

poses under appropriate international control, particularly the approval of the procedures in responding to requests for services related to nuclear explosions for peaceful purposes, and the resolution of the Board of Governors of 13 September 1974 to establish, within the Agency, a separate organizational unit for this purpose;

8. *Urges* all countries concerned to ratify or accede to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons¹³ or finalize their safeguards agreements with the International Atomic Energy Agency as soon as possible in accordance with the provisions of that Treaty, in view of the fact that the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons will take place in May 1975;

9. *Requests* the Secretary-General to transmit to the Director-General of the International Atomic Energy Agency the records of the twenty-ninth session of the General Assembly relating to the Agency's activities.

2277th plenary meeting
5 November 1974

3236 (XXIX). Question of Palestine

The General Assembly,

Having considered the question of Palestine,

Having heard the statement of the Palestine Liberation Organization, the representative of the Palestinian people,¹⁴

Having also heard other statements made during the debate,

Deeply concerned that no just solution to the problem of Palestine has yet been achieved and recognizing that the problem of Palestine continues to endanger international peace and security,

Recognizing that the Palestinian people is entitled to self-determination in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations,

Expressing its grave concern that the Palestinian people has been prevented from enjoying its inalienable rights, in particular its right to self-determination,

Guided by the purposes and principles of the Charter,

Recalling its relevant resolutions which affirm the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination,

1. *Reaffirms* the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people in Palestine, including:

(a) The right to self-determination without external interference;

(b) The right to national independence and sovereignty;

2. *Reaffirms also* the inalienable right of the Palestinians to return to their homes and property from which they have been displaced and uprooted, and calls for their return;

3. *Emphasizes* that full respect for and the realization of these inalienable rights of the Palestinian people are indispensable for the solution of the question of Palestine;

¹³ Resolution 2373 (XXII), annex.

¹⁴ *Official Records of the General Assembly, Twenty-ninth Session, Plenary Meetings, 2282nd meeting, paras. 3-83.*

4. *Recognizes* that the Palestinian people is a principal party in the establishment of a just and lasting peace in the Middle East;

5. *Further recognizes* the right of the Palestinian people to regain its rights by all means in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations;

6. *Appeals* to all States and international organizations to extend their support to the Palestinian people in its struggle to restore its rights, in accordance with the Charter;

7. *Requests* the Secretary-General to establish contacts with the Palestine Liberation Organization on all matters concerning the question of Palestine;

8. *Requests* the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its thirtieth session on the implementation of the present resolution;

9. *Decides* to include the item entitled "Question of Palestine" in the provisional agenda of its thirtieth session.

2296th plenary meeting
22 November 1974

3237 (XXIX). Observer status for the Palestine Liberation Organization

The General Assembly,

Having considered the question of Palestine,

Taking into consideration the universality of the United Nations prescribed in the Charter,

Recalling its resolution 3102 (XXVIII) of 12 December 1973,

Taking into account Economic and Social Council resolutions 1835 (LVI) of 14 May 1974 and 1840 (LVI) of 15 May 1974,

Noting that the Diplomatic Conference on the Reaffirmation and Development of International Humanitarian Law Applicable in Armed Conflicts, the World Population Conference and the World Food Conference have in effect invited the Palestine Liberation Organization to participate in their respective deliberations,

Noting also that the Third United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea has invited the Palestine Liberation Organization to participate in its deliberations as an observer,

1. *Invites* the Palestine Liberation Organization to participate in the sessions and the work of the General Assembly in the capacity of observer;

2. *Invites* the Palestine Liberation Organization to participate in the sessions and the work of all international conferences convened under the auspices of the General Assembly in the capacity of observer;

3. *Considers* that the Palestine Liberation Organization is entitled to participate as an observer in the sessions and the work of all international conferences convened under the auspices of other organs of the United Nations;

4. *Requests* the Secretary-General to take the necessary steps for the implementation of the present resolution.

2296th plenary meeting
22 November 1974

3369 (XXX). Observer status for the Islamic Conference at the United Nations

The General Assembly,

Noting the desire of the States members of the Islamic Conference for co-operation between the United Nations and the Islamic Conference,

1. *Decides* to invite the Islamic Conference to participate in the sessions and the work of the General Assembly and of its subsidiary organs in the capacity of observer;

2. *Requests* the Secretary-General to take the necessary action to implement the present resolution.

2383rd plenary meeting
10 October 1975

3375 (XXX). Invitation to the Palestine Liberation Organization to participate in the efforts for peace in the Middle East

The General Assembly,

Having considered the item entitled "Question of Palestine",

Reaffirming its resolution 3236 (XXIX) of 22 November 1974, in which it recognized the inalienable national rights of the Palestinian people,

Recognizing the necessity of achieving a just and lasting peace in the Middle East at the earliest possible time,

Believing that the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations is a prerequisite to achieving a just and lasting peace in the area,

Convinced that the participation of the Palestinian people is essential in any efforts and deliberations aiming at the achievement of a just and lasting peace in the Middle East,

1. *Requests* the Security Council to consider and adopt the necessary resolutions and measures in order to enable the Palestinian people to exercise its inalienable national rights in accordance with General Assembly resolution 3236 (XXIX);

2. *Calls* for the invitation of the Palestine Liberation Organization, the representative of the Palestinian people, to participate in all efforts, deliberations and conferences on the Middle East which are held under the auspices of the United Nations, on an equal footing with other parties, on the basis of resolution 3236 (XXIX);

3. *Requests* the Secretary-General to inform the Co-Chairmen of the Peace Conference on the Middle East of the present resolution and to take all necessary steps to secure the invitation of the Palestine Liberation Organization to participate in the work of the Conference as well as in all other efforts for peace;

4. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit a report on this matter to the General Assembly as soon as possible.

2399th plenary meeting
10 November 1975

3376 (XXX). Question of Palestine

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 3236 (XXIX) of 22 November 1974,

Taking note of the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of that resolution,¹³

Deeply concerned that no just solution to the problem of Palestine has yet been achieved,

Recognizing that the problem of Palestine continues to endanger international peace and security,

1. *Reaffirms* its resolution 3236 (XXIX);

2. *Expresses its grave concern* that no progress has been achieved towards:

(a) The exercise by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights in Palestine, including the right to self-determination without external interference and the right to national independence and sovereignty;

(b) The exercise by Palestinians of their inalienable right to return to their homes and property from which they have been displaced and uprooted;

3. *Decides* to establish a Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People composed of twenty Member States to be appointed by the General Assembly at the current session;

4. *Requests* the Committee to consider and recommend to the General Assembly a programme of implementation, designed to enable the Palestinian people to exercise the rights recognized in paragraphs 1 and 2 of Assembly resolution 3236 (XXIX), and to take into account, in the formulation of its recommendations for the implementation of that programme, all the powers conferred by the Charter upon the principal organs of the United Nations;

5. *Authorizes* the Committee, in the fulfilment of its mandate, to establish contact with, and to receive and consider suggestions and proposals from, any State and intergovernmental regional organization and the Palestine Liberation Organization;

6. *Requests* the Secretary-General to provide the Committee with all the necessary facilities for the performance of its tasks;

7. *Requests* the Committee to submit its report and recommendations to the Secretary-General no later than 1 June 1976 and requests the Secretary-General to transmit the report to the Security Council;

8. *Requests* the Security Council to consider, as soon as possible after 1 June 1976, the question of the exercise by the Palestinian people of the inalienable rights recognized in paragraphs 1 and 2 of resolution 3236 (XXIX);

9. *Requests* the Secretary-General to inform the Committee of the action taken by the Security Council in accordance with paragraph 8 above;

10. *Authorizes* the Committee, taking into consideration the action taken by the Security Council, to submit to the General Assembly, at its thirty-first session, a report containing its observations and recommendations;

11. *Decides* to include the item entitled "Question of Palestine" in the provisional agenda of its thirty-first session.

2399th plenary meeting
10 November 1975

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At its 2443rd plenary meeting, on 17 December 1975, the General Assembly, in pursuance of paragraph 3 of the above resolution, appointed the following twenty Member States as members of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable

¹³ A/10265.

Rights of the Palestinian People: AFGHANISTAN, CUBA, CYPRUS, GERMAN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC, GUINEA, HUNGARY, INDIA, INDONESIA, LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC, MADAGASCAR, MALAYSIA, MALTA, PAKISTAN, ROMANIA, SENEGAL, SIERRA LEONE, TUNISIA, TURKEY, UKRAINIAN SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLIC and YUGOSLAVIA.

3385 (XXX). Admission of the Comoros to membership in the United Nations

The General Assembly,

Having received the recommendation of the Security Council of 17 October 1975 that the Comoros should be admitted to membership in the United Nations,¹⁴

Having considered the application for membership of the Comoros,¹⁵

Reaffirming the necessity of respecting the unity and territorial integrity of the Comoro Archipelago, composed of the islands of Anjouan, Grande-Comore, Mayotte and Mohéli, as emphasized in resolution 3291 (XXIX) of 13 December 1974 and other resolutions of the General Assembly,

Decides to admit the Comoros to membership in the United Nations.

2402nd plenary meeting
12 November 1975

3386 (XXX). Report of the International Atomic Energy Agency

The General Assembly,

Having received the report of the International Atomic Energy Agency to the General Assembly for the year 1974/1975 and the addendum thereto,¹⁶

Aware that the statement of the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency of 12 November 1975¹⁷ provides additional information on the main developments in the Agency's activities,

Recognizing that in the course of 1975 it was made abundantly clear that further measures should be taken towards the full realization of the goal of an international non-proliferation policy,

1. *Takes note* of the report of the International Atomic Energy Agency and of the addendum thereto;

2. *Notes* that the annual report of the International Atomic Energy Agency will henceforth be based on the calendar year for the purpose of simplifying the evaluation of programme implementation;

3. *Welcomes* the action taken by the International Atomic Energy Agency to increase further the level of the target for voluntary contributions to the general fund of \$5.5 million in 1976 and the continuing increase of total contributions of member States towards the realization of targets;

4. *Notes with appreciation* the increased and continuing emphasis which the International Atomic Energy Agency places in its technical assistance programme on the introduction of nuclear power and its technology in

¹⁴ *Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirtieth Session, Annexes*, agenda item 22, document A/10302.

¹⁵ A/10293-S/11848. For the printed text, see *Official Records of the Security Council, Thirtieth Year, Supplement for October, November and December 1975*.

¹⁶ International Atomic Energy Agency, *Annual Report, 1 July 1974-30 June 1975* (Vienna, July 1975) and corrigendum and addendum; transmitted to the members of the General Assembly by notes of the Secretary-General (A/10168 and Corr.1 and Add.1).

¹⁷ *Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirtieth Session, Plenary Meetings*, 2403rd meeting, paras. 2-40.

developing countries for the peaceful needs of these countries, in particular the series of training courses on nuclear power project planning and implementation;

5. *Notes with satisfaction* the intensification of work of the International Atomic Energy Agency, in accordance with its statute, in the fields of reactor safety and reliability, the disposal of radio-active waste, the safeguarding and physical protection of nuclear facilities and materials, and the comprehensive studies of fuel cycle facilities, including the possibility of establishing regional fuel cycle services;

6. *Commends* the International Atomic Energy Agency for its implementation of General Assembly resolutions 2829 (XXVI) of 16 December 1971 and 3213 (XXIX) of 5 November 1974 regarding nuclear explosions for peaceful purposes and, in this connexion, for establishing the *Ad Hoc* Advisory Group on Nuclear Explosions for Peaceful Purposes to identify possible applications of peaceful nuclear explosions and to study safety, environmental and economic aspects as well as the legal implications and the procedures for assistance in carrying out peaceful explosion projects;

7. *Urges* all States to continue to co-operate with the International Atomic Energy Agency and to take all necessary measures to enhance the recognized efforts of the Agency in the fulfilment of its tasks in the various fields of the peaceful uses of atomic energy;

8. *Requests* the Secretary-General to transmit to the Director-General of the International Atomic Energy Agency the records of the thirtieth session of the General Assembly relating to the Agency's activities.

2403rd plenary meeting
12 November 1975

3391 (XXX). Restitution of works of art to countries victims of expropriation

The General Assembly,

Aware of the paramount aims of the United Nations and particularly of its faith in fundamental human rights and in the dignity and worth of the human person,

Recalling the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples,¹⁸

Recalling the Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property, adopted by the General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization at its sixteenth session, on 14 November 1970,¹⁹

Recalling General Assembly resolution 3187 (XXVIII) of 18 December 1973 concerning the restitution of works of art to countries victims of expropriation, in which the Assembly, *inter alia*, invited the Secretary-General, in consultation with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and Member States, to submit a report to the Assembly at its thirtieth session on the progress achieved,

Taking note of the report of the Secretary-General,²⁰

Noting with interest the steps taken by certain States towards the restitution of works of art to countries victims of expropriation in accordance with resolution 3187 (XXVIII),

¹⁸ Resolution 1514 (XV).

¹⁹ United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, *Records of the General Conference, Sixteenth Session*, vol. I, *Resolutions*, pp. 135-141.

²⁰ A/10224.

Unity in the relevant work of the United Nations bodies concerned, including in particular the positive role played by the Administrative Secretary-General and the General Secretariat of the Organization of African Unity;

3. *Welcomes* the efforts of the Organization of African Unity to find African solutions to some of the issues of vital importance to the international community;

4. *Reaffirms* the determination of the United Nations, in co-operation with the Organization of African Unity, to intensify its efforts to find a solution to the present grave situation in southern Africa;

5. *Requests* the Secretary-General to continue to take the necessary measures to strengthen co-operation at the political, economic, cultural and administrative levels between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly, particularly with regard to the provision of assistance to the victims of colonialism and *apartheid* in southern Africa, and, in this connexion, draws attention to the Assistance Fund for the Struggle against Colonialism and *Apartheid* established by the Organization of African Unity;

6. *Draws once again the attention* of United Nations bodies, in particular the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council, the Special Committee against *Apartheid*, the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples and the United Nations Council for Namibia, to the continued need to take effective measures to associate closely the Organization of African Unity regularly with all their work concerning Africa;

7. *Invites* the specialized agencies and other organizations concerned within the United Nations system to continue and intensify their co-operation with the Organization of African Unity;

8. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its thirty-second session a report on the implementation of the present resolution and on the development of co-operation between the Organization of African Unity and the organizations concerned within the United Nations system.

*67th plenary meeting
16 November 1976*

31/16. Credentials of representatives to the thirty-first session of the General Assembly

A

The General Assembly

Approves the first report of the Credentials Committee.³⁵

*76th plenary meeting
23 November 1976*

³⁵ *Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-first Session, Annexes, agenda item 3, document A/31/308.*

B

The General Assembly

Approves the second report of the Credentials Committee.³⁶

*105th plenary meeting
20 December 1976*

31/20. Question of Palestine

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 3376 (XXX) of 10 November 1975,

Having considered the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People,³⁷

Deeply concerned that no just solution to the problem of Palestine has been achieved and that this problem therefore continues to aggravate the Middle East conflict, of which it is the core, and to endanger international peace and security,

Reaffirming that a just and lasting peace in the Middle East cannot be established without the achievement, *inter alia*, of a just solution of the problem of Palestine on the basis of the attainment of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including the right of return and the right to national independence and sovereignty in Palestine, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations,

1. *Expresses its appreciation* to the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for its efforts in performing the tasks assigned to it by the General Assembly;

2. *Takes note* of the report of the Committee and endorses the recommendations contained therein, as a basis for the solution of the question of Palestine;

3. *Decides* to circulate the report to all the competent bodies of the United Nations and urges them to take necessary action, as appropriate, in accordance with the Committee's programme of implementation;

4. *Urges* the Security Council to consider once again as soon as possible the recommendations contained in the report, taking fully into account the observations made thereon during the debate in the General Assembly at its thirty-first session, in order to take the necessary measures to implement the above-mentioned recommendations of the Committee so as to achieve early progress towards a solution of the problem of Palestine and the establishment of a just and lasting peace in the Middle East;

5. *Authorizes* the Committee to exert all efforts to promote the implementation of its recommendations and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its thirty-second session;

6. *Requests* the Committee to promote the greatest possible dissemination of information on its programme of implementation through non-governmental organizations and other appropriate means;

7. *Requests* the Secretary-General to give the widest possible publicity to the Committee's work and to

³⁶ *Ibid.*, document A/31/308/Add.1.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, *Thirty-first Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/31/35).*

provide the Committee with all the necessary facilities for the performance of its tasks, including summary records of its meetings;

8. *Decides* to include the item entitled "Question of Palestine" in the provisional agenda of its thirty-second session.

*77th plenary meeting
24 November 1976*

31/21. Admission of new Members to the United Nations

The General Assembly,

Having examined the special report of the Security Council to the General Assembly,³⁸

Taking note of the letter of 18 November 1976 from the Permanent Observer of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly,³⁹

Convinced of the ability and willingness of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam to carry out the obligations of the Charter of the United Nations,

Reiterating its conviction that the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam is fully qualified for membership in the United Nations in accordance with Article 4 of the Charter,

Recalling that resolution 3366 (XXX) of 19 September 1975, in which the General Assembly requested the Security Council to reconsider immediately and favourably the application of Viet Nam, was adopted by 123 votes in favour and none against,

Noting that in the general debate of the current session of the General Assembly the admission of Viet Nam to membership in the United Nations received the unequivocal and widespread support of the Members of the Organization,

Expressing deep regret and concern that, on 15 November 1976,⁴⁰ one negative vote by a permanent member of the Security Council prevented the adoption of the draft resolution supported by fourteen members of the Council recommending the admission of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam to membership in the United Nations,

1. *Considers* that the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam should be admitted to membership in the United Nations;

2. *Accordingly recommends* that the Security Council should reconsider the matter favourably in strict conformity with Article 4 of the Charter of the United Nations.

*80th plenary meeting
26 November 1976*

31/44. Admission of the People's Republic of Angola to membership in the United Nations

The General Assembly,

Having received the recommendation of the Security Council of 22 November 1976 that the People's Re-

³⁸ *Ibid.*, *Thirty-first Session, Annexes*, agenda item 26, document A/31/330.

³⁹ A/31/349.

⁴⁰ See *Official Records of the Security Council, Thirty-first Year, 1972nd meeting*.

public of Angola should be admitted to membership in the United Nations,⁴¹

Having considered the application for membership of the People's Republic of Angola,⁴²

Decides to admit the People's Republic of Angola to membership in the United Nations.

*84th plenary meeting
1 December 1976*

31/60. Appointment of the Secretary-General of the United Nations

The General Assembly,

Acting in accordance with the recommendation contained in Security Council resolution 400 (1976) of 7 December 1976,⁴³

Expressing its appreciation for the effective and dedicated service rendered to the United Nations by Mr. Kurt Waldheim during his first term of office,

Appoints Mr. Kurt Waldheim Secretary-General of the United Nations for a second term of office beginning on 1 January 1977 and ending on 31 December 1981.

*93rd plenary meeting
8 December 1976*

31/61. The situation in the Middle East

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 3414 (XXX) of 5 December 1975 and noting with concern that no progress has been achieved towards the implementation of that resolution, in particular its paragraph 4,

Recalling the debate held in the Security Council in January 1976⁴⁴ on the Middle East problem including the Palestinian question, in implementation of subparagraph (a) of Council resolution 381 (1975) of 30 November 1975,

Deeply concerned at the increasing deterioration of the situation in the Middle East due to continued Israeli occupation and Israel's refusal to implement United Nations resolutions,

Reaffirming the necessity of establishing a just and lasting peace in the region based on full respect for the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations as well as for the resolutions concerning the problem of the Middle East and the question of Palestine,

1. *Affirms* that the early resumption of the Peace Conference on the Middle East with the participation of all the parties concerned, including the Palestine Liberation Organization, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 3375 (XXX) of 10 November 1975, is essential for the realization of a just and lasting settlement in the region;

⁴¹ *Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-first Session, Annexes*, agenda item 26, document A/31/340.

⁴² A/31/85-S/12064. For the printed text, see *Official Records of the Security Council, Thirty-first Year, Supplement for April, May and June 1976*.

⁴³ *Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-first Session, Annexes*, agenda item 17, document A/31/393.

⁴⁴ See *Official Records of the Security Council, Thirty-first Year, 1870th to 1879th meetings*.

gust 1976, concerning the situation in the Middle East and the question of Palestine,⁴²

Deeply concerned that the Arab territories occupied since 1967 have continued, for more than ten years, to be under illegal Israeli occupation and that the Palestinian people, after three decades, are still deprived of the exercise of their inalienable national rights,

Reaffirming that the acquisition of territory by force is inadmissible and that all territories thus occupied must be returned,

Reaffirming also the urgent necessity of the establishment of a just and lasting peace in the region, based on full respect for the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations as well as for its resolutions concerning the problem of the Middle East including the question of Palestine,

Taking note with satisfaction of the joint statement on the Middle East issued on 1 October 1977 by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the Secretary of State of the United States of America in their capacities as Co-Chairmen of the Peace Conference on the Middle East,

Reaffirming that peace is indivisible and that a just and lasting settlement of the Middle East problem must be based on a comprehensive solution, under the auspices of the United Nations, which takes into account all aspects of the Arab-Israeli conflict, in particular the attainment by the Palestinian people of all their inalienable national rights and the Israeli withdrawal from all the occupied Arab territories,

Convinced that the early convening of the Peace Conference on the Middle East with the participation of all parties concerned, including the Palestine Liberation Organization, in accordance with relevant resolutions of the General Assembly, is essential for the realization of a just and lasting settlement in the region,

1. *Condemns* Israel's continued occupation of Arab territories, in violation of the Charter of the United Nations, the principles of international law and repeated resolutions of the United Nations;

2. *Reaffirms* that a just and lasting peace in the Middle East, in which all countries and peoples in the region can live in peace and security within recognized and secure boundaries, cannot be achieved without Israel's withdrawal from all Arab territories occupied since 5 June 1967 and the attainment by the Palestinian people of their inalienable national rights;

3. *Calls anew* for the early convening of the Peace Conference on the Middle East, under the auspices of the United Nations and the co-chairmanship of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the United States of America, with the participation on an equal footing of all parties concerned, including the Palestine Liberation Organization;

4. *Urges* the parties to the conflict and all other interested parties to work towards the achievement of a comprehensive settlement covering all aspects of the problems and worked out with the participation of all parties concerned within the framework of the United Nations;

5. *Requests* the Security Council, in the exercise of its responsibilities under the Charter, to take all necessary measures in order to ensure the implementa-

tion of relevant resolutions of the United Nations and to facilitate the achievement of such a comprehensive settlement aiming at the establishment of a just and lasting peace in the region;

6. *Requests* the Secretary-General to follow up the implementation of the present resolution and to inform all concerned, including the Co-Chairmen of the Peace Conference on the Middle East;

7. *Also requests* the Secretary-General to report to the Security Council periodically on the development of the situation and to submit to the General Assembly at its thirty-third session a comprehensive report covering, in all their aspects, the developments in the Middle East.

*82nd plenary meeting
25 November 1977*

32/21. Credentials of representatives to the thirty-second session of the General Assembly

A

The General Assembly

Approves the first report of the Credentials Committee.⁴³

*83rd plenary meeting
28 November 1977*

B

The General Assembly

Approves the second report of the Credentials Committee.⁴⁴

*104th plenary meeting
16 December 1977*

32/40. Question of Palestine

A

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 3236 (XXIX) of 22 November 1974, 3376 (XXX) of 10 November 1975 and 31/20 of 24 November 1976,

Having considered the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People,⁴⁵

Having heard the statement of the Palestine Liberation Organization, the representative of the Palestinian people,⁴⁶

Deeply concerned that no just solution to the problem of Palestine has been achieved and that this problem therefore continues to aggravate the Middle East con-

⁴³ *Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-second Session, Annexes*, agenda item 3, document A/32/336.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, document A/32/336/Add.1.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, *Thirty-second Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/32/35)*.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, *Thirty-second Session, Plenary Meetings, 84th meeting*, paras. 46-79.

⁴² See A/31/197.

flict, of which it is the core, and to endanger international peace and security,

Reaffirming that a just and lasting peace in the Middle East cannot be established without the achievement, *inter alia*, of a just solution of the problem of Palestine on the basis of the attainment of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including the right of return and the right to national independence and sovereignty in Palestine, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations,

Taking note of the resolution on the question of Palestine adopted by the Council of Ministers of the Organization of African Unity at its twenty-ninth ordinary session, held at Libreville from 23 June to 3 July 1977,⁴⁷

Taking note of the Declaration on the situation in the Middle East and the question of Palestine adopted by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of non-aligned countries at their extraordinary meeting in New York on 30 September 1977,⁴⁸

Taking note also of the final communiqué of the extraordinary meeting of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the States members of the Islamic Conference, held in New York on 3 October 1977,⁴⁹

1. *Expresses its appreciation* to the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for its efforts in performing the tasks assigned to it by the General Assembly;

2. *Takes note* of the report of the Committee and endorses the recommendations contained in paragraphs 43 and 44 of that report;

3. *Notes with satisfaction* that, during the consideration of the report of the Committee by the Security Council at its 2041st meeting, on 27 October 1977, all members of the Council who participated in the discussion reaffirmed that a just and lasting peace in the Middle East could not be established without the achievement, in particular, of a just solution of the problem of Palestine on the basis of the attainment of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people;

4. *Urges* the Security Council to take as soon as possible a decision on the recommendations endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 31/20 as a basis for the solution of the problem of Palestine;

5. *Decides* to circulate the report to all the competent bodies of the United Nations and urges them to take necessary action, as appropriate, in accordance with the Committee's programme of implementation;

6. *Requests* the Secretary-General to transmit the reports of the Committee to all conferences on the Middle East held under the auspices of the United Nations, including the Geneva Peace Conference on the Middle East;

7. *Authorizes* the Committee to continue to exert all efforts to promote the implementation of its recommendations, to send delegations or representatives to international conferences where such representation would be considered by it to be appropriate, and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its thirty-third session;

⁴⁷ A/32/310, annex I, resolution CM/Res.580 (XXIX).

⁴⁸ A/32/255-S/12410, annex. For the printed text, see *Official Records of the Security Council, Thirty-second Year, Supplement for October, November and December 1977*.

⁴⁹ A/32/261, annex.

8. *Further requests* the Secretary-General to continue to provide the Committee with all the necessary facilities for the performance of its tasks, including summary records of its meetings;

9. *Decides* to include the item entitled "Question of Palestine" in the provisional agenda of its thirty-third session.

*91st plenary meeting
2 December 1977*

B

The General Assembly,

Having considered the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People,⁵⁰

Noting, in particular, the observations contained in paragraphs 38 to 42 of that report,

Recognizing the need for the greatest possible dissemination of information on the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and on the efforts of the United Nations to promote the attainment of those rights,

1. *Requests* the Secretary-General to establish within the Secretariat of the United Nations a Special Unit on Palestinian Rights which would:

(a) Prepare, under the guidance of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, studies and publications relating to:

(i) The inalienable rights of the Palestinian people;

(ii) Relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and other organs of the United Nations;

(iii) The activities of the Committee and other United Nations organs, in order to promote the attainment of those rights;

(b) Promote maximum publicity for such studies and publications through all appropriate means;

(c) Organize in consultation with the Committee, commencing in 1978, the annual observance of 29 November as the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People;

2. *Further requests* the Secretary-General to ensure the full co-operation of the Office of Public Information and other units of the Secretariat in enabling the Special Unit on Palestinian Rights to perform its tasks;

3. *Invites* all Governments and organizations to lend their co-operation to the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and the Special Unit on Palestinian Rights in the implementation of the present resolution.

*91st plenary meeting
2 December 1977*

32/41. International Conference in Support of the Peoples of Zimbabwe and Namibia

The General Assembly,

Recalling that the International Conference in Support of the Peoples of Zimbabwe and Namibia was held at Maputo from 16 to 21 May 1977, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 31/145 of 17 December 1976,

⁵⁰ *Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-second Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/32/35)*.

research between the Organization of African Unity and the United Nations,

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General on co-operation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity and commends his efforts in strengthening such co-operation;

2. *Notes with deep appreciation* the increasing participation of the Organization of African Unity in the work of the United Nations and the specialized agencies and its constructive contribution to that work;

3. *Commends* the continued efforts of the Organization of African Unity to promote multilateral co-operation among African States and to find solutions to African problems of vital importance to the international community and takes note with satisfaction of the increased collaboration of various United Nations agencies in support of those efforts;

4. *Reaffirms* the determination of the United Nations, in co-operation with the Organization of African Unity, to intensify its efforts to eliminate colonialism, racial discrimination and *apartheid* in southern Africa;

5. *Recognizes* the importance of continued close association by the United Nations and the specialized agencies, where appropriate, with the efforts of the Organization of African Unity to promote social and economic development and to advance intra-African co-operation in this vital field;

6. *Reaffirms* the determination of the United Nations to work closely with the Organization of African Unity towards the establishment of the new international economic order in accordance with the resolutions adopted by the General Assembly;

7. *Reiterates its appreciation* to the Secretary-General for his efforts, on behalf of the international community, to organize and mobilize special economic assistance programmes to various African States experiencing grave economic difficulties due to abnormal political, humanitarian and geo-economic circumstances;

8. *Calls upon* all Member States, regional and international organizations and organizations of the United Nations system to give favourable consideration to those special economic assistance programmes and accord them full and generous support;

9. *Requests* the Secretary-General to keep the Organization of African Unity informed periodically of the response of the international community to those programmes and to co-ordinate efforts with any similar programmes initiated by the Organization of African Unity;

10. *Requests* the Secretary-General and the organizations within the United Nations system to ensure that adequate facilities continue to be made available for the provision of technical assistance to the General Secretariat of the Organization of African Unity as and when required;

11. *Requests* the Secretary-General to continue to take the necessary measures to strengthen co-operation at the political, economic, cultural and administrative levels between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly, particularly with regard to the provision of assistance to the victims of colonialism and *apartheid* in southern Africa, and, in

this connexion, draws attention once again to the Assistance Fund for the Struggle against Colonialism and *Apartheid* established by the Organization of African Unity;

12. *Calls upon* the United Nations bodies, in particular the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council, the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, the Special Committee against *Apartheid* and the United Nations Council for Namibia, to continue to associate closely the Organization of African Unity with all their work concerning Africa;

13. *Calls upon* the United Nations Development Programme, in particular, to arrange for the meeting between the Organization of African Unity and the organizations within the United Nations system to be held in New York during the twenty-sixth session of the Governing Council of the Programme, in June 1979, and requests that the meeting deal with relations between the Organization of African Unity and the organizations within the United Nations system as well as assistance to liberation movements;

14. *Reiterates* its invitation to the specialized agencies and other organizations concerned within the United Nations system to continue and expand their co-operation with the Organization of African Unity and, through it, their assistance to the liberation movements recognized by the Organization of African Unity;

15. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its thirty-fourth session a report on the implementation of the present resolution and on the development of co-operation between the Organization of African Unity and the organizations concerned within the United Nations system.

68th plenary meeting
1 December 1978

33/28. Question of Palestine

A

The General Assembly,

Recalling and reaffirming its resolutions 3236 (XXIX) of 22 November 1974, 3375 (XXX) and 3376 (XXX) of 10 November 1975, 31/20 of 24 November 1976 and 32/40 A and B of 2 December 1977,

Having considered the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People,¹⁹

Having heard the statement of the Palestine Liberation Organization, the representative of the Palestinian people,²⁰

1. *Expresses its grave concern* that no just solution to the problem of Palestine has been achieved and that this problem therefore continues to aggravate the Middle East conflict, of which it is the core, and to endanger international peace and security;

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, Thirty-third Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/33/35 and Corr.1).

²⁰ *Ibid.*, Thirty-third Session, Plenary Meetings, 59th meeting, paras. 73-112.

2. *Reaffirms* that a just and lasting peace in the Middle East cannot be established without the achievement, *inter alia*, of a just solution of the problem of Palestine on the basis of the attainment of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including the right of return and the right to national independence and sovereignty in Palestine, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations;

3. *Calls once more* for the invitation of the Palestine Liberation Organization, the representative of the Palestinian people, to participate, on the basis of General Assembly resolution 3236 (XXIX), in all efforts, deliberations and conferences on the Middle East which are held under the auspices of the United Nations, on an equal footing with other parties;

4. *Declares* that the validity of agreements purporting to solve the problem of Palestine requires that they be within the framework of the United Nations and its Charter and its resolutions on the basis of the full attainment and exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including the right of return and the right to national independence and sovereignty in Palestine, and with the participation of the Palestine Liberation Organization;

5. *Endorses* the recommendations of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People as contained in paragraphs 55 to 58 of its report;¹⁸

6. *Expresses its regret and concern* that the recommendations of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolutions 31/20 and 32/40 A have not been implemented;

7. *Notes with regret* that the Security Council has not taken the action it was urged to take by the General Assembly in paragraph 4 of its resolution 32/40 A;

8. *Once again urges* the Security Council to consider and take as soon as possible a decision on the recommendations endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolutions 31/20 and 32/40 A and in the present resolution;

9. *Authorizes and requests* the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, in the event that the Security Council fails to consider or to take a decision on those recommendations by 1 June 1979, to consider that situation and to make the suggestions it deems appropriate;

10. *Decides* to include the item entitled "Question of Palestine" in the provisional agenda of its thirty-fourth session.

73rd plenary meeting
7 December 1978

B

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 3376 (XXX) of 10 November 1975, 31/20 of 24 November 1976 and 32/40 A and B of 2 December 1977,

Having considered the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People,²¹

²¹ *Ibid.*, Thirty-third Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/33/35 and Corr.1/Rev.1).

1. *Expresses its appreciation* to the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for its efforts in performing the tasks assigned to it by the General Assembly;

2. *Requests* the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People to keep the situation relating to the question of Palestine under review and to report and make suggestions to the General Assembly or to the Security Council, as may be appropriate;

3. *Authorizes* the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People to continue to exert all efforts to promote the implementation of its recommendations, to send delegations or representatives to international conferences where such representation would be considered by it to be appropriate, and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its thirty-fourth session and thereafter;

4. *Requests* the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine, established under General Assembly resolution 194 (III) of 11 December 1948, to co-operate fully with the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and to make available to the Committee, at its request, the relevant information and documentation which the Commission has at its disposal;

5. *Decides* to circulate the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People to all the competent bodies of the United Nations and urges them to take necessary action, as appropriate, in accordance with the Committee's programme of implementation;

6. *Requests* the Secretary-General to continue to provide the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People with all the necessary facilities for the performance of its tasks, including summary records of its meetings.

73rd plenary meeting
7 December 1978

C

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 32/40 B of 2 December 1977,

Having considered the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People,²²

Noting, in particular, the information contained in paragraphs 47 to 54 of that report,

1. *Takes note* of the establishment, within the Secretariat of the United Nations, of a Special Unit on Palestinian Rights in accordance with paragraph 1 of General Assembly resolution 32/40 B;

2. *Requests* the Secretary-General to ensure that the Special Unit on Palestinian Rights continues to discharge the tasks assigned to it in paragraph 1 of resolution 32/40 B in consultation with the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and under its guidance;

3. *Further requests* the Secretary-General to consider, in consultation with the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People,

²² *Ibid.*

the strengthening and the possible reorganization and renaming of the Special Unit on Palestinian Rights;

4. *Also requests* the Secretary-General to ensure the full co-operation of the Department of Public Information and other units of the Secretariat in enabling the Special Unit on Palestinian Rights to perform its tasks;

5. *Invites* all Governments and organizations to lend their co-operation to the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and the Special Unit on Palestinian Rights in the performance of their tasks.

73rd plenary meeting
7 December 1978

33/29. The situation in the Middle East

The General Assembly,

Having discussed the item entitled "The situation in the Middle East",

Recalling its previous resolutions on the subject, in particular resolutions 3414 (XXX) of 5 December 1975, 31/61 of 9 December 1976, 32/20 of 25 November 1977 and 33/28 of 7 December 1978,

Taking into account the decisions of the Conference of Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Non-Aligned Countries, held at Belgrade from 25 to 30 July 1978, concerning the situation in the Middle East and the question of Palestine,²³

Deeply concerned that the Arab territories occupied since 1967 have continued, for more than eleven years, to be under illegal Israeli occupation and that the Palestinian people, after three decades, is still deprived of the exercise of its inalienable national rights,

Reaffirming that the acquisition of territory by force is inadmissible and that all territories thus occupied must be returned,

Reaffirming also the urgent necessity of the establishment of a just and lasting peace in the region, based on full respect for the principles of the Charter of the United Nations as well as for its resolutions concerning the problem of the Middle East including the question of Palestine,

Convinced that the early convening of the Peace Conference on the Middle East with the participation of all parties concerned, including the Palestine Liberation Organization, in accordance with relevant resolutions of the General Assembly, is essential for the realization of a just and lasting settlement in the region,

1. *Condemns* Israel's continued occupation of Palestinian and other Arab territories, in violation of the Charter of the United Nations, the principles of international law and repeated resolutions of the United Nations;

2. *Declares* that peace is indivisible and that a just and lasting settlement of the Middle East problem must be based on a comprehensive solution, under the auspices of the United Nations, which takes into account all aspects of the Arab-Israeli conflict, in particular the attainment by the Palestinian people of all its inalienable national rights and the Israeli with-

drawal from all the occupied Palestinian and other Arab territories;

3. *Reaffirms* that until Israel withdraws from all occupied Palestinian and other Arab territories, and until the Palestinian people attains and exercises its inalienable national rights, a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East, in which all countries and peoples in the region live in peace and security within recognized and secure boundaries, will not be achieved;

4. *Calls anew* for the early convening of the Peace Conference on the Middle East, under the auspices of the United Nations and the co-chairmanship of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the United States of America, with the participation on an equal footing of all parties concerned, including the Palestine Liberation Organization in accordance with General Assembly resolution 3375 (XXX) of 10 November 1975;

5. *Urges* the parties to the conflict and all other interested parties to work towards the achievement of a comprehensive settlement covering all aspects of the problems and worked out with the participation of all parties concerned within the framework of the United Nations;

6. *Requests* the Security Council, in the exercise of its responsibilities under the Charter, to take all necessary measures in order to ensure the implementation of relevant resolutions of the United Nations, including General Assembly resolution 33/28 and the present resolution, and to facilitate the achievement of such a comprehensive settlement aiming at the establishment of a just and lasting peace in the region;

7. *Requests* the Secretary-General to follow up the implementation of the present resolution and to inform all concerned, including the Co-Chairmen of the Peace Conference on the Middle East;

8. *Also requests* the Secretary-General to report to the Security Council periodically on the development of the situation and to submit to the General Assembly at its thirty-fourth session a comprehensive report covering, in all their aspects, the developments in the Middle East.

73rd plenary meeting
7 December 1978

33/44. Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples

The General Assembly,

Having examined the report of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples,²⁴

Recalling its resolutions 1514 (XV) of 14 December 1960, containing the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, and 2621 (XXV) of 12 October 1970, containing the programme of action for the full implementation of the Declaration,

Recalling all its previous resolutions concerning the implementation of the Declaration, in particular reso-

²³ See A/33/206.

²⁴ Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-third Session, Supplement No. 23 (A/33/23/Rev.1).

port on the implementation of the present resolution and of all previous resolutions adopted by the Assembly on this question;

9. *Decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its thirty-sixth session an item entitled "Return or restitution of cultural property to the countries of origin".

*82nd plenary meeting
29 November 1979*

34/65. Question of Palestine

A

The General Assembly,

Recalling and reaffirming its resolutions 3236 (XXIX) of 22 November 1974, 3375 (XXX) and 3376 (XXX) of 10 November 1975, 31/20 of 24 November 1976, 32/40 A and B of 2 December 1977 and 33/28 A to C of 7 December 1978,

Having considered the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People,²⁸

Having heard the statement of the Palestine Liberation Organization, the representative of the Palestinian people,²⁹

1. *Expresses its grave concern* that no just solution to the problem of Palestine has been achieved and that this problem therefore continues to aggravate the Middle East conflict, of which it is the core, and to endanger international peace and security;

2. *Reaffirms* that a just and lasting peace in the Middle East cannot be established without the achievement, *inter alia*, of a just solution of the problem of Palestine on the basis of the attainment of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including the right of return and the right to national independence and sovereignty in Palestine, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations;

3. *Calls once more* for the invitation of the Palestine Liberation Organization, the representative of the Palestinian people, to participate, on the basis of General Assembly resolution 3237 (XXIX), in all efforts, deliberations and conferences on the Middle East which are held under the auspices of the United Nations, on an equal footing with other parties;

4. *Endorses* the recommendations of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People contained in paragraphs 52 to 55 of its report;

5. *Expresses its regret and concern* that the recommendations of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolutions 31/20, 32/40 A and 33/28 A have not been implemented;

6. *Notes with regret* that the Security Council has not taken the action it was urged to take by the General Assembly in paragraph 4 of its resolution 32/40 A;

7. *Once again urges* the Security Council to consider and take as soon as possible a decision on the recommendations endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolutions 31/20, 32/40 A and 33/28 A and in the present resolution;

²⁸ *Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/34/35 and Corr.1).*

²⁹ *Ibid., Thirty-fourth Session, Plenary Meetings, 77th meeting, paras. 70-118.*

8. *Authorizes and requests* the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, in the event of the Security Council failing to consider or to take a decision on those recommendations by 31 March 1980, to consider that situation and to make the suggestions it deems appropriate;

9. *Decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its thirty-fifth session the item entitled "Question of Palestine".

*83rd plenary meeting
29 November 1979*

B

The General Assembly,

Recalling and reaffirming the declaration, contained in paragraph 4 of its resolution 33/28 A of 7 December 1978, that the validity of agreements purporting to solve the problem of Palestine requires that they be within the framework of the United Nations and its Charter and its resolutions on the basis of the full attainment and exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including the right of return and the right to national independence and sovereignty in Palestine, and with the participation of the Palestine Liberation Organization,

Taking note of paragraphs 33 to 35 of the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People,³⁰

1. *Notes with concern* that the Camp David accords have been concluded outside the framework of the United Nations and without the participation of the Palestine Liberation Organization, the representative of the Palestinian people;

2. *Rejects* those provisions of the accords which ignore, infringe, violate or deny the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including the right of return, the right of self-determination and the right to national independence and sovereignty in Palestine, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, and which envisage and condone continued Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories occupied by Israel since 1967;

3. *Strongly condemns* all partial agreements and separate treaties which constitute a flagrant violation of the rights of the Palestinian people, the principles of the Charter and the resolutions adopted in the various international forums on the Palestinian issue;

4. *Declares* that the Camp David accords and other agreements have no validity in so far as they purport to determine the future of the Palestinian people and of the Palestinian territories occupied by Israel since 1967.

*83rd plenary meeting
29 November 1979*

C

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 3376 (XXX) of 10 November 1975, 31/20 of 24 November 1976, 32/40 A and B of 2 December 1977 and 33/28 A to C of 7 December 1978,

Having considered the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People,³¹

³⁰ *Ibid., Thirty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/34/35 and Corr.1).*

³¹ *Ibid.*

1. *Expresses its appreciation* to the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for its efforts in performing the tasks assigned to it by the General Assembly;

2. *Requests* the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People to keep the situation relating to the question of Palestine under review and to report and make suggestions to the General Assembly or the Security Council, as appropriate;

3. *Authorizes* the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People to continue to exert all efforts to promote the implementation of its recommendations, to send delegations or representatives to international conferences where such representation would be considered by it to be appropriate, and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its thirty-fifth session and thereafter;

4. *Requests* the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine, established under General Assembly resolution 194 (III) of 11 December 1948, as well as other United Nations bodies associated with the question of Palestine, to co-operate fully with the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and to make available to the Committee, at its request, the relevant information and documentation which they have at their disposal;

5. *Decides* to circulate the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People to all the competent bodies of the United Nations and urges them to take necessary action, as appropriate, in accordance with the Committee's programme of implementation;

6. *Requests* the Secretary-General to continue to provide the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People with all the necessary facilities for the performance of its tasks.

*100th plenary meeting
12 December 1979*

D

The General Assembly,

Having considered the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People,³²

Noting, in particular, the information contained in paragraphs 45 to 51 of that report,

Recalling its resolutions 32/40 B of 2 December 1977 and 33/28 C of 7 December 1978,

1. *Requests* the Secretary-General, in the light of the consultations held in accordance with paragraph 3 of General Assembly resolution 33/28 C, to redesignate the Special Unit on Palestinian Rights as the Division for Palestinian Rights and to provide it with the resources necessary to discharge the increased responsibilities assigned to it by the Assembly;

2. *Also requests* the Secretary-General to ensure that the Division for Palestinian Rights, in consultation with the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and under its guidance:

(a) Shall continue to discharge the tasks detailed in paragraph 1 of General Assembly resolution 32/40 B;

(b) Shall undertake an expanded programme of work, including, *inter alia*, the following:

- (i) Establishment of closer co-operation within the United Nations framework and with non-governmental organizations;
- (ii) Organization of four seminars during the biennium 1980-1981, sponsoring of annual internship programmes and arrangements for lecture tours;
- (iii) Monitoring of political and other relevant developments affecting the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people;
- (iv) Assistance in the preparation of visual material, such as posters;
- (v) Expansion of the scope of the bulletin issued by the Division for Palestinian Rights to include all items relevant to the question of Palestinian rights;

3. *Further requests* the Secretary-General to ensure the full co-operation of the Department of Public Information and other units of the Secretariat in enabling the Division for Palestinian Rights to perform its tasks;

4. *Invites* all Governments and organizations to lend their co-operation to the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and the Division for Palestinian Rights in the performance of their tasks;

5. *Requests* the Secretary-General to direct the United Nations Postal Administration to issue a series of United Nations commemorative postage stamps to publicize as widely as possible the grave situation and the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people;

6. *Requests* Member States to observe annually on 29 November the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People and to issue special postage stamps for the occasion;

7. *Requests* the Secretary-General to direct the Department of Public Information to set up, in consultation with the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, a photographic display in the public areas of United Nations Headquarters with a view to keeping visitors informed of the grave situation and the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.

*100th plenary meeting
12 December 1979*

34/69. Question of the Comorian island of Mayotte

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 1514 (XV) of 14 December 1960, containing the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, and 2621 (XXV) of 12 October 1970, containing the programme of action for the full implementation of the Declaration,

Recalling its previous resolutions, in particular resolutions 3161 (XXVIII) of 14 December 1973, 3291 (XXIX) of 13 December 1974, 31/4 of 21 October 1976 and 32/7 of 1 November 1977, in which it, *inter alia*, affirmed the unity and territorial integrity of the Comoros,

Recalling, in particular, its resolution 3385 (XXX) of 12 November 1975 on the admission of the Comoros to membership in the United Nations, in which it reaffirmed the necessity of respecting the unity and territorial integrity of the Comoro Archipelago, composed

³² *Ibid.*

Hoc Working Group to undertake its deliberations during the thirty-sixth session;

3. *Decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its thirty-sixth session the item entitled "Review of the implementation of the Declaration on the Strengthening of International Security".

94th plenary meeting
12 December 1980

35/169. Question of Palestine

A

The General Assembly,

Recalling and reaffirming its resolutions 181 (II) of 29 November 1947, 194 (III) of 11 December 1948, 3236 (XXIX) of 22 November 1974, 3375 (XXX) and 3376 (XXX) of 10 November 1975, 31/20 of 24 November 1976, 32/40 A and B of 2 December 1977, 33/28 A to C of 7 December 1978, 34/65 A to D of 29 November and 12 December 1979 and ES-7/2 of 29 July 1980,

Having considered the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People,³⁸

Having heard the statement of the Palestine Liberation Organization, the representative of the Palestinian people,³⁹

1. *Expresses its grave concern* that no just solution to the problem of Palestine has been achieved and that this problem therefore continues to aggravate the Middle East conflict, of which it is the core, and to endanger international peace and security, and that Security Council resolution 242 (1967) of 22 November 1967 does not provide for the future and for the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, the attainment of which is a *conditio sine qua non* for a just solution of the question of Palestine;

2. *Reaffirms* that a just and lasting peace in the Middle East cannot be established without the achievement, *inter alia*, of a just solution of the problem of Palestine on the basis of the attainment of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including the right of return and the right to self-determination, national independence and sovereignty in Palestine, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and the principles of international law;

3. *Stresses* the basic principle that the future of the Palestinian people cannot be discussed in their absence and, therefore, calls once more for the invitation of the Palestine Liberation Organization, the representative of the Palestinian people, to participate, on the basis of General Assembly resolution 3237 (XXIX) of 22 November 1974, in all efforts, deliberations and conferences on the Middle East which are held under the auspices of the United Nations, on an equal footing with other parties;

4. *Endorses* the recommendations of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People contained in paragraphs 45 to 48 of its report and draws the attention of the Security Council to the need for urgent action thereon;

5. *Reaffirms* the inalienable right of the Palestinians to return to their homes and property in Palestine, from

³⁸*Ibid.*, Thirty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/35/35).

³⁹*Ibid.*, Thirty-fifth Session, Plenary Meetings, 75th meeting, paras. 85-141.

which they have been displaced and uprooted, and calls for their return;

6. *Reaffirms also* the inalienable rights in Palestine of the Palestinian people, including:

(a) The right to self-determination without external interference, and to national independence and sovereignty;

(b) The right to establish its own independent sovereign State;

7. *Strongly reaffirms* its repeated endorsement of the recommendations of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, as contained in paragraphs 59 to 72 of its report on its thirty-first session, and as reproduced in the annex to the present resolution;

8. *Demands* the complete and unconditional withdrawal by Israel from all the Palestinian and other Arab territories occupied since June 1967, including Jerusalem, in conformity with the fundamental principle of the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force;

9. *Demands* that Israel should fully comply with the provisions, in particular, of Security Council resolution 465 (1980) adopted unanimously on 1 March 1980;

10. *Further demands* that Israel should fully comply with all the resolutions of the United Nations relevant to the historic character of the Holy City of Jerusalem, in particular Security Council resolutions 476 (1980) of 30 June 1980 and 478 (1980) of 20 August 1980, and rejects the declaration of Israel that Jerusalem is its capital;

11. *Expresses its opposition* to all policies and plans aimed at the resettlement of the Palestinians outside their homeland;

12. *Condemns* Israel for its non-compliance with the provisions of General Assembly resolution ES-7/2 and Security Council resolutions 465 (1980) and 478 (1980) and other relevant resolutions of the United Nations;

13. *Requests* the Security Council to convene in order to consider the situation and the adoption of effective measures under Chapter VII of the Charter;

14. *Decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its thirty-sixth session the item entitled "Question of Palestine".

95th plenary meeting
15 December 1980

ANNEX

Recommendations of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, endorsed by the General Assembly at its thirty-first session⁴⁰

I. BASIC CONSIDERATIONS AND GUIDELINES

59. The question of Palestine is at the heart of the Middle East problem, and, consequently, the Committee stressed its belief that no solution in the Middle East can be envisaged which does not fully take into account the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people.

60. The legitimate and inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to return to their homes and property and to achieve self-determination, national independence and sovereignty are endorsed by the Committee in the conviction that the full implementation of these rights will contribute decisively to a comprehensive and final settlement of the Middle East crisis.

⁴⁰The recommendations endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 31/20 were originally issued as part two of *Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-first Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/31/35)*.

61. The participation of the Palestine Liberation Organization, the representative of the Palestinian people, on an equal footing with other parties, on the basis of General Assembly resolutions 3236 (XXIX) and 3375 (XXX) is indispensable in all efforts, deliberations and conferences on the Middle East which are held under the auspices of the United Nations.

62. The Committee recalls the fundamental principle of the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force and stresses the consequent obligation for complete and speedy evacuation of any territory so occupied.

63. The Committee considers that it is the duty and the responsibility of all concerned to enable the Palestinians to exercise their inalienable rights.

64. The Committee recommends an expanded and more influential role by the United Nations and its organs in promoting a just solution to the question of Palestine and in the implementation of such a solution. The Security Council, in particular, should take appropriate action to facilitate the exercise by the Palestinians of their right to return to their homes, lands and property. The Committee, furthermore, urges the Security Council to promote action towards a just solution, taking into account all the powers conferred on it by the Charter of the United Nations.

65. It is with this perspective in view and on the basis of the numerous resolutions of the United Nations, after due consideration of all the facts, proposals and suggestions advanced in the course of its deliberations, that the Committee submits its recommendations on the modalities for the implementation of the exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.

II. RIGHT OF RETURN

66. The natural and inalienable right of Palestinians to return to their homes is recognized by resolution 194 (III), which the General Assembly has reaffirmed almost every year since its adoption. This right was also unanimously recognized by the Security Council in its resolution 237 (1967); the time for the urgent implementation of these resolutions is long overdue.

67. Without prejudice to the right of all Palestinians to return to their homes, lands and property, the Committee considers that the programme of implementation of the exercise of this right may be carried out in two phases.

Phase one

68. The first phase involves the return to their homes of the Palestinians displaced as a result of the war of June 1967. The Committee recommends that:

(a) The Security Council should request the immediate implementation of its resolution 237 (1967) and that such implementation should not be related to any other condition;

(b) The resources of the International Committee of the Red Cross and/or of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, suitably financed and mandated, may be employed to assist in the solution of any logistical problems involved in the resettlement of those returning to their homes. These agencies could also assist, in co-operation with the host countries and the Palestine Liberation Organization, in the identification of the displaced Palestinians.

Phase two

69. The second phase deals with the return to their homes of the Palestinians displaced between 1948 and 1967. The Committee recommends that:

(a) While the first phase is being implemented, the United Nations in co-operation with the States directly involved, and the Palestine Liberation Organization as the interim representative of the Palestinian entity, should proceed to make the necessary arrangements to enable Palestinians displaced between 1948 and 1967 to exercise their right to return to their homes and property, in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions, particularly General Assembly resolution 194 (III);

(b) Palestinians not choosing to return to their homes should be paid just and equitable compensation as provided for in resolution 194 (III).

III. RIGHT TO SELF-DETERMINATION, NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE AND SOVEREIGNTY

70. The Palestinian people has the inherent right to self-determination, national independence and sovereignty in Palestine. The Committee considers that the evacuation of the territories occupied by force and in violation of the principles of the Charter and relevant resolutions of the United Nations is a *conditio sine qua non* for the exercise by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights in Palestine. The Committee considers, furthermore, that upon the return of the Palestinians to their homes and property and with the establishment of an independent Palestinian entity, the Palestinian people will be able to exercise its rights to self-determination and to decide its form of government without external interference.

71. The Committee also feels that the United Nations has a historical duty and responsibility to render all assistance necessary to promote the economic development and prosperity of the Palestinian entity.

72. To these ends, the Committee recommends that:

(a) A time-table should be established by the Security Council for the complete withdrawal by Israeli occupation forces from those areas occupied in 1967; such withdrawal should be completed no later than 1 June 1977;

(b) The Security Council may need to provide temporary peace-keeping forces in order to facilitate the process of withdrawal;

(c) Israel should be requested by the Security Council to desist from the establishment of new settlements and to withdraw during this period from settlements established since 1967 in the occupied territories; Arab property and all essential services in these areas should be maintained intact;

(d) Israel should also be requested to abide scrupulously by the provisions of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949,⁴¹ and to declare, pending its speedy withdrawal from these territories, its recognition of the applicability of that Convention;

(e) The evacuated territories, with all property and services intact, should be taken over by the United Nations, which, with the co-operation of the League of Arab States, will subsequently hand over these evacuated areas to the Palestine Liberation Organization as the representative of the Palestinian people;

(f) The United Nations should, if necessary, assist in establishing communications between Gaza and the West Bank;

(g) As soon as the independent Palestinian entity has been established, the United Nations, in co-operation with the States directly involved and the Palestinian entity, should, taking into account General Assembly resolution 3375 (XXX), make further arrangements for the full implementation of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, the resolution of outstanding problems and the establishment of a just and lasting peace in the region, in accordance with all relevant United Nations resolutions;

(h) The United Nations should provide the economic and technical assistance necessary for the consolidation of the Palestinian entity.

B

The General Assembly,

Recalling and reaffirming its resolutions 34/65 A to D of 29 November and 12 December 1979,

Taking note of paragraphs 31 and 47 of the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People,⁴²

1. Reaffirms its rejection of those provisions of the accords which ignore, infringe, violate or deny the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including the right of return, the right of self-determination and the right to national independence and sovereignty in Palestine, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and the principles of international law, and

⁴¹United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 75, No. 973, p. 287.

⁴²*Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/35/35)*.

which envisage and condone continued Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories occupied by Israel since 1967;

2. *Expresses its strong opposition* to all partial agreements and separate treaties which constitute a flagrant violation of the rights of the Palestinian people, the principles of the Charter and the resolutions adopted in the various international forums on the Palestinian issue, as well as the principles of international law, and declares that all agreements and separate treaties have no validity in so far as they purport to determine the future of the Palestinian people and of the Palestinian territories occupied by Israel since 1967;

3. *Declares* that no State has the right to undertake any actions, measures or negotiations that could affect the future of the Palestinian people, its inalienable rights and the occupied Palestinian territories without the participation of the Palestine Liberation Organization on an equal footing, in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions, and rejects all such actions, measures and negotiations.

*95th plenary meeting
15 December 1980*

C

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 3376 (XXX) of 10 November 1975, 31/20 of 24 November 1976, 32/40 A and B of 2 December 1977, 33/28 A to C of 7 December 1978, 34/65 A to D of 29 November and 12 December 1979 and ES-7/3 of 29 July 1980,

Having considered the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People,⁴²

1. *Expresses its appreciation* to the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for its efforts in performing the tasks assigned to it by the General Assembly;

2. *Requests* the Committee to keep the situation relating to the question of Palestine under review and to report and make suggestions to the General Assembly or the Security Council, as appropriate;

3. *Authorizes* the Committee to continue to exert all efforts to promote the implementation of its recommendations, to send delegations or representatives to international conferences where such representation would be considered by it to be appropriate, and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its thirty-sixth session and thereafter;

4. *Requests* the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine, established under General Assembly resolution 194 (III) of 11 December 1948, as well as other United Nations bodies associated with the question of Palestine, to co-operate fully with the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and to make available to the Committee, at its request, the relevant information and documentation which they have at their disposal;

5. *Decides* to circulate the report of the Committee to all the competent bodies of the United Nations and urges them to take the necessary action, as appropriate, in accordance with the Committee's programme of implementation;

6. *Requests* the Secretary-General to continue to provide the Committee with all the necessary facilities for the performance of its tasks.

*95th plenary meeting
15 December 1980*

D

The General Assembly,

Having considered the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People,⁴²

Noting, in particular, the information contained in paragraphs 20 to 29 and 38 to 44 of that report,

Recalling its resolutions 32/40 B of 2 December 1977, 33/28 C of 7 December 1978 and 34/65 D of 12 December 1979,

1. *Notes with appreciation* the action taken by the Secretary-General in compliance with General Assembly resolution 34/65 D;

2. *Requests* the Secretary-General to ensure that the Special Unit on Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat, in consultation with the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and under its guidance, continues to discharge the tasks detailed in paragraph 1 of General Assembly resolution 32/40 B and paragraph 2 (b) of resolution 34/65 D;

3. *Also requests* the Secretary-General to keep under constant review the question of the strengthening of the Special Unit on Palestinian Rights and to provide it with the resources necessary to discharge the responsibilities assigned to it by the General Assembly as well as the redesignation of the Special Unit as requested in paragraph 1 of resolution 34/65 D;

4. *Further requests* the Secretary-General to ensure the continued co-operation of the Department of Public Information and other units of the Secretariat in enabling the Special Unit on Palestinian Rights to perform its tasks;

5. *Invites* all Governments and organizations to lend their co-operation to the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and the Special Unit on Palestinian Rights in the performance of their tasks;

6. *Notes with appreciation* the action taken by Member States to observe annually on 29 November the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People and the issuance by them of special postage stamps for the occasion.

*95th plenary meeting
15 December 1980*

E

The General Assembly,

Recalling and reaffirming its resolutions 2253 (ES-V) of 4 July 1967 and 2254 (ES-V) of 14 July 1967,

Recalling the resolutions of the Security Council relevant to the character and status of the Holy City of Jerusalem, in particular resolutions 252 (1968) of 21 May 1968, 267 (1969) of 3 July 1969, 271 (1969) of 15 September 1969, 298 (1971) of 25 September 1971, 465 (1980) of 1 March 1980, 476 (1980) of 30 June 1980 and 478 (1980) of 20 August 1980,

Reaffirming that the acquisition of territory by force is inadmissible,

Bearing in mind the specific status of Jerusalem and, in particular, the need for protection and preservation of the unique spiritual and religious dimension of the Holy Places in the city,

Expressing its satisfaction at the decision taken by the States which have responded to Security Council resolution 478 (1980) and withdrawn their diplomatic representatives from the Holy City of Jerusalem,

Recalling the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949,⁴³

Deploring the persistence of Israel in changing the physical character, demographic composition, institutional structure and the status of the Holy City of Jerusalem,

Deeply concerned over the enactment of a "basic law" in the Israeli Knesset proclaiming a change in the character and status of the Holy City of Jerusalem, with its implications for peace and security,

1. *Censures* in the strongest terms the enactment by Israel of the "Basic Law" on Jerusalem;

2. *Affirms* that the enactment of the "Basic Law" by Israel constitutes a violation of international law and does not affect the continued application of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, in the Palestinian and other Arab territories occupied since June 1967, including Jerusalem;

3. *Determines* that all legislative and administrative measures and actions taken by Israel, the occupying Power, which have altered or purport to alter the character and status of the Holy City of Jerusalem, and, in particular, the recent "Basic Law" on Jerusalem and the proclamation of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, are null and void and must be rescinded forthwith;

4. *Affirms also* that this action constitutes a serious obstruction to achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East;

5. *Decides* not to recognize that "Basic Law" and such other actions by Israel that, as a result of this law, seek to alter the character and status of Jerusalem and calls upon all States, specialized agencies and other international organizations to comply with the present resolution and other relevant resolutions and urges them not to conduct any business which is not in conformity with the provisions of the present resolution and the other relevant resolutions.

95th plenary meeting
15 December 1980

35/206. Policies of apartheid of the Government of South Africa⁴⁴

A

SITUATION IN SOUTH AFRICA

The General Assembly,

Conscious of the responsibility of the United Nations and the international community towards the oppressed people of South Africa and their national liberation movement, as proclaimed, in particular, in General Assembly resolution 3411 C (XXX) of 28 November 1975,

Having considered the reports of the Special Committee against Apartheid,⁴⁵

Recalling Security Council resolution 473 (1980) of 13 June 1980,

Taking note of the great advance in the struggle of the oppressed people of South Africa and their national liberation movement,

Gravely concerned at the further aggravation of the situation in South Africa, resulting from the policies and actions of the apartheid régime,

Considering that the policy of "bantustanization" aggravates the situation in the region,

Reaffirming that the policies and actions of the apartheid régime, the strengthening of its military forces and the escalating acts of aggression and subversion of that régime against independent African States constitute a grave threat to international peace and security,

Considering that the acquisition of nuclear capability by the apartheid régime constitutes a grave menace to Africa and the world,

Condemning all military, nuclear and other collaboration by certain States with South Africa,

Condemning also the collaboration by transnational corporations and financial institutions with South Africa,

Reaffirming that apartheid is a crime against humanity,

Recognizing that the so-called constitutional and other reforms by the racist minority régime are no more than mere adjustments within the framework of apartheid,

Convinced that it is incumbent on the international community to provide all necessary assistance to the oppressed people of South Africa and their national liberation movement in their legitimate struggle for the establishment of a democratic society in accordance with their inalienable human and political rights, as set forth in the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,⁴⁶

Recalling and reaffirming the Declaration on South Africa contained in resolution 34/93 O of 12 December 1979,

1. *Reaffirms* the legitimacy of the struggle of the oppressed people of South Africa and their national liberation movement by all available means, including armed struggle, for the seizure of power by the people, the elimination of the apartheid régime and the exercise of the right of self-determination by the people of South Africa as a whole;

2. *Strongly condemns* the racist minority régime for its brutal repression and indiscriminate torture and killings of workers, schoolchildren and other opponents of apartheid;

3. *Vehemently condemns* the Pretoria régime's persistent attempts at destabilization of neighbouring States and its repeated acts of aggression and subversion;

4. *Further condemns* that régime for its defiance of Security Council resolution 473 (1980);

5. *Urges* the Security Council to determine that the situation in South Africa, and in southern Africa as a whole, resulting from the policies and actions of the

⁴³United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 75, No. 973, p. 287.

⁴⁴See also sect. I, foot-note 8, and sect. X.B.2, decision 35/415.

⁴⁵*Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 22 (A/35/22) and Supplement No. 22 A (A/35/22/Add.1-3).*

⁴⁶Resolution 217 A (III).

17. *Calls upon* all Member States and organizations of the United Nations system to increase their assistance to the African States affected by serious economic problems, in particular problems of displaced persons, resulting from natural or other disasters, by mobilizing special economic and emergency assistance programmes;

18. *Calls upon* all Member States and regional and international organizations, in particular those of the United Nations system, and non-governmental organizations to increase substantially their aid to refugees in Africa;

19. *Requests* the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat and all the specialized agencies and other organizations of the United Nations system to give wider publicity and intensify the dissemination of information on social and economic development matters concerning Africa;

20. *Calls upon* United Nations bodies, in particular the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council, the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, the Special Committee against Apartheid and the United Nations Council for Namibia, to continue to associate closely the Organization of African Unity with all their work concerning Africa;

21. *Urges* the specialized agencies and the other organizations concerned within the United Nations system to continue and expand their co-operation with the Organization of African Unity and, through it, their assistance to the liberation movements recognized by that organization;

22. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its thirty-seventh session a report on the implementation of the present resolution and on the development of co-operation between the Organization of African Unity and the organizations concerned within the United Nations system.

*90th plenary meeting
9 December 1981*

36/105. Question of the Comorian island of Mayotte

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 1514 (XV) of 14 December 1960, containing the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, and 2621 (XXV) of 12 October 1970, containing the programme of action for the full implementation of the Declaration,

Recalling also its previous resolutions, in particular resolutions 3161 (XXVIII) of 14 December 1973, 3291 (XXIX) of 13 December 1974, 31/4 of 21 October 1976, 32/7 of 1 November 1977, 34/69 of 6 December 1979 and 35/43 of 28 November 1980, in which it, *inter alia*, affirmed the unity and territorial integrity of the Comoros,

Recalling, in particular, its resolution 3385 (XXX) of 12 November 1975 on the admission of the Comoros to membership in the United Nations, in which it reaffirmed the necessity of respecting the unity and territorial integrity of the Comoro Archipelago, composed of the islands of Anjouan, Grande-Comore, Mayotte and Mohéli,

Recalling further that, in accordance with the agreements signed on 15 June 1973 between the Comoros and France concerning the accession of the Comoros to independence, the results of the referendum of 22 December 1974 were to be considered on a global basis and not island by island,

Convinced that a just and lasting solution to the question of Mayotte is to be found in respect for the sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of the Comoro Archipelago,

Taking note of the talks opened between the Government of the Islamic Federal Republic of the Comoros and the Government of the French Republic,

Taking note of the report of the Secretary-General,⁵⁰

Bearing in mind the decisions of the Organization of African Unity, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and the Organization of the Islamic Conference concerning this question,

1. *Reaffirms* the sovereignty of the Islamic Federal Republic of the Comoros over the island of Mayotte;

2. *Invites* the Government of France to honour the commitments entered into prior to the referendum on the self-determination of the Comoro Archipelago of 22 December 1974 concerning respect for the unity and territorial integrity of the Comoros;

3. *Also invites* the Government of France to resume and actively pursue the negotiations with the Government of the Comoros with a view to ensuring the effective return of the island of Mayotte to the Comoros as soon as possible;

4. *Requests* the Secretary-General of the United Nations to follow developments concerning this question, in conjunction with the Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity, and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its thirty-seventh session;

5. *Decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its thirty-seventh session the item entitled "Question of the Comorian island of Mayotte".

*92nd plenary meeting
10 December 1981*

36/120. Question of Palestine

A

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 3376 (XXX) of 10 November 1975, 31/20 of 24 November 1976, 32/40 A and B of 2 December 1977, 33/28 A to C of 7 December 1978, 34/65 A and B of 29 November 1979, 34/65 C and D of 12 December 1979, ES-7/2 of 29 July 1980 and 35/169 A to E of 15 December 1980,

Having considered the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People,⁵¹

1. *Expresses its appreciation* to the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for its efforts in performing the tasks assigned to it by the General Assembly;

2. *Requests* the Committee to keep the situation relating to the question of Palestine under review and to report and make suggestions to the General Assembly or the Security Council, as appropriate;

3. *Authorizes* the Committee to continue to exert all efforts to promote the implementation of its recommendations, to send delegations or representatives to international conferences where such representation would be considered by it to be appropriate, and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its thirty-seventh session and thereafter;

4. *Requests* the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine, established under General Assembly resolution 194 (III) of 11 December 1948, as well as other United Nations bodies associated with the question of Palestine, to co-operate fully with the Committee and to make available to it, at its request, the relevant information and documentation which they have at their disposal;

⁵⁰ A/36/671.

5. *Decides* to circulate the report of the Committee to all the competent bodies of the United Nations and urges them to take the necessary action, as appropriate, in accordance with the Committee's programme of implementation;

6. *Requests* the Secretary-General to continue to provide the Committee with all the necessary facilities for the performance of its tasks.

93rd plenary meeting
10 December 1981

B

The General Assembly,

Having considered the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People,⁵¹

Taking note, in particular, of the information contained in paragraphs 39 to 48 of that report,

Recalling its resolutions 32/40 B of 2 December 1977, 33/28 C of 7 December 1978, 34/65 D of 12 December 1979 and 35/169 D of 15 December 1980,

1. *Takes note with appreciation* of the action taken by the Secretary-General in compliance with General Assembly resolution 35/169 D;

2. *Requests* the Secretary-General to ensure that the Special Unit on Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat continues to discharge the tasks detailed in paragraph 1 of General Assembly resolution 32/40 B and paragraph 2 (b) of Assembly resolution 34/65 D, in consultation with the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and under its guidance;

3. *Requests* the Secretary-General to provide the Special Unit on Palestinian Rights with the necessary additional resources to accomplish its tasks and to expand its work programme, *inter alia* through:

(a) The organization annually of a seminar in North America in addition to the regional seminars;

(b) More widespread dissemination of its publications in all the official languages;

(c) The translation of those publications into languages other than the official languages of the United Nations;

4. *Also requests* the Secretary-General to take necessary action on the redesignation of the Special Unit on Palestinian Rights, as requested in paragraph 1 of resolution 34/65 D, in keeping with the political importance of its work and its expanded work programme;

5. *Further requests* the Secretary-General to ensure the continued co-operation of the Department of Public Information and other units of the Secretariat in enabling the Special Unit on Palestinian Rights to perform its tasks, *inter alia* through the production, in consultation with the Committee, of a film on Palestinian rights and through the provision of copies of the photographic exhibit on Palestinian rights installed at United Nations Headquarters and of other visual material for use by the Special Unit and United Nations information centres;

6. *Invites* all Governments and organizations to lend their co-operation to the Committee and the Special Unit on Palestinian Rights in the performance of their tasks;

7. *Takes note with appreciation* of the action taken by Member States to observe annually on 29 November the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People and the issuance by them of special postage stamps for the occasion.

93rd plenary meeting
10 December 1981

C

The General Assembly,

Having considered the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People,⁵¹

Recalling its relevant resolutions, particularly resolutions 31/20 of 24 November 1976 and ES-7/2 of 29 July 1980,

Gravely concerned that no just solution to the problem of Palestine has been achieved and that this problem therefore continues to aggravate the Middle East conflict, of which it is the core, and to endanger international peace and security,

Convinced that wider international recognition of the facts underlying the question of Palestine will lead to a just solution of the problem,

Recognizing that a lasting peace in the Middle East requires a just solution of the problem of Palestine through the attainment and exercise by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights,

Emphasizing the need for a comprehensive effort to seek effective ways and means to enable the Palestinian people to attain and to exercise those rights,

1. *Decides* to convene, under the auspices of the United Nations, an International Conference on the Question of Palestine not later than 1984, on the basis of General Assembly resolution ES-7/2;

2. *Authorizes* the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People to act as the Preparatory Committee for the Conference and to take all the necessary steps for its organization, to hold sessions particularly for this purpose and to make recommendations regarding, *inter alia*, the site, scheduling of and participation in the Conference, and the provisional agenda of the Conference;

3. *Invites* all appropriate United Nations bodies, the specialized agencies and other intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations to co-operate with the Committee in the implementation of the present resolution;

4. *Requests* the Secretary-General to appoint a Secretary-General of the Conference and to provide all the necessary assistance to the Committee in the organization of the Conference.

93rd plenary meeting
10 December 1981

D

The General Assembly,

Having considered the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People⁵¹ and the recommendations contained therein,⁵²

Having heard the statement of the Palestine Liberation Organization, the representative of the Palestinian people,⁵³

Expressing its extreme concern that no just solution to the problem of Palestine has been achieved and that this problem therefore continues to aggravate the Middle East conflict, of which it is the core, and to endanger international peace and security,

Reaffirming that a just and comprehensive lasting peace in the Middle East requires a just solution to the problem of Palestine through the attainment by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights,

Resolutely emphasizing the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force.

⁵² *Ibid.*, sect. V.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, Thirty-sixth Session, Plenary Meetings, 80th meeting, paras. 79-134.

⁵¹ *Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/36/35).*

Recognizing the need to work for a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East,

Recalling and reaffirming its previous relevant resolutions, particularly resolutions 181 (II) of 29 November 1947, 194 (III) of 11 December 1948, 3236 (XXIX) of 22 November 1974 and ES-7/2 of 29 July 1980,

1. Reaffirms the inalienable right of the Palestinians to return to their homes and property in Palestine, from which they have been displaced and uprooted, and calls for their early return;

2. Reaffirms also the inalienable rights in Palestine of the Palestinian people, including:

(a) The right to self-determination without external interference, and to national independence and sovereignty;

(b) The right to establish its own independent sovereign State;

3. Reaffirms, in particular, that a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East cannot be established without the withdrawal of Israel from all the occupied Palestinian and other Arab territories, including Jerusalem, and without the achievement of a just solution of the problem of Palestine on the basis of the attainment by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights in Palestine, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and the relevant resolutions of the United Nations;

4. Expresses its opposition to all policies and plans aimed at the resettlement of the Palestinians outside their homeland;

5. Demands that Israel should withdraw completely and unconditionally from all the Palestinian and other Arab territories occupied since June 1967, including Jerusalem, with all property and services intact;

6. Further demands that Israel should fully comply with all the resolutions of the United Nations relevant to the historic character of the Holy City of Jerusalem, in particular Security Council resolutions 476 (1980) of 30 June 1980 and 478 (1980) of 20 August 1980, and rejects the enactment of a "Basic Law" by the Israel Knesset proclaiming Jerusalem the capital of Israel;

7. Demands that Israel should fully comply with the provisions, in particular, of Security Council resolution 465 (1980) adopted unanimously on 1 March 1980;

8. Reaffirms the basic principle that the future of the Palestinian people can only be considered with its participation and calls for the participation of the Palestine Liberation Organization, the representative of the Palestinian people, in all efforts, deliberations and conferences on the question of Palestine and on the situation in the Middle East to be held under the auspices of the United Nations, on an equal footing and on the basis of the relevant resolutions of the United Nations;

9. Endorses the recommendations of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People contained in paragraphs 49 to 53 of its report⁵⁴ and draws the attention of the Security Council to the fact that action on the Committee's recommendations, as endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 31/20 of 24 November 1976,⁵⁴ is long overdue;

10. Requests the Security Council to convene in order to consider the situation and the adoption of effective measures to implement the recommendations of the Committee as endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 31/20;

11. Decides to include in the provisional agenda of its thirty-seventh session the item entitled "Question of Palestine".

93rd plenary meeting
10 December 1981

E

The General Assembly,

Recalling and reaffirming its resolutions 2253 (ES-V) of 4 July 1967, 2254 (ES-V) of 14 July 1967, 35/169 E of 15 December 1980 and 36/15 of 28 October 1981,

Recalling the resolutions of the Security Council relevant to the character and status of the Holy City of Jerusalem, in particular resolutions 252 (1968) of 21 May 1968, 267 (1969) of 3 July 1969, 271 (1969) of 15 September 1969, 298 (1971) of 25 September 1971, 465 (1980) of 1 March 1980, 476 (1980) of 30 June 1980 and 478 (1980) of 20 August 1980,

Reaffirming that the acquisition of territory by force is inadmissible,

Bearing in mind the specific status of Jerusalem and, in particular, the need for protection and preservation of the unique spiritual and religious dimension of the Holy Places in the city,

Recalling the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949,⁵⁵

Deploring the persistence of Israel in changing the physical character, the demographic composition, the institutional structure and the status of the Holy City of Jerusalem,

1. Determines once again that all legislative and administrative measures and actions taken by Israel, the occupying Power, which have altered or purport to alter the character and status of the Holy City of Jerusalem, and, in particular, the so-called "Basic Law" on Jerusalem and the proclamation of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, are null and void and must be rescinded forthwith;

2. Affirms that such actions constitute a serious obstruction to achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East, and a threat to international peace and security;

3. Reaffirms its resolution not to recognize that "Basic Law" and such other actions by Israel that, as a result of this law, seek to alter the character and status of Jerusalem and calls upon all States, specialized agencies and other international organizations to comply with the present resolution and other relevant resolutions and urges them not to conduct any business which is not in conformity with the provisions of the present resolution and the other relevant resolutions;

4. Demands that Israel should fully comply with all the resolutions of the United Nations relevant to the historic character of the Holy City of Jerusalem, in particular Security Council resolutions 476 (1980) and 478 (1980);

5. Requests the Secretary-General to report on the implementation of those resolutions within six months.

93rd plenary meeting
10 December 1981

F

The General Assembly,

Recalling and reaffirming its resolutions 34/65 A and B of 29 November 1979, 34/65 C and D of 12 December 1979 and 35/169 B of 15 December 1980,

⁵⁴ For the text of the recommendations, see resolution 35/169 A, annex.

⁵⁵ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 75, No. 973, p. 287.

Taking note of paragraphs 26, 27 and 52 of the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People,⁵¹

1. *Strongly reaffirms* its rejection of those provisions of the accords which ignore, infringe, violate or deny the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including the right of return, the right of self-determination and the right to national independence and sovereignty in Palestine, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and the principles of international law, and which envisage and condone continued Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories occupied by Israel since 1967, including Jerusalem;

2. *Expresses its strong opposition* to all partial agreements and separate treaties which constitute a flagrant violation of the rights of the Palestinian people, the principles of the Charter and the resolutions adopted in the various international forums on the Palestinian issue, as well as the principles of international law, and declares that all agreements and separate treaties have no validity in so far as they purport to determine the future of the Palestinian people and of the Palestinian territories occupied by Israel since 1967, including Jerusalem;

3. *Declares* that no State has the right to undertake any actions, measures or negotiations that could affect the future of the Palestinian people, its inalienable rights and the occupied Palestinian territories without the participation of the Palestine Liberation Organization on an equal footing, in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the United Nations, rejects all such actions, measures and negotiations, and considers all such actions, measures and negotiations as a flagrant violation of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people;

4. *Decides* that all actions, measures and negotiations to implement or execute such accords and agreements, or any part thereof, are null and void in so far as they purport to determine the future of the Palestinian people and of the Palestinian territories occupied by Israel since 1967, including Jerusalem.

93rd plenary meeting
10 December 1981

36/121. Question of Namibia

A

SITUATION IN NAMIBIA RESULTING FROM THE ILLEGAL OCCUPATION OF THE TERRITORY BY SOUTH AFRICA

The General Assembly,

Having examined the report of the United Nations Council for Namibia⁵⁶ and the relevant chapters of the report of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples,⁵⁷

Recalling its resolution 1514 (XV) of 14 December 1960 containing the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples,

Recalling, in particular, its resolutions 2145 (XXI) of 27 October 1966 and 2248 (S-V) of 19 May 1967 and subsequent resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council relating to Namibia, as well as the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice of 21 June 1971,⁵⁸

delivered in response to the request addressed to it by the Council in its resolution 284 (1970) of 29 July 1970,

Recalling also its resolutions 3111 (XXVIII) of 12 December 1973, and 31/146 and 31/152 of 20 December 1976, by which it, *inter alia*, recognized the South West Africa People's Organization as the sole and authentic representative of the Namibian people and granted observer status to it.

Taking into consideration the Panama Declaration and Programme of Action on Namibia,⁵⁹ adopted by the United Nations Council for Namibia at its extraordinary plenary meeting held at Panama City on 5 June 1981,

Taking into consideration resolution CM/Res. 853 (XXXVII) on Namibia adopted by the Council of Ministers of the Organization of African Unity at its thirty-seventh ordinary session, held at Nairobi from 15 to 26 June 1981,⁶⁰ and endorsed by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity at its eighteenth ordinary session, held at Nairobi from 24 to 27 June 1981, as well as decisions of the Organization of African Unity reaffirming the unequivocal support of member States for the just armed struggle of liberation waged by the Namibian people under the leadership of the South West Africa People's Organization, the sole legitimate and genuine representative of the Namibian people.

Strongly condemning France, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America for their collusion with the South African racists as manifested in the triple vetoes in the Security Council, where the majority of the world body demonstrated its determination to adopt concrete political and economic measures aimed at isolating terrorist South Africa in order to compel it to vacate Namibia.

Taking into consideration the Paris Declaration on Sanctions against South Africa and the Special Declaration on Namibia,⁶¹ adopted by the International Conference on Sanctions against South Africa, held at Paris from 20 to 27 May 1981.

Welcoming the establishment of a Solidarity Fund by the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and of an Emergency Namibia Liberation Fund by the Organization of African Unity to support the efforts of the South West Africa People's Organization in its liberation struggle,

Stressing the grave responsibility of the international community to take all possible measures in support of the Namibian people in their liberation struggle under the leadership of their sole and authentic representative, the South West Africa People's Organization,

Strongly reiterating its support for the national liberation movement of Namibia, the South West Africa People's Organization, the sole and authentic representative of the Namibian people in their struggle to achieve self-determination, freedom and national independence in a united Namibia,

Reaffirming its full support for the armed struggle of the Namibian people under the leadership of the South West African People's Organization,

Strongly condemning South Africa's continued illegal occupation of Namibia, its brutal repression of the Namibian people and its ruthless exploitation of the people and resources of Namibia, as well as its attempts to destroy the national unity and territorial integrity of Namibia,

⁵⁶ Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 24 (A/36/24).

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, Supplement No. 23 (A/36/23/Rev.1), chaps. I-VI and VIII.

⁵⁸ Legal Consequences for States of the Continued Presence of South Africa in Namibia (South West Africa) notwithstanding Security Council Resolution 276 (1970), Advisory Opinion, I.C.J. Reports 1971, p. 16.

⁵⁹ Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 24 (A/36/24), para. 222.

⁶⁰ See A/36/534, annex I.

⁶¹ A/CONF.107/8, sect. X.

under arbitrary security legislation, as well as continued repression in Namibia,

Reaffirming that increased humanitarian assistance by the international community to those persecuted under repressive and discriminatory legislation in South Africa and Namibia is appropriate and essential,

Recognizing that increased contributions to the Trust Fund and to the voluntary agencies concerned are necessary to enable them to meet the increased needs for humanitarian and legal assistance,

1. *Commends* the Secretary-General and the Committee of Trustees of the United Nations Trust Fund for South Africa for their efforts to promote humanitarian and legal assistance to persons persecuted under repressive and discriminatory legislation in South Africa and Namibia, as well as assistance to their families and to refugees from South Africa;

2. *Expresses its appreciation* to the Governments, organizations and individuals that have contributed to the Trust Fund and to the voluntary agencies engaged in rendering humanitarian and legal assistance to the victims of *apartheid* and racial discrimination;

3. *Appeals* for generous and increased contributions to the Trust Fund;

4. *Also appeals* for direct contributions to the voluntary agencies engaged in assistance to the victims of *apartheid* and racial discrimination in South Africa and Namibia.

97th plenary meeting
9 December 1982

J

OIL EMBARGO AGAINST SOUTH AFRICA

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 36/172 G of 17 December 1981,

Recalling further the Paris Declaration on Sanctions against South Africa,⁵⁹

Taking note of the report of the Special Committee against *Apartheid*,⁶¹

Convinced of the need to ensure the effective implementation of embargoes imposed or policies declared by most oil-producing and oil-exporting countries with regard to the supply of oil and oil products to South Africa, and to promote a mandatory oil embargo against South Africa under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations,

Reiterating its requests to the Security Council to consider a mandatory embargo on the supply of petroleum and petroleum products to South Africa under Chapter VII of the Charter,

1. *Authorizes* the Special Committee against *Apartheid* to appoint a Group of Experts on the Supply of Oil and Oil Products to South Africa, nominated by Governments, to prepare a thorough study and report as soon as possible on all aspects of the question as a basis for the consideration of national and international measures to ensure the effective implementation of the embargoes imposed or policies declared by oil-producing and oil-exporting countries with regard to the supply of oil and oil products to South Africa;

2. *Requests* the Secretary-General to organize, in consultation with the Special Committee, meetings of permanent representatives to the United Nations of the oil-producing and oil-exporting countries committed to the oil embargo against South Africa:

(a) To consider the report of the Group of Experts on the Supply of Oil and Oil Products to South Africa;

(b) To consult on national and international arrangements to ensure the effective implementation of the embargoes in the light of the report;

(c) To decide on all arrangements for an international conference;

(d) To consider, on the basis of the report of the Group of Experts, participation of countries concerned in addition to oil-producing and oil-exporting countries committed to the oil embargo against South Africa;

3. *Requests and authorizes* the Secretary-General, in consultation with the Special Committee and in the light of the recommendations made at the meetings of permanent representatives of the countries concerned, to organize the International Conference on an Oil Embargo against South Africa for the purpose of considering national and international arrangements to ensure the implementation of embargoes imposed or policies declared by oil-producing and oil-exporting countries with regard to the supply of oil and oil products to South Africa.

97th plenary meeting
9 December 1982

37/86. Question of Palestine

A

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 3376 (XXX) of 10 November 1975, 31/20 of 24 November 1976, 32/40 of 2 December 1977, 33/28 of 7 December 1978, 34/65 of 29 November and 12 December 1979, ES-7/2 of 29 July 1980, 35/169 of 15 December 1980, 36/120 of 10 December 1981, ES-7/4 of 28 April 1982, ES-7/5 of 26 June 1982 and ES-7/9 of 24 September 1982,

Having considered the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People,⁶⁸

1. *Expresses its appreciation* to the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for its efforts in performing the tasks assigned to it by the General Assembly;

2. *Endorses* the recommendations of the Committee contained in paragraphs 114 to 119 of its report and draws the attention of the Security Council to the fact that action on the Committee's recommendations, as endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 31/20, is long overdue;

3. *Requests* the Committee to keep the situation relating to the question of Palestine under review and to report and make suggestions to the General Assembly or the Security Council, as appropriate;

4. *Authorizes* the Committee to continue to exert all efforts to promote the implementation of its recommendations, to send delegations or representatives to international conferences where such representation would be considered by it to be appropriate, and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its thirty-eighth session and thereafter;

5. *Requests* the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine, established under General Assembly resolution 194 (III) of 11 December 1948, as well as other United Nations bodies associated with the question of Palestine, to co-operate fully with the Committee and to make available to it, at its request, the relevant information and documentation which they have at their disposal;

⁶⁸ Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/37/35 and Corr.1).

6. *Decides* to circulate the report of the Committee to all the competent bodies of the United Nations and urges them to take the necessary action, as appropriate, in accordance with the Committee's programme of implementation;

7. Requests the Secretary-General to continue to provide the Committee with all the necessary facilities for the performance of its tasks.

99th plenary meeting
10 December 1982

B

The General Assembly,

Having considered the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People,⁶⁸

Noting, in particular, the information contained in paragraphs 103 to 111 of that report,

Recalling its resolutions 32/40 B of 2 December 1977, 33/28 C of 7 December 1978, 34/65 D of 12 December 1979, 35/169 D of 15 December 1980 and 36/120 B of 10 December 1981,

1. *Takes note with appreciation* of the action taken by the Secretary-General in compliance with General Assembly resolution 36/120 B;

2. *Requests* the Secretary-General to ensure that the Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat continues to discharge the tasks detailed in paragraph 1 of General Assembly resolution 32/40 B, paragraph 2 (b) of resolution 34/65 D and paragraph 3 of resolution 36/120 B, in consultation with the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and under its guidance;

3. *Also requests* the Secretary-General to provide the Division for Palestinian Rights with the necessary resources to carry out its tasks as urged in paragraph 109 of the Committee's report;

4. *Further requests* the Secretary-General to ensure the continued co-operation of the Department of Public Information and other units of the Secretariat in enabling the Division for Palestinian Rights to perform its tasks and in covering adequately the various aspects of the question of Palestine;

5. *Invites* all Governments and organizations to lend their co-operation to the Committee and the Division for Palestinian Rights in the performance of their tasks;

6. *Takes note with appreciation* of the action taken by Member States to observe annually on 29 November the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People and the issuance by them of special postage stamps for the occasion.

99th plenary meeting
10 December 1982

C

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 3236 (XXIX) and 3237 (XXIX) of 22 November 1974 and all other United Nations resolutions, including resolution ES-7/2 of 29 July 1980, pertinent to the question of Palestine,

Recalling also its resolutions 36/120 C of 10 December 1981, in which it decided to convene an International Conference on the Question of Palestine for a comprehensive effort to seek effective ways and means to enable the Palestinian people to attain and to exercise their rights, and ES-7/7 of 19 August 1982, in which it decided to convene

the Conference at the headquarters of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, in Paris, from 16 to 27 August 1983,

Convinced that a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East can be established, in accordance with the Charter and the relevant resolutions of the United Nations, through a just solution to the problem of Palestine on the basis of the attainment of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people,

Convinced that the Conference will provide a unique opportunity to heighten awareness of the underlying causes of the question of Palestine and to contribute actively and constructively to a solution of the question on the basis of relevant United Nations resolutions,

Stressing the need to assure the participation of all Member States in the Conference and their support for its preparation,

Taking note with appreciation of the report of the Preparatory Committee for the International Conference on the Question of Palestine,⁶⁹

1. *Reiterates* the responsibility of the United Nations to strive for a lasting peace in the Middle East through a just solution of the problem of Palestine;

2. *Endorses* the recommendations of the Preparatory Committee for the International Conference on the Question of Palestine, contained in paragraph 32 of its report,⁶⁹ concerning the preparatory activities for the Conference, the objectives, the documentation, the draft provisional agenda and the draft provisional rules of procedure of the Conference, the participation in the Conference and the organization of work of the Preparatory Committee;

3. *Calls upon* all organizations of the United Nations system to continue to extend their fullest support to the Conference and to its preparation;

4. *Urges* all Member States to promote heightened awareness of the importance of the Conference and to intensify preparations at the national, subregional and regional levels in order to ensure its success;

5. *Calls upon* all Member States to contribute to the achievement of Palestinian rights and to support modalities for their implementation, and to participate in the Conference and the regional preparatory meetings preceding it;

6. *Decides* to consider the results of the Conference at its thirty-eighth session.

99th plenary meeting
10 December 1982

D

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions relevant to the question of Palestine, in particular resolutions 181 (II) of 29 November 1947, 194 (III) of 11 December 1948, 3210 (XXIX) of 14 October 1974, 3236 (XXIX) of 22 November 1974 and ES-7/2 of 29 July 1980,

Recalling the resolutions of the Security Council relevant to Palestine,

Having heard the statement of the representative of the Palestine Liberation Organization,⁷⁰

1. *Takes note* of the declaration of the Palestine Liberation Organization of 19 April 1981 of its intention to pursue its role in the solution of the question of Palestine

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, Supplement No. 49 (A/37/49 and Corr.1).

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, Thirty-seventh Session, Plenary Meetings, 84th meeting, paras. 110-153.

on the basis of the attainment by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights in Palestine, in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the United Nations;

2. *Reaffirms* the principle of the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force;

3. *Reaffirms once again* that a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East cannot be established without the unconditional withdrawal of Israel from the Palestinian and the other Arab territories occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, and without the exercise and attainment by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights in Palestine, in accordance with the principles of the Charter and the relevant resolutions of the United Nations;

4. *Requests* the Security Council to discharge its responsibilities under the Charter and recognize the inalienable rights of the Palestinian Arab people, including the right to self-determination and the right to establish its independent Arab State in Palestine;

5. *Reiterates* its request that the Security Council take the necessary measures, in execution of the relevant United Nations resolutions, to implement the plan which, *inter alia*, recommends that an independent Arab State shall come into existence in Palestine;

6. *Requests* the Secretary-General to report on the progress made in implementing the present resolution as soon as possible

99th plenary meeting
10 December 1982

E

The General Assembly,

Having considered the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People,⁶⁸

Expressing its extreme concern that no just solution to the problem of Palestine has been achieved and that this problem therefore continues to aggravate the Middle East conflict, of which it is the core, and to endanger international peace and security,

Recalling its previous relevant resolutions, particularly resolutions 181 (II) of 29 November 1947, 194 (III) of 11 December 1948, 3236 (XXIX) of 22 November 1974, ES-7/2 of 29 July 1980, 36/120 D of 10 December 1981 and ES-7/9 of 24 September 1982,

Recalling, in particular, the principles relevant to the question of Palestine that have been accepted by the international community, including the right of all States in the region to existence within internationally recognized boundaries, and justice and security for all the peoples, which requires recognition and attainment of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people,

Recognizing the necessity of participation by all parties concerned in any efforts aimed at the attainment of a just and lasting solution,

1. *Reaffirms* the inalienable legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, including the right to self-determination and the right to establish, once it so wishes, its independent State in Palestine;

2. *Declares* all Israeli policies and practices of, or aimed at, annexation of the occupied Palestinian and other Arab territories, including Jerusalem, to be in violation of international law and of the relevant United Nations resolutions;

3. *Demands*, in conformity with the fundamental principle of the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force, that Israel should withdraw completely and unconditionally from all the Palestinian and other Arab territories occupied since June 1967, including Jerusalem, with all property and services intact;

4. *Urges* the Security Council to facilitate the process of Israeli withdrawal;

5. *Recommends* that, following the withdrawal of Israel from the occupied Palestinian territories, those territories should be subjected to a short transitional period under the supervision of the United Nations, during which period the Palestinian people would exercise its right to self-determination;

6. *Urgently calls* for the achievement of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace, based on the resolutions of the United Nations and under its auspices, in which all parties concerned, including the Palestine Liberation Organization, the representative of the Palestinian people, participate on an equal footing;

7. *Recommends* that the Security Council should take early action to promote a just and comprehensive solution to the question of Palestine;

8. *Requests* the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its thirty-eighth session on the progress made in implementing the present resolution.

112th plenary meeting
20 December 1982

37/101. Invasion of Lesotho by South Africa

The General Assembly,

Having learned of the invasion of Lesotho by South Africa on 9 December 1982, resulting in the loss of innocent lives and the destruction of property,

Noting with deep concern the continued acts of aggression by South Africa against Lesotho and other neighbouring independent African States in complete disregard of resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council,

Grieved at the tragic loss of human life and concerned about the damage and destruction of property resulting from the invasion of Lesotho by South Africa,

Convinced that international solidarity with Lesotho, as a neighbouring State of South Africa, is essential to counteract effectively South Africa's policy of coercing its neighbours into not opposing its policy of *apartheid* and not giving sanctuary to South African refugees,

1. *Condemns* South Africa for its unprovoked invasion of Lesotho, resulting in the loss of innocent lives and the destruction of property;

2. *Commends* the Government of Lesotho for its opposition to the *apartheid* policy of the racist régime of South Africa and for the sanctuary it is giving to South African refugees;

3. *Urges* the Security Council to take immediate steps to deter South Africa from repeating its acts of aggression against and destabilization of Lesotho and other neighbouring independent African States.

103rd plenary meeting
14 December 1982

37/123. The situation in the Middle East

A

The General Assembly,

Having discussed the item entitled "The situation in the Middle East",

Taking note of the reports of the Secretary-General,⁷¹

⁷¹ A/37/169 and Add.1-3-S/14953 and Add.1-3. For the printed text, see *Official Records of the Security Council, Thirty-seventh Year, Supplement for April, May and June 1982*, documents S/14953 and Add.1; and *ibid.*, *Supplement for October, November and December 1982*, documents S/14953/Add.2 and 3.

respect of all other United Nations instruments on human rights:

4. *Urges* the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, in co-operation with Governments, to undertake rigorous efforts to spread the teaching of human rights in all educational institutions, particularly primary and secondary schools, as well as in the training of relevant professional groups and requests the Director-General of that organization to submit to the General Assembly at its forty-third session, on the occasion of the fortieth anniversary of the Declaration, a report on the efforts made by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization to those ends.

91st plenary meeting
9 December 1983

38/58. Question of Palestine

A

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 3376 (XXX) of 10 November 1975, 31/20 of 24 November 1976, 32/40 of 2 December 1977, 33/28 of 7 December 1978, 34/65 A and B of 29 November 1979 and 34/65 C and D of 12 December 1979, ES-7/2 of 29 July 1980, 35/169 of 15 December 1980, 36/120 of 10 December 1981, ES-7/4 of 28 April 1982, ES-7/5 of 26 June 1982, ES-7/9 of 24 September 1982 and 37/86 A of 10 December 1982,

Having considered the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People,¹⁰⁰

1. *Expresses its appreciation* to the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for its efforts in performing the tasks assigned to it by the General Assembly;

2. *Endorses* the recommendations of the Committee contained in paragraphs 94 to 98 of its report and draws the attention of the Security Council to the fact that action on the Committee's recommendations, as repeatedly endorsed by the General Assembly, at its thirty-first session and subsequently, is long overdue;

3. *Requests* the Committee to keep under review the situation relating to the question of Palestine as well as the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Achievement of Palestinian Rights¹⁰¹ adopted by the International Conference on the Question of Palestine and to report and make suggestions to the General Assembly or the Security Council, as appropriate;

4. *Requests* the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine, established under General Assembly resolution 194 (III) of 11 December 1948, as well as other United Nations bodies associated with the question of Palestine, to co-operate fully with the Committee and to make available to it, at its request, the relevant information and documentation which they have at their disposal;

5. *Authorizes* the Committee to continue to exert all efforts to promote the implementation of its recommendations, to send delegations or representatives to international conferences where such representation would be considered by it to be appropriate, and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its thirty-ninth session and thereafter;

¹⁰⁰ Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/38/35).

6. *Decides* to circulate the report of the Committee to all the competent bodies of the United Nations and urges them to take the necessary action, as appropriate, in accordance with the Committee's programme of implementation;

7. *Requests* the Secretary-General to continue to provide the Committee with all the necessary facilities for the performance of its tasks.

95th plenary meeting
13 December 1983

B

The General Assembly,

Having considered the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People,¹⁰⁰

Noting, in particular, the information contained in paragraphs 86 to 91 of that report,

Recalling its resolutions 32/40 B of 2 December 1977, 33/28 C of 7 December 1978, 34/65 D of 12 December 1979, 35/169 D of 15 December 1980, 36/120 B of 10 December 1981 and 37/86 B of 10 December 1982,

1. *Notes with appreciation* the action taken by the Secretary-General in compliance with General Assembly resolution 37/86 B:

2. *Requests* the Secretary-General to ensure that the Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat continues to discharge the tasks detailed in paragraph 1 of General Assembly resolution 32/40 B, paragraph 2 (b) of resolution 34/65 D and paragraph 3 of resolution 36/120 B, in consultation with the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and under its guidance;

3. *Also requests* the Secretary-General to provide the Division for Palestinian Rights with the necessary resources to accomplish its tasks and to expand its work programme, *inter alia*, through:

(a) Closer contacts with the media and wider dissemination of the Division's information material, particularly where information on the question of Palestine is inadequate;

(b) Increased contacts with non-governmental organizations and the convening of symposia and meetings for non-governmental organizations in different regions in order to heighten awareness of the facts relating to the question of Palestine;

4. *Further requests* the Secretary-General to ensure the continued co-operation of the Department of Public Information and other units of the Secretariat in enabling the Division for Palestinian Rights to perform its tasks and in covering adequately the various aspects of the question of Palestine;

5. *Invites* all Governments and organizations to lend their co-operation to the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and the Division for Palestinian Rights in the performance of their tasks;

6. *Notes with appreciation* the action taken by Member States to observe annually on 29 November the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People and

¹⁰¹ Report of the International Conference on the Question of Palestine, Geneva, 29 August-7 September 1983 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.83.L.21), chap. I, sect. B.

the issuance by them of special postage stamps for the occasion.

*95th plenary meeting
13 December 1983*

C

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 36/120 C of 10 December 1981, in which it decided to convene, under the auspices of the United Nations, an International Conference on the Question of Palestine on the basis of its resolution ES-7/2 of 29 July 1980,

Recalling also its resolution 37/86 C of 10 December 1982 in which it, *inter alia*, reiterated the responsibility of the United Nations to strive for a lasting peace in the Middle East through a just solution of the problem of Palestine,

Having considered the report of the International Conference on the Question of Palestine,¹⁰² held at Geneva from 29 August to 7 September 1983,

Convinced that the Conference, in adopting by acclamation the Geneva Declaration on Palestine¹⁰³ and the Programme of Action for the Achievement of Palestinian Rights,¹⁰¹ made an important and positive contribution to the attainment of a comprehensive, just and durable peace in the Middle East through a just solution of the problem of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict,

Conscious of the importance of the time factor in achieving a just solution of the problem of Palestine,

1. Takes note with satisfaction of the report of the International Conference on the Question of Palestine;

2. Endorses the Geneva Declaration on Palestine, adopted by acclamation on 7 September 1983;

3. Welcomes and endorses the call for convening an International Peace Conference on the Middle East in conformity with the following guidelines:

(a) The attainment by the Palestinian people of its legitimate inalienable rights, including the right to return, the right to self-determination and the right to establish its own independent State in Palestine;

(b) The right of the Palestine Liberation Organization, the representative of the Palestinian people, to participate on an equal footing with other parties in all efforts, deliberations and conferences on the Middle East;

(c) The need to put an end to Israel's occupation of the Arab territories, in accordance with the principle of the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force, and, consequently, the need to secure Israeli withdrawal from the territories occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem;

(d) The need to oppose and reject such Israeli policies and practices in the occupied territories, including Jerusalem, and any *de facto* situation created by Israel as are contrary to international law and relevant United Nations resolutions, particularly the establishment of settlements, as these policies and practices constitute major obstacles to the achievement of peace in the Middle East;

(e) The need to reaffirm as null and void all legislative and administrative measures and actions taken by Israel, the occupying Power, which have altered or purported to alter the character and status of the Holy City of Jerusalem, including the expropriation of land and property situated thereon, and in particular the so-called "Basic Law"

on Jerusalem and the proclamation of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel:

(f) The right of all States in the region to existence within secure and internationally recognized boundaries, with justice and security for all the people, the *sine qua non* of which is the recognition and attainment of the legitimate, inalienable rights of the Palestinian people as stated in subparagraph (a) above:

4. Invites all parties to the Arab-Israeli conflict, including the Palestine Liberation Organization, as well as the United States of America, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and other concerned States, to participate in the International Peace Conference on the Middle East on an equal footing and with equal rights;

5. Requests the Secretary-General, in consultation with the Security Council, urgently to undertake preparatory measures to convene the Conference;

6. Invites the Security Council to facilitate the organization of the Conference;

7. Also requests the Secretary-General to report on his efforts no later than 15 March 1984;

8. Decides to consider at its thirty-ninth session the report of the Secretary-General on the Conference.

*95th plenary meeting
13 December 1983*

D

The General Assembly,

Having considered the report of the International Conference on the Question of Palestine,¹⁰² held at Geneva from 29 August to 7 September 1983,

Taking note of the Programme of Action for the Achievement of Palestinian Rights,¹⁰¹

Bearing in mind its resolution 38/145 of 19 December 1983 on assistance to the Palestinian people,

Urges the meeting of specialized agencies and other organizations of the United Nations system to be convened in 1984, referred to in General Assembly resolution 38/145, to take into account the recommendations of the five regional preparatory meetings of the International Conference on the Question of Palestine¹⁰⁴ and the United Nations resolutions concerning economic and social assistance to the Palestinian people in developing a co-ordinated programme of economic and social assistance to the Palestinian people, and to ensure the implementation of that programme.

*95th plenary meeting
13 December 1983*

E

The General Assembly,

Having considered the report of the International Conference on the Question of Palestine,¹⁰² held at Geneva from 29 August to 7 September 1983,

Convinced that the world-wide dissemination of accurate and comprehensive information and the role of non-governmental organizations and institutions remain of vital importance in heightening awareness of and support for the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to self-

¹⁰² United Nations publication, Sales No. E.83.L.21.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, chap. I, sect. A.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, chap. II, paras. 10 and 11.

determination and to the establishment of an independent sovereign Palestinian State.

Requests that the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat, in full co-operation and co-ordination with the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, should:

- (a) Disseminate all information on the activities of the United Nations system relating to Palestine;
- (b) Expand publications and audio-visual coverage of the facts and developments pertaining to the question of Palestine;
- (c) Publish newsletters and articles in its relevant publications on Israeli violations of the human rights of the Arab inhabitants of the occupied territories, and organize fact-finding missions to the area for journalists;
- (d) Organize regional encounters for journalists;
- (e) Disseminate appropriate information on the results of the International Conference on the Question of Palestine.

*95th plenary meeting
13 December 1983*

38/59. Third United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea

A

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 37/66 of 3 December 1982 regarding the Third United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea,

Noting that the Conference was concluded at Montego Bay, Jamaica, on 10 December 1982, that the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea¹⁰⁵ was opened for signature and that one hundred and nineteen signatures were affixed to it on that date,

Taking further note of the increasing and overwhelming support for the Convention, as evidenced, *inter alia*, by the one hundred and thirty-two signatures and nine ratifications by States and by the United Nations Council for Namibia, on behalf of Namibia, as at 31 October 1983,

Concerned at any attempt to undermine the Convention and its related resolutions,¹⁰⁶

Recognizing that, as stated in the third preambular paragraph of the Convention, the problems of ocean space are closely interrelated and need to be considered as a whole.

Convinced that it is important to safeguard the unified character of the Convention and its related resolutions and to refrain from any action to apply their provisions selectively, in a manner inconsistent with their objectives and purposes,

Noting the increasing needs of countries, especially developing countries, for information, advice and assistance in their developmental process for the full realization of the benefits of the comprehensive legal régime established by the Convention, as also recognized by the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 1983/48 of 28 July 1983,

Recalling that the Convention provides that the seat of the International Sea-Bed Authority shall be in Jamaica and the seat of the International Tribunal for the Law of

the Sea shall be at Hamburg, Federal Republic of Germany,

Recalling also that in paragraph 12 of Conference resolution I of 30 April 1982,¹⁰⁶ establishing the Preparatory Commission for the International Sea-Bed Authority and for the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea, it is expressly provided that the Commission shall meet at the seat of the Authority if facilities are available and as often as necessary for the expeditious exercise of its functions.

Noting also that the Preparatory Commission held its first session at Kingston, at which it elected its Bureau, concluded the elaboration of its organizational framework by allocating functions between the Plenary and Special Commissions and requested the secretariat to prepare background information and working papers in respect of the work allocated to these organs, and decided, *inter alia*, to hold its next regular session at Kingston from 19 March to 13 April 1984 and a session for its working groups during the summer of 1984, in New York or Geneva, as it may decide.¹⁰⁷

Recalling its approval of the assumption by the Secretary-General of the responsibilities entrusted to him under the Convention and its related resolutions and the approval of the stationing of an adequate number of secretariat staff in Jamaica for the purpose of servicing the Preparatory Commission, as required by its functions and programme of work,

Taking note also of the major programme on marine affairs, set forth in chapter 25 of the medium-term plan for the period 1984-1989,¹⁰⁸

Recalling the extensive functions entrusted to the Preparatory Commission, including the administration of the scheme governing preparatory investments in pioneer activities relating to polymetallic nodules.

Recalling its approval of the financing of the expenses of the Preparatory Commission from the regular budget of the United Nations,

Taking special note of the report of the Secretary-General¹⁰⁹ prepared in response to paragraph 10 of General Assembly resolution 37/66.

1. *Recalls* the historic significance of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea as an important contribution to the maintenance of peace, justice and progress for all peoples of the world;

2. *Expresses its satisfaction* at the large number of signatures affixed to the Convention as well as at the number of ratifications deposited with the Secretary-General during the year following the opening of the Convention for signature;

3. *Calls upon* States that have not done so to consider signing and ratifying the Convention at the earliest possible date to allow the effective entry into force of the new legal régime for the uses of the sea and its resources;

4. *Calls upon* all States to safeguard the unified character of the Convention and its related resolutions;

5. *Appeals* to all States to refrain from taking any action directed at undermining the Convention or defeating its objectives and purposes;

6. *Requests* the Secretary-General to accord due consideration to the activities outlined in his report, special emphasis being placed on the work of the Preparatory Commission for the International Sea-Bed Authority and for the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea:

¹⁰⁵ *Official Records of the Third United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea*, vol. XVII (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.84.V.2), document A/CONF.62/122.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, document A/CONF.62/121, annex I.

¹⁰⁷ See A/38/570 and Corr.1, sect. IV.

¹⁰⁸ *Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 6A (A/37/6 Add.1), annex II.*

¹⁰⁹ A/38/570 and Corr.1 and Add.1 and Add.1-Corr.1.

tion of African Unity, and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its fortieth session;

6. *Decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its fortieth session the item entitled "Question of the Comorian island of Mayotte".

94th plenary meeting
11 December 1984

39/49. Question of Palestine

A

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 3376 (XXX) of 10 November 1975, 31/20 of 24 November 1976, 32/40 of 2 December 1977, 33/28 of 7 December 1978, 34/65 A and B of 29 November 1979 and 34/65 C and D of 12 December 1980, 36/120 of 10 December 1981, ES-7/4 of 28 April 1982, ES-7/5 of 26 June 1982, ES-7/9 of 24 September 1982, 37/86 A of 10 December 1982 and 38/58 A of 13 December 1983,

Having considered the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People,⁵³

1. *Expresses its appreciation* to the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for its efforts in performing the tasks assigned to it by the General Assembly;

2. *Endorses* the recommendations of the Committee contained in paragraphs 155 to 160 of its report and draws the attention of the Security Council to the fact that action on the Committee's recommendations, as repeatedly endorsed by the General Assembly at its thirty-first session and subsequently, is still awaited;

3. *Requests* the Committee to continue to keep under review the situation relating to the question of Palestine as well as the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Achievement of Palestinian Rights⁵⁴ adopted by the International Conference on the Question of Palestine and to report and make suggestions to the General Assembly or the Security Council, as appropriate;

4. *Authorizes* the Committee to continue to exert all efforts to promote the implementation of its recommendations, to send delegations or representatives to international conferences where such representation would be considered by it to be appropriate, and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its fortieth session and thereafter;

5. *Requests* the Committee to continue to extend its co-operation to non-governmental organizations in their contribution towards heightening international awareness of the facts relating to the question of Palestine;

6. *Requests* the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine, established under General Assembly resolution 194 (III) of 11 December 1948, as well as other United Nations bodies associated with the question of Palestine, to co-operate fully with the Committee and to make available to it, at its request, the relevant information and documentation which they have at their disposal;

7. *Decides* to circulate the report of the Committee to all the competent bodies of the United Nations and urges them to take the necessary action, as appropriate, in accordance with the Committee's programme of implementation;

8. *Requests* the Secretary-General to continue to provide the Committee with all the necessary facilities for the performance of its tasks.

95th plenary meeting
11 December 1984

B

The General Assembly,

Having considered the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People,⁵³

Noting the particularly relevant information contained in paragraphs 125 to 132 of that report,

Recalling its resolutions 32/40 B of 2 December 1977, 33/28 C of 7 December 1978, 34/65 D of 12 December 1979, 35/169 D of 15 December 1980, 36/120 B of 10 December 1981, 37/86 B of 10 December 1982 and 38/58 B of 13 December 1983,

1. *Notes with appreciation* the action taken by the Secretary-General in compliance with General Assembly resolution 38/58 B;

2. *Requests* the Secretary-General to ensure that the Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat continues to discharge the tasks detailed in paragraph 1 of General Assembly resolution 32/40 B, paragraph 2 (b) of resolution 34/65 D, paragraph 3 of resolution 36/120 B and paragraphs 2 and 3 of resolution 38/58 B, in consultation with the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and under its guidance;

3. *Also requests* the Secretary-General to ensure the continued co-operation of the Department of Public Information and other units of the Secretariat in enabling the Division for Palestinian Rights to perform its tasks and in covering adequately the various aspects of the question of Palestine;

4. *Invites* all Governments and organizations to lend their co-operation to the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and the Division for Palestinian Rights in the performance of their tasks;

5. *Notes with appreciation* the action taken by Member States to observe annually on 29 November the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People and the issuance by them of special postage stamps for the occasion.

95th plenary meeting
11 December 1984

C

The General Assembly,

Having considered the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People,⁵³

Noting, in particular, the information contained in paragraphs 133 to 142 of that report,

Recalling its resolution 38/58 E of 13 December 1983,

Convinced that the world-wide dissemination of accurate and comprehensive information and the role of non-governmental organizations and institutions remain of

⁵³ Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/39/35).

⁵⁴ Report of the International Conference on the Question of Palestine, Geneva, 29 August-7 September 1983 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.83.I.21), chap. I, sect. B.

vital importance in heightening awareness of and support for the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination and to the establishment of an independent sovereign Palestinian State,

1. *Notes with appreciation* the action taken by the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat in compliance with General Assembly resolution 38/58 E;

2. *Requests* that the Department of Public Information, in full co-operation and co-ordination with the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, should:

(a) Continue the implementation of all parts of General Assembly resolution 38/58 E;

(b) Disseminate all information on the activities of the United Nations system relating to Palestine;

(c) Expand and update publications and audio-visual material on the facts and developments pertaining to the question of Palestine;

(d) Publish newsletters and articles in its relevant publications on Israeli violations of the human rights of the Arab inhabitants of the occupied territories;

(e) Organize fact-finding missions to the area for journalists;

(f) Organize regional and national encounters for journalists.

95th plenary meeting
11 December 1984

D

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 38/58 C of 13 December 1984, in which it, *inter alia*, endorsed the convening of an International Peace Conference on the Middle East,

Reaffirming paragraph 5 of its resolution 38/58 C, in which it requested the Secretary-General to undertake preparatory measures to convene the Conference,

Having considered the reports of the Secretary-General of 13 March 1984⁵⁵ and 13 September 1984,⁵⁶ in which he stated that, *inter alia*, "it is clear from the replies of the Governments of Israel and the United States of America that they are not prepared to participate in the proposed Conference",⁵⁷

Reiterating its conviction that the convening of the Conference would constitute a major contribution by the United Nations towards the achievement of a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict,

1. *Takes note* of the reports of the Secretary-General;

2. *Reaffirms* its endorsement of the call for convening the International Peace Conference on the Middle East in conformity with the provisions of General Assembly resolution 38/58 C;

3. *Expresses its regret* at the negative response of the two Governments and calls upon them to reconsider their position towards the Conference;

4. *Urges* all Governments to make additional constructive efforts and to strengthen their political will in

order to convene the Conference without delay and for the achievement of its peaceful objectives;

5. *Requests* the Secretary-General, in consultation with the Security Council, to continue his efforts with a view to convening the Conference and to report thereon to the General Assembly not later than 15 March 1985;⁵⁸

6. *Decides* to consider at its fortieth session the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the present resolution.

95th plenary meeting
11 December 1984

39/50. Question of Namibia

A

SITUATION IN NAMIBIA RESULTING FROM THE ILLEGAL OCCUPATION OF THE TERRITORY BY SOUTH AFRICA

The General Assembly,

Having examined the report of the United Nations Council for Namibia⁵⁹ and the relevant chapters of the report of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples,⁶⁰

Recalling its resolution 1514 (XV) of 14 December 1960, containing the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples,

Recalling, in particular, its resolutions 2145 (XXI) of 27 October 1966 and 2248 (S-V) of 19 May 1967 and subsequent resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council relating to Namibia, as well as the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice of 21 June 1971,⁶¹ delivered in response to the request addressed to it by the Security Council in its resolution 284 (1970) of 29 July 1970,

Recalling also its resolutions 3111 (XXVIII) of 12 December 1973 and 31/146 and 31/152 of 20 December 1976, by which it, *inter alia*, recognized the South West Africa People's Organization as the sole and authentic representative of the Namibian people and granted observer status to it,

Recalling further its resolutions ES-8/2 of 14 September 1981 and 36/121 B of 10 December 1981, by which it called upon States to cease forthwith, individually and collectively, all dealings with South Africa in order totally to isolate it politically, economically, militarily and culturally,

Taking note of Security Council resolutions 532 (1983) of 31 May 1983 and 539 (1983) of 28 October 1983,

Noting also the Final Communiqué of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting, held at New Delhi from 23 to 29 November 1983,⁶² the resolution on Namibia adopted by the Council of Ministers of the Organization of African Unity at its fortieth ordinary session, held at Addis Ababa from 27 February to 5 March 1984,⁶³ the Final Communiqué of the Summit Meeting of the Front-line States, held at Arusha, United Republic of

⁵⁵ A/39/130-S/16409. For the printed text, see *Official Records of the Security Council, Thirty-ninth Year, Supplement for January, February and March 1984*, document S/16409.

⁵⁶ A/39/130/Add.1-S/16409/Add.1. For the printed text, see *Official Records of the Security Council, Thirty-ninth Year, Supplement for July, August and September 1984*, document S/16409/Add.1.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, para. 4.

⁵⁸ The report was issued under the symbol A/40/168-S/17014. For the printed text, see *Official Records of the Security Council, Fortieth Year, Supplement for January, February and March 1985*, document S/17014.

⁵⁹ *Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 24 (A/39/24)*.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, Supplement No. 23 (A/39/23).

⁶¹ *Legal Consequences for States of the Continued Presence of South Africa in Namibia (South West Africa) notwithstanding Security Council Resolution 276 (1970)*, Advisory Opinion, I.C.J. Reports, 1971, p. 16.

⁶² See A/38/707-S/16206, annex.

⁶³ A/39/207, annex, resolution CM/Res.934 (XL).

5 December 1980, 36/78 of 9 December 1981, 37/167 of 17 December 1982, 38/60 of 14 December 1983 and 39/74 of 13 December 1984,

Noting that the Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference for the Promotion of International Co-operation in the Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy at its sixth session decided to establish a Working Group to carry out formal/official inter-sessional intergovernmental work under the guidance of the Chairman of the Committee, participation being open to members of the Preparatory Committee and to other interested Member States, and that the Working Group will conclude its deliberations in time to submit its report to the Preparatory Committee for consideration at its seventh session to be held at Vienna from 10 to 21 November 1986,⁷³

Noting further that the Preparatory Committee, upon reconsideration of the dates of the Conference on practical considerations and on the understanding that this did not constitute a reopening of the question of timing in any substantive sense, decided that the Conference should be held at Geneva from 23 March to 10 April 1987,⁷⁴

1. *Approves* the conclusions and decisions contained in the report of the Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference for the Promotion of International Co-operation in the Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy on its sixth session, including the dates for the seventh session of the Preparatory Committee, from 10 to 21 November 1986, and the new dates of the Conference, from 23 March to 10 April 1987;

2. *Expresses its appreciation* for the efforts of the Chairman of the Preparatory Committee and the Secretary-General of the Conference in pursuance of paragraph 3 of General Assembly resolution 39/74;

3. *Notes with satisfaction* the progress made in the preparations for the Conference and requests the Secretary-General of the Conference to continue with the preparations;

4. *Invites* the International Atomic Energy Agency, the specialized agencies and other relevant organizations of the United Nations system to contribute further to the preparations of the Conference by revising and updating, as necessary and appropriate, their input documents for the Conference, bearing in mind paragraph 7 of General Assembly resolution 39/74 and in the light of the comments by the members of the Preparatory Committee at its sixth session;

5. *Invites* all States to co-operate actively in the preparations for the Conference and to make available at the earliest the information requested in paragraph 9 of General Assembly resolution 36/78 and in the broad questionnaire circulated by the Secretary-General of the Conference in March 1984;

6. *Decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its forty-first session the item entitled "United Nations Conference for the Promotion of International Co-operation in the Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy".

*114th plenary meeting
12 December 1985*

⁷³ See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fortieth Session, Supplement No. 47 (A/40/47)*, para. 25.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, para. 41.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, Supplement No. 35 (A/40/35).

40/96. Question of Palestine

A

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 3376 (XXX) of 10 November 1975, 31/20 of 24 November 1976, 32/40 of 2 December 1977, 33/28 of 7 December 1978, 34/65 A and B of 29 November 1979 and 34/65 C and D of 12 December 1979, ES-7/2 of 29 July 1980, 35/169 of 15 December 1980, 36/120 of 10 December 1981, ES-7/4 of 28 April 1982, ES-7/5 of 26 June 1982, ES-7/9 of 24 September 1982, 37/86 A of 10 December 1982, 38/58 A of 13 December 1983 and 39/49 A of 11 December 1984,

Having considered the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People,⁷⁵

1. *Expresses its appreciation* to the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for its efforts in performing the tasks assigned to it by the General Assembly;

2. *Endorses* the recommendations contained in paragraphs 163 to 172 of the report of the Committee⁷⁵ and draws the attention of the Security Council to the fact that action on the Committee's recommendations, as repeatedly endorsed by the General Assembly at its thirty-first session and subsequently, is still awaited;

3. *Requests* the Committee to continue to keep under review the situation relating to the question of Palestine as well as the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Achievement of Palestinian Rights⁷⁶ and to report and make suggestions to the General Assembly or the Security Council, as appropriate;

4. *Authorizes* the Committee to continue to exert all efforts to promote the implementation of its recommendations, including representation at conferences and meetings and the sending of delegations where such activities would be considered by it to be appropriate, and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its forty-first session and thereafter;

5. *Requests* the Committee to continue to extend its co-operation to non-governmental organizations in their contribution towards heightening international awareness of the facts relating to the question of Palestine and in creating a more favourable atmosphere for the full implementation of the Committee's recommendations, and to take the necessary steps to expand its contacts with those organizations;

6. *Requests* the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine, established under General Assembly resolution 194 (III) of 11 December 1948, as well as other United Nations bodies associated with the question of Palestine, to co-operate fully with the Committee and to make available to it, at its request, the relevant information and documentation which they have at their disposal;

7. *Decides* to circulate the report of the Committee to all the competent bodies of the United Nations and urges them to take the necessary action, as appropriate, in accordance with the Committee's programme of implementation;

⁷⁶ *Report of the International Conference on the Question of Palestine, Geneva, 29 August-7 September 1983* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.83.L.21), chap. I, sect. B

8. *Requests* the Secretary-General to continue to provide the Committee with all the necessary facilities for the performance of its tasks.

*114th plenary meeting
12 December 1985*

B

The General Assembly,

Having considered the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People,⁷⁵

Noting the particularly relevant information contained in paragraphs 135 to 150 of that report,

Recalling its resolutions 32/40 B of 2 December 1977, 33/28 C of 7 December 1978, 34/65 D of 12 December 1979, 35/169 D of 15 December 1980, 36/120 B of 10 December 1981, 37/86 B of 10 December 1982, 38/58 B of 13 December 1983 and 39/49 B of 11 December 1984,

1. *Takes note with appreciation* of the action taken by the Secretary-General in compliance with General Assembly resolution 39/49 B;

2. *Requests* the Secretary-General to ensure that the Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat continues to discharge the tasks detailed in paragraph 1 of General Assembly resolution 32/40 B, paragraph 2 (b) of resolution 34/65 D, paragraph 3 of resolution 36/120 B and paragraphs 2 and 3 of resolution 38/58 B, in consultation with the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and under its guidance;

3. *Also requests* the Secretary-General to provide the Division for Palestinian Rights with the necessary resources to accomplish its tasks and to expand its work programme, particularly through additional meetings for non-governmental organizations, in order to heighten awareness of the facts relating to the question of Palestine and to create a more favourable atmosphere for the full implementation of the recommendations of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People;

4. *Further requests* the Secretary-General to ensure the continued co-operation of the Department of Public Information and other units of the Secretariat in enabling the Division for Palestinian Rights to perform its tasks and in covering adequately the various aspects of the question of Palestine;

5. *Invites* all Governments and organizations to lend their co-operation to the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and the Division for Palestinian Rights in the performance of their tasks;

6. *Takes note with appreciation* of the action taken by Member States to observe annually on 29 November the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People and the issuance by them of special postage stamps for the occasion.

*114th plenary meeting
12 December 1985*

C

The General Assembly,

Having considered the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People,⁷⁵

Noting, in particular, the information contained in paragraphs 151 to 162 of that report,

Recalling its resolutions 38/58 E of 13 December 1983 and 39/49 C of 11 December 1984,

Convinced that the world-wide dissemination of accurate and comprehensive information and the role of non-governmental organizations and institutions remain of vital importance in heightening awareness of and support for the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination and to the establishment of an independent sovereign Palestinian State,

1. *Takes note with appreciation* of the action taken by the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat in compliance with General Assembly resolutions 38/58 E and 39/49 C;

2. *Requests* the Department of Public Information, in full co-operation and co-ordination with the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, to continue its special information programme on the question of Palestine for the biennium 1986-1987 and, in particular:

(a) To disseminate information on all the activities of the United Nations system relating to the question of Palestine;

(b) To continue to update publications on the facts and developments pertaining to the question of Palestine;

(c) To publish brochures and booklets on the various aspects of the question of Palestine, including Israeli violations of the human rights of the Arab inhabitants of the occupied territories;

(d) To expand its audio-visual material on the question of Palestine, including the production of a new film, special series of radio programmes and television broadcasts;

(e) To organize fact-finding news missions to the area for journalists

(f) To organize regional and national encounters for journalists.

*114th plenary meeting
12 December 1985*

D

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 38/58 C of 13 December 1983 and 39/49 D of 11 December 1984, in which it, *inter alia*, endorsed the convening of an International Peace Conference on the Middle East,

Reaffirming its resolution 39/49 D, in which it, *inter alia*, requested the Secretary-General, in consultation with the Security Council, to continue his efforts with a view to convening the Conference,

Having considered the reply of the President of the Security Council to the Secretary-General, dated 26 February 1985, in which he, *inter alia*, stated on the subject of the Conference: "In this context, members of the Council invite the Secretary-General to continue consultations on

the subject in any manner he deems appropriate in the light of General Assembly resolution 39/49 D.”⁷⁷

Having considered again the reports of the Secretary-General of 13 March 1984⁷⁸ and 13 September 1984,⁷⁹ in which he stated, *inter alia*, that it was clear from the replies of the Governments of Israel and the United States of America that they were not prepared to participate in the proposed Conference, and regretting the continued negative response of these two Governments and the lack of willingness to reconsider their position towards the Conference,

Having considered the reports of the Secretary-General of 11 March 1985⁸⁰ and 22 October 1985,⁸¹ in which he, *inter alia*, referred to the difficulties experienced in his efforts made the previous year with a view to convening the Conference,

Having heard the constructive statements made by numerous representatives, including that of the Palestine Liberation Organization,

Taking note of the positive positions of the concerned parties, including the Palestine Liberation Organization, and of other States on the convening of the Conference,⁷⁹

Taking note also of the position of the Palestine Liberation Organization which condemns all acts of terrorism, whether committed by States or individuals, including acts of terrorism committed by Israel against the Palestinian people and the Arab nation,

Reiterating once again its conviction that the convening of the Conference would constitute a major contribution by the United Nations towards the achievement of a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict,

1. *Takes note with appreciation* of the reports of the Secretary-General;
2. *Reaffirms again* its endorsement of the call for convening the International Peace Conference on the Middle East in conformity with the provisions of its resolution 38/58 C;
3. *Stresses* the urgent need for additional constructive efforts by all Governments in order to convene the Conference without further delay and for the achievement of its peaceful objectives;
4. *Determines* that the question of Palestine is the root-cause of the Arab-Israeli conflict in the Middle East;
5. *Calls upon* the Governments of Israel and the United States of America to reconsider their positions towards the attainment of peace in the Middle East through the convening of the Conference;
6. *Requests* the Secretary-General, in consultation with the Security Council, to continue his efforts with a view to convening the Conference and to report thereon to the General Assembly not later than 15 March 1986;
7. *Decides* to consider at its forty-first session the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the present resolution.

*114th plenary meeting
12 December 1985*

⁷⁷ See A/40/168-S/17014, para. 3. For the printed text, see *Official Records of the Security Council, Fortieth Year, Supplement for January, February and March 1985*, document S/17014, para. 3.

⁷⁸ A/39/130-S/16409. For the printed text, see *Official Records of the Security Council, Thirty-ninth Year, Supplement for January, February and March 1984*, document S/16409.

⁷⁹ A/39/130/Add.1-S/16409/Add.1. For the printed text, see *Official Records of the Security Council, Thirty-ninth Year, Supplement for July, August and September 1984*, document S/16409/Add.1.

⁸⁰ A/40/168-S/17014. For the printed text, see *Official Records of the Security Council, Fortieth Year, Supplement for January, February and March 1985*, document S/17014.

40/97. Question of Namibia⁸²

A

SITUATION IN NAMIBIA RESULTING FROM THE ILLEGAL OCCUPATION OF THE TERRITORY BY SOUTH AFRICA

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 2145 (XXI) of 27 October 1966, by which it decided to terminate the Mandate of South Africa over Namibia and to place the Territory under the direct responsibility of the United Nations,

Recalling, in particular, its resolution 2248 (S-V) of 19 May 1967, by which it established the United Nations Council for Namibia as the legal Administering Authority for Namibia until independence,

Recalling further its resolution 1514 (XV) of 14 December 1960, containing the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples,

Having examined the report of the United Nations Council for Namibia,⁸³

Having examined also the relevant chapters of the report of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples,⁸⁴

Recalling further other resolutions and decisions declaring the illegality of the continued occupation of Namibia by South Africa, in particular Security Council resolution 284 (1970) of 29 July 1970 and the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice of 21 June 1971,⁸⁵

Bearing in mind that 1986 will mark the twentieth anniversary of the termination of the Mandate of South Africa over Namibia by the General Assembly on 27 October 1966, and expressing its grave concern that, in the period of time that has elapsed, South Africa has continued its illegal occupation of Namibia in defiance of resolutions and decisions of the General Assembly,

Recalling also its resolutions 3111 (XXVIII) of 12 December 1973 and 31/146 and 31/152 of 20 December 1976, by which it, *inter alia*, recognized the South West Africa People's Organization as the sole and authentic representative of the Namibian people and granted observer status to it,

Recalling further its resolutions ES-8/2 of 14 September 1981 and 36/121 B of 10 December 1981, by which it called upon States to cease forthwith, individually and collectively, all dealings with South Africa in order totally to isolate it politically, economically, militarily and culturally,

Taking note of Security Council resolution 566 (1985) of 19 June 1985, by which the Council condemned the racist régime of South Africa for its installation of a so-called interim government and declared such action to be illegal, null and void,

Noting also the Final Document of the Extraordinary Ministerial Meeting of the Co-ordinating Bureau of Non-Aligned Countries on the question of Namibia, held at

⁸¹ A/40/779-S/17581 and Corr.1. For the printed text, see *Official Records of the Security Council, Fortieth Year, Supplement for October, November and December 1985*, document S/17581.

⁸² See also sect. I, footnote 8, and sect. X.B.6, decision 40/409.

⁸³ *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fortieth Session, Supplement No. 24 (A/40/24)*.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, Supplement No. 23 (A/40/23), chaps. I-III, V, VII and IX.

⁸⁵ *Legal Consequences for States of the Continued Presence of South Africa in Namibia (South West Africa) notwithstanding Security Council resolution 276 (1970)*, Advisory Opinion, I.C.J. Reports, 1971, p. 16.

5. *Requests* the Special Committee to follow the implementation of the present resolution and report thereon to the General Assembly at its forty-second session.

*92nd plenary meeting
2 December 1986*

41/43. Question of Palestine

A

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 181 (II) of 29 November 1947, 194 (III) of 11 December 1948, 3236 (XXIX) of 22 November 1974, 3375 (XXX) and 3376 (XXX) of 10 November 1975, 31/20 of 24 November 1976, 32/40 of 2 December 1977, 33/28 of 7 December 1978, 34/65 A and B of 29 November 1979 and 34/65 C and D of 12 December 1979, ES-7/2 of 29 July 1980, 35/169 of 15 December 1980, 36/120 of 10 December 1981, ES-7/4 of 28 April 1982, ES-7/5 of 26 June 1982, ES-7/9 of 24 September 1982, 37/86 A of 10 December 1982, 38/58 A of 13 December 1983, 39/49 A of 11 December 1984 and 40/96 A of 12 December 1985,

Having considered the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People,⁹⁷

1. *Expresses its appreciation* to the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for its efforts in performing the tasks assigned to it by the General Assembly;

2. *Endorses* the recommendations of the Committee contained in paragraphs 112 to 120 of its report and draws the attention of the Security Council to the fact that action on the Committee's recommendations, as repeatedly endorsed by the General Assembly at its thirty-first session and subsequently, is still awaited;

3. *Requests* the Committee to continue to keep under review the situation relating to the question of Palestine as well as the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Achievement of Palestinian Rights⁹⁸ and to report and make suggestions to the General Assembly or the Security Council, as appropriate;

4. *Authorizes* the Committee to continue to exert all efforts to promote the implementation of its recommendations, including representation at conferences and meetings and the sending of delegations where such activities would be considered by it to be appropriate, and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its forty-second session and thereafter;

5. *Requests* the Committee to continue to extend its co-operation to non-governmental organizations in their contribution towards heightening international awareness of the facts relating to the question of Palestine and in creating a more favourable atmosphere for the full implementation of the Committee's recommendations, and to take the necessary steps to expand its contacts with those organizations;

6. *Requests* the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine, established under General Assembly resolution 194 (III), as well as other United Nations bodies associated with the question of Palestine, to co-operate

fully with the Committee and to make available to it, at its request, the relevant information and documentation which they have at their disposal;

7. *Decides* to circulate the report of the Committee to all the competent bodies of the United Nations and urges them to take the necessary action, as appropriate, in accordance with the Committee's programme of implementation;

8. *Requests* the Secretary-General to continue to provide the Committee with all the necessary facilities for the performance of its tasks.

*93rd plenary meeting
2 December 1986*

B

The General Assembly,

Having considered the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People,⁹⁷

Taking note, in particular, of relevant information contained in paragraphs 73 to 101 of that report,

Recalling its resolutions 32/40 B of 2 December 1977, 33/28 C of 7 December 1978, 34/65 D of 12 December 1979, 35/169 D of 15 December 1980, 36/120 B of 10 December 1981, 37/86 B of 10 December 1982, 38/58 B of 13 December 1983, 39/49 B of 11 December 1984, and 40/96 B of 12 December 1985,

1. *Takes note with appreciation* of the action taken by the Secretary-General in compliance with General Assembly resolution 40/96 B;

2. *Requests* the Secretary-General to provide the Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat with the necessary resources and to ensure that it continues to discharge the tasks detailed in paragraphs 2 and 3 of General Assembly resolution 40/96 B in consultation with the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and under its guidance;

3. *Also requests* the Secretary-General to ensure the continued co-operation of the Department of Public Information and other units of the Secretariat in enabling the Division for Palestinian Rights to perform its tasks and in covering adequately the various aspects of the question of Palestine;

4. *Invites* all Governments and organizations to lend their co-operation to the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and the Division for Palestinian Rights in the performance of their tasks;

5. *Takes note with appreciation* of the action taken by Member States to observe annually on 29 November the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People and the issuance by them of special postage stamps for the occasion.

*93rd plenary meeting
2 December 1986*

C

The General Assembly,

Having considered the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People,⁹⁷

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, Supplement No. 35 (A/41/35).

⁹⁸ *Report of the International Conference on the Question of Palestine, Geneva, 29 August-7 September 1983* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.83.I.21), chap. I, sect. B.

Taking note, in particular, of the information contained in paragraphs 102 to 111 of that report,

Recalling its resolution 40/96 C of 12 December 1985,

Convinced that the world-wide dissemination of accurate and comprehensive information and the role of non-governmental organizations and institutions remain of vital importance in heightening awareness of and support for the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination and to the establishment of an independent sovereign Palestinian State,

1. *Takes note with appreciation* of the action taken by the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat in compliance with General Assembly resolution 40/96 C,

2. *Requests* the Department of Public Information, in full co-operation and co-ordination with the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, to continue its special information programme on the question of Palestine for the biennium 1986-1987 and, in particular:

(a) To disseminate information on all the activities of the United Nations system relating to the question of Palestine;

(b) To continue to update publications on the facts and developments pertaining to the question of Palestine;

(c) To publish brochures and booklets on the various aspects of the question of Palestine, including Israeli violations of the human rights of the Arab inhabitants of the occupied territories;

(d) To expand its audio-visual material on the question of Palestine, including the production of a new film in 1987 and special series of radio programmes and television broadcasts;

(e) To organize fact-finding news missions to the area for journalists;

(f) To organize regional and national encounters for journalists.

93rd plenary meeting
2 December 1986

D

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 38/58 C of 13 December 1983, 39/49 D of 11 December 1984 and 40/96 D of 12 December 1985, in which it, *inter alia*, endorsed the call for convening the International Peace Conference on the Middle East,

Recalling also the relevant resolutions of the Security Council,

Reaffirming its resolutions 39/49 D and 40/96 D, in which it, *inter alia*, requested the Secretary-General, in consultation with the Security Council, to continue his efforts with a view to convening the Conference,

Having considered the report of the Secretary-General of 14 March 1986, in which he, *inter alia*, stated that "the obstacles which have so far prevented the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East as called for by the General Assembly still exist",⁹⁹ and his report of 29 October 1986,¹⁰⁰

Expressing its regret that, owing to the negative attitude of some Member States, the difficulties regarding the convening of the Conference "have remained essentially the same",¹⁰¹ and expressing its hope that those Member States will reconsider their attitude,

Having heard the constructive statements made by numerous representatives, including that of the Palestine Liberation Organization,

Emphasizing the need to bring about a just and comprehensive settlement to the Arab-Israeli conflict which has persisted for nearly four decades,

Recognizing that the persistence of the Arab-Israeli conflict in the Middle East constitutes a threat to security and stability in the region and to world peace, and therefore directly involves the responsibility of the United Nations,

Stressing its conviction that the convening of the Conference will constitute a major contribution by the United Nations towards the realization of a just solution to the question of Palestine conducive to the achievement of a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict,

Appreciating the concern about the exacerbating situation in the Middle East as voiced in a great many statements during the general debate at the current session and at previous sessions,

1. *Takes note with appreciation* of the reports of the Secretary-General;

2. *Determines* that the question of Palestine is the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict in the Middle East;

3. *Reaffirms once again* its endorsement of the call for convening the International Peace Conference on the Middle East in conformity with the provisions of the resolution 38/58 C;

4. *Stresses* the urgent need for additional concrete and constructive efforts by all Governments in order to convene the Conference without further delay;

5. *Endorses the call* for setting up a preparatory committee, within the framework of the Security Council, with the participation of the permanent members of the Council, to take the necessary action to convene the Conference;

6. *Requests* the Secretary-General, in consultation with the Security Council, to continue his efforts with a view to convening the Conference and to report thereon to the General Assembly not later than 15 May 1987;

7. *Decides* to consider at its forty-second session the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the present resolution.

93rd plenary meeting
2 December 1986

41/162. The situation in the Middle East

A

The General Assembly,

Having discussed the item entitled "The situation in the Middle East",

Reaffirming its resolutions 36/226 A and B of 17 December 1981, ES-9/1 of 5 February 1982, 37/123 F of 20 December 1982, 38/58 A to E of 13 December 1983,

⁹⁹ A/41/215-S/17916. For the printed text, see *Official Records of the Security Council, Forty-first Year, Supplement for January, February and March 1986*, document S/17916.

¹⁰⁰ A/41/768-S/18427. For the printed text, see *Official Records of the Security Council, Forty-first Year, Supplement for October, November and December 1986*, document S/18427.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, para. 31.

Recalling the provisions of its resolutions 33/4 of 2 November 1978, 34/63 of 29 November 1979, 35/112 of 5 December 1980, 36/78 of 9 December 1981, 37/167 of 17 December 1982, 38/60 of 14 December 1983, 39/74 of 13 December 1984, 40/95 of 12 December 1985 and 41/212 A and B of 11 December 1986,

Bearing in mind the importance and potential of nuclear energy for economic and social development, especially in the developing countries,

Noting with appreciation the extensive and active involvement of the International Atomic Energy Agency in promoting the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes in accordance with articles II and III of its statute, and, in particular, recent measures taken to strengthen international co-operation in nuclear safety and radiological protection, including the adoption of the Convention on Early Notification of a Nuclear Accident and the Convention on Assistance in the Case of a Nuclear Accident or Radiological Emergency,¹⁸

Convinced that close and effective international co-operation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy in a climate of confidence is essential for the full realization of the fundamental twin objectives of ensuring that nuclear technology is not misused in any way and that its benefits are made available in a safe and secure manner,

Recalling that the United Nations Conference for the Promotion of International Co-operation in the Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy, held at Geneva from 23 March to 10 April 1987, provided a global forum under the auspices of the United Nations to consider specifically all relevant concerns on the role of nuclear power and of applications of nuclear techniques in such fields as food and agriculture, health and medicine, hydrology, industry, and scientific and technological research for economic and social development,

Having considered the report of the Conference,⁷⁹

1. Takes note of the report of the United Nations Conference for the Promotion of International Co-operation in the Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy, which mainly states that:

(a) The Conference recognized that nuclear energy could contribute to economic and social development and to the well-being of many countries, and urged that international peaceful nuclear co-operation should be enhanced and broadened;

(b) Extensive efforts were made by the Conference to reach agreement on "principles universally acceptable for international co-operation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and appropriate ways and means for the promotion of such co-operation, as envisaged in General Assembly resolution 32/50, and in accordance with mutually acceptable considerations of non-proliferation", but while reaffirming that these matters were of importance and of major concern, the Conference was unable to reach agreement on them;

(c) The Conference expressed the hope that its active and comprehensive exchange of views would lead to a better appreciation of respective positions on these matters and to further mutual understanding, and it also considered that the International Atomic Energy Agency and other international organizations might benefit from these exchanges;

(d) The Conference considered that the technical reports presented and the discussions that took place during the Conference on the role of nuclear power and of other peaceful applications of nuclear energy for economic and social development could be used in planning national programmes for development, use and safety of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes;

(e) The Conference agreed that the technical reports referred to in subparagraph (d) above should be made widely available and requested the Secretary-General to consider their publication within existing financial resources;

2. Believes that the Conference has served a useful purpose in examining the role of nuclear energy in economic and social development, and the complex problems in the promotion of international co-operation in this vital field;

3. Recognizes that the technical reports presented at the Conference could be used in planning programmes for development, use and safety of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes and authorizes their publication in the official languages of the United Nations within existing financial resources, and requests that arrangements be made to make them widely available;

4. Requests the International Atomic Energy Agency, as the central organization for peaceful nuclear co-operation, to continue its efforts, in close collaboration with the concerned specialized agencies and other relevant organizations of the United Nations system, with the specific aim of strengthening and broadening international co-operation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy for economic and social development;

5. Urges all States to co-operate fully in support of all efforts aimed at fostering international co-operation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy for economic and social development;

6. Requests the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency, in the annual reports of the Agency, to continue to report on the progress made in the promotion of international co-operation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy for economic and social development, especially in the developing countries.

83rd plenary meeting
27 November 1987

42/66. Question of Palestine

A

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 181 (II) of 29 November 1947, 194 (III) of 11 December 1948, 3236 (XXIX) of 22 November 1974, 3375 (XXX) and 3376 (XXX) of 10 November 1975, 31/20 of 24 November 1976, 32/40 of 2 December 1977, 33/28 of 7 December 1978, 34/65 A and B of 29 November 1979 and 34/65 C and D of 12 December 1979, ES-7/2 of 29 July 1980, 35/169 of 15 December 1980, 36/120 of 10 December 1981, ES-7/4 of 28 April 1982, ES-7/5 of 26 June 1982, ES-7/9 of 24 September 1982, 37/86 A of 10 December 1982, 38/58 A of 13 December 1983, 39/49 A of 11 December 1984, 40/96 A of 12 December 1985 and 41/43 A of 2 December 1986,

⁷⁹ Report of the United Nations Conference for the Promotion of International Co-operation in the Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy, Geneva, 23 March-10 April 1987 (A/CONF.108/7).

Having considered the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People,⁸⁰

1. Expresses its appreciation to the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for its efforts in performing the tasks assigned to it by the General Assembly;
2. Endorses the recommendations of the Committee contained in paragraphs 92 to 96 of its report and draws the attention of the Security Council to the fact that action on the Committee's recommendations, as repeatedly endorsed by the General Assembly at its thirty-first session and subsequently, is still awaited;
3. Requests the Committee to continue to keep under review the situation relating to the question of Palestine as well as the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Achievement of Palestinian Rights⁸¹ and to report and make suggestions to the General Assembly or the Security Council, as appropriate;
4. Authorizes the Committee to continue to exert all efforts to promote the implementation of its recommendations, including representation at conferences and meetings and the sending of delegations, to make such adjustments in its approved programme of seminars and symposia and meetings for non-governmental organizations as it may consider necessary, and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its forty-third session and thereafter;
5. Requests the Committee to continue to extend its co-operation to non-governmental organizations in their contribution towards heightening international awareness of the facts relating to the question of Palestine and creating a more favourable atmosphere for the full implementation of the Committee's recommendations, and to take the necessary steps to expand its contacts with those organizations;
6. Requests the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine, established under General Assembly resolution 194 (III), as well as other United Nations bodies associated with the question of Palestine, to co-operate fully with the Committee and to make available to it, at its request, the relevant information and documentation which they have at their disposal;
7. Decides to circulate the report of the Committee to all the competent bodies of the United Nations and urges them to take the necessary action, as appropriate, in accordance with the Committee's programme of implementation;
8. Requests the Secretary-General to continue to provide the Committee with all the necessary facilities for the performance of its tasks.

*89th plenary meeting
2 December 1987*

B

The General Assembly,

Having considered the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People,⁸⁰

Taking note, in particular, of the relevant information contained in paragraphs 56 to 80 of that report,

⁸⁰ Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-second Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/42/35).

⁸¹ Report of the International Conference on the Question of Palestine, Geneva, 29 August-7 September 1983 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.83.I.21), chap. I, sect. B.

Recalling its resolutions 32/40 B of 2 December 1977, 33/28 C of 7 December 1978, 34/65 D of 12 December 1979, 35/169 D of 15 December 1980, 36/120 B of 10 December 1981, 37/86 B of 10 December 1982, 38/58 B of 13 December 1983, 39/49 B of 11 December 1984, 40/96 B of 12 December 1985, and 41/43 B of 2 December 1986,

1. Takes note with appreciation of the action taken by the Secretary-General in compliance with General Assembly resolution 41/43 B;
2. Requests the Secretary-General to provide the Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat with the necessary resources and to ensure that it continues to discharge the tasks detailed in paragraph 1 of General Assembly resolution 32/40 B, paragraph 2 (b) of resolution 34/65 D, paragraph 3 of resolution 36/120 B, paragraph 3 of resolution 38/58 B and paragraph 3 of resolution 40/96 B, in consultation with the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and under its guidance;
3. Also requests the Secretary-General to ensure the continued co-operation of the Department of Public Information and other units of the Secretariat in enabling the Division for Palestinian Rights to perform its tasks and in covering adequately the various aspects of the question of Palestine;
4. Invites all Governments and organizations to lend their co-operation to the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and the Division for Palestinian Rights in the performance of their tasks;
5. Takes note with appreciation of the action taken by Member States to observe annually on 29 November the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, and of the issuance by them of special postage stamps for the occasion.

*89th plenary meeting
2 December 1987*

C

The General Assembly,

Having considered the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People,⁸⁰

Taking note, in particular, of the information contained in paragraphs 81 to 91 of that report,

Recalling its resolution 41/43 C of 2 December 1986,

Convinced that the world-wide dissemination of accurate and comprehensive information and the role of non-governmental organizations and institutions remain of vital importance in heightening awareness of and support for the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination and to the establishment of an independent sovereign Palestinian State,

1. Takes note with appreciation of the action taken by the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat in compliance with General Assembly resolution 41/43 C;
2. Requests the Department of Public Information, in full co-operation and co-ordination with the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, to continue its special information programme on the question of Palestine during the biennium 1988-1989, with particular emphasis on public opinion in Europe and North America and, in particular:

(a) To disseminate information on all the activities of the United Nations system relating to the question of Palestine, including reports of the work carried out by the relevant United Nations organs;

(b) To continue to issue and update publications on the various aspects of the question of Palestine, including Israeli violations of the human rights of the Arab inhabitants of the occupied territories as reported by the relevant United Nations organs;

(c) To expand its audio-visual material on the question of Palestine, including the production of special series of radio programmes and television broadcast;

(d) To organize fact-finding news missions to the area for journalists;

(e) To organize regional and national encounters for journalists.

89th plenary meeting
2 December 1987

D

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 38/58 C of 13 December 1983, 39/49 D of 11 December 1984, 40/96 D of 12 December 1985 and 41/43 D of 2 December 1986, in which it, *inter alia*, endorsed the call for the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East,

Recalling also the relevant resolutions of the Security Council,

Reaffirming its resolutions 39/49 D, 40/96 D and 41/43 D, in which it, *inter alia*, requested the Secretary-General, in consultation with the Security Council, to continue his efforts with a view to convening the Conference,

Having considered the reports of the Secretary-General of 7 May 1987,⁸² and of 13 November 1987,⁸³ in which he, *inter alia*, stated that "the major obstacle at present, however, is one of a different kind, namely, the inability of the Government of Israel as a whole to agree on the principle of an international conference under United Nations auspices",

Expressing its regret that, owing to the attitudes of some Member States, the difficulties regarding the convening of the Conference have remained essentially the same, and expressing its hope that those Member States will reconsider their attitudes,

Having heard the statements made by numerous representatives, including the statement by the representative of the Palestine Liberation Organization,

Taking note of the resolutions as well as the Final Declaration of the Extraordinary Arab Summit Conference, held at Amman from 8 to 11 November 1987, in which, *inter alia*, the Arab leaders declared that "in the context of promoting peaceful efforts and endeavours seeking to achieve a just and durable peace in the Middle East region in accordance with international legality and the resolutions of the United Nations and on the basis of the return of all the occupied Palestinian and Arab territories and the restoration of the national rights of the Palestinian Arab people, the leaders supported, as the only appropriate

means of settling the Arab-Israeli conflict in a peaceful, just and comprehensive manner, the convening of the International Peace Conference under the auspices of the United Nations and with the participation, on an equal footing, of all parties concerned, including the Palestine Liberation Organization, the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian Arab people, and the permanent members of the Security Council",⁸⁴

Noting with satisfaction the growing international consensus in favour of convening the Conference under the auspices of the United Nations, and in conformity with its relevant resolutions, to achieve a comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict, including the just solution of the question of Palestine, which is the core of this conflict.

Emphasizing the need to bring about a just and comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict, which has persisted for nearly four decades,

1. Takes note of the reports of the Secretary-General;

2. Notes with satisfaction the ever-increasing international consensus in favour of the early convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, as reflected in the statements made during the debate;

3. Determines once again that the question of Palestine is the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict in the Middle East;

4. Reaffirms once again its endorsement of the call for convening the Conference in conformity with the provisions of resolution 38/58 C, particularly the guidelines and participation determined therein;

5. Reiterates its endorsement of the call for setting up a preparatory committee, within the framework of the Security Council, with the participation of the permanent members of the Council, to take the necessary action to convene the Conference;

6. Stresses once again the urgent need for additional concrete and constructive efforts by all Governments in order to convene the Conference without further delay;

7. Requests the Secretary-General, in consultation with the Security Council, to continue his efforts with a view to convening the Conference and to report thereon to the General Assembly not later than 31 March 1988;

8. Decides to consider at its forty-third session the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the present resolution.

89th plenary meeting
2 December 1987

42/71. Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples

The General Assembly,

Having examined the report of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples,⁸⁵

Recalling its resolutions 1514 (XV) of 14 December 1960, containing the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, 2621 (XXV)

⁸² A/42/277-S/18849. For the printed text, see *Official Records of the Security Council, Forty-second Year, Supplement for April, May and June 1987*, document S/18849.

⁸³ A/42/714-S/19249. For the printed text, see *Official Records of the Security Council, Forty-second Year, Supplement for October, November and December 1987*, document S/19249.

⁸⁴ See A/42/779-S/19274, annex. For the printed text, see *Official Records of the Security Council, Forty-second Year, Supplement for October, November and December 1987*, document S/19274, annex.

⁸⁵ *Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-second Session, Supplement No. 23 (A/42/23)*

appropriate educational, judicial, legal and other channels, including direct contact among them;

8. *Invites* Member States, the specialized agencies and intergovernmental organizations to draw upon the contributions of non-governmental organizations concerned with the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms for the achievement of the above programme of action;

9. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its forty-eighth session a report on the activities undertaken in pursuance of the present resolution;

10. *Decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its forty-eighth session an item entitled "Forty-fifth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights".

*75th plenary meeting
8 December 1988*

43/174. Review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations in the economic and social fields

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 32/197 of 20 December 1977 on the restructuring of the economic and social sectors of the United Nations system, 41/213 of 19 December 1986 on the review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations, 42/170 of 11 December 1987 on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 41/213 in the economic and social fields, and 42/211 of 21 December 1987 on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 41/213,

Recalling also Economic and Social Council resolution 1988/77 of 29 July 1988 on the revitalization of the Council,

Emphasizing that the financial stability of the Organization will facilitate the orderly, balanced and well coordinated implementation of resolution 41/213 in all its parts,

Emphasizing also that the work of the United Nations should be enhanced and streamlined in order to make the United Nations more effective and responsive to the needs of Member States, particularly developing countries,

Conscious of the fact that the reform of the economic and social sectors of the United Nations is a continuing process aimed at strengthening the effectiveness of the United Nations in dealing with those issues and requires further attention,

Taking note of the report of the Special Commission of the Economic and Social Council on the In-depth Study of the United Nations Intergovernmental Structure and Functions in the Economic and Social Fields¹²³ and its Secretariat support structures, and recognizing that, although the Special Commission had conducted the in-depth study entrusted to it, the Special Commission was unable to reach agreed recommendations,

1. *Stresses* the common interest of all countries in the effective functioning of the United Nations in the economic and social fields so that it is more responsive not only to current issues, but also to emerging problems and issues, particularly those related to the development of developing countries;

2. *Requests* the Secretary-General to consult with all Member States and seek their views on ways and means of achieving a balanced and effective implementation of recommendations 2 and 8 of the Group of High-level Intergovernmental Experts to Review the Efficiency of the Administrative and Financial Functioning of the United Nations,¹²⁴ taking into consideration all relevant reports, including the report of the Special Commission of the Economic and Social Council on the In-depth Study of the United Nations Intergovernmental Structure and Functions in the Economic and Social Fields, as well as the outcome of the discussions in 1989 on the revitalization of the Economic and Social Council, and to submit to the General Assembly at its forty-fourth session a detailed report in order to enable Member States to consider and take appropriate action with a view to enhancing the effectiveness of the intergovernmental structure and its Secretariat support structures as well as programme delivery in the economic and social fields;

3. *Decides* to consider, at its forty-fourth session, the report of the Secretary-General called for in paragraph 2 above, and his final report on the implementation of resolution 41/213, under the item entitled "Review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations".

*76th plenary meeting
9 December 1988*

43/175. Question of Palestine

A

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 181 (II) of 29 November 1947, 194 (III) of 11 December 1948, 3236 (XXIX) of 22 November 1974, 3375 (XXX) and 3376 (XXX) of 10 November 1975, 31/20 of 24 November 1976, 32/40 of 2 December 1977, 33/28 of 7 December 1978, 34/65 A and B of 29 November 1979 and 34/65 C and D of 12 December 1979, ES-7/2 of 29 July 1980, 35/169 of 15 December 1980, 36/120 of 10 December 1981, ES-7/4 of 28 April 1982, ES-7/5 of 26 June 1982, ES-7/9 of 24 September 1982, 37/86 A of 10 December 1982, 38/58 A of 13 December 1983, 39/49 A of 11 December 1984, 40/96 A of 12 December 1985, 41/43 A of 2 December 1986 and 42/66 A of 2 December 1987,

Having considered the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People,¹²⁵

1. *Expresses its appreciation* to the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for its efforts in performing the tasks assigned to it by the General Assembly;

2. *Endorses* the recommendations of the Committee contained in paragraphs 141 to 148 of its report and draws the attention of the Security Council to the fact that action on the Committee's recommendations, as repeatedly endorsed by the General Assembly at its thirty-first session and subsequently, is still awaited;

3. *Requests* the Committee to continue to keep under review the situation relating to the question of Palestine as

¹²³ E/1988/75.

¹²⁴ See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-first Session, Supplement No. 49 (A/41/49)*.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, *Forty-third session, Supplement No. 35 (A/43/35)*.

well as the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Achievement of Palestinian Rights¹²⁶ and to report and make suggestions to the General Assembly or the Security Council, as appropriate;

4. *Authorizes* the Committee to continue to exert all efforts to promote the implementation of its recommendations, including representation at conferences and meetings and the sending of delegations, to make such adjustments in its approved programme of seminars and symposia and meetings for non-governmental organizations as it may consider necessary, and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its forty-fourth session and thereafter;

5. *Requests* the Committee to continue to extend its co-operation to non-governmental organizations in their contribution towards heightening international awareness of the facts relating to the question of Palestine and creating a more favourable atmosphere for the full implementation of the Committee's recommendations, and to take the necessary steps to expand its contacts with those organizations;

6. *Requests* the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine, established under General Assembly resolution 194 (III), as well as other United Nations bodies associated with the question of Palestine, to co-operate fully with the Committee and to make available to it, at its request, the relevant information and documentation which they have at their disposal;

7. *Decides* to circulate the report of the Committee to all the competent bodies of the United Nations and urges them to take the necessary action, as appropriate, in accordance with the Committee's programme of implementation;

8. *Requests* the Secretary-General to continue to provide the Committee with all the necessary facilities for the performance of its tasks.

82nd plenary meeting
15 December 1988

B

The General Assembly,

Having considered the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People,¹²⁵

Taking note, in particular, of the relevant information contained in paragraphs 96 to 128 of that report,

Recalling its resolutions 32/40 B of 2 December 1977, 33/28 C of 7 December 1978, 34/65 D of 12 December 1979, 35/169 D of 15 December 1980, 36/120 B of 10 December 1981, 37/86 B of 10 December 1982, 38/58 B of 13 December 1983, 39/49 B of 11 December 1984, 40/96 B of 12 December 1985, 41/43 B of 2 December 1986 and 42/66 B of 2 December 1987,

Recalling that 1989 is the thirtieth anniversary of the Declaration of the Rights of the Child¹²⁷ and the tenth anniversary of the International Year of the Child,

1. *Takes note with appreciation* of the action taken by the Secretary-General in compliance with General Assembly resolution 42/66 B;

2. *Requests* the Secretary-General to provide the Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat with the necessary resources and to ensure that it continues to dis-

charge the tasks detailed in paragraph 1 of General Assembly resolution 32/40 B, paragraph 2 (b) of resolution 34/65 D, paragraph 3 of resolution 36/120 B, paragraph 3 of resolution 38/58 B, paragraph 3 of resolution 40/96 B and paragraph 2 of resolution 42/66 B, in consultation with the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and under its guidance;

3. *Also requests* the Secretary-General to direct the Division for Palestinian Rights to pay particular attention to the plight of Palestinian children in the occupied Palestinian territories in its programme of work for 1989;

4. *Further requests* the Secretary-General to ensure the continued co-operation of the Department of Public Information and other units of the Secretariat in enabling the Division for Palestinian Rights to perform its tasks and in covering adequately the various aspects of the question of Palestine;

5. *Invites* all Governments and organizations to lend their co-operation to the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and the Division for Palestinian Rights in the performance of their tasks;

6. *Takes note with appreciation* of the action taken by Member States to observe annually on 29 November the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, and of the issuance by them of special postage stamps for the occasion.

82nd plenary meeting
15 December 1988

C

The General Assembly,

Having considered the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People,¹²⁵

Taking note, in particular, of the information contained in paragraphs 129 to 140 of that report,

Recalling its resolution 42/66 C of 2 December 1987,

Convinced that the world-wide dissemination of accurate and comprehensive information and the role of non-governmental organizations and institutions remain of vital importance in heightening awareness of and support for the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination and to the establishment of an independent sovereign Palestinian State,

1. *Takes note with appreciation* of the action taken by the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat in compliance with General Assembly resolution 42/66 C;

2. *Requests* the Department of Public Information, in full co-operation and co-ordination with the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, to continue its special information programme on the question of Palestine in 1989, with particular emphasis on public opinion in Europe and North America and, in particular:

(a) To disseminate information on all the activities of the United Nations system relating to the question of Palestine, including reports of the work carried out by the relevant United Nations organs;

(b) To continue to issue and update publications on the various aspects of the question of Palestine, including Israeli violations of the human rights of the Arab inhabitants of the occupied territories as reported by the relevant United Nations organs;

¹²⁶ Report of the International Conference on the Question of Palestine, Geneva, 29 August-7 September 1983 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.83.I.21), chap. I, sect. B.

¹²⁷ Resolution 1386 (XIV).

(c) To expand its audio-visual material on the question of Palestine, including the production of special series of radio programmes and television broadcasts;

(d) To organize fact-finding news missions to the area for journalists;

(e) To organize regional and national encounters for journalists.

82nd plenary meeting
15 December 1988

43/176. Question of Palestine

The General Assembly,

Having considered the reports of the Secretary-General of 31 March 1988¹⁰⁹ and 30 September 1988,¹¹⁰

Having noted with appreciation the statement made on 13 December 1988 by the Chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organization,¹²⁸

Stressing that achieving peace in the Middle East would constitute a significant contribution to international peace and security,

Aware of the overwhelming support for the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East,

Noting with appreciation the endeavours of the Secretary-General to achieve the convening of the Conference,

Welcoming the outcome of the nineteenth Extraordinary Session of the Palestine National Council as a positive contribution towards a peaceful settlement of the conflict in the region,

Aware of the ongoing uprising (*intifadah*) of the Palestinian people since 9 December 1987, aimed at ending Israeli occupation of Palestinian territory occupied since 1967,

1. *Affirms* the urgent need to achieve a just and comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict, the core of which is the question of Palestine;

2. *Calls for* the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, under the auspices of the United Nations, with the participation of all parties to the conflict, including the Palestine Liberation Organization, on an equal footing, and the five permanent members of the Security Council, based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) of 22 November 1967 and 338 (1973) of 22 October 1973 and the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people, primarily the right to self-determination;

3. *Affirms* the following principles for the achievement of comprehensive peace:

(a) The withdrawal of Israel from the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, and from the other occupied Arab territories;

(b) Guaranteeing arrangements for security of all States in the region, including those named in resolution 181 (II) of 29 November 1947, within secure and internationally recognized boundaries;

(c) Resolving the problem of the Palestine refugees in conformity with General Assembly resolution 194 (III) of 11 December 1948, and subsequent relevant resolutions;

¹²⁸ See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-third Session, Plenary Meetings*, 78th meeting.

(d) Dismantling the Israeli settlements in the territories occupied since 1967;

(e) Guaranteeing freedom of access to Holy Places, religious buildings and sites;

4. *Notes* the expressed desire and endeavours to place the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, under the supervision of the United Nations for a limited period, as part of the peace process;

5. *Requests* the Security Council to consider measures needed to convene the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, including the establishment of a preparatory committee, and to consider guarantees for security measures agreed upon by the Conference for all States in the region;

6. *Requests* the Secretary-General to continue his efforts with the parties concerned, and in consultation with the Security Council, to facilitate the convening of the Conference, and to submit progress reports on developments in this matter.

82nd plenary meeting
15 December 1988

43/177. Question of Palestine

The General Assembly,

Having considered the item entitled "Question of Palestine",

Recalling its resolution 181 (II) of 29 November 1947, in which, *inter alia*, it called for the establishment of an Arab State and a Jewish State in Palestine,

Mindful of the special responsibility of the United Nations to achieve a just solution to the question of Palestine,

Aware of the proclamation of the State of Palestine by the Palestine National Council in line with General Assembly resolution 181 (II) and in exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people,

Affirming the urgent need to achieve a just and comprehensive settlement in the Middle East which, *inter alia*, provides for peaceful coexistence for all States in the region,

Recalling its resolution 3237 (XXIX) of 22 November 1974 on the observer status for the Palestine Liberation Organization and subsequent relevant resolutions,

1. *Acknowledges* the proclamation of the State of Palestine by the Palestine National Council on 15 November 1988;

2. *Affirms* the need to enable the Palestinian people to exercise their sovereignty over their territory occupied since 1967;

3. *Decides* that, effective as of 15 December 1988, the designation "Palestine" should be used in place of the designation "Palestine Liberation Organization" in the United Nations system, without prejudice to the observer status and functions of the Palestine Liberation Organization within the United Nations system, in conformity with relevant United Nations resolutions and practice;

4. *Requests* the Secretary-General to take the necessary action to implement the present resolution.

82nd plenary meeting
15 December 1988

(c) To expand its audio-visual material on the question of Palestine, including the production of special series of radio programmes and television broadcasts;

(d) To organize fact-finding news missions to the area for journalists;

(e) To organize regional and national encounters for journalists.

82nd plenary meeting
15 December 1988

43/176. Question of Palestine

The General Assembly,

Having considered the reports of the Secretary-General of 31 March 1988¹⁰⁹ and 30 September 1988,¹¹⁰

Having noted with appreciation the statement made on 13 December 1988 by the Chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organization,¹²⁸

Stressing that achieving peace in the Middle East would constitute a significant contribution to international peace and security,

Aware of the overwhelming support for the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East,

Noting with appreciation the endeavours of the Secretary-General to achieve the convening of the Conference,

Welcoming the outcome of the nineteenth Extraordinary Session of the Palestine National Council as a positive contribution towards a peaceful settlement of the conflict in the region,

Aware of the ongoing uprising (*intifadah*) of the Palestinian people since 9 December 1987, aimed at ending Israeli occupation of Palestinian territory occupied since 1967,

1. *Affirms* the urgent need to achieve a just and comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict, the core of which is the question of Palestine;

2. *Calls for* the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, under the auspices of the United Nations, with the participation of all parties to the conflict, including the Palestine Liberation Organization, on an equal footing, and the five permanent members of the Security Council, based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) of 22 November 1967 and 338 (1973) of 22 October 1973 and the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people, primarily the right to self-determination;

3. *Affirms* the following principles for the achievement of comprehensive peace:

(a) The withdrawal of Israel from the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, and from the other occupied Arab territories;

(b) Guaranteeing arrangements for security of all States in the region, including those named in resolution 181 (II) of 29 November 1947, within secure and internationally recognized boundaries;

(c) Resolving the problem of the Palestine refugees in conformity with General Assembly resolution 194 (III) of 11 December 1948, and subsequent relevant resolutions;

¹²⁸ See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-third Session, Plenary Meetings*, 78th meeting.

(d) Dismantling the Israeli settlements in the territories occupied since 1967;

(e) Guaranteeing freedom of access to Holy Places, religious buildings and sites;

4. *Notes* the expressed desire and endeavours to place the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, under the supervision of the United Nations for a limited period, as part of the peace process;

5. *Requests* the Security Council to consider measures needed to convene the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, including the establishment of a preparatory committee, and to consider guarantees for security measures agreed upon by the Conference for all States in the region;

6. *Requests* the Secretary-General to continue his efforts with the parties concerned, and in consultation with the Security Council, to facilitate the convening of the Conference, and to submit progress reports on developments in this matter.

82nd plenary meeting
15 December 1988

43/177. Question of Palestine

The General Assembly,

Having considered the item entitled "Question of Palestine",

Recalling its resolution 181 (II) of 29 November 1947, in which, *inter alia*, it called for the establishment of an Arab State and a Jewish State in Palestine,

Mindful of the special responsibility of the United Nations to achieve a just solution to the question of Palestine,

Aware of the proclamation of the State of Palestine by the Palestine National Council in line with General Assembly resolution 181 (II) and in exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people,

Affirming the urgent need to achieve a just and comprehensive settlement in the Middle East which, *inter alia*, provides for peaceful coexistence for all States in the region,

Recalling its resolution 3237 (XXIX) of 22 November 1974 on the observer status for the Palestine Liberation Organization and subsequent relevant resolutions,

1. *Acknowledges* the proclamation of the State of Palestine by the Palestine National Council on 15 November 1988;

2. *Affirms* the need to enable the Palestinian people to exercise their sovereignty over their territory occupied since 1967;

3. *Decides* that, effective as of 15 December 1988, the designation "Palestine" should be used in place of the designation "Palestine Liberation Organization" in the United Nations system, without prejudice to the observer status and functions of the Palestine Liberation Organization within the United Nations system, in conformity with relevant United Nations resolutions and practice;

4. *Requests* the Secretary-General to take the necessary action to implement the present resolution.

82nd plenary meeting
15 December 1988

(c) To expand its audio-visual material on the question of Palestine, including the production of special series of radio programmes and television broadcasts;

(d) To organize fact-finding news missions to the area for journalists;

(e) To organize regional and national encounters for journalists.

82nd plenary meeting
15 December 1988

43/176. Question of Palestine

The General Assembly,

Having considered the reports of the Secretary-General of 31 March 1988¹⁰⁹ and 30 September 1988,¹¹⁰

Having noted with appreciation the statement made on 13 December 1988 by the Chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organization,¹²⁸

Stressing that achieving peace in the Middle East would constitute a significant contribution to international peace and security,

Aware of the overwhelming support for the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East,

Noting with appreciation the endeavours of the Secretary-General to achieve the convening of the Conference,

Welcoming the outcome of the nineteenth Extraordinary Session of the Palestine National Council as a positive contribution towards a peaceful settlement of the conflict in the region,

Aware of the ongoing uprising (*intifadah*) of the Palestinian people since 9 December 1987, aimed at ending Israeli occupation of Palestinian territory occupied since 1967,

1. *Affirms* the urgent need to achieve a just and comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict, the core of which is the question of Palestine;

2. *Calls for* the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, under the auspices of the United Nations, with the participation of all parties to the conflict, including the Palestine Liberation Organization, on an equal footing, and the five permanent members of the Security Council, based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) of 22 November 1967 and 338 (1973) of 22 October 1973 and the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people, primarily the right to self-determination;

3. *Affirms* the following principles for the achievement of comprehensive peace:

(a) The withdrawal of Israel from the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, and from the other occupied Arab territories;

(b) Guaranteeing arrangements for security of all States in the region, including those named in resolution 181 (II) of 29 November 1947, within secure and internationally recognized boundaries;

(c) Resolving the problem of the Palestine refugees in conformity with General Assembly resolution 194 (III) of 11 December 1948, and subsequent relevant resolutions;

¹²⁸ See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-third Session, Plenary Meetings*, 78th meeting.

(d) Dismantling the Israeli settlements in the territories occupied since 1967;

(e) Guaranteeing freedom of access to Holy Places, religious buildings and sites;

4. *Notes* the expressed desire and endeavours to place the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, under the supervision of the United Nations for a limited period, as part of the peace process;

5. *Requests* the Security Council to consider measures needed to convene the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, including the establishment of a preparatory committee, and to consider guarantees for security measures agreed upon by the Conference for all States in the region;

6. *Requests* the Secretary-General to continue his efforts with the parties concerned, and in consultation with the Security Council, to facilitate the convening of the Conference, and to submit progress reports on developments in this matter.

82nd plenary meeting
15 December 1988

43/177. Question of Palestine

The General Assembly,

Having considered the item entitled "Question of Palestine",

Recalling its resolution 181 (II) of 29 November 1947, in which, *inter alia*, it called for the establishment of an Arab State and a Jewish State in Palestine,

Mindful of the special responsibility of the United Nations to achieve a just solution to the question of Palestine,

Aware of the proclamation of the State of Palestine by the Palestine National Council in line with General Assembly resolution 181 (II) and in exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people,

Affirming the urgent need to achieve a just and comprehensive settlement in the Middle East which, *inter alia*, provides for peaceful coexistence for all States in the region,

Recalling its resolution 3237 (XXIX) of 22 November 1974 on the observer status for the Palestine Liberation Organization and subsequent relevant resolutions,

1. *Acknowledges* the proclamation of the State of Palestine by the Palestine National Council on 15 November 1988;

2. *Affirms* the need to enable the Palestinian people to exercise their sovereignty over their territory occupied since 1967;

3. *Decides* that, effective as of 15 December 1988, the designation "Palestine" should be used in place of the designation "Palestine Liberation Organization" in the United Nations system, without prejudice to the observer status and functions of the Palestine Liberation Organization within the United Nations system, in conformity with relevant United Nations resolutions and practice;

4. *Requests* the Secretary-General to take the necessary action to implement the present resolution.

82nd plenary meeting
15 December 1988

RESOLUTIONS

RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED WITHOUT REFERENCE TO A MAIN COMMITTEE

CONTENTS

Resolution No.	Title	Item	Date of adoption	Page
43/233	Question of Palestine (A/43/L.55 and Add.1)	37	20 April 1989	1

43/233. Question of Palestine

The General Assembly,

Having considered the item entitled "Question of Palestine",

Guided by the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the provisions of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,¹

Gravely concerned at and alarmed by the deteriorating situation in the Palestinian territory occupied by Israel since 1967, including Jerusalem,

Expressing its profound shock at the latest action of members of the Israeli armed forces on 13 April 1989, which resulted in the killing and wounding of Palestinian civilians in the town of Nahalin,

Having considered the statement of the Secretary-General on 13 April 1989 relative to that raid,

Aware that Israel, the occupying Power, has imposed limitations on Palestinian Muslims that restrict their participation in the life of their community and in the observance of their religious rites and obligations,

Taking into account the need to consider means for the impartial protection of the Palestinian civilian population under Israeli occupation,

Considering that the current policies and practices of Israel, the occupying Power, in the occupied Palestinian territory are bound to have grave consequences for the endeavours to achieve a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East,

Reaffirming once again that the Geneva Convention Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949,² is applicable to the Palestinian and

other Arab territories occupied by Israel, including Jerusalem,

1. *Condemns* those policies and practices of Israel, the occupying Power, which violate the human rights of the Palestinian people in the occupied territory, including the right of freedom of worship, and, in particular, the opening of fire by Israeli armed forces, which has resulted in the killing and wounding of defenceless Palestinian civilians, and specifically the latest action of members of the Israeli armed forces against the defenceless civilians in the Palestinian town of Nahalin;

2. *Demands* that Israel, the occupying Power, abide scrupulously by the Geneva Convention Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, and that it desist immediately from those policies and practices which are in violation of the provisions of the Convention;

3. *Requests* the Security Council to consider with urgency the situation in the occupied Palestinian territory with a view to considering measures needed to provide international protection to the Palestinian civilians in the Palestinian territory occupied by Israel since 1967, including Jerusalem;

4. *Stresses* the urgent need to expedite the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, under the auspices of the United Nations and in conformity with the provisions of General Assembly resolution 43/176 of 15 December 1988;

5. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit periodic reports on developments in the occupied Palestinian territory.

94th plenary meeting
20 April 1989

¹ Resolution 217 A (III).

² United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 75, No. 973.

(a) To refrain from supplying Israel with any weapons and related equipment and to suspend any military assistance that Israel receives from them;

(b) To refrain from acquiring any weapons or military equipment from Israel;

(c) To suspend economic, financial and technological assistance to and co-operation with Israel;

(d) To sever diplomatic, trade and cultural relations with Israel;

14. *Reiterates its call* to all Member States to cease forthwith, individually and collectively, all dealings with Israel in order totally to isolate it in all fields;

15. *Urges non-member States* to act in accordance with the provisions of the present resolution;

16. *Calls upon* the specialized agencies and other international organizations to conform their relations with Israel to the terms of the present resolution;

17. *Requests* the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its forty-fifth session on the implementation of the present resolution.

73rd plenary meeting
4 December 1989

C

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 36/120 E of 10 December 1981, 37/123 C of 16 December 1982, 38/180 C of 19 December 1983, 39/146 C of 14 December 1984, 40/168 C of 16 December 1985, 41/162 C of 4 December 1986, 42/209 D of 11 December 1987 and 43/54 C of 6 December 1988, in which it determined that all legislative and administrative measures and actions taken by Israel, the occupying Power, which had altered or purported to alter the character and status of the Holy City of Jerusalem, in particular the so-called "Basic Law" on Jerusalem and the proclamation of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, were null and void and must be rescinded forthwith,

Recalling Security Council resolution 478 (1980) of 20 August 1980, in which the Council, *inter alia*, decided not to recognize the "Basic Law" and called upon those States that had established diplomatic missions at Jerusalem to withdraw such missions from the Holy City,

Having considered the report of the Secretary-General of 22 November 1989,¹⁰³

1. *Determines* that Israel's decision to impose its laws, jurisdiction and administration on the Holy City of Jerusalem is illegal and therefore null and void and has no validity whatsoever;

2. *Deplores* the transfer by some States of their diplomatic missions to Jerusalem in violation of Security Council resolution 478 (1980), and their refusal to comply with the provisions of that resolution;

3. *Calls once more upon* those States to abide by the provisions of the relevant United Nations resolutions, in conformity with the Charter of the United Nations;

4. *Requests* the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its forty-fifth session on the implementation of the present resolution.

73rd plenary meeting
4 December 1989

44/41. Question of Palestine

A

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 181 (II) of 29 November 1947, 194 (III) of 11 December 1948, 3236 (XXIX) of 22 November 1974, 3375 (XXX) and 3376 (XXX) of 10 November 1975, 31/20 of 24 November 1976, 32/40 of 2 December 1977, 33/28 of 7 December 1978, 34/65 A and B of 29 November 1979 and 34/65 C and D of 12 December 1979, ES-7/2 of 29 July 1980, 35/169 of 15 December 1980, 36/120 of 10 December 1981, ES-7/4 of 28 April 1982, ES-7/5 of 26 June 1982, ES-7/9 of 24 September 1982, 37/86 A of 10 December 1982, 38/58 A of 13 December 1983, 39/49 A of 11 December 1984, 40/96 A of 12 December 1985, 41/43 A of 2 December 1986, 42/66 A of 2 December 1987 and 43/175 A of 15 December 1988,

Having considered the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People,¹⁰⁵

1. *Expresses its appreciation* to the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for its efforts in performing the tasks assigned to it by the General Assembly;

2. *Endorses* the recommendations of the Committee contained in paragraphs 110 to 118 of its report and draws the attention of the Security Council to the fact that action on the Committee's recommendations, as repeatedly endorsed by the General Assembly at its thirty-first session and subsequently, is still awaited;

3. *Requests* the Committee to continue to keep under review the situation relating to the question of Palestine as well as the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Achievement of Palestinian Rights¹⁰⁶ and to report and make suggestions to the General Assembly or the Security Council, as appropriate;

4. *Authorizes* the Committee to continue to exert all efforts to promote the implementation of its recommendations, including representation at conferences and meetings and the sending of delegations, to make such adjustments in its approved programme of seminars and symposia and meetings for non-governmental organizations as it may consider necessary, and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its forty-fifth session and thereafter;

5. *Also requests* the Committee to continue to extend its co-operation to non-governmental organizations in their contribution towards heightening international awareness of the facts relating to the question of Palestine and creating a more favourable atmosphere for the full implementation of the Committee's recommendations, and to take the necessary steps to expand its contacts with those organizations;

6. *Requests* the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine, established under General Assembly resolution 194 (III), as well as other United Nations bodies associated with the question of Palestine, to continue to co-operate fully with the Committee and to make available to it, at its request, the relevant information and documentation which they have at their disposal;

¹⁰⁵ Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/44/35).

¹⁰⁶ Report of the International Conference on the Question of Palestine, Geneva, 29 August-7 September 1983 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.83.L.21), chap. I, sect. B.

7. *Decides* to circulate the report of the Committee to all the competent bodies of the United Nations and urges them to take the necessary action, as appropriate, in accordance with the Committee's programme of implementation;

8. *Requests* the Secretary-General to continue to provide the Committee with all the necessary facilities for the performance of its tasks.

*76th plenary meeting
6 December 1989*

B

The General Assembly,

Having considered the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People,¹⁰⁵

Taking note, in particular, of the relevant information contained in paragraphs 64 to 93 of that report,

Recalling its resolutions 32/40 B of 2 December 1977, 33/28 C of 7 December 1978, 34/65 D of 12 December 1979, 35/169 D of 15 December 1980, 36/120 B of 10 December 1981, 37/86 B of 10 December 1982, 38/58 B of 13 December 1983, 39/49 B of 11 December 1984, 40/96 B of 12 December 1985, 41/43 B of 2 December 1986, 42/66 B of 2 December 1987 and 43/175 B of 15 December 1988,

1. *Takes note with appreciation* of the action taken by the Secretary-General in compliance with General Assembly resolution 43/175 B;

2. *Requests* the Secretary-General to provide the Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat with the necessary resources and to ensure that it continues to discharge the tasks detailed in paragraph 1 of General Assembly resolution 32/40 B, paragraph 2 (b) of resolution 34/65 D, paragraph 3 of resolution 36/120 B, paragraph 3 of resolution 38/58 B, paragraph 3 of resolution 40/96 B and paragraph 2 of resolution 42/66 B, in consultation with the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and under its guidance;

3. *Also requests* the Secretary-General to ensure the continued co-operation of the Department of Public Information and other units of the Secretariat in enabling the Division for Palestinian Rights to perform its tasks and in covering adequately the various aspects of the question of Palestine;

4. *Invites* all Governments and organizations to lend their co-operation to the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and the Division for Palestinian Rights in the performance of their tasks;

5. *Takes note with appreciation* of the action taken by Member States to observe annually on 29 November the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

*76th plenary meeting
6 December 1989*

C

The General Assembly,

Having considered the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People,¹⁰⁵

Taking note, in particular, of the information contained in paragraphs 94 to 109 of that report,

Recalling its resolutions 43/175 C, 43/176 and 43/177 of 15 December 1988,

Convinced that the world-wide dissemination of accurate and comprehensive information and the role of non-governmental organizations and institutions remain of vital importance in heightening awareness of and support for the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination and to the establishment of an independent sovereign Palestinian State.

1. *Takes note with appreciation* of the action taken by the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat in compliance with General Assembly resolution 43/175 C;

2. *Requests* the Department of Public Information, in full co-operation and co-ordination with the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, to continue its special information programme on the question of Palestine for the biennium 1990-1991, with particular emphasis on public opinion in Europe and North America and, in particular:

(a) To disseminate information on all the activities of the United Nations system relating to the question of Palestine, including reports of the work carried out by the relevant United Nations organs;

(b) To continue to issue and update publications on the various aspects of the question of Palestine, including Israeli violations of the human rights of the Arab inhabitants of the occupied territories as reported by the relevant United Nations organs;

(c) To expand its audio-visual material on the question of Palestine, including the production of special series of radio programmes and television broadcasts;

(d) To organize fact-finding news missions to the area for journalists;

(e) To organize regional and national encounters for journalists.

*76th plenary meeting
6 December 1989*

44/42. Question of Palestine

The General Assembly,

Having considered the report of the Secretary-General of 16 November 1989,¹⁰²

Having heard the statement made on 29 November 1989 by the chairman of the observer delegation of Palestine,¹⁰⁷

Stressing that achieving a comprehensive settlement of the Middle East conflict, the core of which is the question of Palestine, will constitute a significant contribution to international peace and security,

Aware of the overwhelming support for the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East,

Noting with appreciation the endeavours of the Secretary-General to achieve the convening of the Conference,

¹⁰² See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-fourth Session, Plenary Meetings, 67th meeting (A/44/PV.67)*.

7. *Decides* to circulate the report of the Committee to all the competent bodies of the United Nations and urges them to take the necessary action, as appropriate, in accordance with the Committee's programme of implementation;

8. *Requests* the Secretary-General to continue to provide the Committee with all the necessary facilities for the performance of its tasks.

*76th plenary meeting
6 December 1989*

B

The General Assembly,

Having considered the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People,¹⁰⁵

Taking note, in particular, of the relevant information contained in paragraphs 64 to 93 of that report,

Recalling its resolutions 32/40 B of 2 December 1977, 33/28 C of 7 December 1978, 34/65 D of 12 December 1979, 35/169 D of 15 December 1980, 36/120 B of 10 December 1981, 37/86 B of 10 December 1982, 38/58 B of 13 December 1983, 39/49 B of 11 December 1984, 40/96 B of 12 December 1985, 41/43 B of 2 December 1986, 42/66 B of 2 December 1987 and 43/175 B of 15 December 1988,

1. *Takes note with appreciation* of the action taken by the Secretary-General in compliance with General Assembly resolution 43/175 B;

2. *Requests* the Secretary-General to provide the Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat with the necessary resources and to ensure that it continues to discharge the tasks detailed in paragraph 1 of General Assembly resolution 32/40 B, paragraph 2 (b) of resolution 34/65 D, paragraph 3 of resolution 36/120 B, paragraph 3 of resolution 38/58 B, paragraph 3 of resolution 40/96 B and paragraph 2 of resolution 42/66 B, in consultation with the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and under its guidance;

3. *Also requests* the Secretary-General to ensure the continued co-operation of the Department of Public Information and other units of the Secretariat in enabling the Division for Palestinian Rights to perform its tasks and in covering adequately the various aspects of the question of Palestine;

4. *Invites* all Governments and organizations to lend their co-operation to the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and the Division for Palestinian Rights in the performance of their tasks;

5. *Takes note with appreciation* of the action taken by Member States to observe annually on 29 November the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

*76th plenary meeting
6 December 1989*

C

The General Assembly,

Having considered the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People,¹⁰⁵

Taking note, in particular, of the information contained in paragraphs 94 to 109 of that report,

Recalling its resolutions 43/175 C, 43/176 and 43/177 of 15 December 1988,

Convinced that the world-wide dissemination of accurate and comprehensive information and the role of non-governmental organizations and institutions remain of vital importance in heightening awareness of and support for the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination and to the establishment of an independent sovereign Palestinian State.

1. *Takes note with appreciation* of the action taken by the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat in compliance with General Assembly resolution 43/175 C;

2. *Requests* the Department of Public Information, in full co-operation and co-ordination with the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, to continue its special information programme on the question of Palestine for the biennium 1990-1991, with particular emphasis on public opinion in Europe and North America and, in particular:

(a) To disseminate information on all the activities of the United Nations system relating to the question of Palestine, including reports of the work carried out by the relevant United Nations organs;

(b) To continue to issue and update publications on the various aspects of the question of Palestine, including Israeli violations of the human rights of the Arab inhabitants of the occupied territories as reported by the relevant United Nations organs;

(c) To expand its audio-visual material on the question of Palestine, including the production of special series of radio programmes and television broadcasts;

(d) To organize fact-finding news missions to the area for journalists;

(e) To organize regional and national encounters for journalists.

*76th plenary meeting
6 December 1989*

44/42. Question of Palestine

The General Assembly,

Having considered the report of the Secretary-General of 16 November 1989,¹⁰²

Having heard the statement made on 29 November 1989 by the chairman of the observer delegation of Palestine,¹⁰⁷

Stressing that achieving a comprehensive settlement of the Middle East conflict, the core of which is the question of Palestine, will constitute a significant contribution to international peace and security,

Aware of the overwhelming support for the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East,

Noting with appreciation the endeavours of the Secretary-General to achieve the convening of the Conference,

¹⁰² See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-fourth Session, Plenary Meetings, 67th meeting (A/44/PV.67)*.

Preoccupied by the increasingly serious situation in the occupied Palestinian territory as a result of persistent policies and practices of Israel, the occupying Power, and by the continuing lack of progress in achieving peace in the Middle East,

Aware of the ongoing uprising (*intifadah*) of the Palestinian people since 9 December 1987, aimed at ending Israeli occupation of Palestinian territory occupied since 1967,

1. *Reaffirms* the urgent need to achieve a just and comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict, the core of which is the question of Palestine;

2. *Calls once again* for the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, under the auspices of the United Nations, with the participation of all parties to the conflict, including the Palestine Liberation Organization, on an equal footing, and the five permanent members of the Security Council, based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) of 22 November 1967 and 338 (1973) of 22 October 1973 and the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people, primarily the right to self-determination;

3. *Reaffirms* the following principles for the achievement of comprehensive peace:

(a) The withdrawal of Israel from the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, and from the other occupied Arab territories;

(b) Guaranteeing arrangements for security of all States in the region, including those named in resolution 181 (II) of 29 November 1947, within secure and internationally recognized boundaries;

(c) Resolving the problem of the Palestine refugees in conformity with General Assembly resolution 194 (III) of 11 December 1948, and subsequent relevant resolutions;

(d) Dismantling the Israeli settlements in the territories occupied since 1967;

(e) Guaranteeing freedom of access to Holy Places, religious buildings and sites;

4. *Notes* the expressed desire and endeavours to place the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, under the supervision of the United Nations for a limited period, as part of the peace process;

5. *Once again invites* the Security Council to consider measures needed to convene the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, including the establishment of a preparatory committee, and to consider guarantees for security measures agreed upon by the Conference for all States in the region;

6. *Requests* the Secretary-General to continue his efforts with the parties concerned, and in consultation with the Security Council, to facilitate the convening of the Conference, and to submit progress reports on developments in this matter.

76th plenary meeting
6 December 1989

44/43. Judgment of the International Court of Justice of 27 June 1986 concerning military and paramilitary activities in and against Nicaragua: need for immediate compliance

The General Assembly,

Recalling Security Council resolutions 530 (1983) of 19 May 1983 and 562 (1985) of 10 May 1985, and General

Assembly resolutions 41/31 of 3 November 1986, 42/18 of 12 November 1987 and 43/11 of 25 October 1988,

Aware that, under the Charter of the United Nations, the International Court of Justice is the principal judicial organ of the United Nations and that each Member undertakes to comply with the decision of the Court in any case to which it is a party,

Considering that Article 36, paragraph 6, of the Statute of the Court provides that "in the event of a dispute as to whether the Court has jurisdiction, the matter shall be settled by the decision of the Court",

Recalling the Judgment of the International Court of Justice of 27 June 1986 in the case of "Military and Paramilitary Activities in and against Nicaragua",¹⁰⁸

Having considered the events that have taken place in and against Nicaragua since the Judgment was rendered, in particular the continued financing by the United States of America of military and other activities in and against Nicaragua,

Emphasizing the obligation of States, under customary international law, not to intervene in the internal affairs of other States,

1. *Reiterates once again its urgent call* for full and immediate compliance with the Judgment of the International Court of Justice of 27 June 1986 in the case of "Military and Paramilitary Activities in and against Nicaragua" in conformity with the relevant provisions of the Charter of the United Nations;

2. *Requests* the Secretary-General to keep the General Assembly informed on the implementation of the present resolution;

3. *Decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its forty-fifth session the item entitled "Judgment of the International Court of Justice of 27 June 1986 concerning military and paramilitary activities in and against Nicaragua: need for immediate compliance".

77th plenary meeting
7 December 1989

44/100. Programme of Activities in Observance of the Thirtieth Anniversary of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples

The General Assembly,

Having considered the relevant chapter of the report of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples,¹⁰⁹

Bearing in mind that the year 1990 will mark the thirtieth anniversary of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples,¹¹⁰

Emphasizing the importance of the occasion to evaluate the progress achieved during the period in the process of decolonization, in particular in the implementation of the Declaration during the past thirty years, as well as the role played by the United Nations and its system of organizations in that regard, and to formulate specific measures for

¹⁰⁸ Military and Paramilitary Activities in and against Nicaragua (Nicaragua v. United States of America), Merits, Judgment, *I.C.J. Reports 1986*, p. 14.

¹⁰⁹ *Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 23 (A/44/23)*, chap. II.

¹¹⁰ Resolution 1514 (XV)

9. *Also expresses support* for the aspirations of the States of the zone to make it an active instrument for fostering human rights, fundamental freedoms, racial equality, justice and liberty as integral elements of peace, development and co-operation at national and regional levels;

10. *Requests* the Secretary-General to keep the implementation of resolution 41/11 under review and to submit a report to the General Assembly at its forty-sixth session, taking into account, *inter alia*, the views expressed by Member States;

11. *Decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its forty-sixth session the item entitled "Zone of peace and co-operation of the South Atlantic".

*47th plenary meeting
27 November 1990*

45/67. Question of Palestine

A

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 181 (II) of 29 November 1947, 194 (III) of 11 December 1948, 3236 (XXIX) of 22 November 1974, 3375 (XXX) and 3376 (XXX) of 10 November 1975, 31/20 of 24 November 1976, 32/40 of 2 December 1977, 33/28 of 7 December 1978, 34/65 A and B of 29 November 1979 and 34/65 C and D of 12 December 1979, ES-7/2 of 29 July 1980, 35/169 of 15 December 1980, 36/120 of 10 December 1981, ES-7/4 of 28 April 1982, 38/58 A of 13 December 1983, 39/49 A of 11 December 1984, 40/96 A of 12 December 1985, 41/43 A of 2 December 1986, 42/66 A of 2 December 1987, 43/175 A of 15 December 1988 and 44/41 A of 6 December 1989,

Having considered the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People,⁶⁰

1. *Expresses its appreciation* to the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for its efforts in performing the tasks assigned to it by the General Assembly;

2. *Endorses* the recommendations of the Committee contained in paragraphs 93 to 102 of its report and draws the attention of the Security Council to the fact that action on the Committee's recommendations, as repeatedly endorsed by the General Assembly at its thirty-first session and subsequently, is still awaited;

3. *Requests* the Committee to continue to keep under review the situation relating to the question of Palestine as well as the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Achievement of Palestinian Rights⁶¹ and to report and make suggestions to the General Assembly or the Security Council, as appropriate;

4. *Authorizes* the Committee to continue to exert all efforts to promote the implementation of its recommendations, including representation at conferences and meetings and the sending of delegations, to make

⁶⁰ *Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/45/35).*

⁶¹ *Report of the International Conference on the Question of Palestine, Geneva, 29 August-7 September 1983* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.83.I.21), chap. I, sect. B.

such adjustments in its approved programme of seminars and symposia and meetings for non-governmental organizations as it may consider necessary, to give special emphasis to the need to mobilize public opinion in Europe and North America, and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its forty-sixth session and thereafter;

5. *Also requests* the Committee to continue to extend its co-operation to non-governmental organizations in their contribution towards heightening international awareness of the facts relating to the question of Palestine and creating a more favourable atmosphere for the full implementation of the Committee's recommendations, and to take the necessary steps to expand its contacts with those organizations;

6. *Requests* the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine, established under General Assembly resolution 194 (III), as well as other United Nations bodies associated with the question of Palestine, to continue to co-operate fully with the Committee and to make available to it, at its request, the relevant information and documentation which they have at their disposal;

7. *Decides* to circulate the report of the Committee to all the competent bodies of the United Nations and urges them to take the necessary action, as appropriate, in accordance with the Committee's programme of implementation;

8. *Requests* the Secretary-General to continue to provide the Committee with all the necessary facilities for the performance of its tasks.

*59th plenary meeting
6 December 1990*

B

The General Assembly,

Having considered the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People,⁶⁰

Taking note, in particular, of the relevant information contained in paragraphs 52 to 78 of that report,

Recalling its resolutions 32/40 B of 2 December 1977, 33/28 C of 7 December 1978, 34/65 D of 12 December 1979, 35/169 D of 15 December 1980, 36/120 B of 10 December 1981, 37/86 B of 10 December 1982, 38/58 B of 13 December 1983, 39/49 B of 11 December 1984, 40/96 B of 12 December 1985, 41/43 B of 2 December 1986, 42/66 B of 2 December 1987, 43/175 B of 15 December 1988 and 44/41 B of 6 December 1989,

1. *Takes note with appreciation* of the action taken by the Secretary-General in compliance with General Assembly resolution 44/41 B;

2. *Requests* the Secretary-General to provide the Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat with the necessary resources and to ensure that it continues to discharge the tasks detailed in paragraph 1 of General Assembly resolution 32/40 B, paragraph 2 (b) of resolution 34/65 D, paragraph 3 of resolution 36/120 B, paragraph 3 of resolution 38/58 B, paragraph 3 of resolution 40/96 B, paragraph 2 of resolution 42/66 B and paragraph 2 of resolution 44/41 B, in consultation with the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and under its guidance;

3. *Also requests* the Secretary-General to ensure the continued co-operation of the Department of Public Information and other units of the Secretariat in enabling the Division for Palestinian Rights to perform its tasks and in covering adequately the various aspects of the question of Palestine;

4. *Invites* all Governments and organizations to lend their co-operation to the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and the Division for Palestinian Rights in the performance of their tasks;

5. *Takes note with appreciation* of the action taken by Member States to observe annually on 29 November the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

59th plenary meeting
6 December 1990

C

The General Assembly,

Having considered the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People,⁶⁰

Taking note, in particular, of the information contained in paragraphs 79 to 92 of that report,

Recalling its resolutions 44/41 C and 44/42 of 6 December 1989,

Convinced that the world-wide dissemination of accurate and comprehensive information and the role of non-governmental organizations and institutions remain of vital importance in heightening awareness of and support for the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination and to the establishment of an independent sovereign Palestinian State,

1. *Takes note with appreciation* of the action taken by the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat in compliance with General Assembly resolution 44/41 C;

2. *Requests* the Department of Public Information, in full co-operation and co-ordination with the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, to continue its special information programme on the question of Palestine for the remainder of the biennium 1990-1991, with particular emphasis on public opinion in Europe and North America and, in particular:

(a) To disseminate information on all the activities of the United Nations system relating to the question of Palestine, including reports of the work carried out by the relevant United Nations organs;

(b) To continue to issue and update publications on the various aspects of the question of Palestine, including Israeli violations of the human rights of the Palestinian people and other Arab inhabitants of the occupied territories as reported by the relevant United Nations organs;

(c) To expand its audio-visual material on the question of Palestine, including the production of such material;

(d) To organize and promote fact-finding news missions for journalists to the area, including to the occupied territories;

(e) To organize regional and national encounters for journalists.

59th plenary meeting
6 December 1990

45/68. International Peace Conference on the Middle East

The General Assembly,

Having considered the report of the Secretary-General of 12 November 1990,⁶²

Having heard the statement made on 3 December 1990 by the chairman of the observer delegation of Palestine,⁶³

Stressing that achieving a comprehensive settlement of the Middle East conflict, the core of which is the question of Palestine, will constitute a significant contribution to international peace and security,

Aware of the overwhelming support for the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East,

Noting with appreciation the endeavours of the Secretary-General to achieve the convening of the Conference,

Preoccupied by the increasingly serious situation in the occupied Palestinian territory as a result of persistent policies and practices of Israel, the occupying Power, and by the continuing lack of progress in achieving peace in the Middle East,

Aware of the ongoing uprising (*intifadah*) of the Palestinian people since 9 December 1987, aimed at ending Israeli occupation of Palestinian territory occupied since 1967,

1. *Reaffirms* the urgent need to achieve a just and comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict, the core of which is the question of Palestine;

2. *Calls once again* for the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, under the auspices of the United Nations, with the participation of all parties to the conflict, including the Palestine Liberation Organization, on an equal footing, and the five permanent members of the Security Council, based on Council resolutions 242 (1967) of 22 November 1967 and 338 (1973) of 22 October 1973 and the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people, primarily the right to self-determination;

3. *Reaffirms* the following principles for the achievement of comprehensive peace:

(a) The withdrawal of Israel from the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, and from the other occupied Arab territories;

(b) Guaranteeing arrangements for security of all States in the region, including those named in resolution 181 (II) of 29 November 1947, within secure and internationally recognized boundaries;

(c) Resolving the problem of the Palestine refugees in conformity with General Assembly resolution 194

⁶² A/45/709-S/21929; see *Official Records of the Security Council, Forty-fifth Year, Supplement for October, November and December 1990*, document S/21929.

⁶³ See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-fifth Session, Plenary Meetings*, 53rd meeting (A/45/PV.53).

3. *Also requests* the Secretary-General to ensure the continued co-operation of the Department of Public Information and other units of the Secretariat in enabling the Division for Palestinian Rights to perform its tasks and in covering adequately the various aspects of the question of Palestine;

4. *Invites* all Governments and organizations to lend their co-operation to the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and the Division for Palestinian Rights in the performance of their tasks;

5. *Takes note with appreciation* of the action taken by Member States to observe annually on 29 November the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

59th plenary meeting
6 December 1990

C

The General Assembly,

Having considered the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People,⁶⁰

Taking note, in particular, of the information contained in paragraphs 79 to 92 of that report,

Recalling its resolutions 44/41 C and 44/42 of 6 December 1989,

Convinced that the world-wide dissemination of accurate and comprehensive information and the role of non-governmental organizations and institutions remain of vital importance in heightening awareness of and support for the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination and to the establishment of an independent sovereign Palestinian State,

1. *Takes note with appreciation* of the action taken by the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat in compliance with General Assembly resolution 44/41 C;

2. *Requests* the Department of Public Information, in full co-operation and co-ordination with the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, to continue its special information programme on the question of Palestine for the remainder of the biennium 1990-1991, with particular emphasis on public opinion in Europe and North America and, in particular:

(a) To disseminate information on all the activities of the United Nations system relating to the question of Palestine, including reports of the work carried out by the relevant United Nations organs;

(b) To continue to issue and update publications on the various aspects of the question of Palestine, including Israeli violations of the human rights of the Palestinian people and other Arab inhabitants of the occupied territories as reported by the relevant United Nations organs;

(c) To expand its audio-visual material on the question of Palestine, including the production of such material;

(d) To organize and promote fact-finding news missions for journalists to the area, including to the occupied territories;

(e) To organize regional and national encounters for journalists.

59th plenary meeting
6 December 1990

45/68. International Peace Conference on the Middle East

The General Assembly,

Having considered the report of the Secretary-General of 12 November 1990,⁶²

Having heard the statement made on 3 December 1990 by the chairman of the observer delegation of Palestine,⁶³

Stressing that achieving a comprehensive settlement of the Middle East conflict, the core of which is the question of Palestine, will constitute a significant contribution to international peace and security,

Aware of the overwhelming support for the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East,

Noting with appreciation the endeavours of the Secretary-General to achieve the convening of the Conference,

Preoccupied by the increasingly serious situation in the occupied Palestinian territory as a result of persistent policies and practices of Israel, the occupying Power, and by the continuing lack of progress in achieving peace in the Middle East,

Aware of the ongoing uprising (*intifadah*) of the Palestinian people since 9 December 1987, aimed at ending Israeli occupation of Palestinian territory occupied since 1967,

1. *Reaffirms* the urgent need to achieve a just and comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict, the core of which is the question of Palestine;

2. *Calls once again* for the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, under the auspices of the United Nations, with the participation of all parties to the conflict, including the Palestine Liberation Organization, on an equal footing, and the five permanent members of the Security Council, based on Council resolutions 242 (1967) of 22 November 1967 and 338 (1973) of 22 October 1973 and the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people, primarily the right to self-determination;

3. *Reaffirms* the following principles for the achievement of comprehensive peace:

(a) The withdrawal of Israel from the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, and from the other occupied Arab territories;

(b) Guaranteeing arrangements for security of all States in the region, including those named in resolution 181 (II) of 29 November 1947, within secure and internationally recognized boundaries;

(c) Resolving the problem of the Palestine refugees in conformity with General Assembly resolution 194

⁶² A/45/709-S/21929; see *Official Records of the Security Council, Forty-fifth Year, Supplement for October, November and December 1990*, document S/21929.

⁶³ See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-fifth Session, Plenary Meetings*, 53rd meeting (A/45/PV.53).

(III) of 11 December 1948, and subsequent relevant resolutions;

(d) Dismantling the Israeli settlements in the territories occupied since 1967;

(e) Guaranteeing freedom of access to Holy Places, religious buildings and sites;

4. *Notes* the expressed desire and endeavours to place the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, under the supervision of the United Nations for a limited period, as part of the peace process;

5. *Once again invites* the Security Council to consider measures needed to convene the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, including the establishment of a preparatory committee, and to consider guarantees for security measures agreed upon by the Conference for all States in the region;

6. *Requests* the Secretary-General to continue his efforts with the parties concerned, and in consultation with the Security Council, to facilitate the convening of the Conference, and to submit progress reports on developments in this matter.

*59th plenary meeting
6 December 1990*

45/69. The uprising (*intifadah*) of the Palestinian people

The General Assembly,

Aware of the uprising (*intifadah*) of the Palestinian people since 9 December 1987 against Israeli occupation, which has received significant attention and sympathy from world public opinion,

Deeply concerned at the alarming situation in the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, as a result of the continued occupation by Israel, the occupying Power, and of its persistent policies and practices against the Palestinian people,

Reaffirming that the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949,⁶⁴ is applicable to the Palestinian territory occupied by Israel since 1967, including Jerusalem, and to the other occupied Arab territories,

Expressing its profound shock at the continued measures by Israel, the occupying Power, including the killing and wounding of Palestinian civilians, and at the recent acts of violence committed by the Israeli security forces, which took place on 8 October 1990 at the Haram al-Sharif in Jerusalem, resulting in injuries and loss of human lives,

Stressing the need to promote international protection to the Palestinian civilians in the occupied Palestinian territory,

Recognizing the need for increased support to, aid for and solidarity with the Palestinian people under Israeli occupation,

⁶⁴ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 75, No. 973.

Having considered the recommendations contained in the reports of the Secretary-General of 21 January 1988⁶⁵ and 31 October 1990,⁶⁶

Recalling its relevant resolutions as well as the relevant Security Council resolutions,

1. *Condemns* those policies and practices of Israel, the occupying Power, which violate the human rights of the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and, in particular, such acts as the opening of fire by the Israeli army and settlers that result in the killing and wounding of defenceless Palestinian civilians, the beating and breaking of bones, the deportation of Palestinian civilians, the imposition of restrictive economic measures, the demolition of houses, the ransacking of real or personal property belonging individually or collectively to private persons, collective punishment and detentions, and so forth;

2. *Demands* that Israel, the occupying Power, abide scrupulously by the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, and desist immediately from those policies and practices which are in violation of the provisions of the Convention;

3. *Calls upon* all the High Contracting Parties to the Convention to ensure respect by Israel, the occupying Power, for the Convention in all circumstances, in conformity with their obligation under article 1 thereof;

4. *Strongly deplores* the continuing disregard by Israel, the occupying Power, of the relevant decisions of the Security Council;

5. *Reaffirms* that the occupation by Israel of the Palestinian territory since 1967, including Jerusalem, and of the other Arab territories in no way changes the legal status of those territories;

6. *Requests* the Security Council to examine with urgency the situation in the occupied Palestinian territory with a view to considering measures needed to provide international protection to the Palestinian civilians in the Palestinian territory occupied by Israel since 1967, including Jerusalem;

7. *Invites* Member States, the organizations of the United Nations system, governmental, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, and the mass communications media to continue and enhance their support for the Palestinian people;

8. *Requests* the Secretary-General to examine the present situation in the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, by all means available to him and to submit periodic reports thereon, the first such report as soon as possible.

*59th plenary meeting
6 December 1990*

⁶⁵ S/19443; see *Official Records of the Security Council, Forty-third Year, Supplement for January, February and March 1988*, document S/19443.

⁶⁶ S/21919 and Corr.1; see *Official Records of the Security Council, Forty-fifth Year, Supplement for October, November and December 1990*, document S/21919.

take concrete measures through all the media at his disposal, including publications, radio and television, to give widespread and continuous publicity to the work of the United Nations in the field of decolonization and, *inter alia*:

(a) To continue, in consultation with the Special Committee, to collect, prepare and disseminate basic material, studies and articles relating to the problems of decolonization and, in particular, to continue to publish the periodical *Objective: Justice* and other publications, special articles and studies, including the *Decolonization* series, and to increase the information on all the Territories under consideration by the Special Committee, selecting appropriate material for wider dissemination by reprints in various languages;

(b) To seek the full cooperation of the administering Powers in the discharge of the tasks referred to above;

(c) To intensify the decolonization-oriented activities of all United Nations information centres;

(d) To maintain a working relationship with the Organization of African Unity and appropriate regional and intergovernmental organizations, particularly in the Pacific and Caribbean regions, by holding periodic consultations and exchanging information;

(e) To solicit, in consultation with United Nations information centres, assistance in the dissemination of information on decolonization from non-governmental organizations;

(f) To continue to produce comprehensive press releases for all meetings of the Special Committee and its subsidiary bodies;

(g) To ensure that the necessary facilities and services to that end are made available;

(h) To report to the Special Committee on measures taken in the implementation of the present resolution;

4. *Requests* all States, in particular the administering Powers, as well as the specialized agencies and other organizations of the United Nations system and non-governmental organizations with a special interest in decolonization, to undertake or intensify, in cooperation with the Secretary-General and within their respective spheres of competence, the large-scale dissemination of information referred to in paragraph 2 above;

5. *Requests* the Special Committee to follow the implementation of the present resolution and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its forty-seventh session.

*68th plenary meeting
11 December 1991*

46/74. Question of Palestine

A

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 181 (II) of 29 November 1947, 194 (III) of 11 December 1948, 3236 (XXIX) of 22 November 1974, 3375 (XXX) and 3376 (XXX) of 10 November 1975, 31/20 of 24 November 1976, 32/40 of 2 December 1977, 33/28 of 7 December 1978, 34/65 A and B of 29 November 1979 and 34/65 C and D of 12 December 1979, ES-7/2 of 29 July 1980, 35/169 of 15 December 1980, 36/120 of 10 December 1981, ES-7/4 of 28 April

1982, 38/58 A of 13 December 1983, 39/49 A of 11 December 1984, 40/96 A of 12 December 1985, 41/43 A of 2 December 1986, 42/66 A of 2 December 1987, 43/175 A of 15 December 1988, 44/41 A of 6 December 1989 and 45/67 A of 6 December 1990,

Having considered the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People,⁵⁷

1. *Expresses its appreciation* to the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for its efforts in performing the tasks assigned to it by the General Assembly;

2. *Endorses* the recommendations of the Committee contained in paragraphs 87 to 95 of its report and draws the attention of the Security Council to the fact that action on the recommendations of the Committee, as repeatedly endorsed by the General Assembly at its thirty-first session and subsequently, is still awaited;

3. *Requests* the Committee to continue to keep under review the situation relating to the question of Palestine as well as the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Achievement of Palestinian Rights⁵⁸ and to report and make suggestions to the General Assembly or the Security Council, as appropriate;

4. *Authorizes* the Committee to continue to exert all efforts to promote the implementation of its recommendations, including representation at conferences and meetings and the sending of delegations, to make such adjustments in its approved programme of seminars and symposia and meetings for non-governmental organizations as it may consider necessary, to give special emphasis to the need to mobilize public opinion in Europe and North America, and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its forty-seventh session and thereafter;

5. *Also requests* the Committee to continue to extend its cooperation to non-governmental organizations in their contribution towards heightening international awareness of the facts relating to the question of Palestine and creating a more favourable atmosphere for the full implementation of the recommendations of the Committee, and to take the necessary steps to expand its contacts with those organizations;

6. *Requests* the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine, established under General Assembly resolution 194 (III), as well as other United Nations bodies associated with the question of Palestine, to continue to cooperate fully with the Committee and to make available to it, at its request, the relevant information and documentation which they have at their disposal;

7. *Decides* to circulate the report of the Committee to all the competent bodies of the United Nations and urges them to take the necessary action, as appropriate, in accordance with the programme of implementation of the Committee;

8. *Requests* the Secretary-General to continue to provide the Committee with all the necessary facilities for the performance of its tasks.

*69th plenary meeting
11 December 1991*

B

The General Assembly,

Having considered the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People,⁵⁷

Taking note, in particular, of the relevant information contained in paragraphs 53 to 74 of that report,

Recalling its resolutions 32/40 B of 2 December 1977, 33/28 C of 7 December 1978, 34/65 D of 12 December 1979, 35/169 D of 15 December 1980, 36/120 B of 10 December 1981, 37/86 B of 10 December 1982, 38/58 B of 13 December 1983, 39/49 B of 11 December 1984, 40/96 B of 12 December 1985, 41/43 B of 2 December 1986, 42/66 B of 2 December 1987, 43/175 B of 15 December 1988, 44/41 B of 6 December 1989 and 45/67 B of 6 December 1990,

1. *Takes note with appreciation* of the action taken by the Secretary-General in compliance with its resolution 45/67 B;

2. *Requests* the Secretary-General to provide the Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat with the necessary resources, including a computer-based information system, and to ensure that it continues to discharge the tasks detailed in paragraph 1 of resolution 32/40 B, paragraph 2 (b) of resolution 34/65 D, paragraph 3 of resolution 36/120 B, paragraph 3 of resolution 38/58 B, paragraph 3 of resolution 40/96 B, paragraph 2 of resolution 42/66 B and paragraph 2 of resolution 44/41 B, in consultation with the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and under its guidance;

3. *Also requests* the Secretary-General to ensure the continued cooperation of the Department of Public Information and other units of the Secretariat in enabling the Division for Palestinian Rights to perform its tasks and in covering adequately the various aspects of the question of Palestine;

4. *Invites* all Governments and organizations to lend their cooperation to the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and the Division for Palestinian Rights in the performance of their tasks;

5. *Takes note with appreciation* of the action taken by Member States to observe annually on 29 November the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

*69th plenary meeting
11 December 1991*

C

The General Assembly,

Having considered the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People,⁵⁷

Taking note, in particular, of the information contained in paragraphs 75 to 86 of that report,

Recalling its resolutions 45/67 C and 45/68 of 6 December 1990,

Convinced that the world-wide dissemination of accurate and comprehensive information and the role of non-governmental organizations and institutions remain of vital importance in heightening awareness of and support for the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to self-

determination and to the establishment of an independent sovereign Palestinian State,

1. *Takes note with appreciation* of the action taken by the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat in compliance with General Assembly resolution 45/67 C;

2. *Requests* the Department of Public Information, in full cooperation and coordination with the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, to continue, with the necessary flexibility as may be required by developments affecting the question of Palestine, its special information programme on the question of Palestine for the biennium 1992-1993, with particular emphasis on public opinion in Europe and North America and, in particular:

(a) To disseminate information on all the activities of the United Nations system relating to the question of Palestine, including reports of the work carried out by the relevant United Nations organs;

(b) To continue to issue and update publications on the various aspects of the question of Palestine, including Israeli violations of the human rights of the Palestinian people and other Arab inhabitants of the occupied territories as reported by the relevant United Nations organs;

(c) To expand its audiovisual material on the question of Palestine, including the production of such material;

(d) To organize and promote fact-finding news missions for journalists to the area, including to the occupied territories;

(e) To organize international, regional and national encounters for journalists.

*69th plenary meeting
11 December 1991*

46/75. International Peace Conference on the Middle East

The General Assembly,

Having considered the report of the Secretary-General of 8 November 1991,⁵⁹

Having heard the statement made on 21 November 1991 by the chairman of the observer delegation of Palestine,⁶⁰

Stressing that achieving a comprehensive settlement of the Middle East conflict, the core of which is the question of Palestine, will constitute a significant contribution to international peace and security,

Aware of the overwhelming support for the convening of an International Peace Conference on the Middle East and noting the endeavours of the Secretary-General in this regard,

Noting the convening at Madrid, on 30 October 1991, of the Peace Conference on the Middle East,

Preoccupied by the increasingly serious situation in the occupied Palestinian territory as a result of persistent policies and practices of Israel, the occupying Power,

Aware of the ongoing uprising (*intifadah*) of the Palestinian people since 9 December 1987, aimed at ending Israeli occupation of Palestinian territory occupied since 1967,

1. *Reaffirms* the urgent need to achieve a just and comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict, the core of which is the question of Palestine;

B

The General Assembly,

Having considered the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People,⁵⁷

Taking note, in particular, of the relevant information contained in paragraphs 53 to 74 of that report,

Recalling its resolutions 32/40 B of 2 December 1977, 33/28 C of 7 December 1978, 34/65 D of 12 December 1979, 35/169 D of 15 December 1980, 36/120 B of 10 December 1981, 37/86 B of 10 December 1982, 38/58 B of 13 December 1983, 39/49 B of 11 December 1984, 40/96 B of 12 December 1985, 41/43 B of 2 December 1986, 42/66 B of 2 December 1987, 43/175 B of 15 December 1988, 44/41 B of 6 December 1989 and 45/67 B of 6 December 1990,

1. *Takes note with appreciation* of the action taken by the Secretary-General in compliance with its resolution 45/67 B;

2. *Requests* the Secretary-General to provide the Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat with the necessary resources, including a computer-based information system, and to ensure that it continues to discharge the tasks detailed in paragraph 1 of resolution 32/40 B, paragraph 2 (b) of resolution 34/65 D, paragraph 3 of resolution 36/120 B, paragraph 3 of resolution 38/58 B, paragraph 3 of resolution 40/96 B, paragraph 2 of resolution 42/66 B and paragraph 2 of resolution 44/41 B, in consultation with the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and under its guidance;

3. *Also requests* the Secretary-General to ensure the continued cooperation of the Department of Public Information and other units of the Secretariat in enabling the Division for Palestinian Rights to perform its tasks and in covering adequately the various aspects of the question of Palestine;

4. *Invites* all Governments and organizations to lend their cooperation to the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and the Division for Palestinian Rights in the performance of their tasks;

5. *Takes note with appreciation* of the action taken by Member States to observe annually on 29 November the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

*69th plenary meeting
11 December 1991*

C

The General Assembly,

Having considered the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People,⁵⁷

Taking note, in particular, of the information contained in paragraphs 75 to 86 of that report,

Recalling its resolutions 45/67 C and 45/68 of 6 December 1990,

Convinced that the world-wide dissemination of accurate and comprehensive information and the role of non-governmental organizations and institutions remain of vital importance in heightening awareness of and support for the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to self-

determination and to the establishment of an independent sovereign Palestinian State,

1. *Takes note with appreciation* of the action taken by the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat in compliance with General Assembly resolution 45/67 C;

2. *Requests* the Department of Public Information, in full cooperation and coordination with the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, to continue, with the necessary flexibility as may be required by developments affecting the question of Palestine, its special information programme on the question of Palestine for the biennium 1992-1993, with particular emphasis on public opinion in Europe and North America and, in particular:

(a) To disseminate information on all the activities of the United Nations system relating to the question of Palestine, including reports of the work carried out by the relevant United Nations organs;

(b) To continue to issue and update publications on the various aspects of the question of Palestine, including Israeli violations of the human rights of the Palestinian people and other Arab inhabitants of the occupied territories as reported by the relevant United Nations organs;

(c) To expand its audiovisual material on the question of Palestine, including the production of such material;

(d) To organize and promote fact-finding news missions for journalists to the area, including to the occupied territories;

(e) To organize international, regional and national encounters for journalists.

*69th plenary meeting
11 December 1991*

46/75. International Peace Conference on the Middle East

The General Assembly,

Having considered the report of the Secretary-General of 8 November 1991,⁵⁹

Having heard the statement made on 21 November 1991 by the chairman of the observer delegation of Palestine,⁶⁰

Stressing that achieving a comprehensive settlement of the Middle East conflict, the core of which is the question of Palestine, will constitute a significant contribution to international peace and security,

Aware of the overwhelming support for the convening of an International Peace Conference on the Middle East and noting the endeavours of the Secretary-General in this regard,

Noting the convening at Madrid, on 30 October 1991, of the Peace Conference on the Middle East,

Preoccupied by the increasingly serious situation in the occupied Palestinian territory as a result of persistent policies and practices of Israel, the occupying Power,

Aware of the ongoing uprising (*intifadah*) of the Palestinian people since 9 December 1987, aimed at ending Israeli occupation of Palestinian territory occupied since 1967,

1. *Reaffirms* the urgent need to achieve a just and comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict, the core of which is the question of Palestine;

2. *Considers* that the convening of an International Peace Conference on the Middle East, under the auspices of the United Nations, with the participation of all parties to the conflict, including the Palestine Liberation Organization, on an equal footing, and the five permanent members of the Security Council, based on Council resolutions 242 (1967) of 22 November 1967 and 338 (1973) of 22 October 1973 and the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people, primarily the right to self-determination, would contribute to the promotion of peace in the region;

3. *Reaffirms* the following principles for the achievement of comprehensive peace:

(a) The withdrawal of Israel from the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, and from the other occupied Arab territories;

(b) Guaranteeing arrangements for security of all States in the region, including those named in resolution 181 (II) of 29 November 1947, within secure and internationally recognized boundaries;

(c) Resolving the problem of the Palestine refugees in conformity with General Assembly resolution 194 (III) of 11 December 1948, and subsequent relevant resolutions;

(d) Dismantling the Israeli settlements in the territories occupied since 1967;

(e) Guaranteeing freedom of access to Holy Places, religious buildings and sites;

4. *Welcomes* the convening at Madrid, on 30 October 1991, of the Peace Conference on the Middle East, which constitutes a significant step towards the establishment of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the region;

5. *Notes* the expressed desire and endeavours to place the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, under the supervision of the United Nations for a transitional period, as part of the peace process;

6. *Requests* the Secretary-General to continue his efforts with the parties concerned, and in consultation with the Security Council, for the promotion of peace in the region, and to submit progress reports on developments in this matter.

69th plenary meeting
11 December 1991

46/76. The uprising (*intifadah*) of the Palestinian people

The General Assembly,

Aware of the uprising (*intifadah*) of the Palestinian people since 9 December 1987 against Israeli occupation, which has received significant attention and sympathy from world public opinion,

Deeply concerned about the alarming situation in the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, as a result of the continued occupation by Israel, the occupying Power, and of its persistent policies and practices against the Palestinian people,

Reaffirming that the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949,⁶¹ is applicable to the Palestinian territory occupied by Israel since 1967, including Jerusalem, and to the other occupied Arab territories,

Expressing its profound shock at the continued measures

by Israel, the occupying Power, including the killing and wounding of Palestinian civilians, and at the acts of violence committed by the Israeli security forces, which took place on 8 October 1990 at the Haram al-Sharif in Jerusalem, resulting in injuries and loss of human lives, and on 29 December 1990 at Rafah,

Stressing the need to promote international protection to the Palestinian civilians in the occupied Palestinian territory,

Recognizing the need for increased support to, and aid for and solidarity with, the Palestinian people under Israeli occupation,

Having considered the recommendations contained in the reports of the Secretary-General of 21 January 1988,⁶² 31 October 1990⁶³ and 9 April 1991,⁶⁴

Recalling its relevant resolutions as well as the relevant Security Council resolutions, in particular Council resolution 681 (1990) of 20 December 1990, in paragraph 6 of which the Council requested "the Secretary-General, in cooperation with the International Committee of the Red Cross, to develop further the idea, expressed in his report, of convening a meeting of the High Contracting Parties to the said Convention to discuss possible measures that might be taken by them under the Convention and, for this purpose, to invite the Parties to submit their views on how the idea could contribute to the goals of the Convention, as well as on other relevant matters, and to report thereon to the Council",

1. *Condemns* those policies and practices of Israel, the occupying Power, which violate the human rights of the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and, in particular, such acts as the opening of fire by the Israeli army and settlers that result in the killing and wounding of defenceless Palestinian civilians, the beating and breaking of bones, the deportation of Palestinian civilians, the imposition of restrictive economic measures, the demolition of houses, the ransacking of real or personal property belonging individually or collectively to private persons, collective punishment and detentions, and so forth;

2. *Demands* that Israel, the occupying Power, abide scrupulously by the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, and desist immediately from those policies and practices which are in violation of the provisions of the Convention;

3. *Calls upon* all the High Contracting Parties to the Convention to ensure respect by Israel, the occupying Power, for the Convention in all circumstances, in conformity with their obligation under article 1 thereof;

4. *Urges* all the High Contracting Parties to the Geneva Convention to respond to the note verbale submitted to them by the Secretary-General in accordance with paragraph 6 of Security Council resolution 681 (1990);

5. *Strongly deplors* the continuing disregard by Israel, the occupying Power, of the relevant decisions of the Security Council;

6. *Reaffirms* that the occupation by Israel of the Palestinian territory since 1967, including Jerusalem, and of the other Arab territories in no way changes the legal status of those territories;

7. *Requests* the Security Council to examine with urgency the situation in the occupied Palestinian territory with a view to considering measures needed to provide in-



General Assembly

Distr.
GENERAL

A/RES/47/64
22 March 1993

Forty-seventh session
Agenda item 30

RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

[without reference to a Main Committee (A/47/L.35 and Add.1,
A/47/L.36 and Add.1, A/47/L.37/Rev.1 and Add.1,
A/47/L.38 and Add.1, A/47/L.39 and Add.1)]

47/64. Question of Palestine

A

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 181 (II) of 29 November 1947, 194 (III) of 11 December 1948, 3236 (XXIX) of 22 November 1974, 3375 (XXX) and 3376 (XXX) of 10 November 1975, 31/20 of 24 November 1976, 32/40 A of 2 December 1977, 33/28 A and B of 7 December 1978, 34/65 A of 29 November 1979 and 34/65 C of 12 December 1979, ES-7/2 of 29 July 1980, 35/169 A and C of 15 December 1980, 36/120 A and C of 10 December 1981, ES-7/4 of 28 April 1982, 37/86 A of 10 December 1982, 38/58 A of 13 December 1983, 39/49 A of 11 December 1984, 40/96 A of 12 December 1985, 41/43 A of 2 December 1986, 42/66 A of 2 December 1987, 43/175 A of 15 December 1988, 44/41 A of 6 December 1989, 45/67 A of 6 December 1990 and 46/74 A of 11 December 1991,

Having considered the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, 1/

Affirming that the United Nations has a permanent responsibility with respect to the question of Palestine until the question is resolved in all its aspects in a satisfactory manner in accordance with international legitimacy,

1/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/47/35).

1. Expresses its appreciation to the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for its efforts in performing the tasks assigned to it by the General Assembly;

2. Endorses the recommendations of the Committee contained in paragraphs 85 to 94 of its report 1/ and draws the attention of the Security Council to the fact that action on the recommendations of the Committee, as repeatedly endorsed by the General Assembly at its thirty-first session and subsequently, is still awaited;

3. Requests the Committee to continue to keep under review the situation relating to the question of Palestine as well as the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Achievement of Palestinian Rights 2/ and to report and make suggestions to the General Assembly or the Security Council, as appropriate;

4. Authorizes the Committee to continue to exert all efforts to promote the implementation of its recommendations, including representation at conferences and meetings and the sending of delegations, to make such adjustments in its approved programme of work as it may consider appropriate and necessary, to give special emphasis to the need to mobilize public opinion in Europe and North America, and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its forty-eighth session and thereafter;

5. Also requests the Committee to continue to extend its cooperation to non-governmental organizations in their contribution towards heightening international awareness of the facts relating to the question of Palestine and creating a more favourable atmosphere for the full implementation of the recommendations of the Committee, and to take the necessary steps to expand its contacts with those organizations;

6. Requests the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine, established under General Assembly resolution 194 (III), as well as other United Nations bodies associated with the question of Palestine, to continue to cooperate fully with the Committee and to make available to it, at its request, the relevant information and documentation which they have at their disposal;

7. Decides to circulate the report of the Committee to all the competent bodies of the United Nations and urges them to take the necessary action, as appropriate, in accordance with the programme of implementation of the Committee;

8. Requests the Secretary-General to continue to provide the Committee with all the necessary facilities for the performance of its tasks.

84th plenary meeting
11 December 1992

2/ Report of the International Conference on the Question of Palestine, Geneva, 29 August-7 September 1983 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.83.I.21), chap. I, sect. B.

B

The General Assembly,

Having considered the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, 1/

Taking note, in particular, of the relevant information contained in paragraphs 41 to 65 of that report,

Recalling its resolutions 32/40 B of 2 December 1977, 33/28 C of 7 December 1978, 34/65 D of 12 December 1979, 35/169 D of 15 December 1980, 36/120 B of 10 December 1981, 37/86 B of 10 December 1982, 38/58 B of 13 December 1983, 39/49 B of 11 December 1984, 40/96 B of 12 December 1985, 41/43 B of 2 December 1986, 42/66 B of 2 December 1987, 43/175 B of 15 December 1988, 44/41 B of 6 December 1989, 45/67 B of 6 December 1990 and 46/74 B of 11 December 1991,

1. Takes note with appreciation of the action taken by the Secretary-General in compliance with its resolution 46/74 B;
2. Requests the Secretary-General to provide the Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat with the necessary resources to strengthen its programme of research, studies and publications, through the establishment of an adequately staffed and equipped computer-based information system on the question of Palestine, and to ensure that it continues to discharge the tasks detailed in paragraph 1 of resolution 32/40 B, paragraph 2 (b) of resolution 34/65 D, paragraph 3 of resolution 36/120 B, paragraph 3 of resolution 38/58 B, paragraph 3 of resolution 40/96 B, paragraph 2 of resolution 42/66 B, paragraph 2 of resolution 44/41 B and paragraph 2 of resolution 46/74 B, in consultation with the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and under its guidance;
3. Also requests the Secretary-General to ensure the continued cooperation of the Department of Public Information and other units of the Secretariat in enabling the Division for Palestinian Rights to perform its tasks and in covering adequately the various aspects of the question of Palestine;
4. Invites all Governments and organizations to lend their cooperation to the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and the Division for Palestinian Rights in the performance of their tasks;
5. Takes note with appreciation of the action taken by Member States to observe annually on 29 November the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People and requests them to continue to give the widest possible publicity to the observance.

84th plenary meeting
11 December 1992

/...

C

The General Assembly,

Having considered the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, 1/

Taking note, in particular, of the information contained in paragraphs 66 to 84 of that report,

Recalling its resolutions 46/74 C and 46/75 of 11 December 1991,

Convinced that the world-wide dissemination of accurate and comprehensive information and the role of non-governmental organizations and institutions remain of vital importance in heightening awareness of and support for the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people,

1. Takes note with appreciation of the action taken by the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat in compliance with General Assembly resolution 46/74 C;

2. Requests the Department of Public Information, in full cooperation and coordination with the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, to continue, with the necessary flexibility as may be required by developments affecting the question of Palestine, its special information programme on the question of Palestine for the biennium 1992-1993, with particular emphasis on public opinion in Europe and North America and, in particular:

(a) To disseminate information on all the activities of the United Nations system relating to the question of Palestine, including reports of the work carried out by the relevant United Nations organs;

(b) To continue to issue and update publications on the various aspects of the question of Palestine, including Israeli violations of the human rights of the Palestinian people and other Arab inhabitants of the occupied territories as reported by the relevant United Nations organs;

(c) To expand its audiovisual material on the question of Palestine, including the production of such material;

(d) To organize and promote fact-finding news missions for journalists to the area, including the occupied territories;

(e) To organize international, regional and national encounters for journalists.

84th plenary meeting
11 December 1992

/...

D

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 43/176 of 15 December 1988, 44/42 of 6 December 1989, 45/68 of 6 December 1990 and 46/75 of 11 December 1991,

Having considered the report of the Secretary-General of 27 November 1992, 3/

Having heard the statement made on 30 November 1992 by the chairman of the observer delegation of Palestine, 4/

Stressing that achieving a comprehensive settlement of the Middle East conflict, the core of which is the question of Palestine, will constitute a significant contribution to international peace and security,

Noting the convening at Madrid, on 30 October 1991, of the Peace Conference on the Middle East and the subsequent bilateral negotiations, as well as meetings of the multilateral working groups,

Noting also that the United Nations has participated as a full, extraregional participant in the work of the multilateral working groups,

Preoccupied by the increasingly serious situation in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, as a result of persistent policies and practices of Israel, the occupying Power,

1. Reaffirms the urgent need to achieve a just and comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict, the core of which is the question of Palestine;

2. Welcomes the ongoing peace process, which started at Madrid, and expresses the hope that it will lead to the establishment of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the region;

3. Expresses the need for the United Nations to play a more active and expanded role in the current peace process;

4. Considers that the convening, at a certain stage, of an International Peace Conference in the Middle East, under the auspices of the United Nations, with the participation of all parties to the conflict, including the Palestine Liberation Organization, on an equal footing, and the five permanent members of the Security Council, based on Council resolutions 242 (1967) of 22 November 1967 and 338 (1973) of 22 October 1973 and the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people, primarily the right to self-determination, would contribute to the promotion of peace in the region;

5. Reaffirms the following principles for the achievement of comprehensive peace:

3/ A/47/716-S/24845.

4/ See Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-seventh Session, Plenary Meetings, 74th meeting (A/47/PV.74).

/...

(a) The withdrawal of Israel from the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, and from the other occupied Arab territories;

(b) Guaranteeing arrangements for peace and security of all States in the region, including those named in resolution 181 (II) of 29 November 1947, within secure and internationally recognized boundaries;

(c) Resolving the problem of the Palestine refugees in conformity with General Assembly resolution 194 (III) of 11 December 1948, and subsequent relevant resolutions;

(d) Dismantling the Israeli settlements in the territories occupied since 1967;

(e) Guaranteeing freedom of access to Holy Places, religious buildings and sites;

6. Notes the expressed desire and endeavours to place the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, under the supervision of the United Nations for a transitional period or, alternatively, to provide international protection for the Palestinian people there, as part of the peace process;

7. Requests the Secretary-General to continue his efforts with the parties concerned, and in consultation with the Security Council, for the promotion of peace in the region, and to submit progress reports on developments in this matter.

84th plenary meeting
11 December 1992

E

The General Assembly,

Aware of the uprising (intifadah) of the Palestinian people since 9 December 1987 against Israeli occupation, which has received significant attention and sympathy from world public opinion,

Deeply concerned about the alarming situation in the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, as a result of the continued occupation by Israel, the occupying Power, and of its persistent policies and practices against the Palestinian people,

Reaffirming that the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, 5/ is applicable to the Palestinian territory occupied by Israel since 1967, including Jerusalem, and to the other occupied Arab territories.

Expressing its profound shock at the continued measures by Israel, the occupying Power, including the killing and wounding of Palestinian civilians, and at the acts of violence committed by the Israeli security forces, which

5/ United Nations, Treaty Series, vol. 75, No. 973.

/...

took place on 8 October 1990 at the Haram al-Sharif in Jerusalem, resulting in injuries and loss of human lives, and on 29 December 1990 at Rafah,

Stressing the need to promote international protection to the Palestinian civilians in the occupied Palestinian territory,

Recognizing the need for increased support to, and aid for and solidarity with, the Palestinian people under Israeli occupation,

Having considered the recommendations contained in the reports of the Secretary-General of 21 January 1988, 6/ 31 October 1990 7/ and 9 April 1991, 8/

Recalling its relevant resolutions as well as the relevant Security Council resolutions, in particular Council resolution 681 (1990) of 20 December 1990, in paragraph 6 of which the Council requested "the Secretary-General, in cooperation with the International Committee of the Red Cross, to develop further the idea, expressed in his report, of convening a meeting of the High Contracting Parties to the said Convention to discuss possible measures that might be taken by them under the Convention and, for this purpose, to invite the Parties to submit their views on how the idea could contribute to the goals of the Convention, as well as on other relevant matters, and to report thereon to the Council",

1. Condemns those policies and practices of Israel, the occupying Power, which violate the human rights of the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and, in particular, such acts as the opening of fire by the Israeli army and settlers that result in the killing and wounding of defenceless Palestinian civilians, the beating and breaking of bones, the deportation of Palestinian civilians, the imposition of restrictive economic measures, the demolition of houses, the ransacking of real or personal property belonging individually or collectively to private persons, collective punishment and detentions, and so forth;

2. Demands that Israel, the occupying Power, abide scrupulously by the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, and desist immediately from those policies and practices which are in violation of the provisions of the Convention;

3. Calls upon all the High Contracting Parties to the Convention to ensure respect by Israel, the occupying Power, for the Convention in all circumstances, in conformity with their obligation under article 1 thereof;

4. Strongly deplores the continuing disregard by Israel, the occupying Power, of the relevant decisions of the Security Council;

6/ S/19443; see Official Records of the Security Council, Forty-third Year, Supplement for January, February and March 1988, document S/19443.

7/ S/21919 and Corr.1; see Official Records of the Security Council, Forty-fifth Year, Supplement for October, November and December 1990, document S/21919.

8/ S/22472; see Official Records of the Security Council, Forty-sixth Year, Supplement for April, May and June 1991, document S/22472.

5. Reaffirms that the occupation by Israel of the Palestinian territory since 1967, including Jerusalem, and of the other Arab territories in no way changes the legal status of those territories;

6. Requests the Security Council to examine with urgency the situation in the occupied Palestinian territory with a view to considering measures needed to provide international protection to the Palestinian civilians in the Palestinian territory occupied by Israel since 1967, including Jerusalem;

7. Invites Member States, the organizations of the United Nations system, governmental, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, and the mass communications media to continue and enhance their support for the Palestinian people;

8. Requests the Secretary-General to examine the present situation in the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, by all means available to him and to submit periodic reports thereon, the first such report as soon as possible.

84th plenary meeting
11 December 1992



General Assembly

Distr.
GENERAL

A/RES/48/158
26 January 1994

Forty-eighth session
Agenda item 35

RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

[without reference to a Main Committee (A/48/L.41 and Add.1,
A/48/L.42 and Add.1, A/48/L.43 and Add.1 and A/48/L.44 and Add.1)]

48/158. Question of Palestine

A

Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights
of the Palestinian People

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 181 (II) of 29 November 1947, 194 (III) of 11 December 1948, 3236 (XXIX) of 22 November 1974, 3375 (XXX) and 3376 (XXX) of 10 November 1975, 31/20 of 24 November 1976, 32/40 A of 2 December 1977, 33/28 A and B of 7 December 1978, 34/65 A of 29 November 1979 and 34/65 C of 12 December 1979, ES-7/2 of 29 July 1980, 35/169 A and C of 15 December 1980, 36/120 A and C of 10 December 1981, ES-7/4 of 28 April 1982, 37/86 A of 10 December 1982, 38/58 A of 13 December 1983, 39/49 A of 11 December 1984, 40/96 A of 12 December 1985, 41/43 A of 2 December 1986, 42/66 A of 2 December 1987, 43/175 A of 15 December 1988, 44/41 A of 6 December 1989, 45/67 A of 6 December 1990, 46/74 A of 11 December 1991 and 47/64 A of 11 December 1992,

Having considered the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, 1/

1/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/48/35).

Welcoming the signing of the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements, including its Annexes and Agreed Minutes, by the Government of the State of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization on 13 September 1993 in Washington, D.C., 2/

Reaffirming that the United Nations has a permanent responsibility with respect to the question of Palestine until the question is resolved in all its aspects in a satisfactory manner in accordance with international legitimacy,

1. Expresses its appreciation to the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for its efforts in performing the tasks assigned to it by the General Assembly;

2. Considers that the Committee can make a valuable and positive contribution to international efforts to promote the effective implementation of the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements and to mobilize international support for and assistance to the Palestinian people during the transitional period;

3. Endorses the recommendations of the Committee contained in paragraphs 85 to 96 of its report; 1/

4. Requests the Committee to continue to keep under review the situation relating to the question of Palestine and to report and make suggestions to the General Assembly or the Security Council, as appropriate;

5. Authorizes the Committee to continue to exert all efforts to promote the exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, to make such adjustments in its approved programme of work as it may consider appropriate and necessary in light of developments, to give special emphasis to the need to mobilize support for and assistance to the Palestinian people and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session and thereafter;

6. Also requests the Committee to continue to extend its cooperation to non-governmental organizations in their contribution towards heightening international awareness of the facts relating to the question of Palestine and promoting support and assistance to meet the needs of the Palestinian people, and to take the necessary steps to involve additional non-governmental organizations in its work;

7. Requests the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine, established under General Assembly resolution 194 (III), as well as other United Nations bodies associated with the question of Palestine, to continue to cooperate fully with the Committee and to make available to it, at its request, the relevant information and documentation which they have at their disposal;

8. Requests the Secretary-General to circulate the report of the Committee to all the competent bodies of the United Nations, and urges them to take the necessary action, as appropriate;

2/ A/48/486-S/26560, annex.

9. Also requests the Secretary-General to continue to provide the Committee with all the necessary facilities for the performance of its tasks.

85th plenary meeting
20 December 1993

B

Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat

The General Assembly,

Having considered the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, 1/

Taking note, in particular, of the relevant information contained in paragraphs 46 to 68 of that report,

Recalling its resolutions 32/40 B of 2 December 1977, 33/28 C of 7 December 1978, 34/65 D of 12 December 1979, 35/169 D of 15 December 1980, 36/120 B of 10 December 1981, 37/86 B of 10 December 1982, 38/58 B of 13 December 1983, 39/49 B of 11 December 1984, 40/96 B of 12 December 1985, 41/43 B of 2 December 1986, 42/66 B of 2 December 1987, 43/175 B of 15 December 1988, 44/41 B of 6 December 1989, 45/67 B of 6 December 1990, 46/74 B of 11 December 1991 and 47/64 B of 11 December 1992,

1. Notes with appreciation the action taken by the Secretary-General in compliance with its resolution 47/64 B;

2. Requests the Secretary-General to provide the Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat with the resources it requires, including the continuing development of the computer-based information system on the question of Palestine, and to ensure that it continues to discharge the tasks detailed in paragraph 1 of resolution 32/40 B, paragraph 2 (b) of resolution 34/65 D, paragraph 3 of resolution 40/96 B, paragraph 2 of resolution 42/66 B, paragraph 2 of resolution 44/41 B and paragraph 2 of resolution 46/74 B, in consultation with the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and under its guidance;

3. Also requests the Secretary-General to ensure the continued cooperation of the Department of Public Information and other units of the Secretariat in enabling the Division to perform its tasks and in covering adequately the various aspects of the question of Palestine;

4. Invites all Governments and organizations to lend their cooperation to the Committee and the Division in the performance of their tasks;

5. Notes with appreciation the action taken by Member States to observe annually on 29 November the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People and requests them to continue to give the widest possible publicity to the observance, and requests the Committee to continue to organize, as part of the observance of the Day of Solidarity, an annual

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exhibit on Palestinian rights in cooperation with the Office of the Permanent Observer for Palestine to the United Nations.

85th plenary meeting
20 December 1993

C

Department of Public Information of the Secretariat

The General Assembly,

Having considered the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, 1/

Taking note, in particular, of the information contained in paragraphs 71 to 84 of that report,

Recalling its resolution 47/64 C of 11 December 1992,

Convinced that the world-wide dissemination of accurate and comprehensive information and the role of non-governmental organizations and institutions remain of vital importance in heightening awareness of and support for the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people,

Aware of the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements, signed in Washington, D.C., on 13 September 1993 by the Government of the State of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization 2/ and of its positive implications,

1. Notes with appreciation the action taken by the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat in compliance with General Assembly resolution 47/64 C;

2. Requests the Department of Public Information, in full cooperation and coordination with the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, to continue, with the necessary flexibility as may be required by developments affecting the question of Palestine, its special information programme on the question of Palestine for the biennium 1994-1995, with particular emphasis on public opinion in Europe and North America, and in particular:

(a) To disseminate information on all the activities of the United Nations system relating to the question of Palestine, including reports of the work carried out by the relevant United Nations organizations;

(b) To continue to issue and update publications on the various aspects of the question of Palestine in all fields, including all information relating to the recent events concerning this question;

(c) To expand its audiovisual material on the question of Palestine, including the production of such material;

(d) To organize and promote fact-finding news missions for journalists to the area, including the occupied territories;

(e) To organize international, regional and national encounters for journalists;

(f) To provide, in cooperation with specialized agencies of the United Nations system, particularly the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, assistance to the Palestinian people in the field of media development.

85th plenary meeting
20 December 1993

D

Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine

The General Assembly,

Recalling its relevant resolutions, the most recent of which was resolution 47/64 D of 11 December 1992,

Having considered the report of the Secretary-General of 19 November 1993, 3/

Stressing that achieving a comprehensive settlement of the Middle East conflict, the core of which is the question of Palestine, will constitute a significant contribution to international peace and security,

Noting the convening at Madrid, on 30 October 1991, of the Peace Conference on the Middle East and the subsequent bilateral negotiations, as well as meetings of the multilateral working groups,

Noting also that the United Nations has participated as a full, extraregional participant in the work of the multilateral working groups,

Aware of the mutual recognition between the Government of the State of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization, as the representative of the Palestinian people, and the signing between the two parties of the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements 2/ in Washington, D.C., on 13 September 1993, as well as their subsequent negotiations,

Welcoming the convening of the Conference to Support Middle East Peace in Washington, D.C., on 1 October 1993,

1. Reaffirms the need to achieve a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, in all its aspects;

3/ A/48/607-S/26769.

2. Expresses its support for the ongoing peace process, which began in Madrid, and the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements, and expresses the hope that the process will lead to the establishment of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East;

3. Stresses the need for the United Nations to play a more active and expanded role in the current peace process and in the implementation of the Declaration of Principles;

4. Urges Member States to provide economic and technical assistance to the Palestinian people;

5. Also stresses the upcoming negotiations on the final settlement, and reaffirms the following principles for the achievement of a final settlement and comprehensive peace:

(a) The realization of the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people, primarily the right to self-determination;

(b) The withdrawal of Israel from the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, and from the other occupied Arab territories;

(c) Guaranteeing arrangements for peace and security of all States in the region, including those named in resolution 181 (II) of 29 November 1947, within secure and internationally recognized boundaries;

(d) Resolving the problem of the Palestine refugees in conformity with General Assembly resolution 194 (III) of 11 December 1948, and subsequent relevant resolutions;

(e) Resolving the problem of the Israeli settlements, which are illegal and an obstacle to peace, in conformity with relevant United Nations resolutions;

(f) Guaranteeing freedom of access to Holy Places and religious buildings and sites;

6. Requests the Secretary-General to continue his efforts with the parties concerned, and in consultation with the Security Council, for the promotion of peace in the region and to submit progress reports on developments in this matter.

85th plenary meeting
20 December 1993



General Assembly

Distr.
GENERAL

A/RES/49/62
3 February 1995

Forty-ninth session
Agenda item 40

RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

[without reference to a Main Committee (A/49/L.53 and Add.1,
A/49/L.54 and Add.1, A/49/L.55/Rev.1, A/49/L.56 and Add.1)]

49/62. Question of Palestine

A

Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights
of the Palestinian People

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 181 (II) of 29 November 1947, 194 (III) of 11 December 1948, 3236 (XXIX) of 22 November 1974, 3375 (XXX) and 3376 (XXX) of 10 November 1975, 31/20 of 24 November 1976, 32/40 A of 2 December 1977, 33/28 A and B of 7 December 1978, 34/65 A of 29 November 1979 and 34/65 C of 12 December 1979, ES-7/2 of 29 July 1980, 35/169 A and C of 15 December 1980, 36/120 A and C of 10 December 1981, ES-7/4 of 28 April 1982, 37/86 A of 10 December 1982, 38/58 A of 13 December 1983, 39/49 A of 11 December 1984, 40/96 A of 12 December 1985, 41/43 A of 2 December 1986, 42/66 A of 2 December 1987, 43/175 A of 15 December 1988, 44/41 A of 6 December 1989, 45/67 A of 6 December 1990, 46/74 A of 11 December 1991, 47/64 A of 11 December 1992 and 48/158 A of 20 December 1993,

Having considered the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, 1/

1/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/49/35).

Welcoming the signing of the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements, including its Annexes and Agreed Minutes, by the Government of the State of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization on 13 September 1993 in Washington, 2/ as well as the subsequent implementation agreements, including the Agreement on the Gaza Strip and the Jericho Area, signed on 4 May 1994 at Cairo, 3/

Reaffirming that the United Nations has a permanent responsibility with respect to the question of Palestine until the question is resolved in all its aspects in a satisfactory manner in accordance with international legitimacy,

1. Expresses its appreciation to the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for its efforts in performing the tasks assigned to it by the General Assembly;

2. Considers that the Committee can continue to make a valuable and positive contribution to international efforts to promote the effective implementation of the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements and to mobilize international support for and assistance to the Palestinian people during the transitional period;

3. Endorses the recommendations of the Committee contained in section VII its report;

4. Requests the Committee to continue to keep under review the situation relating to the question of Palestine and to report and make suggestions to the General Assembly or the Security Council, as appropriate;

5. Authorizes the Committee to continue to exert all efforts to promote the exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, to make such adjustments in its approved programme of work as it may consider appropriate and necessary in the light of developments, to give special emphasis to the need to mobilize support and assistance for the Palestinian people, and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its fiftieth session and thereafter;

6. Also requests the Committee to continue to extend its cooperation to non-governmental organizations in their contribution towards heightening international awareness of the facts relating to the question of Palestine and promoting support and assistance to meet the needs of the Palestinian people, and to take the necessary steps to involve additional non-governmental organizations in its work;

7. Requests the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine, established under resolution 194 (III), and other United Nations bodies associated with the question of Palestine, to continue to cooperate fully with the Committee and to make available to it, at its request, the relevant information and documentation which they have at their disposal;

2/ A/48/486-S/26560, annex.

3/ A/49/180-S/1994/727, annex.

8. Requests the Secretary-General to circulate the report of the Committee to all the competent bodies of the United Nations, and urges them to take the necessary action, as appropriate;

9. Also requests the Secretary-General to continue to provide the Committee with all the necessary facilities for the performance of its tasks.

88th plenary meeting
14 December 1994

B

Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat

The General Assembly,

Having considered the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, 1/

Taking note, in particular, of the relevant information contained in Section V.B of that report,

Recalling its resolutions 32/40 B of 2 December 1977, 33/28 C of 7 December 1978, 34/65 D of 12 December 1979, 35/169 D of 15 December 1980, 36/120 B of 10 December 1981, 37/86 B of 10 December 1982, 38/58 B of 13 December 1983, 39/49 B of 11 December 1984, 40/96 B of 12 December 1985, 41/43 B of 2 December 1986, 42/66 B of 2 December 1987, 43/175 B of 15 December 1988, 44/41 B of 6 December 1989, 45/67 B of 6 December 1990, 46/74 B of 11 December 1991, 47/64 B of 11 December 1992 and 48/158 B of 20 December 1993,

1. Notes with appreciation the action taken by the Secretary-General in compliance with its resolution 48/158 B;

2. Considers that the Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat continues to make a useful and constructive contribution through the organization of seminars and meetings of non-governmental organizations, as well as through its research and monitoring activities, the preparation of studies and publications, and the collection and dissemination of information in printed and electronic form on all issues pertaining to the question of Palestine;

3. Requests the Secretary-General to continue to provide the Division with the necessary resources, including the further development of the United Nations information system on the question of Palestine, 4/ and to ensure that it continues to discharge the tasks detailed in paragraph 1 of resolution 32/40 B, paragraph 2 (b) of resolution 34/65 D, paragraph 3 of resolution 36/120 B, paragraph 3 of resolution 38/58 B, paragraph 3 of resolution 40/96 B, paragraph 2 of resolution 42/66 B, paragraph 2 of resolution 44/41 B,

4/ See Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/49/35), para. 67.

paragraph 2 of resolution 46/74 B and paragraph 2 of resolution 48/158 B, in consultation with the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and under its guidance;

4. Also requests the Secretary-General to ensure the continuing cooperation of the Department of Public Information and other units of the Secretariat in enabling the Division to perform its tasks and in covering adequately the various aspects of the question of Palestine;

5. Invites all Governments and organizations to lend their cooperation to the Committee and the Division in the performance of their tasks;

6. Notes with appreciation the action taken by Member States to observe annually on 29 November the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People and requests them to continue to give the widest possible publicity to the observance, and requests the Committee to continue to organize, as part of the observance of the Day of Solidarity, an annual exhibit on Palestinian rights in cooperation with the Permanent Observer Mission of Palestine to the United Nations.

88th plenary meeting
14 December 1994

C

Department of Public Information of the Secretariat

The General Assembly,

Having considered the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, 1/

Taking note, in particular, of the information contained in section VI of that report,

Recalling its resolution 48/158 C of 20 December 1993,

Convinced that the world-wide dissemination of accurate and comprehensive information and the role of non-governmental organizations and institutions remain of vital importance in heightening awareness of and support for the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people,

Aware of the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements signed by the Government of the State of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization on 13 September 1993 in Washington, 2/ and of the subsequent implementation agreements, including the Agreement on the Gaza Strip and the Jericho Area, signed on 4 May 1994 at Cairo, 3/ and their positive implications,

1. Notes with appreciation the action taken by the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat in compliance with resolution 48/158 C;

2. Considers that the special information programme on the question of Palestine of the Department of Public Information helps to raise the

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awareness of the international community on the question and the situation in the Middle East in general, including the achievements of the peace process, and should continue to contribute effectively to an atmosphere conducive to dialogue and supportive of the peace process;

3. Requests the Department, in full cooperation and coordination with the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, to continue, with the necessary flexibility as may be required by developments affecting the question of Palestine, its special information programme on the question of Palestine for the biennium 1994-1995, with particular emphasis on public opinion in Europe and North America, and, in particular:

(a) To disseminate information on all the activities of the United Nations system relating to the question of Palestine, including reports of the work carried out by the relevant United Nations organizations;

(b) To continue to issue and update publications on the various aspects of the question of Palestine in all fields, including materials concerning the recent developments in that regard and, in particular, the achievements of the peace process;

(c) To expand its audiovisual material on the question of Palestine, including the production of such material;

(d) To organize and promote fact-finding news missions for journalists to the area, including the occupied territories;

(e) To organize international, regional and national encounters for journalists;

(f) To provide, in cooperation with specialized agencies of the United Nations system, particularly the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, assistance to the Palestinian people in the field of media development.

88th plenary meeting
14 December 1994

D

Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine

The General Assembly,

Recalling its relevant resolutions,

Recalling also relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolutions 242 (1967) of 22 November 1967 and 338 (1973) of 22 October 1973,

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Having considered the report of the Secretary-General of 3 November 1994, submitted pursuant to the request made in its resolution 48/158 D of 20 December 1993, 5/

Convinced that achieving a final and peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, is imperative for the attainment of a comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East,

Aware that the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples is among the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations,

Affirming the principle of the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war,

Affirming also the illegality of the Israeli settlements in the territory occupied since 1967 and of Israeli actions aimed at changing the status of Jerusalem,

Affirming once more the right of all States in the region to live in peace within secure and internationally recognized borders,

Aware of the mutual recognition between the Government of the State of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization, the representative of the Palestinian people, and the signing by the two parties of the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements 2/ on 13 September 1993 in Washington, as well as the subsequent implementation agreements, including the Agreement on the Gaza Strip and the Jericho Area, 3/ signed on 4 May 1994 at Cairo,

Noting with satisfaction the withdrawal of the Israeli army, which took place in the Gaza Strip and the Jericho area in accordance with the agreements reached by the parties, and the initiation of the Palestinian Authority in those areas,

Also aware that the United Nations has participated as a full, extraregional participant in the work of the multilateral working groups of the Middle East peace process,

Noting the appointment by the Secretary-General of the United Nations Special Coordinator in the Occupied Territories,

Welcoming the convening of the Conference to Support Middle East Peace in Washington on 1 October 1993,

1. Reaffirms the necessity of achieving a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, in all its aspects;

5/ A/49/636-S/1994/1240.

2. Expresses its full support for the ongoing peace process, which began in Madrid, and the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements, as well as the subsequent implementation agreements, and expresses the hope that the process will lead to the establishment of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East;

3. Calls for the timely and scrupulous implementation of the agreements reached between the parties towards the negotiation of the final settlement;

4. Stresses the need for:

(a) The realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, primarily the right to self-determination;

(b) The withdrawal of Israel from the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967;

5. Also stresses the need for resolving the problem of the Palestine refugees in conformity with its resolution 194 (III) of 11 December 1948;

6. Urges Member States to expedite the provision of economic and technical assistance to the Palestinian people during this critical period;

7. Emphasizes the importance for the United Nations to play a more active and expanded role in the current peace process and in the implementation of the Declaration of Principles;

8. Requests the Secretary-General to continue his efforts with the parties concerned, and in consultation with the Security Council, for the promotion of peace in the region and to submit progress reports on developments in this matter.

88th plenary meeting
14 December 1994



General Assembly

Distr.
GENERAL

A/RES/50/84
7 March 1996

Fiftieth session
Agenda item 42

RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

[without reference to a Main Committee (A/50/L.47 and Add.1, A/50/L.48 and Add.1, A/50/L.49 and Add.1 and A/50/L.50 and Add.1)]

50/84. Question of Palestine

A

Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the
Palestinian People

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 181 (II) of 29 November 1947, 194 (III) of 11 December 1948, 3236 (XXIX) of 22 November 1974, 3375 (XXX) and 3376 (XXX) of 10 November 1975, 31/20 of 24 November 1976, 32/40 A of 2 December 1977, 33/28 A and B of 7 December 1978, 34/65 A of 29 November 1979 and 34/65 C of 12 December 1979, ES-7/2 of 29 July 1980, 35/169 A and C of 15 December 1980, 36/120 A and C of 10 December 1981, ES-7/4 of 28 April 1982, 37/86 A of 10 December 1982, 38/58 A of 13 December 1983, 39/49 A of 11 December 1984, 40/96 A of 12 December 1985, 41/43 A of 2 December 1986, 42/66 A of 2 December 1987, 43/175 A of 15 December 1988, 44/41 A of 6 December 1989, 45/67 A of 6 December 1990, 46/74 A of 11 December 1991, 47/64 A of 11 December 1992, 48/158 A of 20 December 1993 and 49/62 A of 14 December 1994,

Having considered the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, 1/

1/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Fiftieth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/50/35).

Welcoming the signing of the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements, including its Annexes and Agreed Minutes, by the Government of the State of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization in Washington on 13 September 1993, 2/ as well as the subsequent implementation agreements, in particular the Agreement on the Gaza Strip and the Jericho Area, signed at Cairo on 4 May 1994, 3/ and the Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, signed in Washington on 28 September 1995,

Reaffirming that the United Nations has a permanent responsibility with respect to the question of Palestine until the question is resolved in all its aspects in a satisfactory manner, in accordance with international legitimacy,

1. Expresses its appreciation to the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for its efforts in performing the tasks assigned to it by the General Assembly;

2. Considers that the Committee can continue to make a valuable and positive contribution to international efforts to promote the effective implementation of the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements and to mobilize international support for and assistance to the Palestinian people during the transitional period;

3. Endorses the recommendations of the Committee contained in chapter VII of its report;

4. Requests the Committee to continue to keep under review the situation relating to the question of Palestine and to report and make suggestions to the General Assembly or the Security Council, as appropriate;

5. Authorizes the Committee to continue to exert all efforts to promote the exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, to make such adjustments in its approved programme of work as it may consider appropriate and necessary in the light of developments, to give special emphasis to the need to mobilize support and assistance for the Palestinian people, and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its fifty-first session and thereafter;

6. Also requests the Committee to continue to extend its cooperation to non-governmental organizations in their contribution towards heightening international awareness of the facts relating to the question of Palestine and promoting support and assistance to meet the needs of the Palestinian people, and to take the necessary steps to involve additional non-governmental organizations in its work;

7. Requests the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine, established under resolution 194 (III), and other United Nations bodies associated with the question of Palestine to continue to cooperate fully with the Committee and to make available to it, at its request, the relevant information and documentation which they have at their disposal;

2/ A/48/486-S/26560, annex.

3/ A/49/180-S/1994/727, annex.

8. Requests the Secretary-General to circulate the report of the Committee to all the competent bodies of the United Nations and urges them to take the necessary action, as appropriate;

9. Also requests the Secretary-General to continue to provide the Committee with all the necessary facilities for the performance of its tasks.

93rd plenary meeting
15 December 1995

B

Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat

The General Assembly,

Having considered the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, 1/

Taking note, in particular, of the relevant information contained in chapter V.B of that report,

Recalling its resolutions 32/40 B of 2 December 1977, 33/28 C of 7 December 1978, 34/65 D of 12 December 1979, 35/169 D of 15 December 1980, 36/120 B of 10 December 1981, 37/86 B of 10 December 1982, 38/58 B of 13 December 1983, 39/49 B of 11 December 1984, 40/96 B of 12 December 1985, 41/43 B of 2 December 1986, 42/66 B of 2 December 1987, 43/175 B of 15 December 1988, 44/41 B of 6 December 1989, 45/67 B of 6 December 1990, 46/74 B of 11 December 1991, 47/64 B of 11 December 1992, 48/158 B of 20 December 1993 and 49/62 B of 14 December 1994,

1. Notes with appreciation the action taken by the Secretary-General in compliance with its resolution 49/62 B;

2. Considers that the Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat continues to make a useful and constructive contribution through the organization of seminars and meetings of non-governmental organizations, as well as through its research and monitoring activities, the preparation of studies and publications and the collection and dissemination of information in printed and electronic form on all issues pertaining to the question of Palestine;

3. Requests the Secretary-General to continue to provide the Division with the necessary resources, including for the further development of the United Nations information system on the question of Palestine, 4/ and to ensure that it continues to discharge the tasks detailed in paragraph 1 of resolution 32/40 B, paragraph 2 (b) of resolution 34/65 D, paragraph 3 of resolution 36/120 B, paragraph 3 of resolution 38/58 B, paragraph 3 of resolution 40/96 B, paragraph 2 of resolution 42/66 B, paragraph 2 of resolution 44/41 B, paragraph 2 of resolution 46/74 B and paragraph 2 of

4/ See Official Records of the General Assembly, Fiftieth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/50/35), para. 99.

resolution 48/158 B, in consultation with the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and under its guidance;

4. Also requests the Secretary-General to ensure the continued cooperation of the Department of Public Information and other units of the Secretariat in enabling the Division to perform its tasks and in covering adequately the various aspects of the question of Palestine;

5. Invites all Governments and organizations to lend their cooperation to the Committee and the Division in the performance of their tasks;

6. Notes with appreciation the action taken by Member States to observe annually on 29 November the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People and requests them to continue to give the widest possible publicity to the observance, and requests the Committee to continue to organize, as part of the observance of the Day of Solidarity, an annual exhibit on Palestinian rights in cooperation with the Permanent Observer Mission of Palestine to the United Nations.

93rd plenary meeting
15 December 1995

C

Department of Public Information of the Secretariat

The General Assembly,

Having considered the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, 1/

Taking note, in particular, of the information contained in chapter VI of that report,

Recalling its resolution 49/62 C of 14 December 1994,

Convinced that the worldwide dissemination of accurate and comprehensive information and the role of non-governmental organizations and institutions remain of vital importance in heightening awareness of and support for the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people,

Aware of the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements signed by the Government of the State of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization in Washington on 13 September 1993, 2/ and of the subsequent implementation agreements, in particular the Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip signed in Washington on 28 September 1995, and their positive implications,

1. Notes with appreciation the action taken by the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat in compliance with resolution 49/62 C;

2. Considers that the special information programme on the question of Palestine of the Department of Public Information is very useful in raising the awareness of the international community concerning the complexities of

/...

the question and the situation in the Middle East in general, including the achievements of the peace process, and that the programme is contributing effectively to an atmosphere conducive to dialogue and supportive of the peace process;

3. Requests the Department, in full cooperation and coordination with the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, to continue, with the necessary flexibility as may be required by developments affecting the question of Palestine, its special information programme on the question of Palestine for the biennium 1996-1997, with particular emphasis on public opinion in Europe and North America and, in particular:

(a) To disseminate information on all the activities of the United Nations system relating to the question of Palestine, including reports on the work carried out by the relevant United Nations organizations;

(b) To continue to issue and update publications on the various aspects of the question of Palestine in all fields, including materials concerning the recent developments in that regard and, in particular, the achievements of the peace process;

(c) To expand its audiovisual material on the question of Palestine, including the production of such material;

(d) To organize and promote fact-finding news missions for journalists to the area, including the territories under the jurisdiction of the Palestinian Authority and the occupied territories;

(e) To organize international, regional and national encounters for journalists;

(f) To provide, in cooperation with specialized agencies of the United Nations system, particularly the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, assistance to the Palestinian people in the field of media development.

93rd plenary meeting
15 December 1995

D

Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine

The General Assembly,

Recalling its relevant resolutions,

Recalling also the relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolutions 242 (1967) of 22 November 1967 and 338 (1973) of 22 October 1973,

/...

Having considered the report of the Secretary-General of 7 November 1995, submitted pursuant to the request made in its resolution 49/62 D of 14 December 1994, 5/

Convinced that achieving a final and peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, is imperative for the attainment of a comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East,

Aware that the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples is among the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations,

Affirming the principle of the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war,

Affirming also the illegality of the Israeli settlements in the territory occupied since 1967 and of Israeli actions aimed at changing the status of Jerusalem,

Affirming once again the right of all States in the region to live in peace within secure and internationally recognized borders,

Aware of the mutual recognition between the Government of the State of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization, the representative of the Palestinian people, and the signing by the two parties of the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements 2/ in Washington on 13 September 1993, as well as the subsequent implementation agreements, including the Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip signed in Washington on 28 September 1995,

Noting with satisfaction the withdrawal of the Israeli army, which took place in the Gaza Strip and the Jericho area in accordance with the agreements reached by the parties, and the initiation of the Palestinian Authority in those areas, as well as the beginning of the redeployment of the Israeli army in the rest of the West Bank,

Aware also that the United Nations has participated as a full, extraregional participant in the work of the multilateral working groups of the Middle East peace process,

Noting the appointment of the United Nations Special Coordinator in the Occupied Territories by the Secretary-General, and the positive contribution in this regard,

Welcoming the convening of the Conference to Support Middle East Peace in Washington on 1 October 1993 and all follow-up meetings,

1. Reaffirms the necessity of achieving a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, in all its aspects;

2. Expresses its full support of the ongoing peace process which began in Madrid and the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government

5/ A/50/725-S/1995/930.

Arrangements, as well as the subsequent implementation agreements, and expresses the hope that the process will lead to the establishment of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East;

3. Calls for the timely and scrupulous implementation of the agreements reached between the parties towards the negotiation of the final settlement;

4. Stresses the need for:

(a) The realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, primarily the right to self-determination;

(b) The withdrawal of Israel from the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967;

5. Stresses also the need for resolving the problem of the Palestine refugees in conformity with its resolution 194 (III) of 11 December 1948;

6. Urges Member States to expedite the provision of economic and technical assistance to the Palestinian people during this critical period;

7. Emphasizes the importance for the United Nations to play a more active and expanded role in the current peace process and in the implementation of the Declaration of Principles, including the monitoring of the forthcoming Palestinian elections;

8. Requests the Secretary-General to continue his efforts with the parties concerned, and in consultation with the Security Council, for the promotion of peace in the region and to submit progress reports on developments in this matter.

93rd plenary meeting
15 December 1995



General Assembly

Distr.: General
17 May 2004

Fifty-eighth session
Agenda item 38

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 6 May 2004

[without reference to a Main Committee (A/58/L.61/Rev.1)]

58/292. Status of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 3237 (XXIX) of 22 November 1974, 43/177 of 15 December 1988 and 52/250 of 7 July 1998,

Recalling also Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) of 22 November 1967, 338 (1973) of 22 October 1973, 1397 (2002) of 12 March 2002 and 1515 (2003) of 19 November 2003,

Recalling further the relevant provisions of international law, as well as relevant United Nations resolutions, with regard to Israeli settlements and to Occupied East Jerusalem,

Reaffirming the principle of the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force,

Noting that Palestine, in its capacity as observer and pending its attainment of full membership in the United Nations, does not present credentials to the General Assembly,

Affirming the need to enable the Palestinian people to exercise sovereignty and to achieve independence in their State, Palestine,

1. *Affirms* that the status of the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem, remains one of military occupation, and affirms, in accordance with the rules and principles of international law and relevant resolutions of the United Nations, including Security Council resolutions, that the Palestinian people have the right to self-determination and to sovereignty over their territory and that Israel, the occupying Power, has only the duties and obligations of an occupying Power under the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949¹ and the Regulations annexed to the Hague Convention respecting the Laws and Customs of War on Land, of 1907;²

¹ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 75, No. 973.

² See Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, *The Hague Conventions and Declarations of 1899 and 1907* (New York, Oxford University Press, 1915).

2. *Expresses its determination* to contribute to the achievement of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and the attainment of a just and comprehensive negotiated peace settlement in the Middle East resulting in two viable, sovereign and independent States, Israel and Palestine, based on the pre-1967 borders and living side by side in peace and security.

*87th plenary meeting
6 May 2004*



General Assembly

Distr.
GENERAL

A/RES/51/23
12 December 1996

Fifty-first session
Agenda item 35

RESOLUTION ADOPTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

[without reference to a Main Committee (A/51/L.33 and Add.1)]

51/23. Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable
Rights of the Palestinian People

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 181 (II) of 29 November 1947, 194 (III) of 11 December 1948, 3236 (XXIX) of 22 November 1974, 3375 (XXX) and 3376 (XXX) of 10 November 1975, 31/20 of 24 November 1976, 32/40 A of 2 December 1977, 33/28 A and B of 7 December 1978, 34/65 A of 29 November 1979 and 34/65 C of 12 December 1979, ES-7/2 of 29 July 1980, 35/169 A and C of 15 December 1980, 36/120 A and C of 10 December 1981, ES-7/4 of 28 April 1982, 37/86 A of 10 December 1982, 38/58 A of 13 December 1983, 39/49 A of 11 December 1984, 40/96 A of 12 December 1985, 41/43 A of 2 December 1986, 42/66 A of 2 December 1987, 43/175 A of 15 December 1988, 44/41 A of 6 December 1989, 45/67 A of 6 December 1990, 46/74 A of 11 December 1991, 47/64 A of 11 December 1992, 48/158 A of 20 December 1993, 49/62 A of 14 December 1994 and 50/84 A of 15 December 1995,

Having considered the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People,¹

Welcoming the signing of the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements, including its Annexes and Agreed Minutes, by the Government of the State of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization in Washington, D.C., on 13 September 1993,² as well as the subsequent implementation agreements, in particular the Agreement on the Gaza Strip and

¹ A/51/35.

² A/48/486-S/26560, annex.

the Jericho Area, signed at Cairo on 4 May 1994,³ and the Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, signed in Washington, D.C., on 28 September 1995,

Reaffirming that the United Nations has a permanent responsibility with respect to the question of Palestine until the question is resolved in all its aspects in a satisfactory manner in accordance with international legitimacy,

1. Expresses its appreciation to the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for its efforts in performing the tasks assigned to it by the General Assembly;

2. Considers that the Committee can continue to make a valuable and positive contribution to international efforts to promote the effective implementation of the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements and to mobilize international support for and assistance to the Palestinian people during the transitional period;

3. Endorses the recommendations of the Committee contained in chapter VII of its report;

4. Requests the Committee to continue to keep under review the situation relating to the question of Palestine and to report and make suggestions to the General Assembly or the Security Council, as appropriate;

5. Authorizes the Committee to continue to exert all efforts to promote the exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, to make such adjustments in its approved programme of work as it may consider appropriate and necessary in the light of developments, to give special emphasis to the need to mobilize support and assistance for the Palestinian people, and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its fifty-second session and thereafter;

6. Requests the Committee to continue to extend its cooperation to non-governmental organizations in their contribution towards heightening international awareness of the facts relating to the question of Palestine and promoting support and assistance to meet the needs of the Palestinian people, and to take the necessary steps to involve additional non-governmental organizations in its work;

7. Requests the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine, established under General Assembly resolution 194 (III), and other United Nations bodies associated with the question of Palestine to continue to cooperate fully with the Committee and to make available to it, at its request, the relevant information and documentation which they have at their disposal;

8. Requests the Secretary-General to circulate the report of the Committee to all the competent bodies of the United Nations, and urges them to take the necessary action, as appropriate;

³ A/49/180-S/1994/727, annex.

9. Also requests the Secretary-General to continue to provide the Committee with all the necessary facilities for the performance of its tasks.

72nd plenary meeting

4 December 1996



General Assembly

Distr.
GENERAL

A/RES/52/49
28 January 1998

Fifty-second session
Agenda item 36

RESOLUTION ADOPTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

[without reference to a Main Committee (A/52/L.49 and Add.1)]

52/49. Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 181 (II) of 29 November 1947, 194 (III) of 11 December 1948, 3236 (XXIX) of 22 November 1974, 3375 (XXX) and 3376 (XXX) of 10 November 1975, 31/20 of 24 November 1976, 32/40 A of 2 December 1977, 33/28 A and B of 7 December 1978, 34/65 A of 29 November 1979 and 34/65 C of 12 December 1979, ES-7/2 of 29 July 1980, 35/169 A and C of 15 December 1980, 36/120 A and C of 10 December 1981, ES-7/4 of 28 April 1982, 37/86 A of 10 December 1982, 38/58 A of 13 December 1983, 39/49 A of 11 December 1984, 40/96 A of 12 December 1985, 41/43 A of 2 December 1986, 42/66 A of 2 December 1987, 43/175 A of 15 December 1988, 44/41 A of 6 December 1989, 45/67 A of 6 December 1990, 46/74 A of 11 December 1991, 47/64 A of 11 December 1992, 48/158 A of 20 December 1993, 49/62 A of 14 December 1994, 50/84 A of 15 December 1995 and 51/23 of 4 December 1996,

Having considered the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People,¹

Recalling the signing of the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements, including its Annexes and Agreed Minutes, by the Government of the State of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization in Washington, D.C., on 13 September 1993,² as well as the subsequent

¹ *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-second Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/52/35).*

² A/48/486-S/26560, annex. For the final text, see *Official Records of the Security Council, Forty-eighth Year, Supplement for October, November and December 1993*, document S/26560.

implementation agreements, in particular the Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, signed in Washington, D.C., on 28 September 1995,³

Reaffirming that the United Nations has a permanent responsibility with respect to the question of Palestine until the question is resolved in all its aspects in a satisfactory manner in accordance with international legitimacy,

1. *Expresses its appreciation* to the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for its efforts in performing the tasks assigned to it by the General Assembly;

2. *Considers* that the Committee can continue to make a valuable and positive contribution to international efforts to promote the effective implementation of the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements and to mobilize international support for and assistance to the Palestinian people during the transitional period;

3. *Endorses* the recommendations of the Committee contained in chapter VII of its report;

4. *Requests* the Committee to continue to keep under review the situation relating to the question of Palestine and to report and make suggestions to the General Assembly or the Security Council, as appropriate;

5. *Authorizes* the Committee to continue to exert all efforts to promote the exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, to make such adjustments in its approved programme of work as it may consider appropriate and necessary in the light of developments, to give special emphasis to the need to mobilize support and assistance for the Palestinian people and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its fifty-third session and thereafter;

6. *Requests* the Committee to continue to extend its cooperation to non-governmental organizations in their contribution towards heightening international awareness of the facts relating to the question of Palestine and promoting support and assistance to meet the needs of the Palestinian people and to take the necessary steps to involve additional non-governmental organizations in its work;

7. *Requests* the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine, established under General Assembly resolution 194 (III), and other United Nations bodies associated with the question of Palestine to continue to cooperate fully with the Committee and to make available to it, at its request, the relevant information and documentation which they have at their disposal;

8. *Requests* the Secretary-General to circulate the report of the Committee to all the competent bodies of the United Nations, and urges them to take the necessary action, as appropriate;

9. *Also requests* the Secretary-General to continue to provide the Committee with all the necessary facilities for the performance of its tasks.

*68th plenary meeting
9 December 1997*

³ A/51/889-S/1997/357, annex. For the final text, see *Official Records of the Security Council, Fifty-second Year, Supplement for April, May and June 1997*, document S/1997/357.



General Assembly

Distr.
GENERAL

A/RES/53/39
15 January 1999

Fifty-third session
Agenda item 39

RESOLUTION ADOPTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

[without reference to a Main Committee (A/53/L.48 and Add.1)]

53/39. Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 181 (II) of 29 November 1947, 194 (III) of 11 December 1948, 3236 (XXIX) of 22 November 1974, 3375 (XXX) and 3376 (XXX) of 10 November 1975, 31/20 of 24 November 1976, 32/40 A of 2 December 1977, 33/28 A and B of 7 December 1978, 34/65 A of 29 November 1979 and 34/65 C of 12 December 1979, ES-7/2 of 29 July 1980, 35/169 A and C of 15 December 1980, 36/120 A and C of 10 December 1981, ES-7/4 of 28 April 1982, 37/86 A of 10 December 1982, 38/58 A of 13 December 1983, 39/49 A of 11 December 1984, 40/96 A of 12 December 1985, 41/43 A of 2 December 1986, 42/66 A of 2 December 1987, 43/175 A of 15 December 1988, 44/41 A of 6 December 1989, 45/67 A of 6 December 1990, 46/74 A of 11 December 1991, 47/64 A of 11 December 1992, 48/158 A of 20 December 1993, 49/62 A of 14 December 1994, 50/84 A of 15 December 1995, 51/23 of 4 December 1996 and 52/49 of 9 December 1997,

Having considered the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People,¹

Recalling the signing of the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements, including its Annexes and Agreed Minutes, by the Government of the State of Israel and the Palestine

¹ *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-third Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/53/35).*

Liberation Organization in Washington, D.C., on 13 September 1993,² as well as the subsequent implementation agreements, in particular the Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, signed in Washington, D.C., on 28 September 1995,³

Reaffirming that the United Nations has a permanent responsibility with respect to the question of Palestine until the question is resolved in all its aspects in a satisfactory manner in accordance with international legitimacy,

1. *Expresses its appreciation* to the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for its efforts in performing the tasks assigned to it by the General Assembly;

2. *Considers* that the Committee can continue to make a valuable and positive contribution to international efforts to promote the effective implementation of the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements² and to mobilize international support for and assistance to the Palestinian people during the transitional period;

3. *Endorses* the conclusions and recommendations of the Committee contained in chapter VII of its report;¹

4. *Requests* the Committee to continue to keep under review the situation relating to the question of Palestine and to report and make suggestions to the General Assembly or the Security Council, as appropriate;

5. *Authorizes* the Committee to continue to exert all efforts to promote the exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, to make such adjustments in its approved programme of work as it may consider appropriate and necessary in the light of developments, to give special emphasis to the need to mobilize support and assistance for the Palestinian people and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session and thereafter;

6. *Requests* the Committee to continue to extend its cooperation and support to Palestinian and other non-governmental organizations in order to mobilize international solidarity and support for the achievement by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights and for a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine, and to involve additional non-governmental organizations in its work;

7. *Requests* the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine, established under General Assembly resolution 194 (III), and other United Nations bodies associated with the question of Palestine to continue to cooperate fully with the Committee and to make available to it, at its request, the relevant information and documentation which they have at their disposal;

8. *Requests* the Secretary-General to circulate the report of the Committee to all the competent bodies of the United Nations, and urges them to take the necessary action, as appropriate;

² A/48/486-S/26560, annex; see *Official Records of the Security Council, Forty-eighth Year, Supplement for October, November and December 1993*, document S/26560.

³ A/51/889-S/1997/357, annex; see *Official Records of the Security Council, Fifty-second Year, Supplement for April, May and June 1997*, document S/1997/357.

9. *Also requests* the Secretary-General to continue to provide the Committee with all the necessary facilities for the performance of its tasks.

*76th plenary meeting
2 December 1998*



General Assembly

Distr.
GENERAL

A/RES/54/39
20 January 2000

Fifty-fourth session
Agenda item 44

RESOLUTION ADOPTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

[*without reference to a Main Committee (A/54/L.42 and Add.1)*]

54/39. Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 181 (II) of 29 November 1947, 194 (III) of 11 December 1948, 3236 (XXIX) of 22 November 1974, 3375 (XXX) and 3376 (XXX) of 10 November 1975, 31/20 of 24 November 1976, 32/40 A of 2 December 1977, 33/28 A and B of 7 December 1978, 34/65 A of 29 November 1979 and 34/65 C of 12 December 1979, ES-7/2 of 29 July 1980, 35/169 A and C of 15 December 1980, 36/120 A and C of 10 December 1981, ES-7/4 of 28 April 1982, 37/86 A of 10 December 1982, 38/58 A of 13 December 1983, 39/49 A of 11 December 1984, 40/96 A of 12 December 1985, 41/43 A of 2 December 1986, 42/66 A of 2 December 1987, 43/175 A of 15 December 1988, 44/41 A of 6 December 1989, 45/67 A of 6 December 1990, 46/74 A of 11 December 1991, 47/64 A of 11 December 1992, 48/158 A of 20 December 1993, 49/62 A of 14 December 1994, 50/84 A of 15 December 1995, 51/23 of 4 December 1996, 52/49 of 9 December 1997 and 53/39 of 2 December 1998,

Having considered the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People,¹

¹ *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/54/35).*

Recalling the signing of the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements, including its Annexes and Agreed Minutes, by the Government of the State of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization, the representative of the Palestinian people, in Washington, D.C., on 13 September 1993,² as well as the subsequent implementation agreements, in particular the Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, signed in Washington, D.C., on 28 September 1995,³ and the Memorandum signed at Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, on 4 September 1999,

Reaffirming that the United Nations has a permanent responsibility with respect to the question of Palestine until the question is resolved in all its aspects in a satisfactory manner in accordance with international legitimacy,

1. *Expresses its appreciation* to the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for its efforts in performing the tasks assigned to it by the General Assembly;
2. *Considers* that the Committee can continue to make a valuable and positive contribution to international efforts to promote the Middle East peace process and the full implementation of the agreements reached and to mobilize international support for and assistance to the Palestinian people during the transitional period;
3. *Endorses* the conclusions and recommendations of the Committee contained in chapter VII of its report;¹
4. *Requests* the Committee to continue to keep under review the situation relating to the question of Palestine and to report and make suggestions to the General Assembly or the Security Council, as appropriate;
5. *Authorizes* the Committee to continue to exert all efforts to promote the exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, to make such adjustments in its approved programme of work as it may consider appropriate and necessary in the light of developments, to give special emphasis to the need to mobilize support and assistance for the Palestinian people and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its fifty-fifth session and thereafter;
6. *Requests* the Committee to continue to extend its cooperation and support to Palestinian and other non-governmental organizations in order to mobilize international solidarity and support for the achievement by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights and for a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine, and to involve additional non-governmental organizations in its work;

² A/48/486-S/26560, annex; see *Official Records of the Security Council, Forty-eighth Year, Supplement for October, November and December 1993*, document S/26560.

³ A/51/889-S/1997/357, annex; see *Official Records of the Security Council, Fifty-second Year, Supplement for April, May and June 1997*, document S/1997/357.

7. *Requests* the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine, established under General Assembly resolution 194 (III), and other United Nations bodies associated with the question of Palestine to continue to cooperate fully with the Committee and to make available to it, at its request, the relevant information and documentation which they have at their disposal;

8. *Requests* the Secretary-General to circulate the report of the Committee to all the competent bodies of the United Nations, and urges them to take the necessary action, as appropriate;

9. *Also requests* the Secretary-General to continue to provide the Committee with all the necessary facilities for the performance of its tasks.

*68th plenary meeting
1 December 1999*



General Assembly

Distr.: General
25 January 2001

Fifty-fifth session
Agenda item 41

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly

[without reference to a Main Committee (A/55/L.45 and Add.1)]

55/52. Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 181 (II) of 29 November 1947, 194 (III) of 11 December 1948, 3236 (XXIX) of 22 November 1974, 3375 (XXX) and 3376 (XXX) of 10 November 1975, 31/20 of 24 November 1976, 32/40 A of 2 December 1977, 33/28 A and B of 7 December 1978, 34/65 A of 29 November 1979 and 34/65 C of 12 December 1979, ES-7/2 of 29 July 1980, 35/169 A and C of 15 December 1980, 36/120 A and C of 10 December 1981, ES-7/4 of 28 April 1982, 37/86 A of 10 December 1982, 38/58 A of 13 December 1983, 39/49 A of 11 December 1984, 40/96 A of 12 December 1985, 41/43 A of 2 December 1986, 42/66 A of 2 December 1987, 43/175 A of 15 December 1988, 44/41 A of 6 December 1989, 45/67 A of 6 December 1990, 46/74 A of 11 December 1991, 47/64 A of 11 December 1992, 48/158 A of 20 December 1993, 49/62 A of 14 December 1994, 50/84 A of 15 December 1995, 51/23 of 4 December 1996, 52/49 of 9 December 1997, 53/39 of 2 December 1998 and 54/39 of 1 December 1999,

Having considered the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People,¹

Recalling the signing of the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements, including its Annexes and Agreed Minutes, by the Government of the State of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization, the representative of the Palestinian people, in Washington, D.C., on 13 September 1993,² as well as the subsequent implementation agreements, in particular the Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, signed in Washington, D.C., on 28 September 1995,³ and the Memorandum signed at Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, on 4 September 1999,

¹ *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/55/35).*

² A/48/486-S/26560, annex.

³ A/51/889-S/1997/357, annex.

Reaffirming that the United Nations has a permanent responsibility with respect to the question of Palestine until the question is resolved in all its aspects in a satisfactory manner in accordance with international legitimacy,

1. *Expresses its appreciation* to the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for its efforts in performing the tasks assigned to it by the General Assembly;

2. *Considers* that the Committee can continue to make a valuable and positive contribution to international efforts to promote the Middle East peace process and the full implementation of the agreements reached and to mobilize international support for and assistance to the Palestinian people during the transitional period;

3. *Endorses* the conclusions and recommendations of the Committee contained in chapter VII of its report;¹

4. *Requests* the Committee to continue to keep under review the situation relating to the question of Palestine and to report and make suggestions to the General Assembly or the Security Council, as appropriate;

5. *Authorizes* the Committee to continue to exert all efforts to promote the exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, to make such adjustments in its approved programme of work as it may consider appropriate and necessary in the light of developments, to give special emphasis to the need to mobilize support and assistance for the Palestinian people and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its fifty-sixth session and thereafter;

6. *Requests* the Committee to continue to extend its cooperation and support to Palestinian and other non-governmental organizations in order to mobilize international solidarity and support for the achievement by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights and for a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine, and to involve additional non-governmental organizations in its work;

7. *Requests* the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine, established under General Assembly resolution 194 (III), and other United Nations bodies associated with the question of Palestine to continue to cooperate fully with the Committee, and expresses appreciation for the cooperation between the Commission and the Committee with regard to the modernization and preservation of the records of the Commission;

8. *Requests* the Secretary-General to circulate the report of the Committee to all the competent bodies of the United Nations, and urges them to take the necessary action, as appropriate;

9. *Also requests* the Secretary-General to continue to provide the Committee with all the necessary facilities for the performance of its tasks.

*78th plenary meeting
1 December 2000*



General Assembly

Distr.: General
18 December 2001

Fifty-sixth session
Agenda item 41

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly

[without reference to a Main Committee (A/56/L.19 and Add.1)]

56/33. Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 181 (II) of 29 November 1947, 194 (III) of 11 December 1948, 3236 (XXIX) of 22 November 1974, 3375 (XXX) and 3376 (XXX) of 10 November 1975, 31/20 of 24 November 1976, 32/40 A of 2 December 1977, 33/28 A and B of 7 December 1978, 34/65 A of 29 November 1979 and 34/65 C of 12 December 1979, ES-7/2 of 29 July 1980, 35/169 A and C of 15 December 1980, 36/120 A and C of 10 December 1981, ES-7/4 of 28 April 1982, 37/86 A of 10 December 1982, 38/58 A of 13 December 1983, 39/49 A of 11 December 1984, 40/96 A of 12 December 1985, 41/43 A of 2 December 1986, 42/66 A of 2 December 1987, 43/175 A of 15 December 1988, 44/41 A of 6 December 1989, 45/67 A of 6 December 1990, 46/74 A of 11 December 1991, 47/64 A of 11 December 1992, 48/158 A of 20 December 1993, 49/62 A of 14 December 1994, 50/84 A of 15 December 1995, 51/23 of 4 December 1996, 52/49 of 9 December 1997, 53/39 of 2 December 1998, 54/39 of 1 December 1999 and 55/52 of 1 December 2000,

Having considered the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People,¹

Recalling the signing of the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements, including its Annexes and Agreed Minutes, by the Government of the State of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization, the representative of the Palestinian people, in Washington, D.C., on 13 September 1993,² as well as the subsequent implementation agreements, in particular the Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, signed in Washington, D.C., on 28 September 1995,³

¹ *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/56/35).*

² A/48/486-S/26560, annex.

³ A/51/889-S/1997/357, annex.

Reaffirming that the United Nations has a permanent responsibility with respect to the question of Palestine until the question is resolved in all its aspects in a satisfactory manner in accordance with international legitimacy,

1. *Expresses its appreciation* to the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for its efforts in performing the tasks assigned to it by the General Assembly;

2. *Considers* that the Committee can continue to make a valuable and positive contribution to international efforts to promote the Middle East peace process and the full implementation of the agreements reached and to mobilize international support for and assistance to the Palestinian people during the transitional period;

3. *Endorses* the conclusions and recommendations of the Committee contained in chapter VII of its report;¹

4. *Requests* the Committee to continue to keep under review the situation relating to the question of Palestine and to report and make suggestions to the General Assembly or the Security Council, as appropriate;

5. *Authorizes* the Committee to continue to exert all efforts to promote the exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, to make such adjustments in its approved programme of work as it may consider appropriate and necessary in the light of developments, to give special emphasis to the need to mobilize support and assistance for the Palestinian people and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its fifty-seventh session and thereafter;

6. *Requests* the Committee to continue to extend its cooperation and support to Palestinian and other civil society organizations in order to mobilize international solidarity and support for the achievement by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights and for a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine, and to involve additional civil society organizations in its work;

7. *Requests* the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine, established under General Assembly resolution 194 (III), and other United Nations bodies associated with the question of Palestine to continue to cooperate fully with the Committee and to make available to it, at its request, the relevant information and documentation which they have at their disposal;

8. *Requests* the Secretary-General to circulate the report of the Committee to all the competent bodies of the United Nations, and urges them to take the necessary action, as appropriate;

9. *Also requests* the Secretary-General to continue to provide the Committee with all the necessary facilities for the performance of its tasks.

*72nd plenary meeting
3 December 2001*



General Assembly

Distr.: General
14 February 2003

Fifty-seventh session
Agenda item 35

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly

[without reference to a Main Committee (A/57/L.34 and Add.1)]

57/107. Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 181 (II) of 29 November 1947, 194 (III) of 11 December 1948, 3236 (XXIX) of 22 November 1974, 3375 (XXX) and 3376 (XXX) of 10 November 1975, 31/20 of 24 November 1976 and all subsequent relevant resolutions, including those adopted by the General Assembly at its emergency special sessions and resolution 56/33 of 3 December 2001,

Having considered the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People,¹

Recalling the commencement of the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations, the mutual recognition between the Government of the State of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization, the representative of the Palestinian people, and the existing agreements between the two sides, beginning with the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements of 1993,² and the subsequent implementation agreements,

Reaffirming that the United Nations has a permanent responsibility towards the question of Palestine until the question is resolved in all its aspects in a satisfactory manner in accordance with international legitimacy,

1. *Expresses its appreciation* to the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for its efforts in performing the tasks assigned to it by the General Assembly, and takes note of its annual report,¹ including the conclusions and recommendations contained in chapter VII thereof;

2. *Requests* the Committee to continue to exert all efforts to promote the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, to support the Middle East peace process and to mobilize international support for and assistance to the Palestinian people, and authorizes the Committee to make such adjustments in its approved programme of work as it may consider appropriate and necessary in the

¹ *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/57/35).*

² See A/48/486-S/26560, annex.

light of developments and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its fifty-eighth session and thereafter;

3. *Also requests* the Committee to continue to keep under review the situation relating to the question of Palestine and to report and make suggestions to the General Assembly, the Security Council or the Secretary-General, as appropriate;

4. *Further requests* the Committee to continue to extend its cooperation and support to Palestinian and other civil society organizations in order to mobilize international solidarity and support for the achievement by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights and for a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine, and to involve additional civil society organizations in its work;

5. *Requests* the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine, established under General Assembly resolution 194 (III), and other United Nations bodies associated with the question of Palestine to continue to cooperate fully with the Committee and to make available to it, at its request, the relevant information and documentation which they have at their disposal;

6. *Requests* the Secretary-General to circulate the report of the Committee to all competent bodies of the United Nations, and urges them to take the necessary action, as appropriate;

7. *Also requests* the Secretary-General to continue to provide the Committee with all necessary facilities for the performance of its tasks.

*66th plenary meeting
3 December 2002*



General Assembly

Distr.: General
26 January 2004

Fifty-eighth session
Agenda item 38

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 3 December 2003

[without reference to a Main Committee (A/58/L.23 and Add.1)]

58/18. Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 181 (II) of 29 November 1947, 194 (III) of 11 December 1948, 3236 (XXIX) of 22 November 1974, 3375 (XXX) and 3376 (XXX) of 10 November 1975, 31/20 of 24 November 1976 and all subsequent relevant resolutions, including those adopted by the General Assembly at its emergency special sessions and resolution 57/107 of 3 December 2002,

Having considered the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People,¹

Recalling the mutual recognition between the Government of the State of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization, the representative of the Palestinian people, as well as the existing agreements between the two sides and the need for full compliance with those agreements,

Welcoming the official presentation by the Quartet of the performance-based road map to a permanent two-State solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict,²

Reaffirming that the United Nations has a permanent responsibility towards the question of Palestine until the question is resolved in all its aspects in a satisfactory manner in accordance with international legitimacy,

1. *Expresses its appreciation* to the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for its efforts in performing the tasks assigned to it by the General Assembly, and takes note of its annual report,¹ including the conclusions and recommendations contained in chapter VII thereof;

2. *Requests* the Committee to continue to exert all efforts to promote the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, to support the Middle East peace process and to mobilize international support for and assistance to the Palestinian people, and authorizes the Committee to make such adjustments in its approved programme of work as it may consider appropriate and necessary in the

¹ *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/58/35).*

² S/2003/529, annex.

light of developments and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session and thereafter;

3. *Also requests* the Committee to continue to keep under review the situation relating to the question of Palestine and to report and make suggestions to the General Assembly, the Security Council or the Secretary-General, as appropriate;

4. *Further requests* the Committee to continue to extend its cooperation and support to Palestinian and other civil society organizations in order to mobilize international solidarity and support for the achievement by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights and for a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine, and to involve additional civil society organizations in its work;

5. *Requests* the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine, established under General Assembly resolution 194 (III), and other United Nations bodies and entities working on various aspects of the question of Palestine to continue to cooperate fully with the Committee and to make available to it, at its request, the relevant information and documentation which they have at their disposal;

6. *Invites* all Governments and organizations to extend their cooperation to the Committee in the performance of its tasks;

7. *Requests* the Secretary-General to circulate the report of the Committee to all competent bodies of the United Nations, and urges them to take the necessary action, as appropriate;

8. *Also requests* the Secretary-General to continue to provide the Committee with all necessary facilities for the performance of its tasks.

*68th plenary meeting
3 December 2003*



General Assembly

Distr.: General
31 January 2005

Fifty-ninth session
Agenda item 37

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 1 December 2004

[without reference to a Main Committee (A/59/L.34 and Add.1)]

59/28. Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 181 (II) of 29 November 1947, 194 (III) of 11 December 1948, 3236 (XXIX) of 22 November 1974, 3375 (XXX) and 3376 (XXX) of 10 November 1975, 31/20 of 24 November 1976 and all subsequent relevant resolutions, including those adopted by the General Assembly at its emergency special sessions and resolution 58/18 of 3 December 2003,

Recalling also its resolution 58/292 of 6 May 2004,

Having considered the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People,¹

Recalling the mutual recognition between the Government of the State of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization, the representative of the Palestinian people, as well as the existing agreements between the two sides and the need for full compliance with those agreements,

Recalling also the Quartet road map to a permanent two-State solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict,²

Recalling further the advisory opinion rendered on 9 July 2004 by the International Court of Justice on the *Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory*,³ and recalling also its resolution ES-10/15 of 20 July 2004,

Reaffirming that the United Nations has a permanent responsibility towards the question of Palestine until the question is resolved in all its aspects in a satisfactory manner in accordance with international legitimacy,

1. *Expresses its appreciation* to the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for its efforts in performing the tasks

¹ *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/59/35).*

² S/2003/529, annex.

³ See A/ES-10/273 and Corr.1.

assigned to it by the General Assembly, and takes note of its annual report,¹ including the conclusions and recommendations contained in chapter VII thereof;

2. *Requests* the Committee to continue to exert all efforts to promote the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, to support the Middle East peace process and to mobilize international support for and assistance to the Palestinian people, and authorizes the Committee to make such adjustments in its approved programme of work as it may consider appropriate and necessary in the light of developments and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its sixtieth session and thereafter;

3. *Also requests* the Committee to continue to keep under review the situation relating to the question of Palestine and to report and make suggestions to the General Assembly, the Security Council or the Secretary-General, as appropriate;

4. *Further requests* the Committee to continue to extend its cooperation and support to Palestinian and other civil society organizations in order to mobilize international solidarity and support for the achievement by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights and for a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine, and to involve additional civil society organizations in its work;

5. *Requests* the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine, established under General Assembly resolution 194 (III), and other United Nations bodies associated with the question of Palestine to continue to cooperate fully with the Committee and to make available to it, at its request, the relevant information and documentation which they have at their disposal;

6. *Invites* all Governments and organizations to extend their cooperation to the Committee in the performance of its tasks;

7. *Requests* the Secretary-General to circulate the report of the Committee to all the competent bodies of the United Nations, and urges them to take the necessary action, as appropriate;

8. *Also requests* the Secretary-General to continue to provide the Committee with all the necessary facilities for the performance of its tasks.

*64th plenary meeting
1 December 2004*



General Assembly

Distr.: General
10 February 2006

Sixtieth session
Agenda item 15

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 1 December 2005

[without reference to a Main Committee (A/60/L.28 and Add.1)]

60/36. Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 181 (II) of 29 November 1947, 194 (III) of 11 December 1948, 3236 (XXIX) of 22 November 1974, 3375 (XXX) and 3376 (XXX) of 10 November 1975, 31/20 of 24 November 1976 and all subsequent relevant resolutions, including those adopted by the General Assembly at its emergency special sessions and resolution 59/28 of 1 December 2004,

Recalling also its resolution 58/292 of 6 May 2004,

Having considered the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People,¹

Recalling the mutual recognition between the Government of the State of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization, the representative of the Palestinian people, as well as the existing agreements between the two sides and the need for full compliance with those agreements,

Recalling also the Quartet road map to a permanent two-State solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict,²

Recalling further the advisory opinion rendered on 9 July 2004 by the International Court of Justice on the *Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory*,³ and recalling also its resolution ES-10/15 of 20 July 2004,

Reaffirming that the United Nations has a permanent responsibility towards the question of Palestine until the question is resolved in all its aspects in a satisfactory manner in accordance with international legitimacy,

1. *Expresses its appreciation* to the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for its efforts in performing the tasks

¹ *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixtieth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/60/35).*

² S/2003/529, annex.

³ See A/ES-10/273 and Corr.1.

assigned to it by the General Assembly, and takes note of its annual report,¹ including the conclusions and recommendations contained in chapter VII thereof;

2. *Requests* the Committee to continue to exert all efforts to promote the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, to support the Middle East peace process and to mobilize international support for and assistance to the Palestinian people, and authorizes the Committee to make such adjustments in its approved programme of work as it may consider appropriate and necessary in the light of developments and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its sixty-first session and thereafter;

3. *Also requests* the Committee to continue to keep under review the situation relating to the question of Palestine and to report and make suggestions to the General Assembly, the Security Council or the Secretary-General, as appropriate;

4. *Further requests* the Committee to continue to extend its cooperation and support to Palestinian and other civil society organizations in order to mobilize international solidarity and support for the achievement by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights and for a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine, and to involve additional civil society organizations in its work;

5. *Requests* the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine, established under General Assembly resolution 194 (III), and other United Nations bodies associated with the question of Palestine to continue to cooperate fully with the Committee and to make available to it, at its request, the relevant information and documentation which they have at their disposal;

6. *Invites* all Governments and organizations to extend their cooperation to the Committee in the performance of its tasks;

7. *Requests* the Secretary-General to circulate the report of the Committee to all the competent bodies of the United Nations, and urges them to take the necessary action, as appropriate;

8. *Also requests* the Secretary-General to continue to provide the Committee with all the necessary facilities for the performance of its tasks.

*60th plenary meeting
1 December 2005*



General Assembly

Distr.: General
24 January 2007

Sixty-first session
Agenda item 14

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 1 December 2006

[without reference to a Main Committee (A/61/L.31 and Add.1)]

61/22. Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 181 (II) of 29 November 1947, 194 (III) of 11 December 1948, 3236 (XXIX) of 22 November 1974, 3375 (XXX) and 3376 (XXX) of 10 November 1975, 31/20 of 24 November 1976 and all subsequent relevant resolutions, including those adopted by the General Assembly at its emergency special sessions and resolution 60/36 of 1 December 2005,

Recalling also its resolution 58/292 of 6 May 2004,

Having considered the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People,¹

Recalling the mutual recognition between the Government of the State of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization, the representative of the Palestinian people, as well as the existing agreements between the two sides and the need for full compliance with those agreements,

Recalling also the Quartet road map to a permanent two-State solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict,²

Recalling further the advisory opinion rendered on 9 July 2004 by the International Court of Justice on the *Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory*,³ and recalling also its resolution ES-10/15 of 20 July 2004,

Reaffirming that the United Nations has a permanent responsibility towards the question of Palestine until the question is resolved in all its aspects in a satisfactory manner in accordance with international legitimacy,

1. *Expresses its appreciation* to the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for its efforts in performing the tasks

¹ *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixty-first Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/61/35).*

² S/2003/529, annex.

³ See A/ES-10/273 and Corr.1

assigned to it by the General Assembly, and takes note of its annual report,¹ including the conclusions and valuable recommendations contained in chapter VII thereof;

2. *Requests* the Committee to continue to exert all efforts to promote the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, to support the Middle East peace process and to mobilize international support for and assistance to the Palestinian people, and authorizes the Committee to make such adjustments in its approved programme of work as it may consider appropriate and necessary in the light of developments and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its sixty-second session and thereafter;

3. *Also requests* the Committee to continue to keep under review the situation relating to the question of Palestine and to report and make suggestions to the General Assembly, the Security Council or the Secretary-General, as appropriate;

4. *Further requests* the Committee to continue to extend its cooperation and support to Palestinian and other civil society organizations in order to mobilize international solidarity and support for the Palestinian people, particularly during this critical period of humanitarian hardship and financial crisis, with the overall aim of promoting the achievement by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights and for a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine, and to continue to involve additional civil society organizations in its work;

5. *Requests* the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine, established under General Assembly resolution 194 (III), and other United Nations bodies associated with the question of Palestine to continue to cooperate fully with the Committee and to make available to it, at its request, the relevant information and documentation which they have at their disposal;

6. *Invites* all Governments and organizations to extend their cooperation to the Committee in the performance of its tasks;

7. *Requests* the Secretary-General to circulate the report of the Committee to all the competent bodies of the United Nations, and urges them to take the necessary action, as appropriate;

8. *Also requests* the Secretary-General to continue to provide the Committee with all the necessary facilities for the performance of its tasks.

*63rd plenary meeting
1 December 2006*



General Assembly

Distr.: General
21 January 2008

Sixty-second session
Agenda item 18

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 10 December 2007

[without reference to a Main Committee (A/62/L.18 and Add.1)]

62/80. Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 181 (II) of 29 November 1947, 194 (III) of 11 December 1948, 3236 (XXIX) of 22 November 1974, 3375 (XXX) and 3376 (XXX) of 10 November 1975, 31/20 of 24 November 1976 and all subsequent relevant resolutions, including those adopted by the General Assembly at its emergency special sessions and resolution 61/22 of 1 December 2006,

Recalling also its resolution 58/292 of 6 May 2004,

Having considered the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People,¹

Recalling the mutual recognition between the Government of the State of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization, the representative of the Palestinian people, as well as the existing agreements between the two sides and the need for full compliance with those agreements,

Recalling also the Quartet road map to a permanent two-State solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict,² endorsed by the Security Council in its resolution 1515 (2003) of 19 November 2003,

Recalling further the Arab Peace Initiative adopted by the Council of the League of Arab States at its fourteenth session, held in Beirut on 27 and 28 March 2002,³

Recalling the advisory opinion rendered on 9 July 2004 by the International Court of Justice on the *Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory*,⁴ and recalling also its resolutions ES-10/15 of 20 July 2004 and ES-10/17 of 15 December 2006,

¹ *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixty-second Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/62/35).*

² S/2003/529, annex.

³ A/56/1026-S/2002/932, annex II, resolution 14/221.

⁴ See A/ES-10/273 and Corr.1.

Reaffirming that the United Nations has a permanent responsibility towards the question of Palestine until the question is resolved in all its aspects in a satisfactory manner in accordance with international legitimacy,

1. *Expresses its appreciation* to the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for its efforts in performing the tasks assigned to it by the General Assembly, and takes note of its annual report,¹ including the conclusions and valuable recommendations contained in chapter VII thereof;

2. *Requests* the Committee to continue to exert all efforts to promote the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including their right to self-determination, to support the Middle East peace process and to mobilize international support for and assistance to the Palestinian people, and authorizes the Committee to make such adjustments in its approved programme of work as it may consider appropriate and necessary in the light of developments and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its sixty-third session and thereafter;

3. *Also requests* the Committee to continue to keep under review the situation relating to the question of Palestine and to report and make suggestions to the General Assembly, the Security Council or the Secretary-General, as appropriate;

4. *Further requests* the Committee to continue to extend its cooperation and support to Palestinian and other civil society organizations and to continue to involve additional civil society organizations in its work in order to mobilize international solidarity and support for the Palestinian people, particularly during this critical period of humanitarian hardship and financial crisis, with the overall aim of promoting the achievement by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights and a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine;

5. *Requests* the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine, established under General Assembly resolution 194 (III), and other United Nations bodies associated with the question of Palestine to continue to cooperate fully with the Committee and to make available to it, at its request, the relevant information and documentation which they have at their disposal;

6. *Invites* all Governments and organizations to extend their cooperation to the Committee in the performance of its tasks;

7. *Requests* the Secretary-General to circulate the report of the Committee to all the competent bodies of the United Nations, and urges them to take the necessary action, as appropriate;

8. *Also requests* the Secretary-General to continue to provide the Committee with all the necessary facilities for the performance of its tasks.

*65th plenary meeting
10 December 2007*



General Assembly

Distr.: General
22 January 2009

Sixty-third session
Agenda item 16

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 26 November 2008

[without reference to a Main Committee (A/63/L.32 and Add.1)]

63/26. Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 181 (II) of 29 November 1947, 194 (III) of 11 December 1948, 3236 (XXIX) of 22 November 1974, 3375 (XXX) and 3376 (XXX) of 10 November 1975, 31/20 of 24 November 1976 and all subsequent relevant resolutions, including those adopted by the General Assembly at its emergency special sessions and resolution 62/80 of 10 December 2007,

Recalling also its resolution 58/292 of 6 May 2004,

Having considered the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People,¹

Recalling the mutual recognition between the Government of the State of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization, the representative of the Palestinian people, as well as the existing agreements between the two sides and the need for full compliance with those agreements,

Recalling also the Quartet road map to a permanent two-State solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict,² endorsed by the Security Council in its resolution 1515 (2003) of 19 November 2003,

Recalling further the Arab Peace Initiative adopted by the Council of the League of Arab States at its fourteenth session, held in Beirut on 27 and 28 March 2002,³

Recalling the advisory opinion rendered on 9 July 2004 by the International Court of Justice on the *Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory*,⁴ and recalling also its resolutions ES-10/15 of 20 July 2004 and ES-10/17 of 15 December 2006,

¹ *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixty-third Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/63/35).*

² S/2003/529, annex.

³ A/56/1026-S/2002/932, annex II, resolution 14/221.

⁴ See A/ES-10/273 and Corr.1; see also *Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Advisory Opinion, I.C.J. Reports 2004*, p. 136.

Reaffirming that the United Nations has a permanent responsibility towards the question of Palestine until the question is resolved in all its aspects in a satisfactory manner in accordance with international legitimacy,

1. *Expresses its appreciation* to the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for its efforts in performing the tasks assigned to it by the General Assembly, and takes note of its annual report,¹ including the conclusions and valuable recommendations contained in chapter VII thereof;

2. *Requests* the Committee to continue to exert all efforts to promote the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including their right to self-determination, to support the Middle East peace process and to mobilize international support for and assistance to the Palestinian people, and authorizes the Committee to make such adjustments in its approved programme of work as it may consider appropriate and necessary in the light of developments and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session and thereafter;

3. *Also requests* the Committee to continue to keep under review the situation relating to the question of Palestine and to report and make suggestions to the General Assembly, the Security Council or the Secretary-General, as appropriate;

4. *Further requests* the Committee to continue to extend its cooperation and support to Palestinian and other civil society organizations and to continue to involve additional civil society organizations in its work in order to mobilize international solidarity and support for the Palestinian people, particularly during this critical period of humanitarian hardship and financial crisis, with the overall aim of promoting the achievement by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights and a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine;

5. *Requests* the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine, established under General Assembly resolution 194 (III), and other United Nations bodies associated with the question of Palestine to continue to cooperate fully with the Committee and to make available to it, at its request, the relevant information and documentation which they have at their disposal;

6. *Invites* all Governments and organizations to extend their cooperation to the Committee in the performance of its tasks;

7. *Requests* the Secretary-General to circulate the report of the Committee to all the competent bodies of the United Nations, and urges them to take the necessary action, as appropriate;

8. *Also requests* the Secretary-General to continue to provide the Committee with all the necessary facilities for the performance of its tasks.

*60th plenary meeting
26 November 2008*



General Assembly

Distr.: General
21 January 2010

Sixty-fourth session
Agenda item 16

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 2 December 2009

[without reference to a Main Committee (A/64/L.20 and Add.1)]

64/16. Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 181 (II) of 29 November 1947, 194 (III) of 11 December 1948, 3236 (XXIX) of 22 November 1974, 3375 (XXX) and 3376 (XXX) of 10 November 1975, 31/20 of 24 November 1976 and all its subsequent relevant resolutions, including those adopted at its emergency special sessions and its resolution 63/26 of 26 November 2008,

Recalling also its resolution 58/292 of 6 May 2004,

Having considered the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People,¹

Recalling the mutual recognition between the Government of the State of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization, the representative of the Palestinian people, as well as the existing agreements between the two sides and the need for full compliance with those agreements,

Recalling also the Quartet road map to a permanent two-State solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, endorsed by the Security Council in resolution 1515 (2003) of 19 November 2003,²

Recalling further the Arab Peace Initiative adopted by the Council of the League of Arab States at its fourteenth session, held in Beirut on 27 and 28 March 2002,³

Recalling the advisory opinion rendered on 9 July 2004 by the International Court of Justice on the *Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the*

¹ *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/64/35).*

² S/2003/529, annex.

³ A/56/1026-S/2002/932, annex II, resolution 14/221.



Occupied Palestinian Territory,⁴ and recalling also its resolutions ES-10/15 of 20 July 2004 and ES-10/17 of 15 December 2006,

Reaffirming that the United Nations has a permanent responsibility towards the question of Palestine until the question is resolved in all its aspects in a satisfactory manner in accordance with international legitimacy,

1. *Expresses its appreciation* to the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for its efforts in performing the tasks assigned to it by the General Assembly, and takes note of its annual report,¹ including the conclusions and valuable recommendations contained in chapter VII thereof;

2. *Requests* the Committee to continue to exert all efforts to promote the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including their right to self-determination, to support the Middle East peace process and to mobilize international support for and assistance to the Palestinian people, and authorizes the Committee to make such adjustments in its approved programme of work as it may consider appropriate and necessary in the light of developments and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its sixty-fifth session and thereafter;

3. *Also requests* the Committee to continue to keep under review the situation relating to the question of Palestine and to report and make suggestions to the General Assembly, the Security Council or the Secretary-General, as appropriate;

4. *Further requests* the Committee to continue to extend its cooperation and support to Palestinian and other civil society organizations and to continue to involve additional civil society organizations and parliamentarians in its work in order to mobilize international solidarity and support for the Palestinian people, particularly during this critical period of humanitarian hardship and financial crisis, with the overall aim of promoting the achievement by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights and a just, lasting and peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, on the basis of the relevant United Nations resolutions, the terms of reference of the Madrid Conference, including the principle of land for peace, the Arab Peace Initiative³ and the Quartet road map;²

5. *Requests* the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine, established under General Assembly resolution 194 (III), and other United Nations bodies associated with the question of Palestine to continue to cooperate fully with the Committee and to make available to it, at its request, the relevant information and documentation which they have at their disposal;

6. *Invites* all Governments and organizations to extend their cooperation to the Committee in the performance of its tasks;

7. *Requests* the Secretary-General to circulate the report of the Committee to all the competent bodies of the United Nations, and urges them to take the necessary action, as appropriate;

8. *Also requests* the Secretary-General to continue to provide the Committee with all the necessary facilities for the performance of its tasks.

*54th plenary meeting
2 December 2009*

⁴ See A/ES-10/273 and Corr.1; see also *Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Advisory Opinion, I.C.J. Reports 2004*, p. 136.



General Assembly

Distr.: General
25 January 2011

Sixty-fifth session
Agenda item 37

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 30 November 2010

[without reference to a Main Committee (A/65/L.14 and Add.1)]

65/13. Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 181 (II) of 29 November 1947, 194 (III) of 11 December 1948, 3236 (XXIX) of 22 November 1974, 3375 (XXX) and 3376 (XXX) of 10 November 1975, 31/20 of 24 November 1976 and all its subsequent relevant resolutions, including those adopted at its emergency special sessions and its resolution 64/16 of 2 December 2009,

Recalling also its resolution 58/292 of 6 May 2004,

Having considered the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People,¹

Recalling the mutual recognition between the Government of the State of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization, the representative of the Palestinian people, as well as the existing agreements between the two sides and the need for full compliance with those agreements,

Affirming its support for the Middle East peace process on the basis of the relevant United Nations resolutions, the terms of reference of the Madrid Conference, including the principle of land for peace, the Arab Peace Initiative adopted by the Council of the League of Arab States at its fourteenth session² and the Quartet road map to a permanent two-State solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, endorsed by the Security Council in resolution 1515 (2003) of 19 November 2003,³

Recalling the advisory opinion rendered on 9 July 2004 by the International Court of Justice on the *Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the*

¹ Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/65/35).

² A/56/1026-S/2002/932, annex II, resolution 14/221.

³ S/2003/529, annex.



*Occupied Palestinian Territory*⁴ and recalling also its resolutions ES-10/15 of 20 July 2004 and ES-10/17 of 15 December 2006,

Reaffirming that the United Nations has a permanent responsibility towards the question of Palestine until the question is resolved in all its aspects in a satisfactory manner in accordance with international legitimacy,

1. *Expresses its appreciation* to the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for its efforts in performing the tasks assigned to it by the General Assembly, and takes note of its annual report,¹ including the conclusions and valuable recommendations contained in chapter VII thereof;

2. *Requests* the Committee to continue to exert all efforts to promote the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including their right to self-determination, to support the Middle East peace process and to mobilize international support for and assistance to the Palestinian people, and authorizes the Committee to make such adjustments in its approved programme of work as it may consider appropriate and necessary in the light of developments and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its sixty-sixth session and thereafter;

3. *Also requests* the Committee to continue to keep under review the situation relating to the question of Palestine and to report and make suggestions to the General Assembly, the Security Council or the Secretary-General, as appropriate;

4. *Further requests* the Committee to continue to extend its cooperation and support to Palestinian and other civil society organizations and to continue to involve additional civil society organizations and parliamentarians in its work in order to mobilize international solidarity and support for the Palestinian people, particularly during this critical period of political instability, humanitarian hardship and financial crisis, with the overall aim of promoting the achievement by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights and a just, lasting and peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, on the basis of the relevant United Nations resolutions, the terms of reference of the Madrid Conference, including the principle of land for peace, the Arab Peace Initiative² and the Quartet road map;³

5. *Requests* the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine, established under General Assembly resolution 194 (III), and other United Nations bodies associated with the question of Palestine to continue to cooperate fully with the Committee and to make available to it, at its request, the relevant information and documentation which they have at their disposal;

6. *Invites* all Governments and organizations to extend their cooperation to the Committee in the performance of its tasks;

7. *Requests* the Secretary-General to circulate the report of the Committee to all the competent bodies of the United Nations, and urges them to take the necessary action, as appropriate;

⁴ See A/ES-10/273 and Corr.1; see also *Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Advisory Opinion, I.C.J. Reports 2004*, p. 136.

8. *Also requests* the Secretary-General to continue to provide the Committee with all the necessary facilities for the performance of its tasks.

*55th plenary meeting
30 November 2010*



General Assembly

Distr.: General
25 January 2012

Sixty-sixth session
Agenda item 37

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 30 November 2011

[without reference to a Main Committee (A/66/L.15 and Add.1)]

66/14. Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 181 (II) of 29 November 1947, 194 (III) of 11 December 1948, 3236 (XXIX) of 22 November 1974, 3375 (XXX) and 3376 (XXX) of 10 November 1975, 31/20 of 24 November 1976 and all its subsequent relevant resolutions, including those adopted at its emergency special sessions and its resolution 65/13 of 30 November 2010,

Recalling also its resolution 58/292 of 6 May 2004,

Having considered the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People,¹

Recalling the mutual recognition between the Government of the State of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization, the representative of the Palestinian people, as well as the existing agreements between the two sides and the need for full compliance with those agreements,

Affirming its support for the Middle East peace process on the basis of the relevant United Nations resolutions, the terms of reference of the Madrid Conference, including the principle of land for peace, the Arab Peace Initiative adopted by the Council of the League of Arab States at its fourteenth session² and the Quartet road map to a permanent two-State solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, endorsed by the Security Council in resolution 1515 (2003) of 19 November 2003,³

Recalling the advisory opinion rendered on 9 July 2004 by the International Court of Justice on the *Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the*

¹ *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/66/35).*

² A/56/1026-S/2002/932, annex II, resolution 14/221.

³ S/2003/529, annex.



Occupied Palestinian Territory,⁴ and recalling also its resolutions ES-10/15 of 20 July 2004 and ES-10/17 of 15 December 2006,

Taking note of the application of Palestine for admission to membership in the United Nations, submitted on 23 September 2011,⁵

Reaffirming that the United Nations has a permanent responsibility towards the question of Palestine until the question is resolved in all its aspects in a satisfactory manner in accordance with international legitimacy,

1. *Expresses its appreciation* to the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for its efforts in performing the tasks assigned to it by the General Assembly, and takes note of its annual report,¹ including the conclusions and valuable recommendations contained in chapter VII thereof;

2. *Requests* the Committee to continue to exert all efforts to promote the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including their right to self-determination, to support the Middle East peace process for the achievement of the two-State solution on the basis of the pre-1967 borders and the just resolution of all final status issues and to mobilize international support for and assistance to the Palestinian people, and in this regard authorizes the Committee to make such adjustments in its approved programme of work as it may consider appropriate and necessary in the light of developments and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its sixty-seventh session and thereafter;

3. *Also requests* the Committee to continue to keep under review the situation relating to the question of Palestine and to report and make suggestions to the General Assembly, the Security Council or the Secretary-General, as appropriate;

4. *Further requests* the Committee to continue to extend its cooperation and support to Palestinian and other civil society organizations and to continue to involve additional civil society organizations and parliamentarians in its work in order to mobilize international solidarity and support for the Palestinian people, particularly during this critical period of political instability, humanitarian hardship and financial crisis, with the overall aim of promoting the achievement by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights and a just, lasting and peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, on the basis of the relevant United Nations resolutions, the terms of reference of the Madrid Conference, including the principle of land for peace, the Arab Peace Initiative² and the Quartet road map;³

5. *Requests* the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine, established under General Assembly resolution 194 (III), and other United Nations bodies associated with the question of Palestine to continue to cooperate fully with the Committee and to make available to it, at its request, the relevant information and documentation which they have at their disposal;

6. *Invites* all Governments and organizations to extend their cooperation to the Committee in the performance of its tasks;

⁴ See A/ES-10/273 and Corr.1; see also *Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Advisory Opinion, I.C.J. Reports 2004*, p. 136.

⁵ A/66/371-S/2011/592, annex I.

7. *Requests* the Secretary-General to circulate the report of the Committee to all the competent bodies of the United Nations, and urges them to take the necessary action, as appropriate;

8. *Also requests* the Secretary-General to continue to provide the Committee with all the necessary facilities for the performance of its tasks.

*69th plenary meeting
30 November 2011*



General Assembly

Distr.: General
28 February 2013

Sixty-seventh session
Agenda item 37

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 30 November 2012

[without reference to a Main Committee (A/67/L.17 and Add.1)]

67/20. Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 181 (II) of 29 November 1947, 194 (III) of 11 December 1948, 3236 (XXIX) of 22 November 1974, 3375 (XXX) and 3376 (XXX) of 10 November 1975, 31/20 of 24 November 1976 and all its subsequent relevant resolutions, including those adopted at its emergency special sessions and its resolution 66/14 of 30 November 2011,

Recalling also its resolution 58/292 of 6 May 2004,

Having considered the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People,¹

Recalling the mutual recognition between the Government of the State of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization, the representative of the Palestinian people, as well as the existing agreements between the two sides and the need for full compliance with those agreements,

Affirming its support for the Middle East peace process on the basis of the relevant United Nations resolutions, the terms of reference of the Madrid Conference, including the principle of land for peace, the Arab Peace Initiative adopted by the Council of the League of Arab States at its fourteenth session² and the Quartet road map to a permanent two-State solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, endorsed by the Security Council in resolution 1515 (2003) of 19 November 2003,³

Expressing grave concern about the impasse in the peace process and the serious deterioration of the situation on the ground, and calling for an urgent resumption of the peace process,

¹ *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/67/35).*

² A/56/1026-S/2002/932, annex II, resolution 14/221.

³ S/2003/529, annex.



Recalling the advisory opinion rendered on 9 July 2004 by the International Court of Justice on the legal consequences of the construction of a wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory,⁴ and recalling also its resolutions ES-10/15 of 20 July 2004 and ES-10/17 of 15 December 2006,

Taking note of the application of Palestine for admission to membership in the United Nations, submitted on 23 September 2011,⁵

Reaffirming that the United Nations has a permanent responsibility towards the question of Palestine until the question is resolved in all its aspects in a satisfactory manner in accordance with international legitimacy,

1. *Expresses its appreciation* to the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for its efforts in performing the tasks assigned to it by the General Assembly, and takes note of its annual report,¹ including the conclusions and valuable recommendations contained in chapter VII thereof;

2. *Requests* the Committee to continue to exert all efforts to promote the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including their right to self-determination, to support the Middle East peace process for the achievement of the two-State solution on the basis of the pre-1967 borders and the just resolution of all final status issues and to mobilize international support for and assistance to the Palestinian people, and in this regard authorizes the Committee to make such adjustments in its approved programme of work as it may consider appropriate and necessary in the light of developments and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its sixty-eighth session and thereafter;

3. *Also requests* the Committee to continue to keep under review the situation relating to the question of Palestine and to report and make suggestions to the General Assembly, the Security Council or the Secretary-General, as appropriate;

4. *Further requests* the Committee to continue to extend its cooperation and support to Palestinian and other civil society organizations and to continue to involve additional civil society organizations and parliamentarians in its work in order to mobilize international solidarity and support for the Palestinian people, particularly during this critical period of political instability, humanitarian hardship and financial crisis, with the overall aim of promoting the achievement by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights and a just, lasting and peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, on the basis of the relevant United Nations resolutions, the terms of reference of the Madrid Conference, including the principle of land for peace, the Arab Peace Initiative² and the Quartet road map;³

5. *Requests* the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine, established under General Assembly resolution 194 (III), and other United Nations bodies associated with the question of Palestine to continue to cooperate fully with the Committee and to make available to it, at its request, the relevant information and documentation which they have at their disposal;

⁴ See A/ES-10/273 and Corr.1.

⁵ A/66/371-S/2011/592, annex I.

6. *Invites* all Governments and organizations to extend their cooperation to the Committee in the performance of its tasks;

7. *Requests* the Secretary-General to circulate the report of the Committee to all the competent bodies of the United Nations, and urges them to take the necessary action, as appropriate;

8. *Also requests* the Secretary-General to continue to provide the Committee with all the necessary facilities for the performance of its tasks.

*47th plenary meeting
30 November 2012*



General Assembly

Distr.: General
9 January 2014

Sixty-eighth session
Agenda item 36

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 26 November 2013

[without reference to a Main Committee (A/68/L.12 and Add.1)]

68/12. Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 181 (II) of 29 November 1947, 194 (III) of 11 December 1948, 3236 (XXIX) of 22 November 1974, 3375 (XXX) and 3376 (XXX) of 10 November 1975, [31/20](#) of 24 November 1976 and all its subsequent relevant resolutions, including those adopted at its emergency special sessions and its resolution [67/20](#) of 30 November 2012,

Recalling also its resolution [58/292](#) of 6 May 2004,

Having considered the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People,¹

Recalling the mutual recognition between the Government of the State of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization, the representative of the Palestinian people, as well as the existing agreements between the two sides and the need for full compliance with those agreements,

Affirming its support for the Middle East peace process on the basis of the relevant United Nations resolutions, the terms of reference of the Madrid Conference, including the principle of land for peace, the Arab Peace Initiative adopted by the Council of the League of Arab States at its fourteenth session² and the Quartet road map to a permanent two-State solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, endorsed by the Security Council in resolution [1515 \(2003\)](#) of 19 November 2003,³

Welcoming the resumption, on 29 July 2013, of Israeli-Palestinian peace negotiations aimed at resolving all core final status issues and concluding a final peace agreement within the agreed time frame of nine months, and expressing

¹ *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/68/35).*

² A/56/1026-S/2002/932, annex II, resolution 14/221.

³ S/2003/529, annex.



appreciation for the efforts and support of the United States of America, the European Union, the Russian Federation and the United Nations, as the members of the Quartet, and of the League of Arab States and all other concerned States,

Recalling the advisory opinion rendered on 9 July 2004 by the International Court of Justice on the legal consequences of the construction of a wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory,⁴ and recalling also its resolutions ES-10/15 of 20 July 2004 and ES-10/17 of 15 December 2006,

Taking note of the application of Palestine for admission to membership in the United Nations, submitted on 23 September 2011,⁵

Recalling its resolution 67/19 of 29 November 2012, by which, inter alia, Palestine was accorded non-member observer State status in the United Nations, and taking note of the follow-up report of the Secretary-General,⁶

Reaffirming that the United Nations has a permanent responsibility towards the question of Palestine until the question is resolved in all its aspects in a satisfactory manner in accordance with international legitimacy,

1. *Expresses its appreciation* to the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for its efforts in performing the tasks assigned to it by the General Assembly, and takes note of its annual report,¹ including the conclusions and valuable recommendations contained in chapter VII thereof;

2. *Requests* the Committee to continue to exert all efforts to promote the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including their right to self-determination, to support the Middle East peace process for the achievement of the two-State solution on the basis of the pre-1967 borders and the just resolution of all final status issues and to mobilize international support for and assistance to the Palestinian people, and in this regard authorizes the Committee to make such adjustments in its approved programme of work as it may consider appropriate and necessary in the light of developments and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its sixty-ninth session and thereafter;

3. *Also requests* the Committee to continue to keep under review the situation relating to the question of Palestine and to report and make suggestions to the General Assembly, the Security Council or the Secretary-General, as appropriate;

4. *Further requests* the Committee to continue to extend its cooperation and support to Palestinian and other civil society organizations and to continue to involve additional civil society organizations and parliamentarians in its work in order to mobilize international solidarity and support for the Palestinian people, particularly during this critical period of political instability, humanitarian hardship and financial crisis, with the overall aim of promoting the achievement by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights and a just, lasting and peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, on the basis of the relevant United Nations resolutions, the terms of reference of the Madrid Conference, including the principle of land for peace, the Arab Peace Initiative² and the Quartet road map;³

⁴ See A/ES-10/273 and Corr.1.

⁵ A/66/371-S/2011/592, annex I.

⁶ A/67/738.

5. *Welcomes*, in this regard, the reactivation of the Working Group of the Committee, the mandate of which is to coordinate the efforts of international and regional civil society organizations regarding the question of Palestine;

6. *Requests* the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine, established under General Assembly resolution 194 (III), and other United Nations bodies associated with the question of Palestine to continue to cooperate fully with the Committee and to make available to it, at its request, the relevant information and documentation that they have at their disposal;

7. *Invites* all Governments and organizations to extend their cooperation to the Committee in the performance of its tasks, recalling its repeated call for all States and the specialized agencies and organizations of the United Nations system to continue to support and assist the Palestinian people in the early realization of their right to self-determination, including the right to their independent State of Palestine;

8. *Requests* the Secretary-General to circulate the report of the Committee to all the competent bodies of the United Nations, and urges them to take the necessary action, as appropriate;

9. *Decides* to proclaim 2014 the International Year of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, and requests the Committee to organize activities to be held during the year, in cooperation with Governments, relevant organizations of the United Nations system, intergovernmental organizations and civil society organizations;

10. *Requests* the Secretary-General to continue to provide the Committee with all the facilities necessary for the performance of its tasks.

*58th plenary meeting
26 November 2013*



General Assembly

Distr.: General
10 December 2014

Sixty-ninth session
Agenda item 36

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 25 November 2014

[without reference to a Main Committee (A/69/L.21 and Add.1)]

69/20. Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 181 (II) of 29 November 1947, 194 (III) of 11 December 1948, 3236 (XXIX) of 22 November 1974, 3375 (XXX) and 3376 (XXX) of 10 November 1975, 31/20 of 24 November 1976 and all its subsequent relevant resolutions, including those adopted at its emergency special sessions and its resolution 68/12 of 26 November 2013,

Recalling also its resolution 58/292 of 6 May 2004,

Having considered the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People,¹

Recalling the mutual recognition between the Government of the State of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization, the representative of the Palestinian people, as well as the existing agreements between the two sides and the need for full compliance with those agreements,

Affirming its support for a comprehensive, just, lasting and peaceful settlement to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict on the basis of the relevant United Nations resolutions, the terms of reference of the Madrid Conference, including the principle of land for peace, the Arab Peace Initiative adopted by the Council of the League of Arab States at its fourteenth session² and the Quartet road map to a permanent two-State solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, endorsed by the Security Council in resolution 1515 (2003) of 19 November 2003,³

Recalling the advisory opinion rendered on 9 July 2004 by the International Court of Justice on the legal consequences of the construction of a wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory,⁴ and recalling also its resolutions ES-10/15 of 20 July 2004 and ES-10/17 of 15 December 2006,

¹ *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/69/35).*

² A/56/1026-S/2002/932, annex II, resolution 14/221.

³ S/2003/529, annex.

⁴ See A/ES-10/273 and Corr.1.



Taking note of the application of Palestine for admission to membership in the United Nations, submitted on 23 September 2011,⁵

Recalling its resolution 67/19 of 29 November 2012, by which, inter alia, Palestine was accorded non-member observer State status in the United Nations, and taking note of the follow-up report of the Secretary-General,⁶

Taking note of the accession by Palestine, on 1 April 2014, to several human rights treaties and the core humanitarian law conventions,

Reaffirming that the United Nations has a permanent responsibility towards the question of Palestine until the question is resolved in all its aspects in a satisfactory manner in accordance with international legitimacy,

1. *Expresses its appreciation* to the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for its efforts in performing the tasks assigned to it by the General Assembly, and takes note of its annual report,¹ including the conclusions and valuable recommendations contained in chapter VII thereof;

2. *Requests* the Committee to continue to exert all efforts to promote the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including their right to self-determination, to support the achievement without delay of an end to the Israeli occupation that began in 1967 and of the two-State solution on the basis of the pre-1967 borders and the just resolution of all final status issues and to mobilize international support for and assistance to the Palestinian people, and in this regard authorizes the Committee to make such adjustments in its approved programme of work as it may consider appropriate and necessary in the light of developments and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its seventieth session and thereafter;

3. *Also requests* the Committee to continue to keep under review the situation relating to the question of Palestine and to report and make suggestions to the General Assembly, the Security Council or the Secretary-General, as appropriate;

4. *Further requests* the Committee to continue to extend its cooperation and support to Palestinian and other civil society organizations and to continue to involve additional civil society organizations and parliamentarians in its work in order to mobilize international solidarity and support for the Palestinian people, particularly during this critical period of political instability, humanitarian hardship and financial crisis, with the overall aim of promoting the achievement by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights and a just, lasting and peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, on the basis of the relevant United Nations resolutions, the terms of reference of the Madrid Conference, including the principle of land for peace, the Arab Peace Initiative² and the Quartet road map;³

5. *Commends* the efforts and activities of the Committee in commemoration of the International Year of Solidarity with the Palestinian People in 2014, in cooperation with Governments, relevant organizations of the United Nations system, intergovernmental organizations and civil society organizations;

⁵ A/66/371-S/2011/592, annex I.

⁶ A/67/738.

6. *Also commends* the efforts of the Working Group of the Committee in coordinating the efforts of international and regional civil society organizations regarding the question of Palestine;

7. *Requests* the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine, established under General Assembly resolution 194 (III), and other United Nations bodies associated with the question of Palestine to continue to cooperate fully with the Committee and to make available to it, at its request, the relevant information and documentation that they have at their disposal;

8. *Invites* all Governments and organizations to extend their cooperation to the Committee in the performance of its tasks, recalling its repeated call for all States and the specialized agencies and organizations of the United Nations system to continue to support and assist the Palestinian people in the early realization of their right to self-determination, including the right to their independent State of Palestine;

9. *Requests*, as called for by the Committee, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development to report to the General Assembly on the economic costs of the Israeli occupation for the Palestinian people;

10. *Requests* the Secretary-General to circulate the report of the Committee to all the competent bodies of the United Nations, and urges them to take the necessary action, as appropriate;

11. *Also requests* the Secretary-General to continue to provide the Committee with all the facilities necessary for the performance of its tasks.

*61st plenary meeting
25 November 2014*



General Assembly

Distr.: General
2 December 2015

Seventieth session
Agenda item 38

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 24 November 2015

[without reference to a Main Committee (A/70/L.10 and Add.1)]

70/12. Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 181 (II) of 29 November 1947, 194 (III) of 11 December 1948, 3236 (XXIX) of 22 November 1974, 3375 (XXX) and 3376 (XXX) of 10 November 1975, 31/20 of 24 November 1976 and all its subsequent relevant resolutions, including those adopted at its emergency special sessions and its resolution 69/20 of 25 November 2014,

Recalling also its resolution 58/292 of 6 May 2004,

Having considered the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People,¹

Recalling the mutual recognition between the Government of the State of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization, the representative of the Palestinian people, as well as the existing agreements between the two sides and the need for full compliance with those agreements,

Affirming its support for a comprehensive, just, lasting and peaceful settlement to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict on the basis of the relevant United Nations resolutions, the terms of reference of the Madrid Conference, including the principle of land for peace, the Arab Peace Initiative adopted by the Council of the League of Arab States at its fourteenth session² and the Quartet road map to a permanent two-State solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, endorsed by the Security Council in resolution 1515 (2003) of 19 November 2003,³

Recalling the advisory opinion rendered on 9 July 2004 by the International Court of Justice on the legal consequences of the construction of a wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory,⁴ and recalling also its resolutions ES-10/15 of 20 July 2004 and ES-10/17 of 15 December 2006,

¹ *Official Records of the General Assembly, Seventieth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/70/35).*

² A/56/1026-S/2002/932, annex II, resolution 14/221.

³ S/2003/529, annex.

⁴ See A/ES-10/273 and Corr.1.



Taking note of the application of Palestine for admission to membership in the United Nations, submitted on 23 September 2011,⁵

Recalling its resolution 67/19 of 29 November 2012, by which, inter alia, Palestine was accorded non-member observer State status in the United Nations, and taking note of the follow-up report of the Secretary-General,⁶

Taking note of the accession by Palestine to several human rights treaties and the core humanitarian law conventions, as well as other international treaties,

Reaffirming that the United Nations has a permanent responsibility towards the question of Palestine until the question is resolved in all its aspects in a satisfactory manner in accordance with international legitimacy,

1. *Expresses its appreciation* to the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for its efforts in performing the tasks assigned to it by the General Assembly, and takes note of its annual report,¹ including the conclusions and valuable recommendations contained in chapter VII thereof;

2. *Requests* the Committee to continue to exert all efforts to promote the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including their right to self-determination, to support the achievement without delay of an end to the Israeli occupation that began in 1967 and of the two-State solution on the basis of the pre-1967 borders and the just resolution of all final status issues and to mobilize international support for and assistance to the Palestinian people, and in this regard authorizes the Committee to make such adjustments in its approved programme of work as it may consider appropriate and necessary in the light of developments and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its seventy-first session and thereafter;

3. *Also requests* the Committee to continue to keep under review the situation relating to the question of Palestine and to report and make suggestions to the General Assembly, the Security Council or the Secretary-General, as appropriate;

4. *Further requests* the Committee to continue to extend its cooperation and support to Palestinian and other civil society organizations and to continue to involve additional civil society organizations and parliamentarians in its work in order to mobilize international solidarity and support for the Palestinian people, particularly during this critical period of political instability, humanitarian hardship and financial crisis, with the overall aim of promoting the achievement by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights and a just, lasting and peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, on the basis of the relevant United Nations resolutions, the terms of reference of the Madrid Conference, including the principle of land for peace, the Arab Peace Initiative² and the Quartet road map;³

5. *Commends* the efforts and activities of the Committee in upholding its mandate, including through cooperative initiatives with Governments, relevant organizations of the United Nations system, intergovernmental organizations and civil society organizations;

⁵ A/66/371-S/2011/592, annex I.

⁶ A/67/738.

6. *Also commends* the efforts of the Working Group of the Committee in coordinating the efforts of international and regional civil society organizations regarding the question of Palestine;

7. *Requests* the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine, established under General Assembly resolution 194 (III), and other United Nations bodies associated with the question of Palestine to continue to cooperate fully with the Committee and to make available to it, at its request, the relevant information and documentation that they have at their disposal;

8. *Invites* all Governments and organizations to extend their cooperation to the Committee in the performance of its tasks, recalling its repeated call for all States and the specialized agencies and organizations of the United Nations system to continue to support and assist the Palestinian people in the early realization of their right to self-determination, including the right to their independent State of Palestine;

9. *Notes with appreciation* the efforts of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development to compile a report to the General Assembly, pursuant to resolution 69/20, on the economic costs of the Israeli occupation for the Palestinian people, and, while drawing attention to the alarming findings, as reflected in the recent report on United Nations Conference on Trade and Development assistance to the Palestinian people: developments in the economy of the Occupied Palestinian Territory,⁷ calls for the exertion of all efforts for the provision of necessary resources to expedite completion of the report;

10. *Requests* the Secretary-General to circulate the report of the Committee to all the competent bodies of the United Nations, and urges them to take the necessary action, as appropriate;

11. *Also requests* the Secretary-General to continue to provide the Committee with all the facilities necessary for the performance of its tasks.

*64th plenary meeting
24 November 2015*

⁷ TD/B/62/3.



General Assembly

Distr.: General
14 December 2016

Seventy-first session
Agenda item 35

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 30 November 2016

[without reference to a Main Committee (A/71/L.18 and Add.1)]

71/20. Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 181 (II) of 29 November 1947, 194 (III) of 11 December 1948, 3236 (XXIX) of 22 November 1974, 3375 (XXX) and 3376 (XXX) of 10 November 1975, 31/20 of 24 November 1976 and all its subsequent relevant resolutions, including those adopted at its emergency special sessions and its resolution 70/12 of 24 November 2015,

Recalling also its resolution 58/292 of 6 May 2004,

Having considered the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People,¹

Recalling the mutual recognition between the Government of the State of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization, the representative of the Palestinian people, as well as the existing agreements between the two sides and the need for full compliance with those agreements,

Affirming its support for a comprehensive, just, lasting and peaceful settlement to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict on the basis of the relevant United Nations resolutions, the terms of reference of the Madrid Conference, including the principle of land for peace, the Arab Peace Initiative adopted by the Council of the League of Arab States at its fourteenth session² and the Quartet road map to a permanent two-State solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, endorsed by the Security Council in resolution 1515 (2003) of 19 November 2003,³

Recalling the advisory opinion rendered on 9 July 2004 by the International Court of Justice on the legal consequences of the construction of a wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory,⁴ and recalling also its resolutions ES-10/15 of 20 July 2004 and ES-10/17 of 15 December 2006,

¹ Official Records of the General Assembly, Seventy-first Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/71/35).

² A/56/1026-S/2002/932, annex II, resolution 14/221.

³ S/2003/529, annex.

⁴ See A/ES-10/273 and Corr.1.



Taking note of the application of Palestine for admission to membership in the United Nations, submitted on 23 September 2011,⁵

Recalling its resolution 67/19 of 29 November 2012, by which, inter alia, Palestine was accorded non-member observer State status in the United Nations, and taking note of the follow-up report of the Secretary-General,⁶

Taking note of the accession by Palestine to several human rights treaties and the core humanitarian law conventions, as well as other international treaties,

Noting with deep regret the onset of the fiftieth year of the Israeli occupation, and stressing the urgent need for efforts to reverse the negative trends on the ground and to restore a political horizon for advancing and accelerating meaningful negotiations aimed at the achievement of a peace agreement that will bring a complete end to the Israeli occupation that began in 1967 and the resolution of all core final status issues, without exception, leading to a peaceful, just, lasting and comprehensive solution of the question of Palestine,

Reaffirming that the United Nations has a permanent responsibility towards the question of Palestine until the question is resolved in all its aspects in a satisfactory manner in accordance with international legitimacy,

1. *Expresses its appreciation* to the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for its efforts in performing the tasks assigned to it by the General Assembly, and takes note of its annual report,¹ including the conclusions and valuable recommendations contained in chapter VII thereof;

2. *Requests* the Committee to continue to exert all efforts to promote the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including their right to self-determination, to support the achievement without delay of an end to the Israeli occupation that began in 1967 and of the two-State solution on the basis of the pre-1967 borders and the just resolution of all final status issues and to mobilize international support for and assistance to the Palestinian people, and in this regard authorizes the Committee to make such adjustments in its approved programme of work as it may consider appropriate and necessary in the light of developments and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its seventy-second session and thereafter;

3. *Also requests* the Committee to continue to keep under review the situation relating to the question of Palestine and to report and make suggestions to the General Assembly, the Security Council or the Secretary-General, as appropriate;

4. *Further requests* the Committee to continue to extend its cooperation and support to Palestinian and other civil society organizations and to continue to involve additional civil society organizations and parliamentarians in its work in order to mobilize international solidarity and support for the Palestinian people, particularly during this critical period of political instability, humanitarian hardship and financial crisis, with the overall aim of promoting the achievement by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights and a just, lasting and peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, on the basis of the

⁵ A/66/371-S/2011/592, annex I.

⁶ A/67/738.

relevant United Nations resolutions, the terms of reference of the Madrid Conference, including the principle of land for peace, the Arab Peace Initiative² and the Quartet road map;³

5. *Commends* the efforts and activities of the Committee in upholding its mandate, including through cooperative initiatives with Governments, relevant organizations of the United Nations system, intergovernmental organizations and civil society organizations;

6. *Also commends* the efforts of the Working Group of the Committee in coordinating the efforts of international and regional civil society organizations regarding the question of Palestine;

7. *Requests* the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine, established under General Assembly resolution 194 (III), and other United Nations bodies associated with the question of Palestine to continue to cooperate fully with the Committee and to make available to it, at its request, the relevant information and documentation that they have at their disposal;

8. *Invites* all Governments and organizations to extend their cooperation and support to the Committee in the performance of its tasks, recalling its repeated call for all States and the specialized agencies and organizations of the United Nations system to continue to support and assist the Palestinian people in the early realization of their right to self-determination, including the right to their independent State of Palestine;

9. *Notes with appreciation* the efforts of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development to compile a report to the General Assembly, pursuant to resolution 69/20 of 25 November 2014, on the economic costs of the Israeli occupation for the Palestinian people, and, while drawing attention to the alarming findings, as reflected in the recent report on United Nations Conference on Trade and Development assistance to the Palestinian people: developments in the economy of the Occupied Palestinian Territory,⁷ calls for the exertion of all efforts for the provision of necessary resources to expedite completion of the report, including the facilitation and coordination of pertinent inputs from the relevant organs, bodies and agencies of the United Nations system;

10. *Requests* the Secretary-General to circulate the report of the Committee to all the competent bodies of the United Nations, and urges them to take the necessary action, as appropriate;

11. *Requests* the Committee, in the light of the onset of the fiftieth year of the Israeli occupation, to focus its activities throughout 2017 on efforts and initiatives to end the Israeli occupation that began in 1967 and to organize activities in this regard, within existing resources and in cooperation with Governments, relevant organizations of the United Nations system, intergovernmental organizations and civil society organizations, aimed at raising international awareness and mobilizing efforts as a contribution towards the achievement of a just, lasting, comprehensive and peaceful solution to the question of Palestine in all its aspects;

⁷ TD/B/63/3 and Corr.1.

12. *Requests* the Secretary-General to continue to provide the Committee with all the facilities necessary for the performance of its tasks.

*50th plenary meeting
30 November 2016*



Seventy-second session
Agenda item 38

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 30 November 2017

[without reference to a Main Committee ([A/72/L.15](#) and [A/72/L.15/Add.1](#))]

72/13. Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 181 (II) of 29 November 1947, 194 (III) of 11 December 1948, 3236 (XXIX) of 22 November 1974, 3375 (XXX) and 3376 (XXX) of 10 November 1975, [31/20](#) of 24 November 1976 and all its subsequent relevant resolutions, including those adopted at its emergency special sessions and its resolution [71/20](#) of 30 November 2016,

Recalling also its resolution [58/292](#) of 6 May 2004,

Having considered the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People,¹

Recalling the mutual recognition between the Government of the State of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization, the representative of the Palestinian people, as well as the existing agreements between the two sides and the need for full compliance with those agreements,

Affirming its support for a comprehensive, just, lasting and peaceful settlement to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict on the basis of the relevant United Nations resolutions, the terms of reference of the Madrid Conference, including the principle of land for peace, the Arab Peace Initiative adopted by the Council of the League of Arab States at its fourteenth session² and the Quartet road map to a permanent two-State solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, endorsed by the Security Council in resolution [1515 \(2003\)](#) of 19 November 2003,³

Recalling the relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#) of 23 December 2016, and underscoring in this regard, inter alia, the

¹ *Official Records of the General Assembly, Seventy-second Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/72/35).*

² [A/56/1026-S/2002/932](#), annex II, resolution [14/221](#).

³ [S/2003/529](#), annex.



call upon all parties to continue, in the interest of the promotion of peace and security, to exert collective efforts to launch credible negotiations on all final status issues in the Middle East peace process and within the time frame specified by the Quartet in its statement of 21 September 2010,

Recalling also the advisory opinion rendered on 9 July 2004 by the International Court of Justice on the legal consequences of the construction of a wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory,⁴ and recalling further its resolutions ES-10/15 of 20 July 2004 and ES-10/17 of 15 December 2006,

Taking note of the application of Palestine for admission to membership in the United Nations, submitted on 23 September 2011,⁵

Recalling its resolution 67/19 of 29 November 2012, by which, inter alia, Palestine was accorded non-member observer State status in the United Nations, and taking note of the follow-up report of the Secretary-General,⁶

Taking note of the accession by Palestine to several human rights treaties and the core humanitarian law conventions, as well as other international treaties,

Noting with deep regret the passage of 50 years since the onset of the Israeli occupation and 70 years since the adoption of resolution 181 (II) on 29 November 1947 and the Nakba without tangible progress towards a peaceful solution, and stressing the urgent need for efforts to reverse the negative trends on the ground and to restore a political horizon for advancing and accelerating meaningful negotiations aimed at the achievement of a peace agreement that will bring a complete end to the Israeli occupation that began in 1967 and the resolution of all core final status issues, without exception, leading to a peaceful, just, lasting and comprehensive solution of the question of Palestine,

Reaffirming that the United Nations has a permanent responsibility towards the question of Palestine until the question is resolved in all its aspects in a satisfactory manner in accordance with international legitimacy,

1. *Expresses its appreciation* to the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for its efforts in performing the tasks assigned to it by the General Assembly, and takes note of its annual report,¹ including the conclusions and valuable recommendations contained in chapter VII thereof, inter alia the recommendations for the redoubling of international efforts aimed at achieving a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine, for an expanded multilateral framework for the revitalization of peace efforts, and for efforts to ensure fullest accountability and implementation of the long-standing parameters for peace in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions;

2. *Requests* the Committee to continue to exert all efforts to promote the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including their right to self-determination, to support the achievement without delay of an end to the Israeli occupation that began in 1967 and of the two-State solution on the basis of the pre-1967 borders and the just resolution of all final status issues and to mobilize international support for and assistance to the Palestinian people, and in this regard authorizes the Committee to make such adjustments in its approved programme of work as it may consider appropriate and necessary in the light of developments and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its seventy-third session and thereafter;

⁴ See A/ES-10/273 and A/ES-10/273/Corr.1.

⁵ A/66/371-S/2011/592, annex I.

⁶ A/67/738.

3. *Also requests* the Committee to continue to keep under review the situation relating to the question of Palestine and to report and make suggestions to the General Assembly, the Security Council or the Secretary-General, as appropriate;

4. *Further requests* the Committee to continue to extend its cooperation and support to Palestinian and other civil society organizations and to continue to involve additional civil society organizations and parliamentarians in its work in order to mobilize international solidarity and support for the Palestinian people, particularly during this critical period of political instability, humanitarian hardship and financial crisis, with the overall aim of promoting the achievement by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights and a just, lasting and peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, on the basis of the relevant United Nations resolutions, the terms of reference of the Madrid Conference, including the principle of land for peace, the Arab Peace Initiative² and the Quartet road map;³

5. *Commends* the efforts and activities of the Committee in upholding its mandate, including through cooperative initiatives with Governments, relevant organizations of the United Nations system, intergovernmental organizations and civil society organizations;

6. *Also commends* the efforts of the Working Group of the Committee in coordinating the efforts of international and regional civil society organizations regarding the question of Palestine;

7. *Requests* the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine, established under General Assembly resolution 194 (III), and other United Nations bodies associated with the question of Palestine to continue to cooperate fully with the Committee and to make available to it, at its request, the relevant information and documentation that they have at their disposal;

8. *Invites* all Governments and organizations to extend their cooperation and support to the Committee in the performance of its tasks, recalling its repeated call for all States and the specialized agencies and organizations of the United Nations system to continue to support and assist the Palestinian people in the early realization of their right to self-determination, including the right to their independent State of Palestine;

9. *Notes with appreciation* the efforts of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development to compile a report to the General Assembly, pursuant to resolution 69/20 of 25 November 2014, on the economic costs of the Israeli occupation for the Palestinian people, and, while drawing attention to the alarming findings, as reflected in the recent report on United Nations Conference on Trade and Development assistance to the Palestinian people: developments in the economy of the Occupied Palestinian Territory,⁷ calls for the exertion of all efforts for the provision of necessary resources to expedite completion and publication of the report, including the facilitation and coordination of pertinent inputs from the relevant organs, bodies and agencies of the United Nations system;

10. *Requests* the Secretary-General to circulate the report of the Committee to all the competent bodies of the United Nations, and urges them to take the necessary action, as appropriate;

11. *Requests* the Committee, bearing in mind the solemn anniversaries being observed in 2017 and the absence of tangible progress towards a peaceful solution, to continue to focus its activities throughout 2018 on efforts and initiatives to end the Israeli occupation that began in 1967 and to organize activities in this regard,

⁷ TD/B/63/3 and TD/B/63/3/Corr.1.

within existing resources and in cooperation with Governments, relevant organizations of the United Nations system, intergovernmental organizations and civil society organizations, aimed at raising international awareness and mobilizing diplomatic efforts to launch credible negotiations aimed at achieving without delay a just, lasting, comprehensive and peaceful solution to the question of Palestine in all its aspects;

12. *Requests* the Secretary-General to continue to provide the Committee with all the facilities necessary for the performance of its tasks.

*60th plenary meeting
30 November 2017*



Seventy-third session

Agenda item 39

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 30 November 2018

[without reference to a Main Committee ([A/73/L.31](#) and [A/73/L.31/Add.1](#))]

73/18. Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 181 (II) of 29 November 1947, 194 (III) of 11 December 1948, 3236 (XXIX) of 22 November 1974, 3375 (XXX) and 3376 (XXX) of 10 November 1975, [31/20](#) of 24 November 1976 and all its subsequent relevant resolutions, including those adopted at its emergency special sessions and its resolution [72/13](#) of 30 November 2017,

Recalling also its resolution [58/292](#) of 6 May 2004,

Having considered the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People,¹

Recalling the mutual recognition between the Government of the State of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization, the representative of the Palestinian people, as well as the existing agreements between the two sides and the need for full compliance with those agreements,

Affirming its support for a comprehensive, just, lasting and peaceful settlement to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict on the basis of the relevant United Nations resolutions, the terms of reference of the Madrid Conference, including the principle of land for peace, the Arab Peace Initiative adopted by the Council of the League of Arab States at its fourteenth session² and the Quartet road map to a permanent two-State solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict,³ endorsed by the Security Council in resolution [1515 \(2003\)](#) of 19 November 2003,

Recalling the relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#) of 23 December 2016, and underscoring in this regard, inter alia, the call

¹ *Official Records of the General Assembly, Seventy-third Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/73/35).*

² [A/56/1026-S/2002/932](#), annex II, resolution 14/221.

³ [S/2003/529](#), annex.



upon all parties to continue, in the interest of the promotion of peace and security, to exert collective efforts to launch credible negotiations on all final status issues in the Middle East peace process and within the time frame specified by the Quartet in its statement of 21 September 2010,

Recalling also the advisory opinion rendered on 9 July 2004 by the International Court of Justice on the legal consequences of the construction of a wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory,⁴ and recalling further its resolutions ES-10/15 of 20 July 2004 and ES-10/17 of 15 December 2006,

Taking note of the application of Palestine for admission to membership in the United Nations, submitted on 23 September 2011,⁵

Recalling its resolution 67/19 of 29 November 2012, by which, inter alia, Palestine was accorded non-member observer State status in the United Nations, and taking note of the follow-up report of the Secretary-General,⁶

Taking note of the accession by Palestine to several human rights treaties and the core humanitarian law conventions, as well as other international treaties,

Noting with deep regret the passage of 51 years since the onset of the Israeli occupation and over 70 years since the adoption of resolution 181 (II) on 29 November 1947 and the Nakba without tangible progress towards a peaceful solution, and stressing the urgent need for efforts to reverse the negative trends on the ground and to restore a political horizon for advancing and accelerating meaningful negotiations aimed at the achievement of a peace agreement that will bring a complete end to the Israeli occupation that began in 1967 and the resolution of all core final status issues, without exception, leading to a peaceful, just, lasting and comprehensive solution to the question of Palestine,

Reaffirming that the United Nations has a permanent responsibility towards the question of Palestine until the question is resolved in all its aspects in a satisfactory manner in accordance with international legitimacy,

1. *Expresses its appreciation* to the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for its efforts in performing the tasks assigned to it by the General Assembly, and takes note of its annual report,¹ including the conclusions and valuable recommendations contained in chapter VII thereof, inter alia, the recommendations for the redoubling of international efforts aimed at achieving a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine, for an expanded multilateral framework for the revitalization of peace efforts and for efforts to ensure fullest accountability and implementation of the long-standing parameters for peace in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions;

2. *Requests* the Committee to continue to exert all efforts to promote the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including their right to self-determination, to support the achievement without delay of an end to the Israeli occupation that began in 1967 and of the two-State solution on the basis of the pre-1967 borders and the just resolution of all final status issues and to mobilize international support for and assistance to the Palestinian people, and in this regard authorizes the Committee to make such adjustments in its approved programme of work as it may consider appropriate and necessary in the light of developments and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its seventy-fourth session and thereafter;

⁴ See A/ES-10/273 and A/ES-10/273/Corr.1.

⁵ A/66/371-S/2011/592, annex I.

⁶ A/67/738.

3. *Also requests* the Committee to continue to keep under review the situation relating to the question of Palestine and to report and make suggestions to the General Assembly, the Security Council or the Secretary-General, as appropriate;

4. *Further requests* the Committee to continue to extend its cooperation and support to Palestinian and other civil society organizations and to continue to involve additional civil society organizations and parliamentarians in its work in order to mobilize international solidarity and support for the Palestinian people, particularly during this critical period of political instability, humanitarian hardship and financial crisis, with the overall aim of promoting the achievement by the Palestinian people of their inalienable rights and a just, lasting and peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, on the basis of the relevant United Nations resolutions, the terms of reference of the Madrid Conference, including the principle of land for peace, the Arab Peace Initiative² and the Quartet road map;³

5. *Commends* the Committee on its efforts and activities in upholding its mandate, including through cooperative initiatives with Governments, relevant organizations of the United Nations system, intergovernmental organizations and civil society organizations;

6. *Commends* the Working Group of the Committee on its efforts in coordinating the efforts of international and regional civil society organizations regarding the question of Palestine;

7. *Requests* the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine, established under General Assembly resolution 194 (III), and other United Nations bodies associated with the question of Palestine to continue to cooperate fully with the Committee and to make available to it, at its request, the relevant information and documentation that they have at their disposal;

8. *Invites* all Governments and organizations to extend their cooperation and support to the Committee in the performance of its tasks, recalling its repeated call for all States and the specialized agencies and organizations of the United Nations system to continue to support and assist the Palestinian people in the early realization of their right to self-determination, including the right to their independent State of Palestine;

9. *Requests* the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development to continue to report to the General Assembly on the economic costs of the Israeli occupation for the Palestinian people, and, while drawing attention to the alarming findings, as reflected in the recent reports⁷ in this regard, calls for the exertion of all efforts for the provision of the resources necessary to expedite the completion and publication of the report, including the facilitation and coordination of pertinent inputs from the relevant organs, bodies and agencies of the United Nations system;

10. *Requests* the Secretary-General to circulate the report of the Committee to all the competent bodies of the United Nations, and urges them to take the necessary action, as appropriate;

11. *Requests* the Committee, bearing in mind the regrettable absence of tangible progress towards a peaceful solution, to continue to focus its activities throughout 2019 on efforts and initiatives to end the Israeli occupation that began in 1967 and to organize activities in this regard, within existing resources and in cooperation with Governments, relevant organizations of the United Nations system, intergovernmental organizations and civil society organizations, aimed at raising international awareness and mobilizing diplomatic efforts to launch credible

⁷ A/71/174 and A/73/201.

negotiations aimed at achieving without delay a just, lasting, comprehensive and peaceful solution to the question of Palestine in all its aspects;

12. *Requests* the Secretary-General to continue to provide the Committee with all the facilities necessary for the performance of its tasks.

*43rd plenary meeting
30 November 2018*



Seventy-fourth session
Agenda item 35
Question of Palestine

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 3 December 2019

[without reference to a Main Committee ([A/74/L.14](#) and [A/74/L.14/Add.1](#))]

74/10. Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions [181 \(II\)](#) of 29 November 1947, [194 \(III\)](#) of 11 December 1948, [3236 \(XXIX\)](#) of 22 November 1974, [3375 \(XXX\)](#) and [3376 \(XXX\)](#) of 10 November 1975, [31/20](#) of 24 November 1976 and all its subsequent relevant resolutions, including those adopted at its emergency special sessions and its resolution [73/18](#) of 30 November 2018,

Recalling also its resolution [58/292](#) of 6 May 2004,

Having considered the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People,¹

Recalling the mutual recognition between the Government of the State of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization, the representative of the Palestinian people, as well as the existing agreements between the two sides and the need for full compliance with those agreements,

Affirming its support for a comprehensive, just, lasting and peaceful settlement to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict on the basis of the relevant United Nations resolutions, the terms of reference of the Madrid Conference, including the principle of land for peace, the Arab Peace Initiative adopted by the Council of the League of Arab States at its fourteenth session² and the Quartet road map to a permanent two-State solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict,³ endorsed by the Security Council in resolution [1515 \(2003\)](#) of 19 November 2003,

¹ *Official Records of the General Assembly, Seventy-fourth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/74/35).*

² [A/56/1026-S/2002/932](#), annex II, resolution 14/221.

³ [S/2003/529](#), annex.



Recalling the relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolution 2334 (2016) of 23 December 2016, and underscoring in this regard, inter alia, the call upon all parties to continue, in the interest of the promotion of peace and security, to exert collective efforts to launch credible negotiations on all final status issues in the Middle East peace process and within the time frame specified by the Quartet in its statement of 21 September 2010,

Recalling also the advisory opinion rendered on 9 July 2004 by the International Court of Justice on the legal consequences of the construction of a wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory,⁴ and recalling further its resolutions ES-10/15 of 20 July 2004 and ES-10/17 of 15 December 2006,

Taking note of the application of Palestine for admission to membership in the United Nations, submitted on 23 September 2011,⁵

Recalling its resolution 67/19 of 29 November 2012, by which, inter alia, Palestine was accorded non-member observer State status in the United Nations, and taking note of the follow-up report of the Secretary-General,⁶

Taking note of the accession by Palestine to several human rights treaties and the core humanitarian law conventions, as well as other international treaties,

Noting with deep regret the passage of 52 years since the onset of the Israeli occupation and over 72 years since the adoption of resolution 181 (II) on 29 November 1947 and the Nakba without tangible progress towards a peaceful solution, and stressing the urgent need for efforts to reverse the negative trends on the ground and to restore a political horizon for advancing and accelerating meaningful negotiations aimed at the achievement of a peace agreement that will bring a complete end to the Israeli occupation that began in 1967 and the resolution of all core final status issues, without exception, leading to a peaceful, just, lasting and comprehensive solution to the question of Palestine,

Reaffirming that the United Nations has a permanent responsibility towards the question of Palestine until the question is resolved in all its aspects in a satisfactory manner in accordance with international legitimacy,

1. *Expresses its appreciation* to the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for its efforts in performing the tasks assigned to it by the General Assembly, and takes note of its annual report,¹ including the conclusions and valuable recommendations contained in chapter VII thereof, inter alia, the recommendations for the redoubling of international efforts aimed at achieving a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine, for an expanded multilateral framework for the revitalization of peace efforts and for efforts to ensure fullest accountability and implementation of the long-standing parameters for peace in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions;

2. *Requests* the Committee to continue to exert all efforts to promote the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including their right to self-determination, to support the achievement without delay of an end to the Israeli occupation that began in 1967 and of the two-State solution on the basis of the pre-1967 borders and the just resolution of all final status issues and to mobilize international support for and assistance to the Palestinian people, and in this regard authorizes the Committee to make such adjustments in its approved programme of

⁴ See A/ES-10/273 and A/ES-10/273/Corr.1.

⁵ A/66/371-S/2011/592, annex I.

⁶ A/67/738.

work as it may consider appropriate and necessary in the light of developments and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its seventy-fifth session and thereafter;

3. *Also requests* the Committee to continue to keep under review the situation relating to the question of Palestine and to report and make suggestions to the General Assembly, the Security Council or the Secretary-General, as appropriate;

4. *Further requests* the Committee to continue to extend its cooperation and support to Palestinian and other civil society organizations and to continue to involve additional civil society organizations and parliamentarians in its work in order to mobilize international solidarity and support for the Palestinian people, particularly during this critical period of political instability, humanitarian hardship and financial crisis, with the overall aim of promoting the achievement by the Palestinian people of their inalienable rights and a just, lasting and peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, on the basis of the relevant United Nations resolutions, the terms of reference of the Madrid Conference, including the principle of land for peace, the Arab Peace Initiative² and the Quartet road map;³

5. *Commends* the Committee on its efforts and activities in upholding its mandate, including through cooperative initiatives with Governments, relevant organizations of the United Nations system, intergovernmental organizations and civil society organizations;

6. *Commends* the Working Group of the Committee on its efforts in coordinating the efforts of international and regional civil society organizations regarding the question of Palestine;

7. *Requests* the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine, established under General Assembly resolution 194 (III), and other United Nations bodies associated with the question of Palestine to continue to cooperate fully with the Committee and to make available to it, at its request, the relevant information and documentation that they have at their disposal;

8. *Invites* all Governments and organizations to extend their cooperation and support to the Committee in the performance of its tasks, recalling its repeated call for all States and the specialized agencies and organizations of the United Nations system to continue to support and assist the Palestinian people in the early realization of their right to self-determination, including the right to their independent State of Palestine;

9. *Requests* the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development to continue to report to the General Assembly on the economic costs of the Israeli occupation for the Palestinian people, and, while drawing attention to the alarming findings, as reflected in the recent reports⁷ in this regard, calls for the exertion of all efforts for the provision of the resources necessary to expedite the completion and publication of the report, including the facilitation and coordination of pertinent inputs from the relevant organs, bodies and agencies of the United Nations system;

10. *Requests* the Secretary-General to circulate the report of the Committee to all the competent bodies of the United Nations, and urges them to take the necessary action, as appropriate;

11. *Requests* the Committee, bearing in mind the regrettable absence of tangible progress towards a peaceful solution, to continue to focus its activities throughout 2020 on efforts and initiatives to end the Israeli occupation that began in 1967 and to organize activities in this regard, within existing resources and in cooperation with Governments, relevant organizations of the United Nations system, intergovernmental organizations and civil society organizations, aimed at raising

⁷ A/73/201 and A/74/272.

international awareness and mobilizing diplomatic efforts to launch credible negotiations aimed at achieving without delay a just, lasting, comprehensive and peaceful solution to the question of Palestine in all its aspects;

12. *Requests* the Secretary-General to continue to provide the Committee with all the facilities necessary for the performance of its tasks.

*38th plenary meeting
3 December 2019*



Seventy-fifth session
Agenda item 38
Question of Palestine

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 2 December 2020

[without reference to a Main Committee ([A/75/L.32](#) and [A/75/L.32/Add.1](#))]

75/20. Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions [181 \(II\)](#) of 29 November 1947, [194 \(III\)](#) of 11 December 1948, [3236 \(XXIX\)](#) of 22 November 1974, [3375 \(XXX\)](#) and [3376 \(XXX\)](#) of 10 November 1975, [31/20](#) of 24 November 1976 and all its subsequent relevant resolutions, including those adopted at its emergency special sessions and its resolution [74/10](#) of 3 December 2019,

Recalling also its resolution [58/292](#) of 6 May 2004,

Having considered the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People,¹

Recalling the mutual recognition between the Government of the State of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization, the representative of the Palestinian people, as well as the existing agreements between the two sides and the need for full compliance with those agreements,

Affirming its support for a comprehensive, just, lasting and peaceful settlement to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict on the basis of the relevant United Nations resolutions, the terms of reference of the Madrid Conference, including the principle of land for peace, the Arab Peace Initiative adopted by the Council of the League of Arab States at its fourteenth session² and the Quartet road map to a permanent two-State solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict,³ endorsed by the Security Council in resolution [1515 \(2003\)](#) of 19 November 2003,

¹ *Official Records of the General Assembly, Seventy-fifth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/75/35).*

² [A/56/1026-S/2002/932](#), annex II, resolution 14/221.

³ [S/2003/529](#), annex.



Recalling the relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolution 2334 (2016) of 23 December 2016, and underscoring in this regard, inter alia, the call upon all parties to continue, in the interest of the promotion of peace and security, to exert collective efforts to launch credible negotiations on all final status issues in the Middle East peace process and within the time frame specified by the Quartet in its statement of 21 September 2010,

Recalling also the advisory opinion rendered on 9 July 2004 by the International Court of Justice on the legal consequences of the construction of a wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory,⁴ and recalling further its resolutions ES-10/15 of 20 July 2004 and ES-10/17 of 15 December 2006,

Taking note of the application of Palestine for admission to membership in the United Nations, submitted on 23 September 2011,⁵

Recalling its resolution 67/19 of 29 November 2012, by which, inter alia, Palestine was accorded non-member observer State status in the United Nations, and taking note of the follow-up report of the Secretary-General,⁶

Taking note of the accession by Palestine to several human rights treaties and the core humanitarian law conventions, as well as other international treaties,

Noting with deep regret the passage of 53 years since the onset of the Israeli occupation and over 73 years since the adoption of resolution 181 (II) on 29 November 1947 and the Nakba without tangible progress towards a peaceful solution, and stressing the urgent need for efforts to reverse the negative trends on the ground and to restore a political horizon for advancing and accelerating meaningful negotiations aimed at the achievement of a peace agreement that will bring a complete end to the Israeli occupation that began in 1967 and the resolution of all core final status issues, without exception, leading to a peaceful, just, lasting and comprehensive solution to the question of Palestine,

Reaffirming that the United Nations has a permanent responsibility towards the question of Palestine until the question is resolved in all its aspects in a satisfactory manner in accordance with international legitimacy,

1. *Expresses its appreciation* to the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for its efforts in performing the tasks assigned to it by the General Assembly, and takes note of its annual report, including the conclusions and valuable recommendations contained in chapter VII thereof, inter alia, the recommendations for the redoubling of international efforts aimed at achieving a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine, for an expanded multilateral framework for the revitalization of peace efforts and for efforts to ensure fullest accountability and implementation of the long-standing parameters for peace in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions;

2. *Requests* the Committee to continue to exert all efforts to promote the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including their right to self-determination, to support the achievement without delay of an end to the Israeli occupation that began in 1967 and of the two-State solution on the basis of the pre-1967 borders and the just resolution of all final status issues and to mobilize international support for and assistance to the Palestinian people, and in this regard authorizes the Committee to make such adjustments in its approved programme of work as it may consider appropriate and necessary in the light of developments and

⁴ See A/ES-10/273 and A/ES-10/273/Corr.1.

⁵ A/66/371-S/2011/592, annex I.

⁶ A/67/738.

to report thereon to the General Assembly at its seventy-sixth and seventy-seventh sessions and thereafter;

3. *Also requests* the Committee to continue to keep under review the situation relating to the question of Palestine and to report and make suggestions to the General Assembly, the Security Council or the Secretary-General, as appropriate;

4. *Further requests* the Committee to continue to extend its cooperation and support to Palestinian and other civil society organizations and to continue to involve additional civil society organizations and parliamentarians in its work in order to mobilize international solidarity and support for the Palestinian people, particularly during this critical period of political instability, humanitarian hardship and financial crisis, with the overall aim of promoting the achievement by the Palestinian people of their inalienable rights and a just, lasting and peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, on the basis of the relevant United Nations resolutions, the terms of reference of the Madrid Conference, including the principle of land for peace, the Arab Peace Initiative and the Quartet road map;

5. *Commends* the Committee on its efforts and activities in upholding its mandate, including through cooperative initiatives with Governments, relevant organizations of the United Nations system, intergovernmental organizations and civil society organizations;

6. *Commends* the Working Group of the Committee on its efforts in coordinating the efforts of international and regional civil society organizations regarding the question of Palestine;

7. *Requests* the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine, established under General Assembly resolution 194 (III), and other United Nations bodies associated with the question of Palestine to continue to cooperate fully with the Committee and to make available to it, at its request, the relevant information and documentation that they have at their disposal;

8. *Invites* all Governments and organizations to extend their cooperation and support to the Committee in the performance of its tasks, recalling its repeated call for all States and the specialized agencies and organizations of the United Nations system to continue to support and assist the Palestinian people in the early realization of their right to self-determination, including the right to their independent State of Palestine;

9. *Requests* the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development to continue to report to the General Assembly on the economic costs of the Israeli occupation for the Palestinian people, and, while drawing attention to the alarming findings, as reflected in the recent reports⁷ in this regard, calls for the exertion of all efforts for the provision of the resources necessary to expedite the completion and publication of the report, including the facilitation and coordination of pertinent inputs from the relevant organs, bodies and agencies of the United Nations system;

10. *Requests* the Secretary-General to circulate the report of the Committee to all the competent bodies of the United Nations, and urges them to take the necessary action, as appropriate;

11. *Requests* the Committee, bearing in mind the regrettable absence of tangible progress towards a peaceful solution, to continue to focus its activities throughout 2021 and 2022 on efforts and initiatives to end the Israeli occupation that began in 1967 and to organize activities in this regard, within existing resources and in cooperation with Governments, relevant organizations of the United Nations

⁷ A/73/201, A/74/272 and A/75/310.

system, intergovernmental organizations and civil society organizations, aimed at raising international awareness and mobilizing diplomatic efforts to launch credible negotiations aimed at achieving without delay a just, lasting, comprehensive and peaceful solution to the question of Palestine in all its aspects;

12. *Requests* the Secretary-General to continue to provide the Committee with all the facilities necessary for the performance of its tasks.

*35th plenary meeting
2 December 2020*



Seventy-seventh session
Agenda item 33
Question of Palestine

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 30 November 2022

[without reference to a Main Committee (A/77/L.23)]

77/22. Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 181 (II) of 29 November 1947, 194 (III) of 11 December 1948, 3236 (XXIX) of 22 November 1974, 3375 (XXX) and 3376 (XXX) of 10 November 1975, 31/20 of 24 November 1976 and all its subsequent relevant resolutions, including those adopted at its emergency special sessions and its resolution 75/20 of 2 December 2020,

Recalling also its resolution 58/292 of 6 May 2004,

Having considered the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People,¹

Recalling the mutual recognition between the Government of the State of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization, the representative of the Palestinian people, as well as the existing agreements between the two sides and the need for full compliance with those agreements,

Affirming its support for a comprehensive, just, lasting and peaceful settlement to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict on the basis of the relevant United Nations resolutions, the terms of reference of the Madrid Conference, including the principle of land for peace, the Arab Peace Initiative adopted by the Council of the League of Arab States at its fourteenth session² and the Quartet road map to a permanent two-State solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict,³ endorsed by the Security Council in resolution 1515 (2003) of 19 November 2003,

¹ *Official Records of the General Assembly, Seventy-seventh Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/77/35).*

² *A/56/1026-S/2002/932*, annex II, resolution 14/221.

³ *S/2003/529*, annex.



Recalling the relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolution 2334 (2016) of 23 December 2016, and underscoring in this regard, inter alia, the call upon all parties to continue, in the interest of the promotion of peace and security, to exert collective efforts to launch credible negotiations on all final status issues in the Middle East peace process and within the time frame specified by the Quartet in its statement of 21 September 2010,

Recalling also the advisory opinion rendered on 9 July 2004 by the International Court of Justice on the legal consequences of the construction of a wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory,⁴ and recalling further its resolutions ES-10/15 of 20 July 2004 and ES-10/17 of 15 December 2006,

Taking note of the application of Palestine for admission to membership in the United Nations, submitted on 23 September 2011,⁵

Recalling its resolution 67/19 of 29 November 2012, by which, inter alia, Palestine was accorded non-member observer State status in the United Nations, and taking note of the follow-up report of the Secretary-General,⁶

Taking note of the accession by Palestine to several human rights treaties and the core humanitarian law conventions, as well as other international treaties,

Noting with deep regret the passage of 55 years since the onset of the Israeli occupation and 75 years since the adoption of resolution 181 (II) on 29 November 1947 and the Nakba without tangible progress towards a peaceful solution, and stressing the urgent need for efforts to reverse the negative trends on the ground and to restore a political horizon for advancing and accelerating meaningful negotiations aimed at the achievement of a peace agreement that will bring a complete end to the Israeli occupation that began in 1967 and the resolution of all core final status issues, without exception, leading to a peaceful, just, lasting and comprehensive solution to the question of Palestine,

Reaffirming that the United Nations has a permanent responsibility towards the question of Palestine until the question is resolved in all its aspects in a satisfactory manner in accordance with international legitimacy,

1. *Expresses its appreciation* to the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for its efforts in performing the tasks assigned to it by the General Assembly aimed at achieving a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine, an expanded multilateral framework for the revitalization of peace efforts and ensuring fullest accountability and implementation of the long-standing parameters for peace in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions;

2. *Requests* the Committee to continue to exert all efforts to promote the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including their right to self-determination, to support the achievement without delay of an end to the Israeli occupation that began in 1967 and of the two-State solution on the basis of the pre-1967 borders and the just resolution of all final status issues and to mobilize international support for and assistance to the Palestinian people, and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its seventy-eighth session and thereafter;

3. *Also requests* the Committee to continue to keep under review the situation relating to the question of Palestine and make suggestions to the General Assembly, the Security Council or the Secretary-General, as appropriate;

⁴ See A/ES-10/273 and A/ES-10/273/Corr.1.

⁵ A/66/371-S/2011/592, annex I.

⁶ A/67/738.

4. *Further requests* the Committee to continue to extend its cooperation and support to Palestinian and other civil society organizations and to continue to involve additional civil society organizations and parliamentarians in its work in order to mobilize international solidarity and support for the Palestinian people and for restoring a political horizon and advancing just, lasting and comprehensive peace, particularly during this critical period of political instability, further reduction of civic space in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, humanitarian hardship and financial crisis, with the overall aim of promoting the achievement by the Palestinian people of their inalienable rights and a just, lasting and peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, on the basis of the relevant United Nations resolutions, the terms of reference of the Madrid Conference, including the principle of land for peace, the Arab Peace Initiative and the Quartet road map;

5. *Commends* the Committee on its efforts and activities in upholding its mandate, including through cooperative initiatives with Governments, relevant organizations of the United Nations system, intergovernmental organizations and civil society organizations;

6. *Commends* the Working Group of the Committee on its efforts in coordinating the efforts of international and regional civil society organizations regarding the question of Palestine;

7. *Requests* the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine, established under General Assembly resolution 194 (III), and other United Nations bodies associated with the question of Palestine to continue to cooperate fully with the Committee and to make available to it, at its request, the relevant information and documentation that they have at their disposal;

8. *Invites* all Governments and organizations to extend their cooperation and support to the Committee in the performance of its tasks, recalling its repeated call for all States and the specialized agencies and organizations of the United Nations system to continue to support and assist the Palestinian people in the early realization of their right to self-determination, including the right to their independent State of Palestine, and to support the development and strengthening of Palestinian institutions and Palestinian State-building efforts in preparation for independence;

9. *Requests* the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development to continue to report to the General Assembly on economic development in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the economic costs of the Israeli occupation for the Palestinian people, and, while drawing attention to the alarming findings, as reflected in the recent reports⁷ in this regard, calls for the exertion of all efforts for the provision of the resources necessary to expedite the completion and publication of the report, including the facilitation and coordination of pertinent inputs from the relevant organs, bodies and agencies of the United Nations system;

10. *Requests* the Secretary-General to circulate the report of the Committee to all the competent bodies of the United Nations, and urges them to take the necessary action, as appropriate;

11. *Requests* the Committee, bearing in mind the regrettable absence of tangible progress towards a peaceful solution, to continue to focus its activities on efforts and initiatives to end the Israeli occupation that began in 1967 and to organize activities in this regard, within existing resources and in cooperation with Governments, relevant organizations of the United Nations system, intergovernmental organizations and civil society organizations, aimed at raising international awareness and

⁷ A/73/201, A/74/272, A/75/310, A/76/309 and A/77/295.

mobilizing diplomatic efforts to launch credible negotiations aimed at achieving without delay a just, lasting, comprehensive and peaceful solution to the question of Palestine in all its aspects;

12. *Requests* the Secretary-General to continue to provide the Committee with all the facilities necessary for the performance of its tasks.

*42nd plenary meeting
30 November 2022*



94

**REPORT
OF THE
COMMITTEE ON THE EXERCISE OF
THE INALIENABLE RIGHTS
OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE**

70

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

OFFICIAL RECORDS: THIRTY - FIRST SESSION

SUPPLEMENT No. 35 (A/31/35)

UNITED NATIONS



**REPORT
OF THE
COMMITTEE ON THE EXERCISE OF
THE INALIENABLE RIGHTS
OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE**

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

OFFICIAL RECORDS: THIRTY - FIRST SESSION

SUPPLEMENT No. 35 (A/31/35)

UNITED NATIONS

New York, 1976

NOTE

Symbols of United Nations documents are composed of capital letters combined with figures. Mention of such a symbol indicates a reference to a United Nations document.

CONTENTS

	<u>Paragraphs</u>	<u>Page</u>
LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL		v
PART ONE. PROCEEDINGS OF THE COMMITTEE		
I. INTRODUCTION	1 - 3	1
II. MANDATE OF THE COMMITTEE	4 - 6	1
III. ORGANIZATION OF WORK	7 - 12	2
A. Meetings	7	2
B. Election of officers	8	2
C. Agenda	9	2
D. Participation in the work of the Committee	10 - 12	3
IV. SUMMARY OF THE DELIBERATIONS	13 - 58	3
A. Unique nature of the question of Palestine	13	3
B. Role of the Committee	14 - 17	4
C. Right of return	18 - 32	4
D. Right to self-determination and to national independence and sovereignty	33 - 35	7
E. Status of Jerusalem	36 - 39	8
F. Essential elements of a programme of implementation of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people	40 - 47	8
G. Proposals concerning steps to ensure implementation of the programme	48 - 50	10
H. Interrelationship between the question of Palestine and the Middle East problem	51 - 58	10
PART TWO. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COMMITTEE		
I. BASIC CONSIDERATIONS AND GUIDELINES	59 - 65	13
II. THE RIGHT OF RETURN	66 - 69	13
III. THE RIGHT TO SELF-DETERMINATION, NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE AND SOVEREIGNTY	70 - 72	14

CONTENTS (continued)

Page

ANNEXES

I.	LIST OF DOCUMENTS REFERRED TO IN REPORT	16
II.	LETTER OF 28 MAY 1976 FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL	17
III.	LETTER OF 12 JULY 1976 FROM THE SECRETARY-GENERAL TO THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE	18
IV.	DRAFT RESOLUTION PRESENTED TO THE SECURITY COUNCIL ON 29 JUNE 1976	20

LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

21 July 1976

Sir,

I have the honour to acknowledge receipt of your letter dated 12 July 1976 informing me, in accordance with paragraph 9 of General Assembly resolution 3376 (XXX), of the action taken by the Security Council on the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, transmitted to it by you, as requested by paragraph 8 of resolution 3376 (XXX).

At a meeting on 21 July, the Committee considered the action taken by the Security Council and was of the opinion that the observations on the Committee's recommendations, particularly those voiced by members of the Council who had voted against the draft resolution before the Council, or abstained on it, had been based on considerations beyond the scope of the Committee's mandate. The observations have, however, been noted and will be brought to the attention of the General Assembly in an appropriate manner.

The Committee decided unanimously, therefore, to reaffirm the recommendations which had been transmitted to the Security Council and to authorize me to resubmit the report to you for transmittal to the General Assembly for its consideration, in accordance with paragraph 10 of resolution 3376 (XXX). My letter to you dated 28 May 1976, your letter to me of 12 July 1976 informing me of the action taken by the Security Council and the draft resolution tabled in the Council have been appended to the report (annexes II to IV).

Accept, Sir, the assurances of my highest consideration.

(Signed) Médoune FALL
Chairman
of the Committee on the Exercise
of the Inalienable Rights of the
Palestinian People

His Excellency
Mr. Kurt Waldheim
Secretary-General of the United Nations

PART ONE. PROCEEDINGS OF THE COMMITTEE

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The question of Palestine, both in its political and human rights aspects, has been before the United Nations since 1947. In the period 1947-1975, the General Assembly and the Security Council between them adopted 188 resolutions, each dealing directly or indirectly with various aspects of this question. All these resolutions, many of which have not been implemented, appear in chronological order in document A/AC.183/L.2. An historical background of the question of Palestine in the United Nations is outlined in document A/AC.183/L.3.

2. During its thirtieth session, the General Assembly, at its 2399th plenary meeting on 10 November 1975, adopted by 93 votes to 18, with 27 abstentions, resolution 3376 (XXX) establishing the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People.

3. The following States were appointed members of the Committee by the General Assembly at its 2443rd meeting on 17 December 1975: Afghanistan, Cuba, Cyprus, German Democratic Republic, Guinea, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Madagascar, Malaysia, Malta, Pakistan, Romania, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic and Yugoslavia.

II. MANDATE OF THE COMMITTEE

4. Paragraph 4 of resolution 3376 (XXX) requested the Committee to consider and recommend to the General Assembly a programme of implementation designed to enable the Palestinian people to exercise the rights recognized in paragraphs 1 and 2 of resolution 3236 (XXIX), taking into account in the formulation of its recommendations all the powers conferred by the Charter upon the principal organs of the United Nations.

5. Paragraphs 1 and 2 of General Assembly resolution 3236 (XXIX) read as follows:

"The General Assembly,

"...

"1. Reaffirms the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people in Palestine including:

(a) The right to self-determination without external interference;

(b) The right to national independence and sovereignty;

"2. Reaffirms also the inalienable right of the Palestinians to return to their homes and property from which they have been displaced and uprooted, and calls for their return."

6. Resolution 3376 (XXX) requested the Committee to submit its report and recommendations to the Secretary-General no later than 1 June 1976. The Secretary-General, in his turn, was requested to transmit the report to the Security Council, which was to consider, as soon as possible after 1 June 1976, the question of the exercise by the Palestinian people of the inalienable rights recognized in paragraphs 1 and 2 of resolution 3236 (XXIX). The Secretary-General was also requested to inform the Committee of the action taken on that matter by the Security Council, and the Committee was authorized, taking into consideration the action taken by the Security Council, to submit to the General Assembly at its thirty-first session a report containing its observations and recommendations.

III. ORGANIZATION OF WORK

A. Meetings

7. The Committee held 16 formal and 20 informal meetings at United Nations Headquarters during the period from 26 February to 19 May 1976.

B. Election of officers

8. The Committee elected the following officers at its first and second meetings held on 26 and 27 February respectively:

<u>Chairman:</u>	Mr. Médoune Fall (Senegal)
<u>Vice-Chairmen:</u>	Mr. Ricardo Alarcón Quesada (Cuba)
	Mr. Mir Abdul Wahab Siddiq (Afghanistan)
<u>Rapporteur:</u>	Mr. Victor J. Gauci (Malta)

C. Agenda

9. The Committee adopted the following agenda at its second meeting on 27 February 1976 (A/AC.183/1):

1. Opening of the session
2. Election of officers
3. Adoption of the agenda
4. Organization of work
5. Preparation of the first report of the Committee and formulation of recommendations in implementation of General Assembly resolution 3376 (XXX)
6. Adoption of the first report

D. Participation in the work of the Committee

10. The Committee decided at its second meeting to invite the Palestine Liberation Organization to participate in the work of the Committee as an observer, to attend all its meetings, and to make suggestions and proposals for the consideration of the Committee. Furthermore, the Committee authorized the Chairman to request the Secretary-General to invite all States Members of the United Nations, permanent observers to the United Nations and intergovernmental regional organizations, to participate in the work of the Committee as observers; they were also to be informed that the Committee was ready to receive and to study their suggestions and proposals, made either orally or in writing. This invitation to participate in the work of the Committee was to be brought to the notice particularly of all those States directly interested in the Middle East crisis, the representative of the League of Arab States, the Organization of African Unity and members of the Security Council, especially its permanent members.

11. The following States responded affirmatively to the invitation and participated in the work of the Committee as observers: Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, the Libyan Arab Republic, Mauritania and the Syrian Arab Republic. The Palestine Liberation Organization and the League of Arab States also participated in the work of the Committee as observers. In response to the invitation, the representative of Greece made a statement before the Committee. Written communications were received from several States and are contained in documents A/AC.183/L.21 and Add.1 and 2.

12. In the absence of summary records, it was decided that all major statements made in the Committee would be produced as official documents of the Committee. These statements are contained in documents A/AC.183/2; A/AC.183/L.4-20; A/AC.183/L.22-30. At the request of the Committee, the Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) addressed on 15 March 1976 a letter to the Chairman of the Committee, providing information on the Palestinian refugees registered with UNRWA (A/AC.183/3). A summary of the work of the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine from 1948 to date is contained in document A/AC.183/4.

IV. SUMMARY OF THE DELIBERATIONS

A. Unique nature of the question of Palestine

13. The members of the Committee emphasized the fact that the people of Palestine, inheritors of an ancient civilization, had commenced their struggle for independence early in the twentieth century and, as far back as the end of the Second World War, had been ready for independence. Nevertheless, and in spite of the anti-colonialist age that had dawned since the Second World War, the Palestinians, owing to a combination of circumstances, had suffered, instead, dispersal from their homes and deprivation of their inalienable rights and property. For 30 years, hundreds of thousands had been forced to live in destitution, many being cast in the role of refugee not once, but twice or even three times in their lifetime. This tragedy had been recognized by the international community as one that should no longer be tolerated.

B. Role of the Committee

14. The Committee noted that the inalienable rights of the Palestinians to self-determination, national independence and sovereignty, as well as their inalienable right to return to their homes, had already been affirmed and clearly defined by the General Assembly in its resolution 3236 (XXIX). It noted also that the Assembly, while defining those rights, had recognized the link between them.

15. Consequently, the basic task of the Committee was to formulate a programme of implementation designed to enable the Palestinian people to exercise the rights already affirmed and defined by the General Assembly.

16. Another important responsibility of the Committee was to maintain international concern for progress towards a just solution of the question of Palestine and thereby help promote a lasting peace in the Middle East. To this end, it was suggested that the United Nations should utilize its available resources to focus world attention on, and to strengthen international solidarity with, the plight of the Palestinian people.

17. It was suggested that the Committee should follow the practice of other United Nations bodies which dealt with questions relating to the exercise of the national rights of peoples, by giving precedence to and taking as a basis for discussion, opinions and proposals submitted by the representatives of the people whose national rights were at stake. In this connexion, the Committee's attention was drawn especially to the statement by Mr. Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization and Commander-in-Chief of the Palestine Revolution, before the General Assembly at its 2282nd meeting on 13 November 1974 (A/PV.2282 and Corr.1), and to that of Mr. Farouq Qaddoumi, member of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization, at the 1870th meeting of the Security Council on 12 January 1976 (S/PV.1870).

C. Right of return

18. It was emphasized that the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination could be exercised only in Palestine. Consequently, the exercise of the individual right of the Palestinian to return to his homeland was a conditio sine qua non for the exercise by this people of its rights to self-determination, national independence and sovereignty.

19. In this respect, it was pointed out that Israel was under binding obligation to permit the return of all the Palestinian refugees displaced as a result of the hostilities of 1948 and 1967. This obligation flowed from the unreserved agreement by Israel to honour its commitments under the Charter of the United Nations, and from its specific undertaking, when applying for membership of the United Nations, to implement General Assembly resolutions 181 (II) of 29 November 1947, safeguarding the rights of the Palestinian Arabs inside Israel, and 194 (III) of 11 December 1948, concerning the right of Palestinian refugees to return to their homes or to choose compensation for their property. This undertaking was also clearly reflected in General Assembly resolution 273 (III). The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, as well as the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, also contained relevant provisions concerning these rights. The States directly involved were parties to this Convention.

20. The opinion was expressed that whatever modalities or procedure were envisaged for the implementation of the right of return of the Palestinians - whether such return would be carried out by phases or by quotas according to a definite timetable - that right should be absolute for every Palestinian and must have priority over any other form of substitute arrangements, such as compensation. The Palestinians should be afforded the widest practical opportunities to exercise their right of return, in regard both to the time element and to procedural conditions. Only those Palestinians who would choose not to avail themselves of those opportunities after a pre-determined period of time should be considered as opting for compensation instead of actual repatriation. In this regard, it was recalled that an assessment of the value of the property left behind by displaced Palestinians had been made by the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine and was available on microfilm in the archives of the United Nations.

21. To implement the right of return, a two-phase programme was proposed. In the first phase, the Palestinians displaced in 1967 should be allowed to return to the territories which have been under Israeli military occupation since 1967. In accordance with Security Council resolution 237 (1967), the return of these Palestinians should be immediate and not related to any other condition.

22. During this first phase, certain preparations should be undertaken for the second phase of such a programme, namely, the phase relating to the Palestinians displaced in 1948 from territories occupied by Israel before 1967. These preparations could involve the following elements:

(a) Designation or creation of a competent agency to be entrusted with the organizational and logistical aspects of the mass return of displaced Palestinians;

(b) Creation and financing of a fund for that purpose;

(c) Registration of displaced Palestinians other than those already registered with UNRWA;

(d) Request by either the Security Council or the General Assembly for an advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice, in accordance with Article 96 of the Charter of the United Nations, on certain legal aspects of the right of the Palestinians to return to their homes.

23. The problems related to the second phase - of Palestinians displaced between 1948 and 1967 - would be solved on the basis of the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council and by agreement between the parties involved.

24. The suggestion concerning the unconditional return to their homes, in a first phase, of Palestinians displaced in 1967 was unanimously supported by the Committee as a judicious approach in the search for a solution to the question of Palestine. As for its practical implementation, several delegates expressed doubts as to whether those Palestinians would be able to exercise fully their right to return as long as the territories in question remained under foreign occupation. They felt that the presence of Israeli occupying forces might inhibit and adversely influence the free exercise of the right of return of the Palestinian people. In the view of those delegations, it would be more realistic to expect the

Palestinians displaced in 1967 to exercise their right of return after Israel had vacated the occupied areas according to an established time-table.

25. It was emphasized that pending its withdrawal from the areas occupied in June 1967, Israel should release all political prisoners, dismantle its settlements and maintain intact all Arab property.

26. In the process of the withdrawal of the Israeli forces and of the return of the Palestinians displaced in 1967, the United Nations, acting as an intermediary, might be called upon to perform several functions. The United Nations might, for example be entrusted with taking over from Israel the vacated areas, together with all essential services, which would thereafter be handed over to the Palestinian authorities. UNRWA could be requested by the Committee to have ready the details of the names, addresses and properties of the persons who had fled the country since 5 June 1967 and who wished to return. The United Nations might assist the Palestinian administration in establishing itself in the initial days following Israeli withdrawal. The United Nations might also play a role in establishing communications between the West Bank and Gaza and in arranging access to Jerusalem. To undertake all these responsibilities, including arrangements for the return of the refugees, some special United Nations authority might need to be established.

27. The view was expressed by some delegations that in the performance of such interim functions, the United Nations might seek the co-operation of the League of Arab States, which was ready to contribute to the implementation of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.

28. It was suggested that, if necessary, the Security Council could establish a temporary United Nations peace-keeping force in the region and provide formal assurances of security so as to facilitate withdrawal by Israel from the occupied areas.

29. It was suggested that certain legal questions could be clarified through an advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice; more specifically, the Court could be requested to pronounce itself on the following legal questions:

(a) Whether the recognition by the General Assembly of the inalienable right to return of the displaced Palestinians and the demand by the General Assembly that they be permitted to return were, in fact, an infringement of Israel's sovereignty, particularly in the light of the provisions of General Assembly resolution 181 (II) recommending the Plan of Partition, with its built-in safeguards for the rights of the Palestinian Arab inhabitants of the then proposed Jewish State, and General Assembly resolution 273 (III), which admitted Israel to membership in the United Nations after recalling both resolutions 181 (II) and 194 (III);

(b) Whether or not certain laws enacted by Israel since 1948 - such as the Law of Return, the Nationality Law, the Absentees' Property Law, the Development Authority Law and others - are compatible with the provisions of the Plan of Partition contained in General Assembly resolution 181 (II), by which Israel is bound, and in accordance with which the United Nations itself is the guarantor of the rights of the Palestinian Arabs in the territories occupied by Israel in 1948 and 1949.

30. It was felt that an advisory opinion on the first question might be considered

necessary if Israel invoked the principle of sovereignty in order to obstruct the exercise by Palestinians of their inalienable right to return to their homes. An advisory opinion on the second question was prompted by the fact that the above-mentioned laws had a direct bearing on the status and rights of the displaced Palestinians after their return, inasmuch as they may be considered to infringe upon the rights guaranteed to them in section C of part I of the Plan of Partition.

31. Some delegations expressed reservations in principle as to the advisability of requesting the opinion of the International Court of Justice.

32. The attention of the Committee was drawn to the consequences which continued denial of the Palestinians' right of return to their homes could have for peace in the Middle East. The view was expressed that if Israel opposed the peaceful and orderly return of Palestinians, the result could well be an increased determination on the part of Palestinians and other Arabs to restore the rights of Palestinians by means other than peaceful. The growing opposition of the Palestinian population to occupation, as well as the outcome of the municipal elections recently held in the West Bank and other occupied areas, had more than a symbolic significance in this respect.

D. Right to self-determination and to national independence and sovereignty

33. It was maintained that the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination could be implemented only if Israel evacuated the Palestinian territory it had occupied by force contrary to the Charter of the United Nations and its resolutions and if Israel permitted the refugees and the displaced Palestinians who had been uprooted or expelled or had fled during and after the hostilities of 1948 and 1967 to return to their homes and property.

34. It was stressed that the establishment of an independent Palestinian State, in accordance with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, was a prerequisite for peace in the Middle East. Upon the Israeli vacation of the occupied areas and the establishment of an independent Palestinian administration, the Palestinian people would be able to exercise its right to self-determination and to decide its form of government through democratic means. The role of the United Nations in that regard could only be advisory. Once the Palestinian State was established, it could participate, on a basis of equality, in the negotiations for a peace settlement in the Middle East, which would cover the question of secure and recognized boundaries for all States in the region.

35. The opinion was shared that it was up to the Palestinian people, in the exercise of its right to self-determination, to decide when and how its national independence should be expressed within an independent entity of its own and in its territory, Palestine. No other party had the right to dictate to the Palestinian people the form, status or system of its entity or claim the authority to permit or to prevent the establishment of an independent Palestinian entity. The Palestinian people had the right freely to choose its own representatives and form of government. The Palestine Liberation Organization, which had been recognized by the Palestinian people, the United Nations, the League of Arab States, the Organization of African Unity and the overwhelming majority of world nations as the

sole representative of the Palestinian people, was a guardian of the inalienable rights of this people. The Palestine Liberation Organization, consequently, was entitled to participate as a principal party in all peace efforts to resolve the Middle East problem.

E. Status of Jerusalem

36. The members of the Committee stressed the special significance of the city of Jerusalem and its holy shrines to three major religions of the world - Islam, Judaism and Christianity. The international status of the city of Jerusalem, as provided for in General Assembly resolution 181 (II), was recalled.

37. A suggestion was made that the administration of the city of Jerusalem should consist of two main organs: (a) a 45-member legislative body in which the three main religious communities of the city would be equally represented; (b) an executive organ led by a United Nations commissioner appointed by the Secretary-General with the consent of the Security Council.

38. Several delegations were of the view that the question of the city of Jerusalem was beyond the mandate of the Committee. According to one view, during the first phase of the proposed programme of implementation of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, Jerusalem should be restored to the situation which had prevailed before the war of June 1967. Its future status could be considered after the establishment of an independent Palestinian entity.

39. It was felt in the Committee that any solution of the delicate problem of Jerusalem should be sought within the framework of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and the religious characteristics of the city and that Israel should be called upon to desist from any actions or policies designed to change the legal status of Jerusalem. In this respect, Security Council resolution 298 (1971), in particular was recalled.

F. Essential elements of a programme of implementation of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people

40. It was suggested that the Committee should recommend in its report that the first phase of the implementation of the right of return should consist of the return to their homes of the Palestinians displaced from territories occupied since 1967.

41. The Committee might recommend that the Security Council demand that the Palestinians displaced in 1967 should be permitted immediately to return to the territories occupied since 1967. Their return should not be related to any other conditions. On the basis of such a decision of the Security Council, the Committee, with the co-operation of appropriate international agencies and participation of parties concerned, could prepare a programme for the implementation of that decision.

42. The Committee could also recommend that the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), which played a role in the return of some of the displaced persons in the summer of 1967, or UNRWA, which has had a long association with the problem be asked to help organize the envisaged return of the persons concerned.

If UNRWA were to undertake this programme, its mandate would have to be adjusted accordingly, and its budget and staff commensurately expanded. However, whether the questions of organization and logistics were entrusted to the ICRC or to UNRWA, the agency in charge would have to perform its duties in constant consultation over the mechanics of the programme with the competent authorities in the host countries, with the Palestine Liberation Organization, and with the occupying Power.

43. It was further proposed that the Committee might strongly recommend that, in conjunction with the immediate return of the Palestinians displaced in 1967 to the territories occupied by Israel since that date, the Security Council should demand, in accordance with the powers conferred upon it by the Charter of the United Nations, that:

(a) Israel desist from the establishment of new settlements in the occupied territories and effectively prevent its citizens from creating any new settlements;

(b) Israel withdraw its citizens from the settlements already established since 1967 in the occupied territories contrary to the provisions of article 49 of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 12 August 1949 and contrary to resolutions of several bodies of the United Nations.

44. In addition, the Committee might urge that the Security Council demand, pending the early termination of the occupation, that Israel abide scrupulously by the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention and declare its recognition of the applicability of that Convention. Effective supervision by ICRC of the application of all the provisions of that Convention - both to the existing population and to the returnees - should be requested by the Council, on the recommendation of the Committee; the Committee should recommend alternative methods and instruments of supervision in case ICRC declined to undertake this responsibility. It was suggested that in formulating its recommendations on this matter, the Committee should take into account the deliberations which the Security Council held on the situation in the occupied Arab territories.

45. It was further proposed that the Security Council, in accordance with its pertinent resolutions, should demand the urgent withdrawal of Israel from the Palestinian territories occupied since June 1967. The Security Council could provide international guarantees for the peace and security of all States and peoples in the Middle East, thereby hastening the withdrawal of Israel. After Israel's withdrawal, the Palestinian people would be able to decide its own future, in accordance with its right to self-determination.

46. The suggestion was endorsed that the United Nations, which had a historical responsibility towards the Palestinian people, should render to the Palestinian authorities the necessary economic and technical assistance in order to contribute to the economic and social development of the new Palestinian State.

47. It was suggested that the Committee, in formulating its recommendations, might wish to seek widest possible support among Members of the United Nations. To this end informal contacts should be established and maintained with the representatives of States not members of the Committee, who could play a positive role in the question of Palestine in the Security Council and, subsequently, in the General Assembly. The purpose of such an approach would be to formulate the recommendations in such a way as to obtain general support for them both in the Security Council and in the General Assembly.

G. Proposals concerning steps to ensure implementation of the programme

48. Attention was frequently drawn to the Committee's mandate under resolution 3376 (XXX), by which the Committee, in formulating its programme of implementation of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, was required to take into account all the powers conferred by the Charter upon the principal organs of the United Nations. The powers defined in Articles 5, 6, 41, 42 and 96 were particularly mentioned.

49. It was suggested that the Committee recommend, in whatever programme it devised for the exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, that the Security Council consider what steps and measures should be taken, in accordance with its competence under the Charter, if Israel refused to co-operate in the implementation of the proposed programme.

50. If the Security Council was unable to act because of a veto, the Committee should, in its subsequent report, recommend to the General Assembly that it carry out its own responsibilities in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and in the light of precedents. It was also suggested that if Israel persisted in its refusal to implement General Assembly resolutions 194 (III) and 181 (II), this would constitute a violation of the conditions of its admission to the United Nations, which would then have to reconsider the matter.

H. Interrelationship between the question of Palestine and the Middle East problem

51. It was widely emphasized that the question of Palestine, whose essence was the restoration and exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, was of central importance to the solution of the Middle East crisis. A just solution of this question was a conditio sine qua non for the settlement of the Middle East problem as a whole and for the creation of the necessary conditions for a just and lasting peace in the area. On the other hand, Palestinian rights could not be achieved outside a comprehensive, just settlement that would include Israel's withdrawal from all the Arab territories occupied in June 1967 and the establishment of a just and lasting peace.

52. The view was accordingly expressed that a just and durable settlement in the Middle East must be based on the following fundamental principles:

(a) Israel should withdraw from all the Arab territories occupied since 1967, in accordance with the principle of the inadmissibility of any acquisition of territories by the use of military force and the relevant resolutions of the Security Council;

(b) The Palestinian people should be enabled to exercise its inalienable right to national self-determination, including the right to establish an independent State in Palestine, in accordance with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations; Palestinian refugees wishing to return to their homes and to live in peace with their neighbours should have the right to do so, and those choosing not to return should receive compensation for their properties;

(c) Appropriate arrangements should be made to guarantee, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of all the States in the area and their right to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries.

It was suggested that these principles should be fully taken into account in all international efforts and conferences organized within the framework of the United Nations for the establishment of a just and lasting peace in the Middle East.

53. It was emphasized that the United Nations should play a greater role in all efforts to solve the Palestinian question and to establish a just and lasting peace in the Middle East - a role, particularly by the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Secretary-General, which would cover the entire process, up to and including a final settlement of the problems in the area.

54. On the question of guarantees, reference was made to a statement setting out the position of the USSR, in which was expressed its readiness to participate, together with the United States, the United Kingdom and France, in international guarantees of the security and inviolability of the frontiers of all Middle East countries, either within the United Nations framework or on some other basis. The attention of the Committee was also drawn to the statement of the Government of the USSR on the Middle East, dated 28 April 1976.

55. The opinion was shared that the prevailing situation in the Middle East should not be allowed to stagnate. There was a need to reconvene the Geneva Peace Conference on the Middle East, with the participation of all parties concerned, including the Palestine Liberation Organization, on an equal footing with other participants, according to General Assembly resolution 3375 (XXX), in order to deal with the problem in all its aspects. In this regard many delegations underlined the particular importance of the invitation extended to the Palestine Liberation Organization by the Security Council to take part in its deliberations on an equal footing with the other participants and called for equal participation of the Palestine Liberation Organization in all efforts, deliberations and conferences on the Middle East under the auspices of the United Nations.

56. The suggestion was made that since the Security Council remained the only forum in which all parties to the conflict had been able to meet, this unique circumstance might be more actively utilized for constructive moves towards a settlement. The Committee could also play a role in ascertaining what constructive steps might be taken by the Security Council to overcome the existing impasse and to move towards a general settlement; the members of the Council, assisted by the Secretary-General, either in closed session or through informal consultations, could search for those constructive moves which would contribute to an over-all settlement. The hope was expressed that all the parties concerned would show statesmanship and genuine willingness to negotiate - necessary prerequisites for achieving a comprehensive political settlement of the Middle East problem.

57. Several delegations underlined the importance of the debate in January 1976 in the Security Council on the Middle East problem including the Palestinian question in implementation of Security Council resolution 381 (1975) of 30 November 1975. It was noted that that debate had indicated a constructive change in the approach of the Security Council to the question of the inalienable rights of the Palestinians. The draft resolution (S/11940), proposed by six members of the Security Council but not adopted because of a veto, clearly affirmed the

inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, as well as the basic elements for the establishment of a just and lasting peace in the Middle East. This draft resolution remained, in spite of its obstruction, the most supported basis for a peaceful and just settlement in the Middle East. It was suggested that the Committee should take into full account the provisions of this draft resolution, as well as the ideas emerging from the Security Council deliberations on this question.

58. Against the background of the reported difficulties in the search for a peaceful solution to the Middle East question, the members of the Committee, within their more limited terms of reference, considered that the recommendations which follow would, in their implementation, constitute a contribution within the framework of the United Nations and would complement efforts towards the establishment of a just and lasting peace in the region.

PART TWO. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COMMITTEE

I. BASIC CONSIDERATIONS AND GUIDELINES

59. The question of Palestine is at the heart of the Middle East problem, and, consequently, the Committee stresses its belief that no solution in the Middle East can be envisaged which does not fully take into account the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people.

60. The legitimate and inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to return to their homes and property and to achieve self-determination, national independence and sovereignty are endorsed by the Committee in the conviction that the full implementation of these rights will contribute decisively to a comprehensive and final settlement of the Middle East crisis.

61. The participation of the Palestine Liberation Organization, the representative of the Palestinian people, on an equal footing with other parties, on the basis of General Assembly resolutions 3236 (XXIX) and 3375 (XXX) is indispensable in all efforts, deliberations and conferences on the Middle East which are held under the auspices of the United Nations.

62. The Committee recalls the fundamental principle of the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force and stresses the consequent obligation for complete and speedy evacuation of any territory so occupied.

63. The Committee considers that it is the duty and the responsibility of all concerned to enable the Palestinians to exercise their inalienable rights.

64. The Committee recommends an expanded and more influential role by the United Nations and its organs in promoting a just solution to the question of Palestine and in the implementation of such a solution. The Security Council, in particular, should take appropriate action to facilitate the exercise by the Palestinians of their right to return to their homes, lands and property. The Committee, furthermore, urges the Security Council to promote action towards a just solution, taking into account all the powers conferred on it by the Charter of the United Nations.

65. It is with this perspective in view and on the basis of the numerous resolutions of the United Nations, after due consideration of all the facts, proposals and suggestions advanced in the course of its deliberations, that the Committee submits its recommendations on the modalities for the implementation of the exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.

II. THE RIGHT OF RETURN

66. The natural and inalienable right of Palestinians to return to their homes is recognized by resolution 194 (III), which the General Assembly has reaffirmed almost every year since its adoption. This right was also unanimously recognized

by the Security Council in its resolution 237 (1967); the time for the urgent implementation of these resolutions is long overdue.

67. Without prejudice to the right of all Palestinians to return to their homes, lands and property, the Committee considers that the programme of implementation, of the exercise of this right may be carried out in two phases:

Phase one

68. The first phase involves the return to their homes of the Palestinians displaced as a result of the war of June 1967. The Committee recommends that:

- (i) The Security Council should request the immediate implementation of its resolution 237 (1967) and that such implementation should not be related to any other condition;
- (ii) The resources of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and/or of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, suitably financed and mandated, may be employed to assist in the solution of any logistical problems involved in the resettlement of those returning to their homes. These agencies could also assist, in co-operation with the host countries and the Palestine Liberation Organization, in the identification of the displaced Palestinians;

Phase two

69. The second phase deals with the return to their homes of the Palestinians displaced between 1948 and 1967. The Committee recommends that:

- (i) While the first phase is being implemented, the United Nations in co-operation with the States directly involved, and the Palestine Liberation Organization as the interim representative of the Palestinian entity, should proceed to make the necessary arrangements to enable Palestinians displaced between 1948 and 1967 to exercise their right to return to their homes and property, in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions, particularly General Assembly resolution 194 (III);
- (ii) Palestinians not choosing to return to their homes should be paid just and equitable compensation as provided for in resolution 194 (III).

III. THE RIGHT TO SELF-DETERMINATION, NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE AND SOVEREIGNTY

70. The Palestinian people has the inherent right to self-determination, national independence and sovereignty in Palestine. The Committee considers that the evacuation of the territories occupied by force and in violation of the principles of the Charter and relevant resolutions of the United Nations is a conditio sine qua non for the exercise by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights in Palestine. The Committee considers, furthermore, that upon the return of the Palestinians to their homes and property and with the establishment of an independent

Palestinian entity, the Palestinian people will be able to exercise its rights to self-determination and to decide its form of government without external interference.

71. The Committee also feels that the United Nations has an historical duty and responsibility to render all assistance necessary to promote the economic development and prosperity of the Palestinian entity.

72. To these ends, the Committee recommends that:

(a) A time-table should be established by the Security Council for the complete withdrawal by Israeli occupation forces from those areas occupied in 1967; such withdrawal should be completed no later than 1 June 1977;

(b) The Security Council may need to provide temporary peace-keeping forces in order to facilitate the process of withdrawal;

(c) Israel should be requested by the Security Council to desist from the establishment of new settlements and to withdraw during this period from settlements established since 1967 in the occupied territories. Arab property and all essential services in these areas should be maintained intact;

(d) Israel should also be requested to abide scrupulously by the provisions of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, and to declare, pending its speedy withdrawal from these territories, its recognition of the applicability of that Convention;

(e) The evacuated territories, with all property and services intact, should be taken over by the United Nations, which with the co-operation of the League of Arab States, will subsequently hand over these evacuated areas to the Palestine Liberation Organization as the representative of the Palestinian people;

(f) The United Nations should, if necessary, assist in establishing communications between Gaza and the West Bank;

(g) As soon as the independent Palestinian entity has been established, the United Nations, in co-operation with the States directly involved and the Palestinian entity, should, taking into account General Assembly resolution 3375 (XXX), make further arrangements for the full implementation of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, the resolution of outstanding problems and the establishment of a just and lasting peace in the region, in accordance with all relevant United Nations resolutions;

(h) The United Nations should provide the economic and technical assistance necessary for the consolidation of the Palestinian entity.

ANNEX I

List of documents referred to in report

1. A/AC.183/1 Agenda of the first session
2. A/AC.183/2 Statement of the Permanent Observer of the Palestine Liberation Organization in the Committee
3. A/AC.183/3 Letter dated 15 March 1976 from the Commissioner General of UNRWA to the Chairman of the Committee
4. A/AC.183/4 Summary of the work of the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine
5. A/PV.2282 and Corr.1 of 13 November 1974 Statement to the General Assembly, of Mr. Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization and Commander-in-Chief of the Palestine Revolution
6. S/PV.1870 of 12 January 1976 Statement of Mr. Farouq Qaddoumi, member of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization, in the Security Council
7. A/AC.183/L.2 General Assembly and Security Council resolutions relating to the question of Palestine, 1947-1975
8. A/AC.183/L.3 Brief historical background of the question of Palestine before the United Nations, 1947-1975
9. A/AC.183/L.4-20 and A/AC.183/L.22-30 Major statements made in the Committee
10. A/AC.183/L.21 and Add.1 and 2 Communications from States, observers and intergovernmental regional organizations

ANNEX II

Letter dated 28 May 1976 from the Chairman of the Committee on the
Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People to
the Secretary-General

I have the honour to present herewith, on behalf of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, its report requested by General Assembly resolution 3376 (XXX).

The recommendations of the Committee, which appear in part two of the report, represent, as required by paragraph 4 of resolution 3376 (XXX), a programme of implementation designed to enable the Palestinian people to exercise the rights recognized in paragraphs 1 and 2 of General Assembly resolution 3236 (XXIX).

As required by paragraph 7 of resolution 3376 (XXX), the Committee submits this report to you for transmittal to the Security Council, which under the provisions of paragraph 8 of that resolution is requested to consider, as soon as possible after 1 June 1976, the question of the exercise by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights recognized in paragraphs 1 and 2 of resolution 3236 (XXIX).

(Signed) Médoune FALL
Chairman of the
Committee on the Exercise
of the Inalienable Rights
of the Palestinian People

ANNEX III

Letter dated 12 July 1976 from the Secretary-General to
the Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the
Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

I have the honour to refer to your letter dated 28 May 1976 a/ by which, as requested by paragraph 7 of General Assembly resolution 3376 (XXX), you submitted to me, for transmittal to the Security Council, the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People.

On 29 May, I communicated the text of your letter and of the Committee's report (S/12090) to the Security Council which was requested by paragraph 8 of resolution 3376 (XXX) to "consider as soon as possible after 1 June 1976, the question of the exercise by the Palestinian people of the inalienable rights recognized in paragraphs 1 and 2 of resolution 3236 (XXIX)".

In accordance with the General Assembly's request in paragraph 9 of resolution 3376 (XXX) I set out below, for the information of the Committee, the action taken by the Security Council.

At its 1924th meeting, held on 9 June, the Security Council included in its agenda without objection the item entitled "Question of the exercise by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights: report of the Committee established under General Assembly resolution 3376 (XXX) (S/12090)".

The Security Council considered the item in the course of eight meetings held between 9 and 29 June.

In the course of these meetings the representatives of the following 29 Member States were invited, at their request, to participate in the discussion without the right to vote, in accordance with rule 37 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Security Council: Afghanistan, Algeria, Bahrain, Bulgaria, Cuba, Cyprus, Czechoslovakia, Democratic Yemen, Egypt, German Democratic Republic, Guinea, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Jordan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Poland, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia, Turkey, United Arab Emirates and Yugoslavia.

In accordance with rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure, the Security Council also decided to extend invitations to the Chairman, the Rapporteur and other members of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, pursuant to the request contained in a letter from the Chairman of that Committee, and to Mr. Amin Helmy II, Permanent Observer of the League of Arab States to the United Nations, pursuant to the request contained in a letter from the representative of the Libyan Arab Republic.

a/ See annex II.

The Security Council also decided by a vote of 11 in favour to one against (United States of America) with three abstentions (France, Italy and United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland) to invite, as on previous occasions, the representatives of the Palestine Liberation Organization to participate in the debate, as requested in a letter from the representatives of the Libyan Arab Republic and Pakistan.

The texts of the statements made during consideration of the question by the Security Council are reproduced in the verbatim records of the 1924th, 1928th and 1933rd to 1938th meetings of the Council (S/PV.1924, 1928 and 1933 to 1938), which are transmitted herewith for the information of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People.

At the 1938th meeting, on 29 June, the representative of the United Republic of Tanzania introduced a draft resolution (S/12119) sponsored by Guyana, Pakistan, Panama and the United Republic of Tanzania, the text of which is annexed to this letter. b/

At the same meeting, the Security Council proceeded to vote on that draft resolution. It received 10 votes in favour, 1 against (United States of America) and 4 abstentions (France, Italy, Sweden and United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland), and was not adopted owing to the negative vote of a permanent member of the Security Council.

(Signed) Kurt WALDHEIM
Secretary-General

b/ See annex IV.

ANNEX IV

Draft resolution submitted by Guyana, Pakistan, Panama
and the United Republic of Tanzania a/

The Security Council,

Having considered the item entitled "The question of the exercise by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights", in accordance with the request contained in paragraph 8 of General Assembly resolution 3376 (XXX) of 10 November 1975,

Having heard the representatives of the parties concerned, including the Palestine Liberation Organization, representative of the Palestinian people,

Having considered the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (document S/12090), transmitted to the Security Council in accordance with the provisions of paragraph 7 of General Assembly resolution 3376 (XXX),

Deeply concerned that no just solution to the problem of Palestine has been achieved, and that this problem therefore continues to aggravate the Arab-Israeli conflict, of which it is the core, and to endanger international peace and security,

Recognizing that a just and lasting peace in the Middle East cannot be established without the achievement, inter alia, of a just solution of the problem of Palestine on the basis of the recognition of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people,

1. Takes note of the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (document S/12090);

2. Affirms the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination, including the right of return and the right to national independence and sovereignty in Palestine, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations.

a/ Previously issued under the symbol S/12119.

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**REPORT
OF THE
COMMITTEE ON THE EXERCISE OF
THE INALIENABLE RIGHTS
OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE**

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

OFFICIAL RECORDS: THIRTY-SECOND SESSION

SUPPLEMENT No. 35 (A/32/35)

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NOTE

Symbols of United Nations documents are composed of capital letters combined with figures. Mention of such a symbol indicates a reference to a United Nations document.

CONTENTS

	<u>Paragraphs</u>	<u>Page</u>
LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL		v
I. INTRODUCTION	1 - 3	1
II. MANDATE OF THE COMMITTEE	4	1
III. ORGANIZATION OF WORK	5 - 9	1
A. Election of officers	5	1
B. Participation in the work of the Committee	6 - 8	2
C. Establishment of a Task Force	9	2
IV. ACTION TAKEN BY THE COMMITTEE	10 - 37	2
A. Efforts to promote the implementation of its recommendations in accordance with paragraph 5 of General Assembly resolution 31/20	10 - 31	2
B. Dissemination of information in accordance with paragraph 6 of General Assembly resolution 31/20	32 - 37	7
V. APPRAISAL OF ACTION TAKEN IN ACCORDANCE WITH PARAGRAPH 7 OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 31/20	38 - 42	9
VI. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COMMITTEE	43 - 45	10

ANNEXES

I. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COMMITTEE ENDORSED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AT ITS THIRTY-FIRST SESSION		11
II. A. LETTER DATED 18 APRIL 1977 FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE TO THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF CANADA TO THE UNITED NATIONS		14
B. LETTER DATED 18 APRIL 1977 FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE TO THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF FRANCE TO THE UNITED NATIONS		15

CONTENTS (continued)

	<u>Page</u>
C. LETTER DATED 18 APRIL 1977 FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE TO THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY TO THE UNITED NATIONS	16
D. LETTER DATED 18 APRIL 1977 FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE TO THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND TO THE UNITED NATIONS	17
E. LETTER DATED 18 APRIL 1977 FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE TO THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE UNITED NATIONS	18
F. LETTER DATED 18 APRIL 1977 FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE TO THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF ISRAEL TO THE UNITED NATIONS	19

LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

19 September 1977

Sir,

I have the honour to transmit to you herewith the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for submission to the General Assembly in accordance with paragraph 5 of resolution 31/20.

Accept, Sir, the assurances of my highest consideration.

(Signed) Médoune FALL
Chairman, Committee on the Exercise
of the Inalienable Rights of
the Palestinian People

His Excellency
Mr. Kurt Waldheim
Secretary-General of the United Nations

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, established by the General Assembly in resolution 3376 (XXX) of 10 November 1975, submitted its first report to the Assembly at its thirty-first session. 1/
2. In its resolution 31/20 of 24 November 1976, adopted by 90 votes to 16, with 30 abstentions, the General Assembly took note of the report of the Committee and endorsed the recommendations contained therein, as a basis for the solution of the question of Palestine. Those recommendations are reproduced in annex I to the present report. Subsequently, by its decision 31/318 of 22 December 1976, the General Assembly enlarged the membership of the Committee by the addition of Guyana, Mali and Nigeria.
3. The following States were members of the Committee in 1977: Afghanistan, Cuba, Cyprus, German Democratic Republic, Guinea, Guyana, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mali, Malta, Nigeria, Pakistan, Romania, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic and Yugoslavia.

II. MANDATE OF THE COMMITTEE

4. The present mandate of the Committee was specified in paragraphs 5 and 6 of resolution 31/20. In paragraph 5, the General Assembly authorized the Committee to exert all efforts to promote the implementation of its recommendations and to report thereon to the Assembly at its thirty-second session. In paragraph 6, the Assembly requested the Committee to promote the greatest possible dissemination of information on its programme of implementation through non-governmental organizations and other appropriate means.

III. ORGANIZATION OF WORK

A. Election of officers

5. At its 19th meeting, on 26 January 1977, the Committee unanimously re-elected the following officers:

<u>Chairman:</u>	Mr. Médoune Fall (Senegal)
<u>Vice-Chairmen:</u>	Mr. Ricardo Alarcón Quesada (Cuba)
	Mr. Mir Abdul Wahab Siddiq (Afghanistan)
<u>Rapporteur:</u>	Mr. Victor J. Gauci (Malta)

1/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-first Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/31/35).

B. Participation in the work of the Committee

6. The Committee decided that those States Members of the United Nations and permanent observers to the United Nations which had participated in the work of the Committee as observers in 1976 could, if they so wished, continue to participate in that capacity in 1977. These were: Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Mauritania, Syrian Arab Republic, the League of Arab States and the Palestine Liberation Organization, which continued in 1977 to participate in the work of the Committee as observers.

7. In order to encourage the contribution of all sectors of opinion to its work, the Committee authorized the Chairman to request the Secretary-General again to invite all States Members of the United Nations and the permanent observers to the United Nations which were not already participating in the work of the Committee to do so, if they so wished, as observers; they were also to be informed that the Committee was ready to receive and to study their suggestions and proposals made either orally or in writing. This invitation was to be brought to the particular notice of all those States directly interested in the Middle East situation and the members of the Security Council, especially its permanent members.

8. The Secretary-General's letter conveying this invitation and the replies received are contained in documents A/AC.183/L.31 and Add.1-4.

C. Establishment of a Task Force

9. To facilitate its work, the Committee appointed a Task Force composed of nine members. It was entrusted with the task of: (1) keeping up to date with events which affected the work of the Committee and suggesting to the Committee action which it could usefully undertake, and (2) assisting the Committee in any other specific assignment related to its work. The following were appointed members of the Task Force: Malta (Chairman), Afghanistan, Cuba, Guinea, Guyana, India, Senegal, Tunisia and Palestine Liberation Organization.

IV. ACTION TAKEN BY THE COMMITTEE

A. Efforts to promote the implementation of its recommendations in accordance with paragraph 5 of General Assembly resolution 31/20

1. Review of the discussion in the General Assembly at its thirty-first session

10. The Committee studied and analysed the views expressed in the discussion of its report and recommendations at the thirty-first session of the General Assembly. It noted the concurrence of opinion that the question of Palestine was a central element of the Middle East conflict and that, therefore, a just and lasting peace in the area could be achieved only if the legitimate rights and aspirations of the Palestinian people were taken into account. It noted also the emphasis made that a satisfactory and equitable solution to the question of Palestine could only be achieved within the framework of a comprehensive settlement in the Middle East, in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the United Nations. The Committee noted that these major trends of opinion emerging from the debate confirmed the basic considerations presented by the Committee in its report.

11. On the other hand, a noticeable trend of opinion had also held that the Committee had given detailed consideration only to one aspect - though an important one - of the Middle East problem, and that, in consequence, the report and recommendations lacked a sufficient balance. However, the Committee maintained that this was a question of the mandate assigned to it; the Committee could not go beyond its mandate, while recognizing that other aspects of the wider problem were dealt with elsewhere within the United Nations system.

12. The Committee noted that under the terms of General Assembly resolution 31/62, the Secretary-General had had contacts with all parties to the conflict and the Co-Chairmen of the Peace Conference on the Middle East. Taking into account its mandate, the Committee felt that a fuller report on those contacts might have been made available to it, and expressed the hope that it would be kept fully informed should such contacts take place in the future.

2. Contacts with the Security Council and consideration of possible action

13. The Committee noted with appreciation the information conveyed by the Permanent Observer of the Palestine Liberation Organization on 28 March 1977 that the Palestine National Council, at its meeting in Cairo, in March 1977, had decided (a) to consider the recommendations contained in the report submitted by the Committee to the General Assembly at its thirty-first session as a positive and progressive step towards the achievement of the aspirations and rights of the Palestinian people, including the right of return and the right to self-determination, independence and national sovereignty; (b) to declare that any settlement or agreement affecting the rights of the Palestinian people concluded in its absence would be null and void.

14. As an expression of the views of the people directly concerned, the Committee decided to bring this information to the attention of the Security Council; a letter was accordingly addressed to the President of the Security Council on 28 March 1977. 2/ The Committee wishes to stress the importance of this matter, and also desires to bring it to the attention of the General Assembly.

15. At the invitation of Mr. Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization, the Chairman of the Committee visited Lebanon in August 1977 and met with Mr. Arafat and other leaders of the Palestine Liberation Organization. Reporting to the Committee on these meetings, the Chairman stated that Mr. Arafat had expressed his appreciation of the work of the Committee and had stated that, despite certain reservations, the Palestine Liberation Organization considered the Committee's recommendations, especially if adopted by the Security Council, as an equitable basis for the solution of the question of Palestine.

16. The Chairman also visited some of the refugee camps, where he was able to see for himself the unacceptable plight of the refugees. He was impressed by their wish for a better future and for a peaceful and just solution to their problem as well as by their determination to continue the struggle if a peaceful solution was not forthcoming.

2/ Official Records of the Security Council, Thirty-second Year, Supplement for January, February and March 1977, document S/12308.

17. Consideration was given by the Committee throughout its deliberations as to the most propitious time for the Security Council to take up the item entitled "Question of Palestine", as it was requested to do in paragraph 4 of General Assembly resolution 31/20, which urged the Security Council to consider again as soon as possible the recommendations contained in the Committee's report, taking fully into account the observations made thereon during the debate in the General Assembly. It was evident that the question of timing of such consideration could not be looked at in isolation, and that the situation in the region itself had to be taken into account. It was clear too, that there was need for continuing consultations so that a meeting of the Security Council could be called for under favourable conditions.

18. The Committee attached particular importance to this matter, first, because implementation of the Committee's recommendations required the active involvement of the Security Council and, secondly, because the discussion in the General Assembly had revealed that there was virtual unanimity of opinion that the Palestinian issue was a fundamental element in the search for a settlement of the Middle East conflict. The Committee therefore felt that, to the extent possible within its own mandate, it should strive to facilitate the work of the Security Council in taking positive action when the latter was next called upon to reconsider the problems of the area.

19. The attention of the Committee was drawn to the fact that the political communiqué issued after the Ministerial Meeting of the Bureau of Non-Aligned Countries, held at New Delhi from 7 to 11 April 1977, had noted with satisfaction that the General Assembly had adopted the Committee's report and had also called upon the Security Council to take measures for the immediate implementation of the Committee's recommendations. That communiqué had also referred to the decision taken at the Fifth Conference of Heads of State or Government of the Non-Aligned Countries on the need to bring pressure on Israel, especially in the Security Council, with a view to securing Israel's compliance with United Nations resolutions. Communiqués on the question of Palestine issued at other international meetings of countries, political parties and organizations were also noted with satisfaction.

20. It was felt that there was a wider recognition by certain members of the Security Council of the aspirations of the Palestinian people, and of the crucial relevance of this aspect within the Middle East situation. The urgency of reconvening the Geneva Conference had been acknowledged; one of the main points at issue was still whether the Palestine Liberation Organization should be allowed to participate in that Conference on an equal footing with the other parties. On both these points the position of the Committee was very firm; it had repeatedly stressed the urgency of constructive efforts towards a just solution guaranteeing the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, and insisted on the participation of the Palestine Liberation Organization, as the representatives of the Palestinian people, on an equal footing in any such efforts. It was considered useful, therefore, for an active dialogue to be established between the Committee and the participants in the Geneva Conference with a view to promoting a negotiated solution, since it was felt that the Committee, having already demonstrated its impartiality, was well placed to promote its recommendations on implementation of the rights of the Palestinian people.

21. The Committee decided that it would be useful if those members of the Security Council which had been unable to support the report and recommendations of the Committee would indicate their latest thinking on the question of the rights of the Palestinian people; the Committee accordingly authorized the Chairman to address letters to the Permanent Representatives of Canada, France, Federal Republic of Germany, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America seeking this information. At the same time, the Chairman was authorized to address a similar letter to the Permanent Representative of Israel, as a principal party to the issue. Copies of these letters are reproduced in annex II to the present report.

22. Since no replies had been received to these letters the Committee decided that its Chairman should meet the permanent representatives of those countries which were members of the Security Council and seek to obtain oral replies from them.

23. The Chairman reported on his contacts at the 22nd meeting of the Committee on 7 June 1977. In those meetings the Chairman had emphasized that the Committee's sole objective, within its terms of reference, was to make a constructive contribution to the heart of the problem in the Middle East, and that it had invariably sought the views of all Member States in carrying out its mandate as determined by the General Assembly; furthermore, as a body duly constituted by the General Assembly, its recommendations carried the authority of a United Nations resolution. The Permanent Representatives of the five States had all adduced the fact that they had not voted for General Assembly resolutions 3376 (XXX) and 31/20 as their main reason for not replying to the Chairman's letter. In the Chairman's view, this argument involved a dangerous contradiction. It not only risked paralysing the Organization but could also undermine the de jure status of Israel which had been established by General Assembly resolution 273 (III) of 11 May 1949, for which certain countries had not voted.

24. Summarizing the outcome of his contacts with the five Powers concerned, the Chairman stated that they had evidently appreciated the fact that the Committee's report would figure largely in the deliberations of the Security Council when it considered the question of Palestine, but had felt that in view of the efforts being made at the time it would be better if such consideration by the Council were deferred to a more appropriate moment.

25. The Committee was convinced that its aim should be to seek to consolidate the positive trend that was apparently developing in the views of certain countries and to contribute towards the creation of a climate which would favour the achievement of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. To this end, it felt that it was important that the work of the Committee should be the subject of a thorough exchange of views in the light of the evolution of the situation and the contacts which were taking place.

26. In view of the urgency of the matter, and in order to highlight the relevance of the Committee's recommendations, the Chairman was authorized, with the full backing of the Committee, to address a letter to the President of the Security Council.

27. Accordingly, on 8 June 1977 the Chairman addressed a letter to the President of the Security Council, which though not suggesting a definite date for a Security Council meeting, drew attention to paragraph 4 of General Assembly resolution 31/20,

and conveyed the Committee's strong belief that delay in action by the Council would be prejudicial to progress, and that the requirements of the present situation demanded that at its next meeting on the question of Palestine the Security Council should endeavour urgently to promote a positive approach which would lead tangibly towards a solution of the Palestinian problem (S/12345).

28. On 12 September 1977, the Committee decided to authorize the Chairman to address another letter to the President of the Security Council which would again recall paragraph 4 of General Assembly resolution 31/20 and stress that the recommendations contained in the Committee's report in 1976 had been endorsed by the General Assembly and were therefore recommendations of the General Assembly. While no specific date was suggested for a Security Council meeting on the question of Palestine, the President of the Council was requested to ensure that this item was discussed by the Council before being taken up by the General Assembly at its thirty-second session. The letter also contained a request that it be published as a document of the Security Council (S/12399), while a copy was sent to the Secretary-General with the request that it be published as a document of the General Assembly (A/32/217).

3. Reaction to developments in the occupied territories

29. The Committee viewed with extreme concern the actions taken by the Government of Israel in the occupied territories, especially the administrative measures it had announced and which seemed to imply a continuation of the policy aimed at permanent annexation of those territories. Strong condemnation was expressed against these actions of the Government of Israel which could only encourage the establishment of even more such settlements and create greater tension in the area, against the wishes of the international community.

30. Accordingly, on 28 July 1977, the Chairman again addressed a letter to the President of the Security Council expressing his deep concern at the action taken by the Government of Israel to approve three settlements at Camp Kadum, Ofra and Maale Adumin, situated in the territories illegally occupied since June 1967. In this letter, the Chairman also pointed out that this decision of the Government of Israel was incompatible with the recommendations contained in the Committee's report, which were endorsed by the General Assembly at its thirty-first session; the decision furthermore constituted a violation of the Geneva Convention Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War of 12 August 1949 ^{3/} of General Assembly resolutions 3525 (XXX) of 15 December 1975 and 31/106 of 16 December 1976, of Security Council resolutions 237 (1967) of 14 June 1967 and 252 (1968) of 21 May 1968, and of statements made on behalf of the Security Council by its President at the 1922nd meeting, on 26 May 1976, and the 1969th meeting, on 11 November 1976. The Chairman also expressed the view that such a decision merely aggravated the tensions in the region, artificially erected an additional obstacle to the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, and undermined efforts to promote a just and lasting settlement of the Middle East problem (S/12377).

^{3/} United Nations, Treaty Series, vol. 75, No. 973, p. 287.

4. Other action taken by the Committee

31. With respect to paragraph 3 of General Assembly resolution 31/20 which urged all competent bodies of the United Nations to take necessary action, as appropriate, in accordance with its programme of implementation, the Committee was of the opinion that those bodies should stand ready to implement the recommendations of the Committee, and should take whatever intermediate steps were necessary at this stage to avoid delays in implementation of those recommendations. At the request of the Committee, this view was brought by the Secretary-General to the attention particularly of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency and the United Nations Conciliation Commission on Palestine, which were likely to have specific responsibilities in the implementation of the programme.

B. Dissemination of information in accordance with paragraph 6 of General Assembly resolution 31/20

32. As requested in paragraph 6 of General Assembly resolution 31/20, the Committee attached the greatest importance to dissemination of information on its work, and on the various aspects of the problem of the implementation of its recommendations concerning the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. It was felt important that the public should realize that the Committee's function was not to support any one country against another but to deal fairly and objectively with a problem affecting international peace and security. The view was expressed that no opportunity should be missed to bring to the attention of the world public all the facts of the Palestinian problem which had long been ignored.

33. With this end in view, the Chairman of the Committee addressed the Economic and Social Council at its sixty-second session, held in New York, and the Committee was represented by a delegation of two members at the World Conference on Action Against Apartheid, held at Lagos from 22 to 26 August 1977. In addition, the report and recommendations of the Committee were brought to the attention of the World Health Assembly when it met at Geneva in May 1977. The Committee also decided that the resolution on the question of Palestine adopted by the Council of Ministers and approved by the Summit Conference of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity at Libreville in July 1977 should be published as a document of the General Assembly (A/32/160).

34. At its 23rd meeting, on 9 August 1977, the Committee decided that the issue by the United Nations of a series of commemorative stamps relating to the question of Palestinian rights would be an appropriate method of highlighting those rights, and accordingly authorized the Chairman to request the Secretary-General to initiate steps to issue such a series of stamps.

35. The Committee considered a suggestion that an international day of solidarity with the Palestinian people be designated and observed, and decided that this proposal could be included in a resolution at the thirty-second session of the General Assembly.

36. In considering ways and means of obtaining the widest possible radio and television coverage of the Palestinian question, the Committee recalled that, at the Fifth Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries held at Colombo in August 1976, a resolution adopted by that Conference referred to the need to strive in all fields, at the widest international level, to realize the

objective of recognition of and respect for the rights of the Palestinian people (see A/31/197, p. 121). It was decided therefore that the Committee should approach the Co-ordination Council of the Pool of Press Agencies of Non-Aligned Countries with the request that maximum coverage be given by national and international media to the various aspects of this question.

37. The Chairman accordingly addressed the Chairman of the Co-ordinating Bureau of the Non-Aligned Countries in New York requesting him to bring the Committee's decision to the notice of the Co-ordination Council of the Pool of Press Agencies of the Non-Aligned Countries so that it might take steps to improve coverage of the question of Palestine by national and international mass media.

V. APPRAISAL OF ACTION TAKEN IN ACCORDANCE WITH PARAGRAPH 7
OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 31/20

38. In its consideration of action taken by the Office of Public Information of the Secretariat to disseminate information on the work of the Committee, as required by paragraph 7 of General Assembly resolution 31/20, the Committee agreed that the Office of Public Information could, through its network of information centres throughout the world, play an influential role by making available to the public an objective presentation of the Palestinian question. The opinion was expressed that the Office of Public Information in particular was in the best position to state the truth about decisions on this question in the United Nations, and about the history of the United Nations involvement with the Palestinian question - facts which would otherwise be buried in the archives of the United Nations and utilized only by specialists or by Governments in pursuit of their own interests.

39. It was felt that there was genuine public interest in the question of the Middle East and in the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, although many seemed unable to distinguish between a resolution dealing with refugees and a resolution dealing with a people's right to independence. Publications on the question should be strictly documentary in nature, simple and accurate in their coverage of significant and historical events.

40. The Committee noted that the Office of Public Information had recorded interviews with members and observers of the Committee which were broadcast in English, French, Spanish and Arabic and that the United Nations Monthly Chronicle had carried articles on the proceedings of the Committee.

41. The Committee was agreed that this campaign should be intensified in the coming months through the publication of pamphlets dealing with individual aspects of the problem, and through more television and radio broadcasts in several languages aimed at reaching the widest possible audience throughout the world. The United Nations Monthly Chronicle could also extend coverage to articles on events beyond the work of the Committee and take in events and developments in the Middle East region.

42. It was also felt that the publication of pamphlets on the various aspects of the problem would be particularly useful in making the facts concerning the rights of the Palestinian people more widely disseminated and better understood.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COMMITTEE

43. Having taken into account the various observations made on its report and recommendations and in the light of current events in the region, the Committee unanimously decided to reaffirm the validity of its recommendations, endorsed by the General Assembly, which are reproduced as annex I of this report. It agreed that the date suggested for the withdrawal of Israeli occupation forces from territories occupied in 1967, although now passed, should be retained for its symbolic significance and as a timely reminder of the urgency of a peaceful solution under the auspices of the United Nations, and particularly on the basis of resolutions unanimously adopted but not yet implemented.

44. It was also agreed that an intensification of efforts was necessary to implement those recommendations with the minimum delay, and that the various sectors of the United Nations system should act in concert to promote their implementation by peaceful means.

45. In the course of the discussion in the Committee, suggestions were made as to ways and means by which the objectives of the Committee could be further advanced. It was felt, however, that a decision on these suggestions should be deferred until such time as the Security Council had considered the question of Palestine.

ANNEX I*

Recommendations of the Committee endorsed by the
General Assembly at its thirty-first session

I. BASIC CONSIDERATIONS AND GUIDELINES

59. The question of Palestine is at the heart of the Middle East problem, and, consequently, the Committee stresses its belief that no solution in the Middle East can be envisaged which does not fully take into account the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people.

60. The legitimate and inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to return to their homes and property and to achieve self-determination, national independence and sovereignty are endorsed by the Committee in the conviction that the full implementation of these rights will contribute decisively to a comprehensive and final settlement of the Middle East crisis.

61. The participation of the Palestine Liberation Organization, the representative of the Palestinian people, on an equal footing with other parties, on the basis of General Assembly resolutions 3236 (XXIX) and 3375 (XXX) is indispensable in all efforts, deliberations and conferences on the Middle East which are held under the auspices of the United Nations.

62. The Committee recalls the fundamental principle of the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force and stresses the consequent obligation for complete and speedy evacuation of any territory so occupied.

63. The Committee considers that it is the duty and the responsibility of all concerned to enable the Palestinians to exercise their inalienable rights.

64. The Committee recommends an expanded and more influential role by the United Nations and its organs in promoting a just solution to the question of Palestine and in the implementation of such a solution. The Security Council, in particular, should take appropriate action to facilitate the exercise by the Palestinians of their right to return to their homes, lands and property. The Committee, furthermore, urges the Security Council to promote action towards a just solution, taking into account all the powers conferred on it by the Charter of the United Nations.

65. It is with this perspective in view and on the basis of the numerous resolutions of the United Nations, after due consideration of all the facts, proposals and suggestions advanced in the course of its deliberations, that the Committee submits its recommendations on the modalities for the implementation of the exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.

* Previously issued as part two of Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-first Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/31/35).

II. THE RIGHT OF RETURN

66. The natural and inalienable right of Palestinians to return to their homes is recognized by resolution 194 (III), which the General Assembly has reaffirmed almost every year since its adoption. This right was also unanimously recognized by the Security Council in its resolution 237 (1967); the time for the urgent implementation of these resolutions is long overdue.

67. Without prejudice to the right of all Palestinians to return to their homes, lands and property, the Committee considers that the programme of implementation, of the exercise of this right may be carried out in two phases:

Phase one

68. The first phase involves the return to their homes of the Palestinians displaced as a result of the war of June 1967. The Committee recommends that:

- (i) The Security Council should request the immediate implementation of its resolution 237 (1967) and that such implementation should not be related to any other condition;
- (ii) The resources of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and/or of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, suitably financed and mandated, may be employed to assist in the solution of any logistical problems involved in the resettlement of those returning to their homes. These agencies could also assist, in co-operation with the host countries and the Palestine Liberation Organization, in the identification of the displaced Palestinians.

Phase two

69. The second phase deals with the return to their homes of the Palestinians displaced between 1948 and 1967. The Committee recommends that:

- (i) While the first phase is being implemented, the United Nations in co-operation with the States directly involved, and the Palestine Liberation Organization as the interim representative of the Palestinian entity, should proceed to make the necessary arrangements to enable Palestinians displaced between 1948 and 1967 to exercise their right to return to their homes and property, in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions, particularly General Assembly resolution 194 (III);
- (ii) Palestinians not choosing to return to their homes should be paid just and equitable compensation as provided for in resolution 194 (III).

III. THE RIGHT TO SELF-DETERMINATION, NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE AND SOVEREIGNTY

70. The Palestinian people has the inherent right to self-determination, national independence and sovereignty in Palestine. The Committee considers that the evacuation of the territories occupied by force and in violation of the principles

of the Charter and relevant resolutions of the United Nations is a conditio sine qua non for the exercise by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights in Palestine to their homes and property and with the establishment of an independent Palestinian entity, the Palestinian people will be able to exercise its rights to self-determination and to decide its form of government without external interference.

71. The Committee also feels that the United Nations has an historical duty and responsibility to render all assistance necessary to promote the economic development and prosperity of the Palestinian entity.

72. To these ends, the Committee recommends that:

(a) A time-table should be established by the Security Council for the complete withdrawal by Israeli occupation forces from those areas occupied in 1967; such withdrawal should be completed no later than 1 June 1977;

(b) The Security Council may need to provide temporary peace-keeping forces in order to facilitate the process of withdrawal;

(c) Israel should be requested by the Security Council to desist from the establishment of new settlements and to withdraw during this period from settlements established since 1967 in the occupied territories. Arab property and all essential services in these areas should be maintained intact;

(d) Israel should also be requested to abide scrupulously by the provisions of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, and to declare, pending its speedy withdrawal from these territories, its recognition of the applicability of that Convention;

(e) The evacuated territories, with all property and services intact, should be taken over by the United Nations, which with the co-operation of the League of Arab States, will subsequently hand over these evacuated areas to the Palestine Liberation Organization as the representative of the Palestinian people;

(f) The United Nations should, if necessary, assist in establishing communications between Gaza and the West Bank;

(g) As soon as the independent Palestinian entity has been established, the United Nations, in co-operation with the States directly involved and the Palestinian entity, should, taking into account General Assembly resolution 3375 (XXX), make further arrangements for the full implementation of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, the resolution of outstanding problems and the establishment of a just and lasting peace in the region, in accordance with all relevant United Nations resolutions;

(h) The United Nations should provide the economic and technical assistance necessary for the consolidation of the Palestinian entity.

ANNEX II

A. Letter dated 18 April 1977 from the Chairman of the Committee to the Permanent Representative of Canada to the United Nations

I have the honour to inform you that on 15 April 1977 the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People held a meeting in the course of which its members noted certain statements concerning your Government's official position on the question of Palestine and the establishment of a just and lasting peace in the Middle East.

In this connexion, reference was made to the statement delivered by the representative of Canada on 24 November 1976 in the plenary of the United Nations General Assembly and, in particular, to the observation contained therein to the effect that the agreed framework for Middle East negotiations laid down in Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) "has in recent years been supplemented by a universal recognition of the political dimension of the Palestinian issue".

In my capacity as Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, I have been asked to request you to transmit to me any additional information which may be available to you concerning the current official position of the Government of Canada on the question of Palestine.

(Signed) Médoune FALL
Chairman of the Committee on the
Exercise of the Inalienable
Rights of the Palestinian People

B. Letter dated 18 April 1977 from the Chairman of the Committee to the Permanent Representative of France to the United Nations

I have the honour to inform you that on 15 April 1977 the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People held a meeting in the course of which its members noted certain statements concerning your Government's official position on the question of Palestine and the establishment of a just and lasting peace in the Middle East. In this connexion, reference was made, in particular, to the press conference given by the President of France, His Excellency Mr. Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, at Cairo on 14 December 1975, in the course of which he said:

"I should like to tell you what our position is on the nature of the Palestinian homeland. It is not for us to take decisions in the stead of those personally concerned, and when we speak of an 'independent State', we mean 'a State which will determine its own destiny'. If it emerges that, in view of the outlook for the future in this area, it wishes to establish any particular special relationship or any particular special institutional arrangement with a State in the area, we have no objection."

The attention of the Committee members was also drawn to the statement made by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of France, His Excellency Mr. Louis de Guiringaud, on 29 September 1976 in the plenary of the United Nations General Assembly and, in particular, to the following observations contained therein:

"... we reaffirm both the necessity to implement Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and the basic nature of the three principles upon which any lasting settlement must necessarily rely: withdrawal from the territories occupied by Israel in June 1967, recognition of the Palestinians' right to a homeland, and the right of all States in the area, including Israel, to live in peace within secure, recognized and guaranteed boundaries.

"The basis of any just and lasting settlement can be found in the application of those principles, especially as regards the Palestinians. That people, raised in hardship and made strong by suffering, has now taken its place as a necessary partner in any negotiation. It has become quite obvious that no solution to the conflict is possible unless the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people to express its national identity becomes a reality. But how can that right be exercised without a territorial base which, at the proper time, could be given the structures of statehood?"

In my capacity as Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, I have been asked to request you to transmit to me any additional information which may be available to you concerning the current official position of the Government of France on the question of Palestine.

(Signed) Médoune FALL
Chairman of the Committee on the
Exercise of the Inalienable
Rights of the Palestinian People

C. Letter dated 18 April 1977 from the Chairman of the Committee to the Permanent Representative of the Federal Republic of Germany to the United Nations

I have the honour to inform you that on 15 April 1977 the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People held a meeting in the course of which its members noted certain statements concerning your Government's official position on the question of Palestine and the establishment of a just and lasting peace in the Middle East. In this connexion, reference was made to the statement delivered by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands, His Excellency Mr. van der Stoep, on 28 September 1976, on behalf of the nine members of the European Economic Community, in the plenary of the United Nations General Assembly and, in particular, to the following observations contained therein:

"With regard to the Arab-Israeli conflict, the members of the European Community are convinced that negotiations based on a minimum of consensus among all the parties concerned are essential for the achievement of a just and lasting peace in the Middle East. In this respect they reiterate their continuing firm attachment to resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) of the Security Council and to the principles which are the basis of their position and which I repeat: first, the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force; secondly, the need for Israel to end the territorial occupation which it has maintained since the conflict of 1967; thirdly, respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of every State in the area and its right to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries; and fourthly, recognition that in the establishment of a just and lasting peace account must be taken of the legitimate rights of the Palestinians.

"I should like to emphasize that a solution of the conflict in the Middle East will be possible only if the legitimate right of the Palestinian people to give effective expression to its national identity is translated into fact."

The attention of the Committee members was also drawn to the press conference given by the Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany, His Excellency Mr. Helmut Schmidt, on 1 April 1977, in the course of which he stated that the Geneva Peace Conference should be resumed before the end of the year with the participation of the Palestinians.

In my capacity as Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, I have been asked to request you to transmit to me any additional information which may be available to you concerning the current official position of the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany on the question of Palestine.

(Signed) Médoune FALL
Chairman of the Committee on the
Exercise of the Inalienable
Rights of the Palestinian People

D. Letter dated 18 April 1977 from the Chairman of the Committee to the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations

I have the honour to inform you that on 15 April 1977 the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People held a meeting in the course of which its members noted certain statements concerning your Government's official position on the question of Palestine and the establishment of a just and lasting peace in the Middle East. In this connexion, reference was made to the statement delivered by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands, His Excellency Mr. van der Stoep, on 28 September 1976, on behalf of the nine members of the European Economic Community, in the plenary of the United Nations General Assembly and, in particular, to the following observations contained therein:

"With regard to the Arab-Israeli conflict, the members of the European Community are convinced that negotiations based on a minimum of consensus among all the parties concerned are essential for the achievement of a just and lasting peace in the Middle East. In this respect they reiterate their continuing firm attachment to resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) of the Security Council and to the principles which are the basis of their position and which I repeat: first, the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force; secondly, the need for Israel to end the territorial occupation which it has maintained since the conflict of 1967; thirdly, respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of every State in the area and its right to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries; and fourthly, recognition that in the establishment of a just and lasting peace account must be taken of the legitimate rights of the Palestinians.

"I should like to emphasize that a solution of the conflict in the Middle East will be possible only if the legitimate right of the Palestinian people to give effective expression to its national identity is translated into fact."

In my capacity as Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, I have been asked to request you to transmit to me any additional information which may be available to you concerning the current official position of the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland on the question of Palestine.

(Signed) Médoune FALL
Chairman of the Committee on the
Exercise of the Inalienable
Rights of the Palestinian People

E. Letter dated 18 April 1977 from the Chairman of the Committee to the Permanent Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations

I have the honour to inform you that on 15 April 1977 the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People held a meeting in the course of which its members noted certain statements concerning your Government's official position on the question of Palestine and the establishment of a just and lasting peace in the Middle East. In this connexion, reference was made, in particular, to the statement delivered by the President of the United States of America, His Excellency Mr. Jimmy Carter, at Clinton on 16 March 1977, in which he said, inter alia:

"There has to be a homeland provided for the Palestinian refugees who have suffered for many, many years."

The attention of the Committee members was also drawn to the statement made on 23 November 1976, on behalf of the United States of America, in the plenary of the United Nations General Assembly and, in particular, to the following observations contained therein:

"That the legitimate aspirations and interests of the Palestinian people must be taken into account in working out a settlement in the Middle East is an elementary truth. Without doubt, this is one of the central issues that must be resolved in the negotiations to have a just and lasting peace, which is what we all seek for the Middle East."

In my capacity as Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, I have been asked to request you to transmit to me any additional information which may be available to you concerning the current official position of the Government of the United States of America on the question of Palestine.

(Signed) Médoune FALL
Chairman of the Committee on the
Exercise of the Inalienable
Rights of the Palestinian People

F. Letter dated 18 April 1977 from the Chairman of the Committee to the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations

I have the honour to inform you that on 15 April 1977 the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People held a meeting in the course of which its members noted certain statements concerning your Government's official position on the Palestinian problem and the establishment of a just and lasting peace in the Middle East. In this connexion, reference was made to the speech delivered by the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Deputy Prime Minister of Israel, His Excellency Mr. Yigal Allon, on 16 February 1977 on the occasion of the dinner in honour of the Secretary of State of the United States of America and, in particular, to the statement contained therein to the effect that:

"For Israel, peace in the Near East is through a solution to the Palestinian problem which must be approved by the Jordanians and the Palestinians, on the one hand, and by Israel, on the other."

In my capacity as Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, I have been asked to request you to transmit to me any additional information which may be available to you concerning the current official position of the Government of Israel on the Palestinian question.

(Signed) Médoune FALL
Chairman of the Committee on the
Exercise of the Inalienable
Rights of the Palestinian People

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**REPORT
OF THE
COMMITTEE ON THE EXERCISE OF
THE INALIENABLE RIGHTS
OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE**

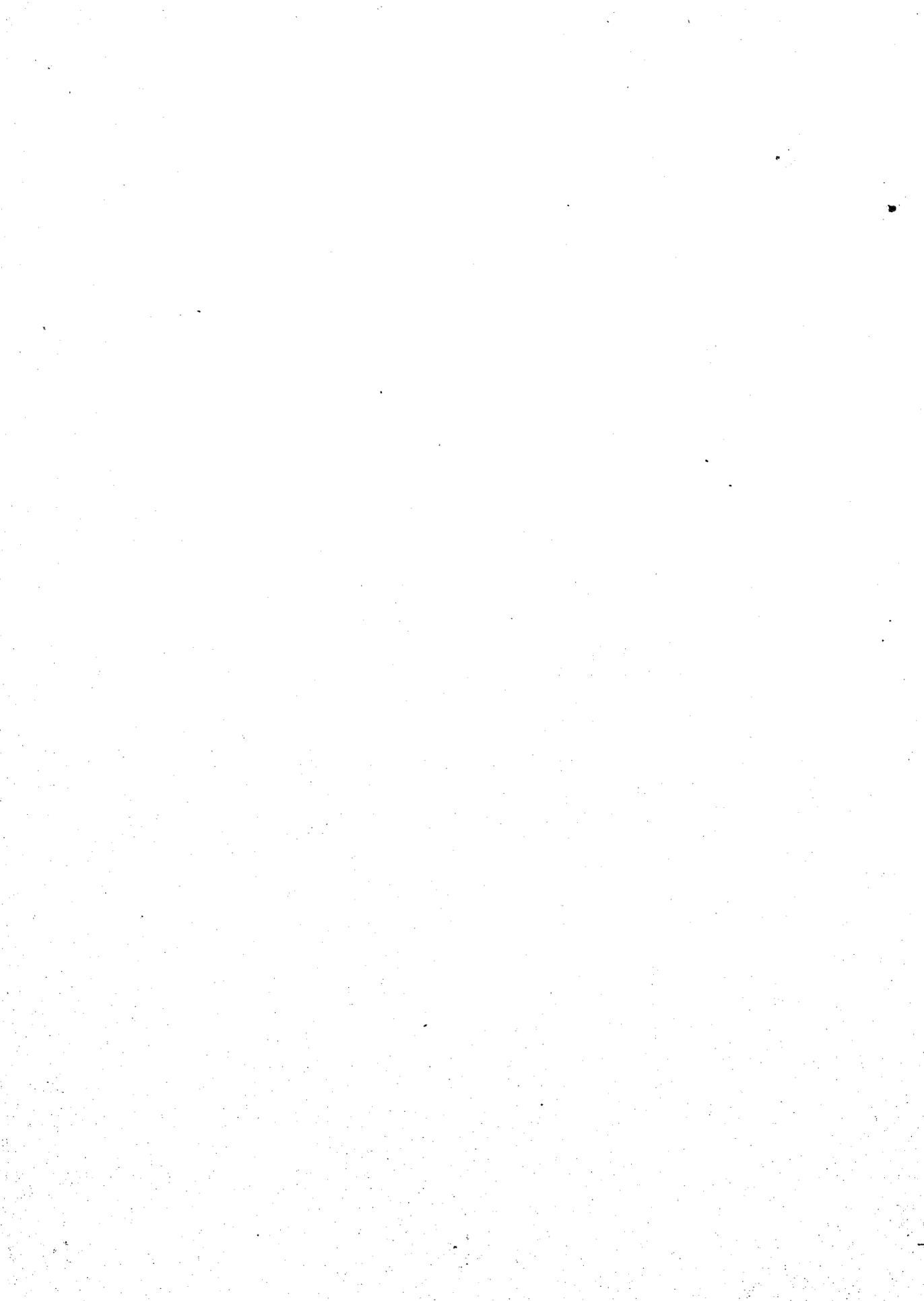
GENERAL ASSEMBLY

OFFICIAL RECORDS: THIRTY - THIRD SESSION

SUPPLEMENT No. 35 (A/33/35)



UNITED NATIONS



REPORT
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UNITED NATIONS

New York, 1978

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/6 October 1978/

CONTENTS

	<u>Paragraphs</u>	<u>Page</u>
LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL		iv
I. INTRODUCTION	1 - 4	1
II. MANDATE OF THE COMMITTEE	5 - 7	1
III. ORGANIZATION OF WORK	8 - 11	2
A. Election of officers	8	2
B. Participation in the work of the Committee	9 - 10	2
C. Establishment of a Task Force	11	2
IV. ACTION TAKEN BY THE COMMITTEE	12 - 54	3
A. Efforts to promote implementation of its recommendations in accordance with paragraph 7 of General Assembly resolution 32/40 A	12 - 46	3
B. Action taken in accordance with paragraph 1 (a) of General Assembly resolution 32/40 B	47 - 51	10
C. Action taken in accordance with paragraph 1 (c) of General Assembly resolution 32/40 B	52 - 54	11
V. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COMMITTEE	55 - 58	11

ANNEX

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COMMITTEE ENDORSED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AT ITS THIRTY-FIRST SESSION	13
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LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

22 September 1977

Sir,

I have the honour to transmit to you herewith the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for submission to the General Assembly in accordance with paragraph 7 of resolution 32/40 A.

Accept, Sir, the assurances of my highest consideration.

(Signed) Médoune FALL
Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise
of the Inalienable Rights of
the Palestinian People

His Excellency
Mr. Kurt Waldheim
Secretary-General of the United Nations

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, originally composed of 20 members, was established by the General Assembly in resolution 3376 (XXX) of 10 November 1975. The first report of the Committee was submitted to the General Assembly at its thirty-first session. 1/
2. In its resolution 31/20 of 24 November 1976, the General Assembly took note of the report of the Committee and endorsed the recommendations contained therein as a basis for the solution of the question of Palestine. Subsequently, by its decision 31/318 of 22 December 1976, the General Assembly enlarged the membership of the Committee by the addition of three new members.
3. In its report to the General Assembly at its thirty-second session, 2/ after having thoroughly analysed the comments made on the recommendations, and taking into account current events in the region, the Committee unanimously reaffirmed the validity of its recommendations endorsed by the General Assembly. It agreed that the date suggested for the withdrawal of Israeli occupation forces from territories occupied in 1967, although now passed, should be retained for its symbolic significance and as a timely reminder of the urgency of a peaceful solution under the auspices of the United Nations. It stressed also that an intensification of efforts was necessary to implement those recommendations with the minimum delay, and that the various sectors of the United Nations system should act in concert to promote their implementation by peaceful means.
4. In its resolution 32/40 A of 2 December 1977, adopted by 100 votes to 12 with 29 abstentions, the General Assembly took note of the report of the Committee and endorsed its recommendations as contained in paragraphs 43 and 44 of its report. The General Assembly also gave the Committee a new mandate.

II. MANDATE OF THE COMMITTEE

5. The mandate was specified in paragraph 7 of resolution 32/40 A and paragraphs 1 (a) and 1 (c) of resolution 32/40 B. In paragraph 7 of resolution 32/40 A, the General Assembly authorized the Committee to continue to exert all efforts to promote the implementation of its recommendations, to send delegations or representatives to international conferences where it considered such representation to be appropriate, and to report to the Assembly at its thirty-third session.
6. In paragraph 1 (a) of resolution 32/40 B the General Assembly authorized the Committee to provide the necessary guidelines to the Special Unit on Palestinian Rights, established in accordance with the terms of that resolution, in the

1/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-first Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/31/35).

2/ Ibid., Thirty-second Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/32/35).

preparation of studies and publications relating to: (i) the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people; (ii) relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and other organs of the United Nations; (iii) the activities of the Committee and other United Nations organs, in order to promote the attainment of those rights.

7. In paragraph 1 (c) of resolution 32/40 B, the General Assembly requested that the Special Unit should organize, in consultation with the Committee, commencing in 1978, annual observance of 29 November as the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

III. ORGANIZATION OF WORK

A. Election of officers

8. At its 26th meeting, on 10 January 1978, the Committee unanimously re-elected the following officers:

Chairman: Mr. Médoune Fall (Senegal)

Vice-Chairman: Mr. Ricardo Alarcón Quesada (Cuba)
Mr. Mir Abdul Wahab Siddiq (Afghanistan)

Rapporteur: Mr. Victor J. Gauci (Malta)

At the 31st meeting, on 14 June 1978, Mr. Raúl Roa Kouri (Cuba) was unanimously elected Vice-Chairman in place of Mr. Ricardo Alarcón Quesada (Cuba) who had left New York on another assignment for his country.

B. Participation in the work of the Committee

9. The Committee reconfirmed that those States Members of the United Nations and Permanent Observers to the United Nations which wished to participate in the work of the Committee as observers could do so, and it welcomed in that capacity Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Mauritania, the Syrian Arab Republic, the League of Arab States and the Palestine Liberation Organization, which continued in 1978 to participate in the work of the Committee.

10. At its request, Viet Nam also participated in the work of the Committee as an observer.

C. Establishment of a Task Force

11. The Committee unanimously decided that the Task Force established by it in 1977 should continue to function in order to facilitate the work of the Committee by: (a) keeping up to date with events which affect the work of the Committee and suggesting to the Committee action which it could usefully undertake, and (b) assisting the Committee in any other specific assignment related to its work. The following were reappointed members of the Task Force: Malta (Chairman), Afghanistan, Cuba, Guinea, Guyana, India, Senegal, Tunisia and, as representatives of the people directly concerned, the Palestine Liberation Organization.

IV. ACTION TAKEN BY THE COMMITTEE

A. Efforts to promote the implementation of its recommendations in accordance with paragraph 7 of General Assembly resolution 32/40 A

1. Contacts with the Security Council and consideration of possible action

12. In September 1977, after it had submitted its report to the General Assembly, the Committee authorized its Chairman to undertake the necessary consultations with the President of the Security Council with a view to convening at a suitable date a meeting of the Council on the question of Palestine. The Committee felt that this meeting should take place before the question of Palestine was taken up by the General Assembly at the thirty-second session. Accordingly, on 13 September 1977, the Chairman of the Committee addressed a letter 3/ to the President of the Security Council and commenced the necessary consultations.

13. The Security Council considered the question of Palestine at its 2041st meeting, on 27 October 1977. Those representatives who participated in the discussion supported the recommendations made by the Committee and endorsed by the General Assembly. At the conclusion of the discussion, the President of the Council announced that after prior consultation with members of the Council it had been agreed that the debate on this item should be adjourned for the present and that the next meeting would be fixed after consultations among members.

14. In paragraph 3 of its resolution 32/40 A, the General Assembly noted with satisfaction that, during the consideration of the report of the Committee by the Security Council on 27 October 1977, all members of the Council who participated in the discussion had reaffirmed that a just and lasting peace in the Middle East could not be established without the achievement, in particular, of a just solution of the problem of Palestine on the basis of the attainment of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. In paragraph 4 of that resolution, the General Assembly urged the Security Council to take as soon as possible a decision on the recommendations endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 31/20. The Security Council is accordingly still seized of the question of Palestine and the Committee's recommendations.

15. It was strongly felt that there was a need for the Committee to restate its support for the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and to bring to the attention of the President of the Security Council, the President of the General Assembly, the Secretary-General, the two Co-Chairmen of the Geneva Conference and all States directly concerned with the Palestinian question those points within its mandate which the Committee considered essential for a Middle East Settlement.

3/ Official Records of the Security Council, Thirty-second year, Supplement for July, August and September 1977, document S/12399.

16. On 18 January the Chairman accordingly addressed letters to the President of the Security Council (A/33/55, annex III), ^{4/} the President of the thirty-second session of the General Assembly (A/33/55, annex II), the Secretary-General (A/33/54), the Co-Chairman of the Geneva Conference - the Permanent Representative of the United States and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics - and to the Permanent Representatives of Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon and Syrian Arab Republic (A/33/55, annexes IV and V) recalling the following important principles:

(a) The question of Palestine is at the heart of the problem of the Middle East and no solution to that problem can be envisaged without taking into account the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people;

(b) The implementation of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people of returning to their homes and property, of exercising their right of self-determination and independence and national sovereignty will contribute to a final solution of the Middle East crisis;

(c) The participation of the Palestine Liberation Organization, the representative of the Palestinian people, on an equal footing with all other parties on the basis of General Assembly resolutions 3236 (XXIX) and 3375 (XXX) is indispensable to all efforts, deliberations and conferences on the Middle East which take place under the auspices of the United Nations;

(d) The inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force and the consequent obligation for Israel to withdraw completely and quickly from all territory so occupied.

17. At the same time the Chairman recalled the fact that the Palestine National Council, at its meeting in Cairo in March 1977, had decided to consider the recommendations of the Committee endorsed by the General Assembly at its thirty-first session as a positive step towards the realization of the aspirations of the Palestinian people and their rights of return, self-determination and to independence and national sovereignty. The Palestine National Council had also declared that any agreement affecting the rights of the Palestinian people and concluded in its absence would be regarded as null and void. The Chairman added that the Permanent Observer of the Palestine Liberation Organization to the United Nations had, on instructions from the Executive Chairman of the Organization, reaffirmed that decision in the Committee.

18. In the light of tragic events which took place subsequently in Lebanon and the adoption of resolution 425 (1978) by the Security Council on 19 March 1978, the Committee authorized its Chairman to address the President of the Security Council unanimously associating itself with those provisions of Security Council resolution 425 (1978) which called upon Israel to cease immediately its military action against the territorial integrity of Lebanon and to withdraw forthwith all its forces from Lebanese territory. It felt also that it was imperative that the Security Council should take more energetic action to bring about the urgent establishment of peace in the Middle East through a positive response to the

^{4/} For the printed text, see Official Records of the Security Council, Thirty-third year, Supplement for January, February and March 1978, document S/12531.

General Assembly's recommendations on the question of Palestine. In his letter dated 20 March 1978, 5/ the Chairman also expressed his certainty that many innocent lives could have been spared if the Security Council had exercised its responsibilities and had made a positive contribution to the efforts aimed at advancing a settlement of the question of Palestine.

2. Review of events relating to the Middle East question

19. In reviewing events which had taken place on the Middle East question, initiated during the later months of 1977 and on which details of results have now been made public, the Committee felt that it should recall the detailed and phased recommendations which it had made on the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, which the General Assembly had already endorsed, as a basis for the solution of the question of Palestine, in two successive sessions. These recommendations are contained as an annex to the report and are summarized in paragraphs 16 and 58.

20. The Committee deems it necessary to stress once again, in particular, that the participation of the Palestine Liberation Organization, the representative of the Palestinian people, is indispensable to a just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine, which is at the heart of the Middle East conflict.

3. Action relating to recommendations of the Committee taken by other organizations

21. The Committee noted that the Ninth Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers, held at Dakar in April 1978, the Council of Ministers of the Organization of African Unity, meeting at Khartoum in July 1978 and the Conference of Foreign Ministers of the Non-Aligned Countries, meeting at Belgrade in July 1978, had all strongly reaffirmed their support for the struggle to restore the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and had called upon the Security Council to act on the Committee's recommendations. The Committee noted also that the World Conference to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination meeting at Geneva from 14 to 25 August 1978 had in its Declaration expressed its grave concern over the continuing situation in the Middle East and had deplored Israel's refusal to comply with the relevant resolutions of the United Nations. That Conference had proclaimed its solidarity with the Palestinian people in its struggle for liberation and against racial discrimination and had voiced the hope that the Palestinian people would soon have the opportunity to exercise its inalienable right to self-determination.

4. Reaction to developments in the occupied territories

22. Referring to the reported reply of the Government of Israel to the Government of the United States of America in June 1978 concerning the future of the occupied territories, and to the clarification given by Mr. Moshe Dayan, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Israel quoted in the New York Times of 20 June 1978, the Chairman of the Committee addressed a letter (A/33/154) to the Secretary-General expressing the view

5/ Ibid., document S/12614.

that the Israeli Foreign Minister's clarification that "the plan for autonomy in the occupied territories would be permanent and not a transitional phase to a separate Palestinian homeland" confirmed that Israel had no intention of honouring the resolutions of the United Nations which opposed the occupation of territories by force and recognized the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people affirmed by the General Assembly. He pointed out also that the clarification constituted a violation of the principle of self-determination and that it was clear that all the assurances given by the Israeli Government concerning the territories occupied in 1967 had been aimed at enabling Israel to evade its responsibilities and its obligations with respect to the United Nations and its Charter.

23. In March 1978, the Secretary-General drew the attention of the Committee to some petitions addressed to him by prominent Palestinians in the occupied territories. The Committee was convinced on the basis of the signatures appended to these documents that they represented the true sentiments and aspirations of the Palestinian people, irrespective of their place of residence. The Committee addressed a letter to the Secretary-General emphasizing the main elements put forth in those documents and requested that the letter be circulated as an official document of the General Assembly (A/33/165). The main elements were:

(a) The Palestine Liberation Organization is the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people and as such not only had the full right but was duty bound to express the views and attitudes of the Palestinian people;

(b) The rights of the Palestinian people as affirmed by various United Nations resolutions were not subject to bargaining;

(c) Palestinians in the occupied territories rejected any solution, regardless of its origin, which did not contain a clear recognition of the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and to establish their own independent national state.

24. On 17 August 1978 on the instruction of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization, its Permanent Observer brought to the attention of the Chairman of the Committee that, on 15 August 1978, Palestinian prisoners and detainees in the occupied territories had begun a hunger strike to protest against their harsh and inhuman treatment by the occupation authorities. Quoting several examples of such ill treatment, the Permanent Observer urged the Chairman to take immediate and appropriate action to support the demands put forward by the prisoners, namely, that they be treated as prisoners of war and be given adequate medical care.

25. The Chairman of the Committee accordingly addressed a letter to the Secretary-General (A/33-218-S/12820) on 22 August 1978 requesting that appropriate action be taken by him to ensure that the demands put forward by the prisoners are accorded due attention. Similar letters were addressed also to the President of the Security Council and to the President of the Commission on Human Rights.

5. Attendance at conferences

26. In accordance with paragraph 7 of resolution 32/40 A which, inter alia, authorized the Committee to send delegations or representatives to international

conferences where such representation would be considered by it to be appropriate, the Committee decided to accept invitations and to send representatives to several important conferences during 1978.

27. The Committee was represented at the World Conference for the Eradication of Racism organized by the World Peace Council in Basel from 18 to 21 May; the workshop organized by the Palestine Human Rights Campaign in Washington, D.C., on 21 May; the Week of Solidarity with the Anti-Imperialist Forces in the Middle East in Their Struggle for Peace and Social Progress, organized by the Solidarity Committee of the German Democratic Republic at Berlin from 5 to 11 June 1978 and the United Nations Conference to Combat Racism, held at Geneva from 14 to 25 August 1978.

28. The Committee was of the view that such attendance was of extreme importance in furthering the aims and objectives of the Committee and in fulfilling its mandate.

29. The opportunity was invariably taken of addressing these conferences and making known the work and recommendations of the Committee. Those who represented the Committee at these conferences reported that they were also able to establish contact with several international non-governmental organizations which also participated in these conferences. They found that there was evidently a considerable amount of understanding of and sympathy for the problem of the Palestinian people.

30. The Chairman also informed the Committee that he had had the opportunity to describe the Committee's work at a meeting in Jeddah of the Committee on Jerusalem of the Islamic Conference. Following his statement, it had been decided that a letter would be sent to the Committee for the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People thanking its members and commending them on their work.

6. Other action taken by the Committee

31. At the first meeting of the Committee in 1978, the Permanent Observer of the Palestine Liberation Organization conveyed to the Committee the greetings of the Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization, Chairman Yasser Arafat, reaffirming his support for the recommendations contained in the Committee's report and endorsed by the General Assembly. The Chairman of the Committee accordingly sent a message (A/33/55, annex I) to Chairman Yasser Arafat thanking him for his message of good wishes and assuring him once more of the Committee's solidarity with the just cause of the Palestinian people and of its inalienable rights.

32. A message of greetings and good wishes was also sent by the Chairman of the Committee to the President of the Commission on Human Rights at the commencement of the thirty-fourth session of the Commission. In that message the Chairman expressed the Committee's interest in the deliberations on the question of the violation of human rights in the occupied territories, including Palestine, and the certainty that such discussions would draw once more the attention of all States and world public opinion to the General Assembly's recommendations concerning the implementation of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.

33. The Committee noted that the Commission on Human Rights had adopted four important resolutions dealing with the violations of human rights in the occupied Arab territories, including Palestine, and the right of peoples to self-determination and its application to peoples under colonial or alien domination or foreign occupation. It noted also that the Economic and Social Council subsequently adopted resolution 1978/24 by which, having considered the report of the Commission on Human Rights on its thirty-fourth session, it took note of the decisions of the Commission concerning the violation by Israel of human rights in the occupied territories; commended the Commission for its vigilance and its decisions on the protection of human rights in the occupied Arab territories, including Palestine; and requested the Commission to pursue its efforts for the protection of human rights in the occupied territories, including Palestine, and to continue to take appropriate measures in this respect.

34. On 22 April 1978, the Chairman of the Committee addressed (see A/S-8/PV.3) the eighth special session of the General Assembly convened to consider the financing of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon. In that statement he declared that the aim of Israel's invasion of Lebanon was the physical and moral destruction of the Palestinian people and breaking the will of a whole people. He declared that the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People believed that the presence of United Nations forces should not be misused to solidify injustices and pursue a policy of oppression and occupation. On the contrary, it should impel the United Nations and particularly the Security Council to seek a lasting solution to the problem of Southern Lebanon; that problem could be solved only in the context of an over-all settlement making it possible for the Palestinian people to exercise their inalienable rights which had been recognized by the United Nations since 1947.

35. He recalled that the Committee had prepared recommendations that could not only enable the Palestinian people to exercise their rights but also assist in finding a solution to the Middle East conflict. Those recommendations had been endorsed by the United Nations General Assembly. The National Council of Palestine, the supreme body of the Palestinian people, had also approved them. Unfortunately, it had not been possible to implement them because of the immobility of the Security Council which had not yet taken a position on the question. He asserted the Committee's belief that the present situation allowed for no further delay, that it was imperative for the Security Council to act in a more decisive way to bring about a just and lasting settlement to the Middle East question. Otherwise a new cycle of violations and destruction could not only endanger international peace and security but also jeopardize any chances for a peaceful settlement. In the Committee's opinion a positive response to those recommendations would be an important step towards eliminating the danger of conflict in the Middle East, promoting a just and lasting peace and finally devoting large United Nations funds to profitable tasks, tasks more useful to the international community as a whole.

36. The Rapporteur of the Committee, addressing the special session of the General Assembly on the same day (see A/S-8/PV.2), maintained that the real issue before the Assembly was the fate of a dispossessed people who from time immemorial had worked hard, peaceably and with warm attachment to the land where they were born and in which they had toiled. It was high time that all members of the organization lived up to their responsibilities in accordance with the Charter. A just and lasting solution of the crisis in the Middle East was inconceivable except on the basis of Israel's unconditional and complete withdrawal from all the

Palestinian and Arab territories occupied since 1967 and recognition of the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people, including the right to a State of their own, as well as the right of all the countries of the region to independence and security. Referring to the recommendations of the Committee, he reminded the Assembly that a prescription for peace had been drawn up and had won the endorsement of the international community and that endorsement had been reaffirmed a second time after more concentrated consideration by the General Assembly at its thirty-second session.

37. The Committee decided that it might follow up on the initiative it had taken in 1977 by inquiring of the competent bodies of the United Nations what action they had taken in pursuance of paragraph 5 of resolution 32/40 A which urged them to take necessary action, as appropriate, in accordance with the Committee's recommended programme of implementation.

38. In accordance with this decision the Chairman addressed a letter to the Secretary-General inquiring what the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) might be able to do as preparatory work to implement the Committee's recommendations.

39. In his reply the Commissioner General of UNRWA indicated that, given the funds and the mandate, UNRWA would be competent to assume responsibility for the short-term logistical aspects of the return of any or all of the 311,000 (including natural increase since 1967) registered Palestinian refugees displaced as a result of the 1967 hostilities and now in east Jordan and the Syrian Arab Republic. Given both a proper mandate and adequate funds UNRWA could also handle the movement of an estimated 210,000 (including natural increase) other Palestinians displaced as a result of the 1967 hostilities and now in east Jordan.

40. With the co-operation of the Governments concerned, UNRWA was capable at short notice of providing, within its operational area, transport, a temporary staging centre or centres with feeding arrangements, clinics, a potable water supply and environmental sanitation, and control of identification of registered Palestine refugees. The Agency could not provide permanent housing or the kind of institutionalized education and health care it now provided the Palestine refugees, even if funds were available, unless adequate land for housing and installations were made available and 18 months' to two years' advance notice of resettlement were given to permit the necessary construction.

41. As for the second phase of the Committee's programme which deals with "the return to their homes of the Palestinians displaced between 1948 and 1967", the 1.7 million Palestine refugees registered with UNRWA were all in this category, assuming that those refugees displaced in 1967 would return, in the first phase, to the places outside Israel from which they were displaced.

42. Appropriately provided with authority and funds, UNRWA was capable of playing a role in this also, with regard to:

- (a) The identification of registered refugees;
- (b) Transport;
- (c) Overnight shelter, if required;

(d) Emergency feeding;

(e) Emergency medical care.

43. Most of the services could be provided for non-registered refugees if UNRWA were authorized to do so.

44. While UNRWA could render substantial short-term assistance to facilitate the return of refugees, in the event of a mass movement back to Palestine, the important considerations for the refugees were less likely to be what they will need in the short term but rather such fundamental concerns as jobs, permanent housing, education, and other social services of a continuing nature. Presumably these would be the responsibility of whatever governmental authority would then have control of the territory to which the refugees return.

45. In summary, given the authority, the funds and the co-operation of the Governments concerned UNRWA could be capable of providing the assistance referred to by the Committee, promptly, efficiently and economically.

46. The Conciliation Commission for Palestine in its reply referred the Committee to its reports to the thirty-first and thirty-second sessions of the General Assembly.

B. Action taken in accordance with paragraph 1 (a)
of General Assembly resolution 32/40 B

47. The Committee noted that in compliance with paragraph 1 of General Assembly resolution 32/40 B the Secretary-General had established within the Secretariat a Special Unit on Palestinian Rights which would prepare, under the guidance of the Committee, studies and publications relating to the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and other organs of the United Nations and the activities of the Committee and other United Nations organs in order to promote the attainment of those rights. The Special Unit was also to promote for such studies and publications maximum publicity through all appropriate means. Paragraph 2 of that resolution requested the Secretary-General to ensure the full co-operation of the Office of Public Information and other units of the Secretariat in enabling the Special Unit on Palestinian Rights to perform its tasks.

48. In carrying out its mandate in accordance with this resolution the Committee suggested to the Special Unit several themes on which it might prepare studies during 1978. These were the right of return and how it should be applied and implemented in the case of the rights of the Palestinian people; the right of self-determination referred to in resolution 3236 (XXIX); the evolution and origins of the Palestinian problem, in particular how it had originally come before the United Nations and a critical and analytical study of all relevant resolutions on the question of Palestine which would be intended for specialists on the Palestinian question.

49. On the question of Bulletins which were to be issued by the Special Unit on Palestinian Rights, the Committee suggested that they should deal with relevant current events including those involving violations of rights in the occupied territories and should cover important statements and events in the region.

50. It noted that the Office of Public Information of the Secretariat had issued a pamphlet entitled "the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People" which covered the work of the Committee from its inception in 1976 to June 1978.

51. The Committee participated also in drawing up the scenario for the film being produced by the Office of Public Information and made its suggestions and comments on what the perspectives, accuracy and objectivity of the film should be. It is expected that the film will be ready for screening on 29 November 1978, when the United Nations commemorates the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

C. Action taken in accordance with paragraph 1 (c) of General Assembly resolution 32/40 B

52. The Special Unit on Palestinian Rights was requested by paragraph 1 (c) of resolution 32/40 B to organize, in consultation with the Committee, commencing in 1978, annual observance of 29 November as the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

53. In laying down the guidelines for the observance of that Day the Committee recommended that Solidarity Day should be observed in New York by the holding of a special meeting of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People to which all Member States should be invited and at which statements may be made by those whom the Committee considered should be invited to do so. Selected international non-governmental organizations were to be invited as well. Messages received from Heads of States or Governments would be read out at the meeting. The film produced by the Office of Public Information would have its premiere on that occasion and literature produced by the Special Unit, including a special issue of the Bulletin, would be distributed at the meeting. In addition, an exhibition of photographs and posters were to be arranged in the Visitor's Lounge of the United Nations Secretariat building during the week commencing Monday, 27 November 1978.

54. The Committee also requested the Secretary-General to draw the attention of all Member States, specialized agencies and other United Nations organs to the International Day of Solidarity and to inquire in what manner they intend to commemorate the Day. The Secretary-General was also requested to instruct the Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva to organize a special meeting in Geneva to commemorate the Day, to screen the film and to arrange an exhibition of photographs and posters. It is expected that many Governments, with the assistance of United Nations information centres, will observe the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People in an appropriate manner.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COMMITTEE

55. In the light of actual developments in the Middle East, the Committee unanimously decided to reiterate the validity of the recommendations it had made to the thirty-first session of the General Assembly, which the Assembly has already endorsed. These recommendations are annexed to the present report, their validity undiminished by the passage of time. The Committee agreed that, now more than

ever, the symbolic significance of the date suggested for the withdrawal of Israeli occupation forces from territories occupied in 1967 required that it be retained as a reminder of the urgency of a peaceful solution under the auspices of the United Nations particularly on the basis of resolutions unanimously adopted but not yet implemented. The Committee stresses that events over the past year have again indicated the urgency of a solution. Indeed, the Committee feels that, had a start been made on the implementation of the recommendations, conflict in the area might have been avoided.

56. The Committee considered that a continuation of its efforts would contribute to a wider understanding of the just causes of the Palestinian people and hence to the implementation of its recommendations, especially if the various sectors of the United Nations system continued to act in concert to promote their implementation by peaceful means.

57. The Committee was of the opinion that positive action by the Security Council on the recommendations endorsed by the General Assembly could create the necessary conditions for a just and lasting peace in the Middle East.

58. The Committee recommends that the General Assembly should urge the Security Council to be guided constantly by the basic principles relating to the problem of Palestine within the Middle East situation. These principles are:

- (a) The question of Palestine is at the heart of the problem of the Middle East and consequently no solution to the Middle East problem could be envisaged without taking into account the rights of the Palestinian people;
- (b) The realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to return to their homes and to self-determination, independence and national sovereignty would contribute to a solution of the crisis in the Middle East;
- (c) The participation of the Palestine Liberation Organization, the representative of the Palestinian people, on an equal footing with all other parties on the basis of General Assembly resolutions 3236 (XXIX) and 3375 (XXX) is indispensable in all efforts, deliberations and conferences on the Middle East undertaken under the auspices of the United Nations.
- (d) The inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force and the obligation which devolved on Israel to withdraw completely and quickly from all territory so occupied.

ANNEX*

Recommendations of the Committee endorsed by the
General Assembly at its thirty-first session

I. BASIC CONSIDERATIONS AND GUIDELINES

59. The question of Palestine is at the heart of the Middle East problem, and, consequently, the Committee stresses its belief that no solution in the Middle East can be envisaged which does not fully take into account the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people.

60. The legitimate and inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to return to their homes and property and to achieve self-determination, national independence and sovereignty are endorsed by the Committee in the conviction that the full implementation of these rights will contribute decisively to a comprehensive and final settlement of the Middle East crisis.

61. The participation of the Palestine Liberation Organization, the representative of the Palestinian people, on an equal footing with other parties, on the basis of General Assembly resolutions 3236 (XXIX) and 3375 (XXX) is indispensable in all efforts, deliberations and conferences on the Middle East which are held under the auspices of the United Nations.

62. The Committee recalls the fundamental principle of the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force and stresses the consequent obligation for complete and speedy evacuation of any territory so occupied.

63. The Committee considers that it is the duty and the responsibility of all concerned to enable the Palestinians to exercise their inalienable rights.

64. The Committee recommends an expanded and more influential role by the United Nations and its organs in promoting a just solution to the question of Palestine and in the implementation of such a solution. The Security Council, in particular, should take appropriate action to facilitate the exercise by the Palestinians of their right to return to their homes, lands and property. The Committee, furthermore, urges the Security Council to promote action towards a just solution, taking into account all the powers conferred on it by the Charter of the United Nations.

65. It is with this perspective in view and on the basis of the numerous resolutions of the United Nations, after due consideration of all the facts, proposals and suggestions advanced in the course of its deliberations, that the Committee submits its recommendations on the modalities for the implementation of the exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.

* Previously issued as annex I of Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-second Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/32/35).

II. THE RIGHT OF RETURN

66. The natural and inalienable right of Palestinians to return to their homes is recognized by resolution 194 (III), which the General Assembly has reaffirmed almost every year since its adoption. This right was also unanimously recognized by the Security Council in its resolution 237 (1967); the time for the urgent implementation of these resolutions is long overdue.

67. Without prejudice to the right of all Palestinians to return to their homes, lands and property, the Committee considers that the programme of implementation, of the exercise of this right may be carried out in two phases:

Phase one

68. The first phase involves the return to their homes of the Palestinians displaced as a result of the war of June 1967. The Committee recommends that:

- (i) The Security Council should request the immediate implementation of its resolution 237 (1967) and that such implementation should not be related to any other condition;
- (ii) The resources of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and/or of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, suitably financed and mandated, may be employed to assist in the solution of any logistical problems involved in the resettlement of those returning to their homes. These agencies could also assist, in co-operation with the host countries and the Palestine Liberation Organization, in the identification of the displaced Palestinians.

Phase two

69. The second phase deals with the return to their homes of the Palestinians displaced between 1948 and 1967. The Committee recommends that:

- (i) While the first phase is being implemented, the United Nations in co-operation with the States directly involved, and the Palestine Liberation Organization as the interim representative of the Palestinian entity, should proceed to make the necessary arrangements to enable Palestinians displaced between 1948 and 1967 to exercise their right to return to their homes and property, in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions, particularly General Assembly resolution 194 (III);
- (ii) Palestinians not choosing to return to their homes should be paid just and equitable compensation as provided for in resolution 194 (III).

III. THE RIGHT TO SELF-DETERMINATION, NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE AND SOVEREIGNTY

70. The Palestinian people has the inherent right to self-determination, national independence and sovereignty in Palestine. The Committee considers that the evacuation of the territories occupied by force and in violation of the principles

of the Charter and relevant resolutions of the United Nations is a conditio sine qua non for the exercise by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights of Palestinians to their homes and property and with the establishment of an independent Palestinian entity, the Palestinian people will be able to exercise its rights to self-determination and to decide its form of government without external interference.

71. The Committee also feels that the United Nations has an historical duty and responsibility to render all assistance necessary to promote the economic development and prosperity of the Palestinian entity.

72. To these ends, the Committee recommends that:

(a) A time-table should be established by the Security Council for the complete withdrawal by Israeli occupation forces from those areas occupied in 1967; such withdrawal should be completed no later than 1 June 1977;

(b) The Security Council may need to provide temporary peace-keeping forces in order to facilitate the process of withdrawal;

(c) Israel should be requested by the Security Council to desist from the establishment of new settlements and to withdraw during this period from settlements established since 1967 in the occupied territories. Arab property and all essential services in these areas should be maintained intact;

(d) Israel should also be requested to abide scrupulously by the provisions of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, and to declare, pending its speedy withdrawal from these territories, its recognition of the applicability of that Convention;

(e) The evacuated territories, with all property and services intact, should be taken over by the United Nations, which with the co-operation of the League of Arab States, will subsequently hand over these evacuated areas to the Palestine Liberation Organization as the representative of the Palestinian people;

(f) The United Nations should, if necessary, assist in establishing communications between Gaza and the West Bank;

(g) As soon as the independent Palestinian entity has been established, the United Nations, in co-operation with the States directly involved and the Palestinian entity, should, taking into account General Assembly resolution 3375 (XXX), make further arrangements for the full implementation of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, the resolution of outstanding problems and the establishment of a just and lasting peace in the region, in accordance with all relevant United Nations resolutions;

(h) The United Nations should provide the economic and technical assistance necessary for the consolidation of the Palestinian entity.

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REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE EXERCISE OF THE
INALIENABLE RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE

Corrigendum

1. Page iv, line 2

For 22 September 1977 read 22 September 1978

2. Page 5, paragraph 19, line 2

For 1977 read 1978



REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE EXERCISE OF THE
INALIENABLE RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE

Corrigendum

Page iv, line 2

For 22 September 1977 read 22 September 1978

**REPORT
OF THE
COMMITTEE ON THE EXERCISE OF
THE INALIENABLE RIGHTS
OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE**

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

OFFICIAL RECORDS: THIRTY-FOURTH SESSION

SUPPLEMENT No. 35 (A/34/35)



UNITED NATIONS

New York, 1979

NOTE

Symbols of United Nations documents are composed of capital letters combined with figures. Mention of such a symbol indicates a reference to a United Nations document.

CONTENTS

	<u>Paragraphs</u>	<u>Page</u>
LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL		iv
I. INTRODUCTION	1 - 4	1
II. MANDATE OF THE COMMITTEE	5 - 6	1
III. ORGANIZATION OF WORK	7 - 10	3
A. Election of officers	7	3
B. Participation in the work of the Committee	8 - 9	3
C. Establishment of a Task Force	10	3
IV. ACTION TAKEN BY THE COMMITTEE	11 - 51	3
A. Action taken in accordance with paragraph 9 of General Assembly resolution 33/28 A	11 - 17	3
B. Action taken in accordance with paragraphs 2 and 3 of General Assembly resolution 33/28 B	18 - 44	5
C. Action taken in accordance with paragraphs 1 (a) and 1 (c) of General Assembly resolution 32/40 B	45 - 51	10
V. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COMMITTEE	52 - 55	11

ANNEX

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COMMITTEE ENDORSED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AT ITS THIRTY-FIRST SESSION	12
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LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

/Original: French/
/17 October 1979/

Sir,

I have the honour to transmit to you herewith the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for submission to the General Assembly in accordance with paragraph 3 of resolution 33/28 B.

Accept, Sir, the assurances of my highest consideration.

(Signed) Médoune FALL
Chairman of the Committee on the
Exercise of the Inalienable Rights
of the Palestinian People

His Excellency Mr. Kurt Waldheim
Secretary-General of the United Nations

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, originally composed of 20 members and later enlarged to 23, 1/ was established by the General Assembly in resolution 3376 (XXX) on 10 November 1975. Its first report, 2/ submitted to the General Assembly at its thirty-first session, contained the recommendations of the Committee designed to enable the Palestinian people to exercise its inalienable rights as recognized and defined by the General Assembly.
2. The Committee's recommendations were first endorsed by the General Assembly at its thirty-first session as a basis for the solution of the question of Palestine.
3. In its subsequent reports to the General Assembly at its thirty-second 3/ and thirty-third 4/ sessions, the Committee retained its recommendations unchanged, and on each occasion they were again endorsed by the General Assembly which reviewed and renewed the mandate of the Committee.
4. The recommendations, however, have not yet been acted upon by the Security Council, and neither have they been implemented.

II. MANDATE OF THE COMMITTEE

5. The present Mandate of the Committee was specified in paragraph 9 of General Assembly resolution 33/28 A, paragraphs 2 and 3 of resolution 33/28 B, paragraph 2 of resolution 33/28 C, and paragraphs 1 (a) and 1 (c) of resolution 32/40 B.
6. These stated respectively that the General Assembly (a) authorized and requested the Committee, in the event that the Security Council failed to consider or to take a decision on the Committee's recommendations by 1 June 1979, to consider that situation and to make the suggestions it deemed appropriate; (b) requested the Committee to keep the situation relating to the question of Palestine under review and to report and make suggestions to the General Assembly or to the Security Council as may be appropriate; (c) authorized the Committee to continue to exert all efforts to promote the implementation of its recommendations, to send delegations or representatives to international conferences where such representation would be considered by it to be appropriate and to report thereon

1/ The Committee is composed of the following members: Afghanistan, Cuba, Cyprus, German Democratic Republic, Guinea, Guyana, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Laos, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mali, Malta, Nigeria, Pakistan, Romania, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic and Yugoslavia.

2/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-first Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/31/35).

3/ Ibid., Thirty-second Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/32/35).

4/ Ibid., Thirty-third Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/33/35 and Corr.1).

to the General Assembly at its thirty-fourth session and thereafter; (d) authorized the Committee to provide the necessary guidelines to the Special Unit on Palestinian Rights in preparing studies and publications; (e) the General Assembly requested that the Special Unit should organize, in consultation with the Committee, commencing in 1978, the annual observance of 29 November as the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

III. ORGANIZATION OF WORK

A. Election of officers

7. At its 36th meeting, on 16 February 1979, the Committee unanimously re-elected the following officers:

Chairman: Mr. Médoune Fall (Senegal)
Vice-Chairman: Mr. Raúl Roa Kouri (Cuba)
Mr. Mir Abdul Wahab Siddiq (Afghanistan)
Rapporteur: Mr. Victor J. Gauci (Malta)

At its 42nd meeting, the Committee unanimously elected Mr. Abdul Hadim Tabibi (Afghanistan) as Vice-Chairman in place of Mr. Mir Abdul Wahab Siddiq (Afghanistan) whose term of duty in New York had expired.

B. Participation in the work of the Committee

8. The Committee reconfirmed that those States Members of the United Nations and Permanent Observers to the United Nations which wished to participate in the work of the Committee as observers could do so, and it again welcomed in that capacity Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Mauritania, the Syrian Arab Republic, Viet Nam, the League of Arab States and the Palestine Liberation Organization, which continued in 1979 to participate in the work of the Committee.

9. At its request, Algeria also participated in the work of the Committee as an observer from 10 May 1979.

C. Re-establishment of the Task Force

10. The Committee once again unanimously decided that the Task Force which it had established in 1977 should continue to function in order to facilitate the work of the Committee by: (a) keeping up to date with events which affect the work of the Committee and suggesting action which the Committee could usefully undertake, and (b) assisting the Committee in any other specific assignment related to its work. The following were reappointed members of the Task Force: Malta (Chairman), Afghanistan, Cuba, Guinea, Guyana, India, Senegal, Tunisia and, as representatives of the people directly concerned, the Palestine Liberation Organization.

IV. ACTION TAKEN BY THE COMMITTEE

A. Efforts to promote the implementation of its recommendations in accordance with paragraph 9 of General Assembly resolution 33/28 A

11. The General Assembly, in paragraph 8 of its resolution 33/28 A, urged the Security Council once again to consider and to take as soon as possible a decision on the recommendations of the Committee endorsed by the General Assembly. In paragraph 9 of the same resolution the General Assembly authorized and requested the Committee, in the event that the Security Council failed to consider or to

take a decision on those recommendations by 1 June 1979, to consider that situation and to make the suggestions it deemed appropriate.

12. In accordance with this mandate, on 13 March 1979 the Chairman of the Committee addressed a letter (S/13164) to the President of the Security Council drawing his attention to paragraph 8 of General Assembly resolution 33/28 A. He also reiterated the fundamental principles which had guided the members of the Committee in formulating its recommendations. Those principles were:

(a) The question of Palestine is at the heart of the problem of the Middle East and no solution to that problem can be envisaged without taking into account the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people;

(b) The implementation of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people - of returning to their homes and property, of exercising their right of self-determination and independence and national sovereignty - will contribute to a final solution of the Middle East crisis,

(c) The participation of the Palestine Liberation Organization, the representative of the Palestinian people, on an equal footing with all other parties on the basis of General Assembly resolutions 3236 (XXIX) and 3375 (XXX) is indispensable to all efforts, deliberations and conferences on the Middle East which take place under the auspices of the United Nations;

(d) The inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force and the consequent obligation for Israel to withdraw completely and quickly from all territory so occupied.

13. The Chairman also conveyed the Committee's conviction that concrete action by the Security Council on the basis of the implementation of the Committee's recommendations would undoubtedly lead to the achievement of tangible progress towards the solution of the question of Palestine; the Chairman stressed that the need for such action had become increasingly urgent in view of the illegal measures recently taken by the Israeli Government for the establishment of additional settlements in the Occupied Arab Territories, whereby Israel continued its violation of United Nations resolutions and the Geneva Convention of 12 August 1949 relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War. 5/

14. Subsequently, since no action had been taken by the Security Council and the deadline of 1 June 1979 mentioned in the resolution was approaching, following a decision of the Committee in May 1979, its Acting Chairman initiated consultations with the President of the Security Council in order to urge early action by the Council.

15. As a result of these consultations, the President of the Security Council addressed a letter dated 24 May 1979 to the Chairman of the Committee advising him that members of the Security Council were following the matter with great attention and agreed to holding a meeting of the Council at an early date.

5/ United Nations, Treaty Series, vol. 75, No. 973, p. 287.

16. The Security Council considered the question of Palestine at its meetings on 29 June, 27 July, 23 and 24 August 1979. In the course of the discussion, statements were made, inter alia, by the Chairman, the Rapporteur and seven members of the Committee. At the end of the meeting of 24 August, the President announced that the Council would continue consideration of the item at a later date to be agreed on after consultations amongst the members of the Council. A draft resolution drawn up by the Committee as a preliminary step by the Security Council on the question of Palestine was presented in the Council by Senegal on behalf of the Committee and will be considered when the Council next meets on this item. It was considered appropriate not to press the resolution to a vote and to take the matter for consideration at the Sixth Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries in Havana, Cuba, in September 1979.

17. In the light of the decision by that Conference at Havana that an emergency special session of the United Nations General Assembly should be convened in the event that the Security Council failed to act because of lack of unanimity among the permanent members of the Council, and the fact that the Co-ordinating Bureau of the Non-Aligned Countries in New York had been entrusted with the task of acting in co-ordination with the Committee to call for such an emergency special session at the appropriate time, the Committee is of the view that, while keeping the situation in the Middle East as it relates to the question of Palestine under constant observation, it should await further developments on the question of Palestine in the Security Council and take note of views expressed at the thirty-fourth session of the General Assembly before making its suggestions for action to be taken under the terms of paragraph 9 of General Assembly resolution 33/28 A.

B. Action taken in accordance with the terms of paragraphs 2 and 3 of General Assembly resolution 33/28 B

1. Reaction to developments in the Occupied Territories

18. Referring to several press reports based on official documents of the United States Department of State which confirmed that cases of torture and inhuman treatment had occurred in the Occupied Territories, the Chairman of the Committee addressed a letter (A/34/83) on 9 February 1979 to the Secretary-General expressing concern over the recurrence of systematic repressive measures by the Israeli authorities against the Palestinian people in the Occupied Territories.

19. In the same letter the Chairman also expressed concern that the Government of Israel was continuing to establish new settlements in the Occupied Territories, and to enlarge existing settlements, in violation of United Nations resolutions, thereby aggravating an explosive situation and further complicating any prospects for settlement of the Middle East situation.

20. The Committee continued to keep the situation in the Occupied Territories under constant review and on three other occasions through its Chairman or Acting Chairman expressed (S/13291, A/34/238, S/13322 and A/34/258-S/13384) to the President of the Security Council and the Secretary-General its concern over the establishment by Israel of new settlements in the territories occupied in 1967, over the repressive measures taken against the Palestinian people in those territories, and over Israel's refusal to withdraw from those territories in violation of basic principles of international law, the United Nations Charter and General Assembly and Security Council resolutions.

21. In addition, on 2 March 1979 the Acting Chairman of the Committee addressed a letter (S/13132) to the President of the Security Council expressing the Committee's concern over reports of the Government of Israel's policy of systematic repression of Palestinian people in the Occupied Territories. He suggested that these practices be considered when the Security Council met, in response to the official request from Jordan, to consider the erosion of the status of Jerusalem due to the policies of the Israeli occupation authorities in the occupied Palestinian and other territories.

22. The Vice-Chairman of the Committee and several members participated in the discussion in the Security Council when this question was considered. The Committee noted with satisfaction that, at the end of the discussion, the Security Council adopted resolution 446 (1979) whereby it established a Commission of three members of the Security Council to examine the situation relating to settlements in the Arab territories occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem.

23. When that Commission was established, the Committee assured it of its fullest co-operation and assistance and on 30 April 1979 the Bureau of the Committee attended a meeting of the Commission at which the Chairman made known the Committee's views on action that might be taken by the Commission.

24. Among the Commission's findings was evidence that the Government of Israel was engaged in a wilful, systematic and large-scale process of establishing settlements in the Occupied Territories and that, in the implementation of this policy, it had shown disregard for basic human rights, including in particular the right of the refugees to return to their homeland.

25. The Commission also considered that the pattern of that policy was causing profound and irreversible changes of a geographical and demographic nature in those territories, including Jerusalem, and that those changes were of such a nature as to constitute a violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 12 August 1949 and of the relevant decisions adopted by the United Nations.

26. The Committee welcomed the report of the Commission (S/13450) when it was issued in July 1979. The Committee noted that the Commission had sought the co-operation of Israel in carrying out its mandate but, like the Committee, had met with the same attitude of non-co-operation.

27. The Committee also noted that, within the Commission's more limited terms of reference, its conclusions and recommendations bore out those of the Committee, and, in particular, confirmed the inalienable right of the Palestinians to return to their homeland.

28. The Committee further noted that - as it had always maintained, and as the Security Council had determined in resolution 446 (1979) - the Commission reaffirmed that "the policy and practices of Israel in establishing settlements in the Palestinian and other Arab territories occupied since 1967 have no legal validity and constitute a serious obstruction to achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East".

29. Participating in the Security Council's consideration of the report, the Acting Chairman of the Committee expressed the Committee's appreciation of the fact that the Commission created by the Security Council had obtained an understanding of the question which was identical to that of the Committee which had been created

by the General Assembly, and that the Commission's conclusions and recommendations - within the limits of its mandate - were fully in accord with the conclusions and recommendations of the Committee. He expressed the Committee's hope that the recommendations of the Commission would be endorsed by the Security Council as a first step towards the endorsement of the Committee's recommendations when those were later considered by the Council. He also stressed the fact that the Committee had in previous years often drawn the attention of the Security Council to Israel's continuous settlement policies, and that those policies were obstacles to peace which called for urgent action by the Security Council.

30. The Committee noted that the Security Council adopted resolution 452 (1979) by a vote of 14 in favour, none against and 1 abstention, thereby endorsing the recommendations of the Commission. On 1 August 1979, the Chairman of the Committee addressed letters (A/34/395-S/13482) to the President of the Security Council and to the Secretary-General expressing his deep concern at the fact that, in explaining the United States abstention in the vote on resolution 452 (1979) the representative of the United States of America had, at the 2159th meeting, declared that his delegation had abstained because "the resolution, like the recommendations of the Commission which this resolution accepts and incorporates goes beyond the question of settlements to deal with such matters as Jerusalem". The Chairman went on to express the Committee's concern that that statement could carry implications of Jerusalem and its environs being treated as distinct from Arab territories occupied by Israel since 1967, which would appear to constitute a divergence from the long-standing position of the United States of America. The Chairman stated also that such a development would have far-reaching repercussions and would be a matter of serious concern to the Committee.

31. In reviewing the situation in Jerusalem the Committee considered the steps being taken by the Government of Israel to have Jerusalem recognized as its capital. In this connexion, the Committee endorsed the decision taken by the Group of Arab States to oppose these Israeli moves. The Committee also noted that the Islamic Conference had set up a Special Committee to deal with the matter. The Committee also noted that the sixth Non-Aligned Summit meeting at Havana had appealed to members of the non-aligned movement to take firm measures, including severance of economic and diplomatic relations, against countries which, formally or by implication, recognized the City of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel.

32. On 19 September 1979, the Committee authorized its Chairman to address letters to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council and to issue a statement condemning Israel's most recent violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 when the Government of Israel rescinded a law which had hitherto prohibited Israeli citizens and organizations from purchasing land in the illegally occupied Arab territories. In his letters (A/34/492-S/13544) and in his statement issued as a press release, the Chairman expressed the Committee's serious concern over this latest evidence of Israel's determination to strengthen its illegal presence in the occupied Arab territories in flagrant violation of international law, world public opinion, the United Nations Charter and General Assembly and Security Council resolutions and the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949. He conveyed also the Committee's strong feeling that urgent action should be taken to arrest these developments and to secure Israel's early withdrawal from the occupied territories, since the continuation of these Israeli policies could only exacerbate tension in the area and endanger international peace and security.

2. Review of events relating to the Middle East

33. In reviewing events which had taken place on the Middle East question, the Committee felt that it should recall once more the detailed and phased recommendations which it had made on the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, which the General Assembly had endorsed at its last three sessions as a basis for the solution of the question of Palestine.

34. The Committee deems it necessary to stress once again in particular that the participation of the Palestine Liberation Organization, the representative of the Palestinian people, is indispensable to a just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine, which is at the heart of the Middle East conflict. In this connexion, the Committee noted that one of the important developments in the area, the signing of a Peace Treaty between Egypt and Israel, had been concluded and outside the framework of the United Nations, but that the Committee's mandate included the right to pin-point those elements which should form the basis for the exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. Accordingly, on 29 March 1979 the Committee authorized its Chairman to convey to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council its views on recent developments pertaining to the Middle East.

35. In his letters (A/34/155-S/13210) the Chairman recalled the principles on which the Committee's recommendations were based, and conveyed the Committee's regrets that these principles which had been endorsed by the General Assembly, had not been taken into account in recent negotiations. He conveyed also the Committee's concern at recent moves, the consequences of which were hardly favourable for the implementation of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, or addressed themselves in a sufficiently concrete way to the Palestinian problem which is acknowledged by the United Nations as the core of the Middle East conflict.

3. Action taken by other organizations

36. The Committee was informed that its Chairman had participated in the Islamic Conference held in Fez, Morocco, from 8 to 12 May 1979 and that several resolutions adopted by that conference were relevant to the Committee's work. It was observed that the Organization of African Unity, at its Summit Meeting in Monrovia, Liberia, from 17 to 20 July 1979, had reviewed its stand on the Palestinian question. It had condemned all partial agreements and separate treaties which constituted a flagrant violation of the rights of the Palestinian people and the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and of the Organization of African Unity.

37. It was observed further that the Heads of Government of Commonwealth countries at their meeting held at Lusaka from 1 to 7 August 1979, had emphasized that a just and permanent peace in the Middle East could only be achieved on the basis of a fully comprehensive solution which upheld the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, including their right to a homeland. At that meeting, the Commonwealth members of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People had drawn particular attention to the Committee's recommendations, and most Heads of Government had recognized that the Palestine Liberation Organization was the only legitimate representative of the Palestinian people struggling justifiably for an independent Palestinian State.

38. The Committee also took note of the fact that the Commission on Human Rights had, as one of its first acts at its thirty-fifth session in February 1979, sent a telegram to the Government of Israel expressing its deep concern about the systematic torture practised by Israel against Palestinian detainees and about the policies of repression and collective punishment pursued by the Israeli Occupation Forces against the Palestinian people in Palestine and in the Occupied Arab Territories. It further called upon the Government of Israel to cease forthwith these practices which were in violation of the Geneva Convention of 1949. The Committee noted also that the Commission had adopted resolutions condemning these Israeli policies and practices and that the Economic and Social Council had subsequently, on 10 May 1979, adopted a resolution commending the Commission on Human Rights for its vigilance in this regard and requesting it to pursue its efforts and to continue to take appropriate measures.

39. The Committee welcomed the fact that the Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries held at Havana from 3 to 7 September 1979 had expressed its appreciation of the Committee's work as a positive contribution to the search for a just solution to the Palestinian problem, and had reaffirmed its support for the decisions and proposals of the Committee.

40. That Conference had also expressed its regret that the Security Council had not yet taken any decision on the Committee's recommendations endorsed by the General Assembly and had reiterated its request to the Security Council to study the recommendations and adopt them. As stated in paragraph 17 above, the Conference had entrusted its Co-ordinating Bureau in New York, acting in co-ordination with the Committee, to call for an emergency special session of the General Assembly at the appropriate time if the Security Council failed to act on the implementation of the Palestinian people's inalienable national rights because of a lack of unanimity among the permanent members of the Council.

4. Attendance at Conferences

41. In accordance with paragraph 3 of resolution 33/28 B which, inter alia, authorized the Committee to seat delegations or representatives to international conferences where such representation would be considered appropriate, the Committee decided to accept invitations and to send representatives to several important conferences during 1979.

42. The Committee was represented at a seminar convened by the Finnish-Arab Friendship Society in Helsinki on 30 January 1979; at a conference organized by the World Peace Council's Presidential Committee to celebrate the 30th Anniversary of the International Peace Movement and the foundation of the World Peace Council, from 25 to 27 April 1979 in Prague; at an international conference of Solidarity with the Palestinian People organized by the World Peace Council in Basel, Switzerland, from 4 to 6 May 1979; at a conference sponsored by the Palestine Human Rights Campaign in Chicago, United States of America, from 18 to 20 May 1979; at a symposium on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms in the Arab World organized by the Union of Arab Jurists in Baghdad from 18 to 21 May 1979; at the Ministerial Meeting of the Co-ordinating Bureau of the Non-Aligned Countries held in Colombo from 4 to 9 June 1979; at the meeting of Heads of State of the Non-Aligned Countries held at Havana from 29 August to 7 September 1979; at the Conference on Palestine Human Rights and Peace organized by the Palestine Human Rights Campaign in Washington, D.C., from 21 to 25 September 1979, and at the Conference on National

Rights of the Palestinian People in the Middle East organized by the Colloquio Internazionale di Roma from 24 to 26 September 1979 in Rome.

43. The Committee was of the view that such attendance was of extreme importance in furthering the aims and objectives of the Committee and fulfilling its mandate. On every occasion the Committee's representatives found evidence of a considerable understanding of and sympathy for the problem of the Palestinian people as well as an interest in the work of the Committee and in the United Nations action on the question. At each meeting copies of the studies prepared by the Special Unit on Palestinian Rights were widely distributed.

44. Every opportunity was also taken by members of the Committee, particularly the members of its Bureau to make known the work of the Committee and its recommendations at other international conferences in which they participated.

C. Action taken in accordance with paragraphs 1 (a) and 1 (c) of General Assembly resolution 32/40 B

45. In paragraph 1 (a) of resolution 32/40 B, the General Assembly authorized the Committee to provide the necessary guidelines to the Special Unit on Palestinian Rights in preparing its publications. In paragraph 2 of resolution 33/28 C, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to ensure that the Special Unit continued to discharge its tasks in consultation with and under the guidance of the Committee.

46. In carrying out this mandate the Committee suggested to the Special Unit several themes on which it might prepare pamphlets during 1979.

47. The Committee reviewed the bulletins issued periodically by the Special Unit on Palestinian Rights and suggested that these could contain an element of editorial comment introducing the events reported on in those bulletins.

48. The Committee also noted that the studies and bulletins prepared by the Special Unit were receiving the widest possible dissemination.

49. The Committee expected that the film, which the Department of Public Information had commenced preparing in 1978, would be ready for screening on 29 November 1979, when the United Nations commemorated the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

50. The Committee observed that last year there had been an enthusiastic response from a large number of countries to the invitation to observe the International Day of Solidarity. Consequently it recommended that the observance of Solidarity Day should follow the same pattern as it did in 1978 and that the main feature in New York would be a special meeting of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People to which all Member States should be invited and at which statements would be made. Messages received from Heads of State or Governments would be read out at the meeting.

51. The Committee also requested the Secretary-General to draw the attention of all Member States, specialized agencies and other United Nations organs to the International Day of Solidarity, and to inquire in what manner they intended to commemorate the Day. The Secretary-General was requested further to instruct the

Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva once more to observe the commemoration of the Day. It is expected that many Governments, with the assistance of United Nations Information Centres, will observe the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People in an appropriate manner.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COMMITTEE

52. Keeping in mind the actual developments in the Middle East, the Committee unanimously decided once more to reiterate the validity of the recommendations it had made to the thirty-first session of the General Assembly, which the Assembly had repeatedly endorsed at its thirty-first, thirty-second and thirty-third sessions. These recommendations are again annexed to the present report, their validity undiminished by the passage of time, their urgency highlighted by events.

53. The Committee draws the attention of the General Assembly to its considered opinion that the Camp David Accords, to the extent that they did not take into account the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and were negotiated without the participation of the Palestine Liberation Organization, the representative of the Palestinian people, contravened paragraph 4 of General Assembly resolution 33/28 A of 7 December 1978.

54. The Committee considered that a continuation of its efforts would contribute to a wider understanding of the just cause of the Palestinian people, and hence to the implementation of its recommendations, especially if the various sectors of the United Nations system continued to act in concert to promote their implementation by peaceful means.

55. It also maintained its view that positive action by the Security Council on the recommendations endorsed by the General Assembly could create the necessary conditions for a just and lasting peace in the Middle East, especially since the recommendations contained are the basic principles relating to the problem of Palestine within the Middle East situation. As indicated in section IV.A of the present report, the recommendations and the urgency of their implementation had repeatedly been brought to the attention of the Security Council.

ANNEX*

Recommendations of the Committee endorsed by the
General Assembly at its thirty-first session

I. BASIC CONSIDERATIONS AND GUIDELINES

59. The question of Palestine is at the heart of the Middle East problem, and, consequently, the Committee stressed its belief that no solution in the Middle East can be envisaged which does not fully take into account the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people.

60. The legitimate and inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to return to their homes and property and to achieve self-determination, national independence and sovereignty are endorsed by the Committee in the conviction that the full implementation of these rights will contribute decisively to a comprehensive and final settlement of the Middle East crisis.

61. The participation of the Palestine Liberation Organization, the representative of the Palestinian people, on an equal footing with other parties, on the basis of General Assembly resolutions 3236 (XXIX) and 3375 (XXX) is indispensable in all efforts, deliberations and conferences on the Middle East which are held under the auspices of the United Nations.

62. The Committee recalls the fundamental principle of the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force and stresses the consequent obligation for complete and speedy evacuation of any territory so occupied.

63. The Committee considers that it is the duty and the responsibility of all concerned to enable the Palestinians to exercise their inalienable rights.

64. The Committee recommends an expanded and more influential role by the United Nations and its organs in promoting a just solution to the question of Palestine and in the implementation of such a solution. The Security Council, in particular, should take appropriate action to facilitate the exercise by the Palestinians of their right to return to their homes, lands and property. The Committee, furthermore, urges the Security Council to promote action towards a just solution, taking into account all the powers conferred on it by the Charter of the United Nations.

65. It is with this perspective in view and on the basis of the numerous resolutions of the United Nations, after due consideration of all the facts, proposals and suggestions advanced in the course of its deliberations, that the Committee submits its recommendations on the modalities for the implementation of the exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.

* Previously issued as annex I of Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-second Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/32/35).

II. THE RIGHT OF RETURN

66. The natural and inalienable right of Palestinians to return to their homes is recognized by resolution 194 (III), which the General Assembly has reaffirmed almost every year since its adoption. This right was also unanimously recognized by the Security Council in its resolution 237 (1967); the time for the urgent implementation of these resolutions is long overdue.

67. Without prejudice to the right of all Palestinians to return to their homes, lands and property, the Committee considers that the programme of implementation, of the exercise of this right may be carried out in two phases:

Phase one

68. The first phase involves the return to their homes of the Palestinians displaced as a result of the war of June 1967. The Committee recommends that:

- (i) The Security Council should request the immediate implementation of its resolution 237 (1967) and that such implementation should not be related to any other condition;
- (ii) The resources of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and/or of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, suitably financed and mandated, may be employed to assist in the solution of any logistical problems involved in the resettlement of those returning to their homes. These agencies could also assist, in co-operation with the host countries and the Palestine Liberation Organization, in the identification of the displaced Palestinians.

Phase two

69. The second phase deals with the return to their homes of the Palestinians displaced between 1948 and 1967. The Committee recommends that:

- (i) While the first phase is being implemented, the United Nations in co-operation with the States directly involved, and the Palestine Liberation Organization as the interim representative of the Palestinian entity, should proceed to make the necessary arrangements to enable Palestinians displaced between 1948 and 1967 to exercise their right to return to their homes and property, in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions, particularly General Assembly resolution 194 (III);
- (ii) Palestinians not choosing to return to their homes should be paid just and equitable compensation as provided for in resolution 194 (III).

III. THE RIGHT TO SELF-DETERMINATION, NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE AND SOVEREIGNTY

70. The Palestinian people has the inherent right to self-determination, national independence and sovereignty in Palestine. The Committee considers that the evacuation of the territories occupied by force and in violation of the principles

of the Charter and relevant resolutions of the United Nations is a conditio sine qua non for the exercise by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights of Palestinians to their homes and property and with the establishment of an independent Palestinian entity, the Palestinian people will be able to exercise its rights to self-determination and to decide its form of government without external interference.

71. The Committee also feels that the United Nations has an historical duty and responsibility to render all assistance necessary to promote the economic development and prosperity of the Palestinian entity.

72. To these ends, the Committee recommends that:

(a) A time-table should be established by the Security Council for the complete withdrawal by Israeli occupation forces from those areas occupied in 1967; such withdrawal should be completed no later than 1 June 1977;

(b) The Security Council may need to provide temporary peace-keeping forces in order to facilitate the process of withdrawal;

(c) Israel should be requested by the Security Council to desist from the establishment of new settlements and to withdraw during this period from settlements established since 1967 in the occupied territories. Arab property and all essential services in these areas should be maintained intact;

(d) Israel should also be requested to abide scrupulously by the provisions of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, and to declare, pending its speedy withdrawal from these territories, its recognition of the applicability of that Convention;

(e) The evacuated territories, with all property and services intact, should be taken over by the United Nations, which with the co-operation of the League of Arab States, will subsequently hand over these evacuated areas to the Palestine Liberation Organization as the representative of the Palestinian people;

(f) The United Nations should, if necessary, assist in establishing communications between Gaza and the West Bank;

(g) As soon as the independent Palestinian entity has been established, the United Nations, in co-operation with the States directly involved and the Palestinian entity, should, taking into account General Assembly resolution 3375 (XXX), make further arrangements for the full implementation of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, the resolution of outstanding problems and the establishment of a just and lasting peace in the region, in accordance with all relevant United Nations resolutions;

(h) The United Nations should provide the economic and technical assistance necessary for the consolidation of the Palestinian entity.

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**REPORT
OF THE
COMMITTEE ON THE EXERCISE OF
THE INALIENABLE RIGHTS
OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE**

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

OFFICIAL RECORDS: THIRTY-FIFTH SESSION

SUPPLEMENT No. 35 (A/35/35)



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UNITED NATIONS

New York, 1980

NOTE

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CONTENTS

	<u>Paragraphs</u>	<u>Page</u>
LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL		iv
I. INTRODUCTION	1 - 4	1
II. MANDATE OF THE COMMITTEE	5 - 6	2
III. ORGANIZATION OF WORK	7 - 11	3
A. Election of officers	7 - 8	3
B. Participation in the work of the Committee	9 - 10	3
C. Re-establishment of the Working Group (Task Force).	11	3
IV. ACTION TAKEN BY THE COMMITTEE	12 - 44	4
A. Action taken in accordance with paragraph 8 of General Assembly resolution 34/65 A	12 - 19	4
B. Action taken in accordance with paragraphs 2 and 3 of General Assembly resolution 34/65 C	20 - 37	6
C. Action taken in accordance with paragraphs 2 and 7 of General Assembly resolution 34/65 D	38 - 44	10
V. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COMMITTEE	45 - 48	12

ANNEX

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COMMITTEE ENDORSED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AT ITS THIRTY-FIRST SESSION	13
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LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

22 September 1980

Sir,

I have the honour to transmit to you herewith the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for submission to the General Assembly in accordance with paragraph 3 of resolution 34/65 C.

Accept, Sir, the assurances of my highest consideration.

(Signed) Falilou KANE
Chairman of the Committee on the
Exercise of the Inalienable Rights
of the Palestinian People

His Excellency
Mr. Kurt Waldheim
Secretary-General of the United Nations

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, originally composed of 20 members and later enlarged to 23, 1/ was established by the General Assembly in resolution 3376 (XXX) on 10 November 1975. Its first report, 2/ submitted to the General Assembly at its thirty-first session, contained the recommendations of the Committee designed to enable the Palestinian people to exercise its inalienable rights as recognized and defined by the General Assembly.
2. The Committee's recommendations were first endorsed by the General Assembly at its thirty-first session as a basis for the solution of the question of Palestine.
3. In its subsequent reports to the General Assembly at its thirty-second 3/ thirty-third 4/ and thirty-fourth sessions, 5/ the Committee retained its recommendations unchanged, and on each occasion they were again endorsed by the General Assembly which reviewed and renewed the mandate of the Committee.
4. Despite frequent urgings by the Committee, its recommendations have not yet been acted upon by the Security Council, and neither have they been implemented. The Committee consequently recommended, in terms of its mandate, the convening of an emergency special session of the General Assembly to consider the matter. This was held from 22 to 29 July 1980. By a vote of 112 to 7, with 24 abstentions, the General Assembly, at its seventh emergency special session, requested and authorized the Secretary-General, in consultation, as appropriate, with the Committee, to take the necessary measures towards the implementation of the recommendations as a basis for the solution of the question of Palestine (resolution ES-7/2 of 29 July 1980).

1/ The Committee is composed of the following members: Afghanistan, Cuba, Cyprus, German Democratic Republic, Guinea, Guyana, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mali, Malta, Nigeria, Pakistan, Romania, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic and Yugoslavia.

2/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-first Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/31/35).

3/ Ibid., Thirty-second Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/32/35).

4/ Ibid., Thirty-third Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/33/35 and Corr.1).

5/ Ibid., Thirty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/34/35 and Corr.1).

II. MANDATE OF THE COMMITTEE

5. The present mandate of the Committee was specified in paragraph 8 of General Assembly resolution 34/65 A, paragraphs 2 and 3 of resolution 34/65 C paragraphs 2 and 7 of resolution 34/65 D. By those paragraphs the General Assembly:

(a) Authorized and requested the Committee, in the event that the Security Council failed to consider or to take a decision on the Committee's recommendations by 31 March 1980, to consider that situation and to make the suggestions it deemed appropriate;

(b) Requested the Committee to keep the situation relating to the question of Palestine under review and to report and make suggestions to the General Assembly or to the Security Council as may be appropriate;

(c) Authorized the Committee to continue to exert all efforts to promote the implementation of its recommendations, to send delegations or representatives to international conferences where such representation would be considered by it to be appropriate and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its thirty-fifth session and thereafter,

(d) Requested that the Special Unit should, in consultation with the Committee, discharge the tasks detailed in paragraph 1 of General Assembly resolution 32/40 B and undertake an expanded programme of work including, inter alia, the organization of seminars and the monitoring of political and other relevant developments affecting the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.

6. At the seventh emergency special session, in its resolution ES-7/3, the General Assembly further requested the Committee to study thoroughly the reasons for the refusal of Israel to comply with the relevant United Nations resolutions, particularly resolution 31/20 of 24 November 1976, in which the General Assembly endorsed the recommendations of the Committee and the numerous resolutions demanding the withdrawal of Israel from the occupied Palestinian and other Arab territories, including Jerusalem, and to submit the study to the Assembly.

III. ORGANIZATION OF WORK

A. Election of officers

7. In the months of January and February 1980 the Committee retained its bureau from 1979 on a provisional basis until the new officers were elected.

8. At its 49th meeting, on 12 March 1980, the Committee unanimously elected the following officers:

Chairman: Mr. Falilou Kane (Senegal)
Vice-Chairman: Mr. Raúl Roa Kouri (Cuba)
Mr. Farid Zarif (Afghanistan)
Rapporteur: Mr. Victor J. Gauci (Malta)

B. Participation in the work of the Committee

9. The Committee reconfirmed that those States Members of the United Nations and Permanent Observers to the United Nations which wished to participate in the work of the Committee as observers could do so, and it again welcomed in that capacity Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Mauritania, the Syrian Arab Republic, Viet Nam, the League of Arab States, and the Palestine Liberation Organization, which continued in 1980 to participate in the work of the Committee.

10. At its request, the Organization of the Islamic Conference also participated in the work of the Committee as an observer from 12 March 1980.

C. Re-establishment of the Working Group (Task Force)

11. The Committee once again unanimously decided that the Working Group (Task Force) which it had established in 1977 should continue to function in order to facilitate the work of the Committee by: (a) keeping up to date with events which affect the work of the Committee and suggesting action which the Committee could usefully undertake, and (b) assisting the Committee in any other specific assignment related to its work. The following were reappointed members of the Working Group: Malta (Chairman), Afghanistan, Cuba, Guinea, Guyana, India, Senegal, Tunisia and, as representatives of the people directly concerned, the Palestine Liberation Organization. In addition, the German Democratic Republic was co-opted to serve on the Working Group during the period of its term of membership of the Security Council.

IV. ACTION TAKEN BY THE COMMITTEE

A. Action taken in accordance with paragraph 8 of General Assembly resolution 34/65 A

12. The General Assembly, in paragraph 7 of its resolution 34/65 A, urged the Security Council once again to consider and to take as soon as possible a decision on the recommendations of the Committee endorsed by the General Assembly. In paragraph 8 of the same resolution, the General Assembly authorized and requested the Committee, in the event that the Security Council failed to consider or to take a decision on those recommendations by 31 March 1980, to consider that situation and to make the suggestions it deemed appropriate.

13. In accordance with this mandate, on 6 March 1980 the Acting Chairman of the Committee addressed a letter (S/13832) to the President of the Security Council drawing his attention to paragraph 7 of General Assembly resolution 34/65 A. He also reiterated the fundamental principles which had guided the members of the Committee in formulating its recommendations. Those principles were:

(a) The question of Palestine is at the heart of the problem of the Middle East and no solution to that problem can be envisaged without taking into account the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people;

(b) The implementation of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people - of returning to their homes and property, of exercising their right of self-determination and independence and national sovereignty - will contribute to a final solution of the Middle East crisis;

(c) The participation of the Palestine Liberation Organization, the representative of the Palestinian people, on an equal footing with all other parties on the basis of General Assembly resolutions 3236 (XXXIX) of 22 November 1974 and 3375 (XXX) of 10 November 1975 is indispensable to all efforts, deliberations and conferences on the Middle East which take place under the auspices of the United Nations;

(d) The inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force and the consequent obligation for Israel to withdraw completely and speedily from all territory so occupied.

14. The Acting Chairman also conveyed the Committee's conviction that appropriate action by the Security Council on the basis of the implementation of the Committee's recommendations would undoubtedly lead to the achievement of tangible progress towards the solution of the question of Palestine. He pointed out that specific action by the Security Council should not be delayed further, especially on account of the increased intransigence by Israel in establishing and strengthening its settlements in the illegally occupied Arab territories. The Acting Chairman also stressed that in the past year Israel had blatantly defied Security Council resolutions 446 (1979) and 452 (1979) and had only a few days previously openly made it evident that it had no intention of paying any heed to resolution 465 (1980) which had just been passed unanimously by the Security Council.

15. The Acting Chairman also recalled that the Security Council had discussed the Committee's recommendations during June and August 1979 and that although a draft resolution (S/13514) had been presented, it had not been voted upon; in effect, therefore, the Security Council was still seized of the question and the Committee considered it important that the Security Council should take practical measures with a view to implementing the Committee's recommendations which were intended to restore to the Palestinian people their inalienable rights, the denial of which was the root of the Middle East problem.

16. On 24 March 1980, the Chairman of the Committee addressed another letter (S/13855) to the President of the Security Council, in which he pointed out that developments evolving in the occupied Palestinian and other occupied Arab territories, including Jerusalem, constituted continuing violations by Israel of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, and requested that since the date envisaged in paragraph 8 of General Assembly resolution 34/65 A was imminent, the Security Council should convene urgently to consider the recommendations of the Committee.

17. In response to these representations the Security Council considered the question of Palestine on 31 March and 3, 8, 9, 29 and 30 April. After a discussion in which, inter alia, the Chairman, the Rapporteur and seven members of the Committee participated, a draft resolution was presented to the Security Council by the representative of Tunisia, but was not adopted because of the negative vote of a permanent member.

18. Consequently, in accordance with the terms of paragraph 8 of resolution 34/65 A, the Committee considered the situation once more and recommended that the question of Palestine should be discussed by the General Assembly at an emergency special session.

19. Accordingly, at the request of Senegal, the seventh emergency special session of the General Assembly met from 22 to 29 July 1980 to consider the question of Palestine. The high level of attendance underlined the importance that most Member States attached to the session. The Committee noted that over 100 Member States had participated in the debate, and that the overwhelming majority had supported the Committee's position regarding the implementation of its recommendations and insisted on the restoration of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. The General Assembly adopted a draft resolution prepared by the Committee. By that resolution the General Assembly once more endorsed the Committee's recommendations and fixed the date of 15 November 1980 as a deadline for withdrawal by Israel from the occupied Arab territories. Of special satisfaction to the Committee was the fact that on this occasion several Western European member States had in their interventions censured Israel's settlement policy and its attempts to make Jerusalem its permanent capital; and they had also pointed out that the Palestine Liberation Organization should participate in any negotiations concerning the West Bank and Gaza if such negotiations were to be of any practical use. The Committee regarded as noteworthy the fact that many of these countries which had previously voted against the endorsement of the Committee's recommendations had now not done so but abstained in the vote. The Committee expresses its satisfaction with the results of the emergency special session of the General Assembly and considers it to have been most useful in highlighting the isolation of Israel in its defiant attitude towards world public opinion and the application of international law.

B. Action taken in accordance with paragraphs 2 and 3 of General Assembly resolution 34/65 C

1. Reaction to developments in the occupied territories

20. The Committee closely followed developments in the occupied territories and, on several occasions, authorized its Chairman to communicate its concern to the Secretary-General and to the President of the Security Council at the Israeli Government's practices and policies in those territories.

21. Accordingly, on every occasion on which the Government of Israel took any action which, in the opinion of the Committee, was in violation of international law and General Assembly and Security Council resolutions, these were invariably brought to the attention of the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council by the Chairman. These letters dealt with illegal Israeli settlements in the occupied territories, the expropriation by the Israeli authorities of vast areas of Arab owned land, restrictions on educational establishments, the harsh and inhuman treatment of Arab prisoners by the Israeli authorities, the expulsion of the Mayors of Halhoul and Al Khalil (Hebron) and the Sharia Judge of Al Khalil (Hebron), and the assassination attempts on the lives of the Mayors of Nablus, Ramallah and Al Bireh, three cities in the West Bank.

22. The Chairman, on behalf of the Committee, repeatedly conveyed the Committee's grave concern at these steps by Israel which were undoubtedly aimed at strengthening its annexation of the occupied Arab territories in flagrant violation of international law, world public opinion and General Assembly and Security Council resolutions; he pointed out that Israel's protestations of being a peace loving member of the United Nations, dedicated to finding a comprehensive solution to the problem of the Middle East had no basis in good faith. He also stressed that effective action needed to be taken by the Security Council to convince Israel of the danger of its policies and the necessity for its immediate and complete withdrawal from the illegally occupied territories since its continued presence there and its series of defiant acts were a serious obstruction to achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East.

23. In addition the Committee, through its Chairman, participated in the meetings of the Security Council to examine the situation relating to settlements in the Palestinian and other Arab territories occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem. The Committee also intervened in the Council's meetings concerning other developments in the area and particularly on Jerusalem.

24. On the unanimous adoption by the Council of resolution 465 (1980) accepting the conclusions and recommendations contained in the second report of the Commission of the Security Council established under resolution 446 (1979), the Chairman conveyed to the President of the Security Council the Committee's satisfaction at the adoption of that resolution; he advised that the Committee considered it particularly auspicious that the Council was unanimous in determining that all measures taken by Israel to change the physical character, demographic composition, institutional structure or status of the Palestinian and other Arab territories occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, had no legal validity, and that the Committee took special note of the Council's reference to the specific status of Jerusalem.

25. He also conveyed the Committee's gratification that the Council was unanimous in strongly deploring the Israeli Government's policy of establishing settlements in the occupied territories, including Jerusalem, as a policy which constituted a flagrant violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 and also as a serious obstruction to a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East. The Committee noted with appreciation the call on the Israeli Government to dismantle the existing settlements and to cease on an urgent basis the establishment of such settlements.

26. In a separate letter to the President of the Security Council on the same day, the Chairman conveyed the Committee's deep concern at the possible implications of the statement made by the President of the United States of America regarding Security Council resolution 465 (1980). While emphasizing that the Committee had no intention of questioning the right of any Government to formulate its foreign policy, the Chairman drew the attention of the Security Council to one particular statement which touched on a very important aspect of the Committee's mandate. The sentence in question read as follows: "As to Jerusalem, we strongly believe that Jerusalem should be undivided, with free access to the Holy Places for all faiths and that its status should be determined in the negotiations for a comprehensive peace settlement."

27. He pointed out that the Committee was concerned at the fact that this formulation could be interpreted as supporting Israel's insistence that the City of Jerusalem was indivisible only as long as it remained under Israeli domination and that the Committee believed that this proposition was in direct contradiction to resolution 242 (1967) which emphasized the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territories by war and called for the withdrawal of Israeli armed forces from the territories occupied in June 1967. The Committee, he stated, sincerely hoped that the United States statement was in no way designed to support the Israeli position.

28. He conveyed also the Committee's concern at the reference made in that statement to the status of Jerusalem as a matter of negotiation. In the Committee's view the Holy City of Jerusalem already had a very special and unique status for the three monotheistic religions. The only international definition of the status of Jerusalem was to be found in General Assembly resolution 181 (II) of 29 November 1947, which specified that the City of Jerusalem should be established as a corpus separatum under a special international régime administered by the United Nations. The Committee believed that it was only by means of an internationalized status of corpus separatum that free access to the Holy Places could be guaranteed to the followers of all religions, and hoped that the United States statement was not intended to prejudge that delicate issue. The Committee expressed its appreciation to those Governments which had decided to remove their embassies from Jerusalem as a reflection of their respect for international law.

29. Following expropriation by the Israeli authorities of vast areas of Arab owned land within a few days of the unanimous adoption by the Security Council of resolution 465 (1980), the Chairman conveyed the Committee's deep concern at these outrages committed by the Government of Israel which clearly proved that Israel had little intention of helping progress towards a peaceful settlement of the Middle East problem; he once again called for concrete and practical action by the Security Council.

2. Review of events relating to the Middle East

30. In reviewing events which have taken place on the Middle East question, the Committee recalled once more the detailed and phased recommendations which it had made on the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people which the General Assembly had repeatedly endorsed, most recently at its seventh emergency special session.

31. The Committee deems it necessary to stress once more that the participation of the Palestine Liberation Organization, the representative of the Palestinian people, is indispensable to a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine which is at the heart of the Middle East conflict. The Committee recalled that in resolution 34/65 B the General Assembly had noted with concern that the Camp David Accords had been concluded outside the framework of the United Nations and without the participation of the Palestine Liberation Organization, the representative of the Palestinian people; that the resolution had rejected those provisions of the Accords which ignored, infringed upon, violated or denied the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including the right of return, the right of self-determination and the right to national independence and sovereignty in Palestine, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, and which envisaged and condoned continued Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories occupied by Israel since 1967; that it strongly condemned all partial agreements and separate treaties which constitute a flagrant violation of the rights of the Palestinian people, the principle of the Charter and the resolutions adopted in the various international forums on the Palestinian issue, and declared that the Camp David Accords and other agreements had no validity in so far as they purport to determine the future of the Palestinian people and of the Palestinian territories occupied by Israel since 1967.

32. The Committee noted also that the General Assembly in its resolution ES-7/2, adopted at its seventh emergency special session, had reaffirmed the principles which had guided the Committee in formulating its recommendations.

3. Action taken by other organizations

33. The Committee followed with the greatest interest action taken during the year by other organizations on questions relevant to the work of the Committee. Among these were:

(a) The Commission on Human Rights which, at its thirty-sixth session held from 4 February to 14 March 1980, had adopted resolutions condemning Israeli policies and practices in the occupied Arab territories as well as administrative and legislative measures by the Israeli authorities to encourage, promote and expand the establishment of settlers' colonies in the occupied territories, which further demonstrate Israel's determination to annex those territories. The Commission also expressed its deep concern at the consequences of Israel's refusal to apply fully and effectively the Geneva Convention of 12 August 1949 relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War 6/ in all its provisions to all the Arab territories occupied by Israel since 1967, including Jerusalem.

6/ United Nations, Treaty Series, vol. 75, No. 973, p. 287.

(b) The Political Consultative Committee of the States Parties to the Warsaw Treaty which, in a declaration adopted on its meeting in Warsaw on 14 and 15 May 1980, stressed and reaffirmed the positive position of the countries concerned and which stated, inter alia, that a lasting peace in the Middle East could have been established long ago on the basis of an all-embracing Middle Eastern political settlement with the direct participation of all the parties concerned, including the Palestinian Arab people as embodied by its representative, the Palestine Liberation Organization, and of respect for the legitimate interests of all states and peoples of the Middle East, including Israel; such a settlement required the withdrawal of Israeli forces from all Arab territories occupied in 1967, the restoration of the right of the Arab people of Palestine to self-determination, including the establishment of its own independent State, the granting of the sovereignty and security of all States of the region; it requires also that no action should be taken which could make the attainment of those goals more difficult. The full text of the declaration is reproduced in document A/35/237-S/13948.

(c) The Islamic Conference, at an extraordinary session of its Foreign Ministers held at Islamabad, Pakistan, from 27 to 29 January 1980, at its eleventh Conference of Foreign Ministers held at Islamabad from 17 to 22 May, and at an extraordinary session of its Al Quds Committee held at Casablanca, Morocco, from 16 to 18 August, reaffirmed its stand on the question of Palestine in the final declarations and resolutions adopted. These declarations and resolutions are reproduced in documents A/35/109-S/13810, A/35/419-S/14129 and S/14169 respectively. It had also held a second extraordinary session of the Islamic Conference of Ministers of Foreign Affairs at Amman, Jordan, on 11 and 12 July, which was devoted exclusively to the question of Palestine. A resolution was adopted which, inter alia, considered the Camp David Accords and the Egyptian-Israeli Peace Treaty a conspiracy against the future of Jerusalem and of the other occupied Arab territories, which should be categorically rejected, and their repercussions and consequences withstood; the resolution refused to recognize separate and partial solutions of the Palestinian question. The Conference also called upon the General Assembly to consider, at its emergency special session devoted to Palestine, ways and means whereby to secure the implementation of its resolutions on the Palestinian question, including the imposition of sanctions, in accordance with Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter. These resolutions are reproduced in document A/35/384-S/14097.

(d) The meeting of Heads of States and Governments and the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the European Council in Venice, Italy, which, in its declaration of 13 June 1980, had detailed its position on the Middle East. The Committee regarded as specially significant that the Nine had taken a firm position on the question of Palestine and on the fact that the Palestinian people must be placed in a position to exercise fully their right to self-determination; that the Palestine Liberation Organization should be associated with the negotiations to that end; that Israel should put an end to the occupation of the territories which it has maintained since 1967; that Israeli settlements constituted a serious obstacle to peace in the Middle East and were illegal under international law and that the Nine would not accept any unilateral initiative designed to change the status of Jerusalem. The Committee considered this declaration to be an important advance on the part of the Nine towards an understanding of the question of Palestine as well as a major step towards a resolution of the problem.

(e) The Council of Ministers of the Organization of African Unity at its thirty-fifth ordinary session held at Freetown, Sierra Leone, from 18 to 28 June, adopted a resolution on the question of Palestine, in which it reaffirmed its stand on this question and its strong support to the Palestinian people led by its sole legitimate representative the Palestine Liberation Organization. The Ministers also condemned Israel's expansionist policies and all partial agreements and separate treaties which constitute a flagrant violation of the rights of the Palestinian people and of resolutions adopted in various international fora on the Palestine issue, and which prevent the realization of the Palestinian peoples' aspirations to return to their homeland, to self-determination and to exercise full sovereignty on their territories.

4. Attendance at conferences

34. In accordance with paragraph 3 of General Assembly resolution 34/65 C, which, inter alia, authorized the Committee to send delegations or representatives to international conferences where such representation would be considered appropriate, the Committee accepted several invitations in 1980.

35. The Committee was represented at the Islamic Conference in Islamabad, Pakistan, from 17 to 22 May 1980; at the Week of Solidarity with the Palestinian People organized by the Solidarity Committee of the German Democratic Republic in Berlin, from 2 to 8 June; and at a conference on "World Parliament of Peoples for Peace", organized by the World Peace Council, in Sofia, Bulgaria, from 23 to 27 September.

36. The Committee has also accepted an invitation by the International Progress Organization to attend a conference on "The legal aspects of the Palestine problem including, especially, the Question of Jerusalem", at Vienna, from 5 to 7 November 1980.

37. On each of these occasions representatives of the Committee took the opportunity to make known the work of the Committee and its recommendations and to discuss ways and means of promoting the implementation of those recommendations. There was conclusive evidence of considerable understanding of, and sympathy for, the problems of the Palestinian people as well as of interest in the work of the Committee and United Nations action on the question.

C. Action taken in accordance with paragraphs 2 and 7 of General Assembly resolution 34/65 D

38. The Committee wishes to stress the importance it attaches to the work being done by the Special Unit on Palestinian Rights and to the need to provide it with adequate resources to discharge its duties.

39. In paragraph 1 of resolution 34/65 D, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to redesignate the Special Unit as the Division for Palestinian Rights and to provide it with the resources necessary to discharge the increased responsibilities assigned to it by the Assembly. In paragraph 2 of that resolution, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to ensure that the Division for Palestinian Rights would continue to discharge its tasks in consultation with and under the guidance of the Committee.

40. The Committee noted that, pending the recommendations of an interdepartmental working group established by the Secretary-General, there would be no change in the designation of the Special Unit on Palestinian Rights. However, it noted with appreciation that immediate action had been taken to strengthen the Special Unit and that this had enabled the Unit to expand the scope of its work. While considering it too early to judge whether the Special Unit needed further strengthening in order to discharge the expanded programme of work that had been entrusted to it, and was likely to be entrusted to it in the future, the Committee decided that it should keep the matter under constant review.

41. In accordance with paragraph 2 of resolution 34/65 D, two seminars on Palestinian rights were organized by the Special Unit, the first in Arusha, United Republic of Tanzania from 14 to 18 July 1980 and the second at Vienna, from 25 to 29 August 1980. The Committee, which was represented at these seminars, considers them to have been most useful in bringing together academicians and others interested in the question of Palestine and enabling an exchange of views which would constitute a valuable contribution towards informing the international community of the various facets of the question. The papers presented at these seminars will be issued in due course.

42. The Committee also noted with satisfaction that the publications prepared by the Special Unit were, through the co-operation of the Department of Public Information, receiving the widest possible dissemination and that the film prepared in 1979 by the Department of Public Information in consultation with the Committee had been awarded a prize at the 22nd Annual American Film Festival sponsored by the Educational Film Library Association in New York in May 1980.

43. The Committee observed, once more, that there had been an enthusiastic response from a large number of countries to the invitation to observe the International Day of Solidarity in 1979. Consequently, it recommended that the observance of Solidarity Day should follow the same pattern in 1980 and that a special meeting of the Committee would be held to which all Member States would be invited and at which statements would be made and messages received from heads of State and Government read out. It is expected that many Governments, with the assistance of the United Nations Information Centres, will once more observe the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People in an appropriate manner.

44. The Committee was informed that, in accordance with the requests contained in paragraphs 5 and 7 of General Assembly resolution 34/65 D, action was being taken to issue a series of United Nations commemorative postage stamps in January 1981. A photographic display in the public areas of United Nations Headquarters, designed to keep visitors informed of the grave situation in Palestine, and of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, will also be exhibited as from November 1980.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COMMITTEE

45. The repeated endorsement of the recommendations of the Committee by the General Assembly at its thirty-first, thirty-second, thirty-third and thirty-fourth sessions and its seventh emergency special session, strengthens the Committee's conviction that positive action by the Security Council could create the necessary conditions for a just and lasting peace, since the recommendations contain the basic principles relating to the problem of Palestine within the Middle East situation. The Committee, consequently, unanimously decided once more to reiterate the validity of those recommendations which are again annexed to the present report.

46. The Committee once more urges the Security Council to take positive action on those recommendations which, with emphasis on the urgency of their implementation, have repeatedly been brought to the attention of the Security Council.

47. The Committee once more draws the attention of the General Assembly to its considered opinion that the Camp David Accords and the attendant negotiations which continue to take place contravene paragraph 4 of General Assembly resolution 33/28 A of 7 December 1978 and paragraphs 1 and 2 of General Assembly resolution 34/65 B of 29 November 1979, to the extent that they did not take into account the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and were negotiated without the participation of the Palestine Liberation Organization, the representative of the Palestinian people.

48. The Committee considers that a wider understanding of the just cause of the Palestinian people would be a major contribution towards a just solution of the question of Palestine and that it should continue in its efforts to achieve such a wider understanding so as to promote the implementation of its recommendations.

Recommendations of the Committee endorsed by the
General Assembly at its thirty-first session

I. BASIC CONSIDERATIONS AND GUIDELINES

59. The question of Palestine is at the heart of the Middle East problem, and, consequently, the Committee stressed its belief that no solution in the Middle East can be envisaged which does not fully take into account the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people.

60. The legitimate and inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to return to their homes and property and to achieve self-determination, national independence and sovereignty are endorsed by the Committee in the conviction that the full implementation of these rights will contribute decisively to a comprehensive and final settlement of the Middle East crisis.

61. The participation of the Palestine Liberation Organization, the representative of the Palestinian people, on an equal footing with other parties, on the basis of General Assembly resolutions 3236 (XXIX) and 3375 (XXX) is indispensable in all efforts, deliberations and conferences on the Middle East which are held under the auspices of the United Nations.

62. The Committee recalls the fundamental principle of the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force and stresses the consequent obligation for complete and speedy evacuation of any territory so occupied.

63. The Committee considers that it is the duty and the responsibility of all concerned to enable the Palestinians to exercise their inalienable rights.

64. The Committee recommends an expanded and more influential role by the United Nations and its organs in promoting a just solution to the question of Palestine and in the implementation of such a solution. The Security Council, in particular, should take appropriate action to facilitate the exercise by the Palestinians of their right to return to their homes, lands and property. The Committee, furthermore, urges the Security Council to promote action towards a just solution, taking into account all the powers conferred on it by the Charter of the United Nations.

65. It is with this perspective in view and on the basis of the numerous resolutions of the United Nations, after due consideration of all the facts, proposals and suggestions advanced in the course of its deliberations, that the Committee submits its recommendations on the modalities for the implementation of the exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.

* Previously issued as annex I of Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-second Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/32/35).

II. THE RIGHT OF RETURN

66. The natural and inalienable right of Palestinians to return to their homes is recognized by resolution 194 (III), which the General Assembly has reaffirmed almost every year since its adoption. This right was also unanimously recognized by the Security Council in its resolution 237 (1967); the time for the urgent implementation of these resolutions is long overdue.

67. Without prejudice to the right of all Palestinians to return to their homes, lands and property, the Committee considers that the programme of implementation, of the exercise of this right may be carried out in two phases:

Phase one

68. The first phase involves the return to their homes of the Palestinians displaced as a result of the war of June 1967. The Committee recommends that:

- (i) The Security Council should request the immediate implementation of its resolution 237 (1967) and that such implementation should not be related to any other condition;
- (ii) The resources of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and/or of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, suitably financed and mandated, may be employed to assist in the solution of any logistical problems involved in the resettlement of those returning to their homes. These agencies could also assist, in co-operation with the host countries and the Palestine Liberation Organization, in the identification of the displaced Palestinians.

Phase two

69. The second phase deals with the return to their homes of the Palestinians displaced between 1948 and 1967. The Committee recommends that:

- (i) While the first phase is being implemented, the United Nations in co-operation with the States directly involved, and the Palestine Liberation Organization as the interim representative of the Palestinian entity, should proceed to make the necessary arrangements to enable Palestinians displaced between 1948 and 1967 to exercise their right to return to their homes and property, in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions, particularly General Assembly resolution 194 (II);
- (ii) Palestinians not choosing to return to their homes should be paid just and equitable compensation as provided for in resolution 194 (III).

III. THE RIGHT TO SELF-DETERMINATION, NATIONAL
INDEPENDENCE AND SOVEREIGNTY

70. The Palestinian people has the inherent right to self-determination, national independence and sovereignty in Palestine. The Committee considers that the evacuation of the territories occupied by force and in violation of the principles of the Charter and relevant resolutions of the United Nations is a conditio sine qua non for the exercise by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights of Palestinians to their homes and property and with the establishment of an independent Palestinian entity, the Palestinian people will be able to exercise its rights to self-determination and to decide its form of government without external interference.

71. The Committee also feels that the United Nations has an historical duty and responsibility to render all assistance necessary to promote the economic development and prosperity of the Palestinian entity.

72. To these ends, the Committee recommends that:

(a) A time-table should be established by the Security Council for the complete withdrawal by Israeli occupation forces from those areas occupied in 1967; such withdrawal should be completed no later than 1 June 1977;

(b) The Security Council may need to provide temporary peace-keeping forces in order to facilitate the process of withdrawal;

(c) Israel should be requested by the Security Council to desist from the establishment of new settlements and to withdraw during this period from settlements established since 1967 in the occupied territories. Arab property and all essential services in these areas should be maintained intact;

(d) Israel should also be requested to abide scrupulously by the provisions of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, and to declare, pending its speedy withdrawal from these territories, its recognition of the applicability of that Convention;

(e) The evacuated territories, with all property and services intact, should be taken over by the United Nations, which with the co-operation of the League of Arab States, will subsequently hand over these evacuated areas to the Palestine Liberation Organization as the representative of the Palestinian people;

(f) The United Nations should, if necessary, assist in establishing communications between Gaza and the West Bank;

(g) As soon as the independent Palestinian entity has been established, the United Nations, in co-operation with the States directly involved and the Palestinian entity, should, taking into account General Assembly resolution 3375 (XXX), make further arrangements for the full implementation of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, the resolution of outstanding problems and the establishment of a just and lasting peace in the region, in accordance with all relevant United Nations resolutions;

(h) The United Nations should provide the economic and technical assistance necessary for the consolidation of the Palestinian entity.

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**REPORT
OF THE
COMMITTEE ON THE EXERCISE OF
THE INALIENABLE RIGHTS
OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE**

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

OFFICIAL RECORDS: THIRTY- SIXTH SESSION

SUPPLEMENT No. 35 (A/36/35)



UNITED NATIONS

New York, 1981

NOTE

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CONTENTS

	<u>Paragraphs</u>	<u>Page</u>
Letter of transmittal		iv
I. INTRODUCTION	1 - 4	1
II. MANDATE OF THE COMMITTEE	5	2
III. ORGANIZATION OF WORK	6 - 10	3
A. Election of officers	6 - 7	3
B. Participation in the work of the Committee	8 - 9	3
C. Re-establishment of the Working Group (Task Force)	10	3
IV. ACTION TAKEN BY THE COMMITTEE	11 - 48	5
A. Action taken in accordance with paragraphs 2 and 3 of General Assembly resolution 35/169 C	11 - 36	5
B. Action taken in accordance with paragraph 2 of General Assembly resolution ES-7/3	37 - 38	12
C. Action taken in accordance with paragraph 2 of General Assembly resolution 35/169 D	39 - 48	12
V. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COMMITTEE	49 - 53	15

ANNEXES

I. Recommendations of the Committee endorsed by the General Assembly at its thirty-first session		17
II. Report of the Third United Nations Seminar on the Question of Palestine, held at Colombo from 10 to 14 August 1981		20
III. Report of the Fourth United Nations Seminar on the Question of Palestine, held at Havana from 31 August to 4 September 1981		26

LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

15 September 1981

Sir,

I have the honour to enclose herewith the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for submission to the General Assembly in accordance with paragraph 3 of resolution 35/169 C.

Accept, Sir, the assurances of my highest consideration.

(Signed) Massamba SARRE
Chairman of the Committee
on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights
of the Palestinian People

His Excellency
Mr. Kurt Waldheim
Secretary-General of the United Nations

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, originally composed of 20 members and later enlarged to 23, 1/ was established by the General Assembly in resolution 3376 (XXX) on 10 November 1975. Its first report, 2/ submitted to the General Assembly at its thirty-first session, contained the recommendations of the Committee designed to enable the Palestinian people to exercise its inalienable rights as recognized and defined by the General Assembly.
2. The Committee's recommendations were first endorsed by the General Assembly at its thirty-first session as a basis for the solution of the question of Palestine.
3. In its subsequent reports to the General Assembly at its thirty-second, 3/ thirty-third, 4/ thirty-fourth 5/ and thirty-fifth 6/ sessions, the Committee retained its recommendations unchanged, and on each occasion they were again endorsed by the General Assembly which reviewed and renewed the mandate of the Committee after thorough consideration of its report.
4. Despite repeated urgings by the Committee, its recommendations have not yet been acted upon by the Security Council, nor have they been implemented. The situation in the occupied territories arising from Israeli practices remains extremely tense with frequent eruptions of violence and armed conflict. The Committee consequently recommended, in terms of its mandate, the convening of an emergency special session of the General Assembly to consider the matter. This was held from 22 to 29 July 1980. By 112 votes to 7, with 24 abstentions, the General Assembly, at its seventh emergency special session, requested and authorized the Secretary-General, in consultation, as appropriate, with the Committee, to take the necessary measures towards the implementation of the recommendations as a basis for the solution of the question of Palestine (resolution ES-7/2 of 29 July 1980).

1/ The Committee is composed of the following members: Afghanistan, Cuba, Cyprus, German Democratic Republic, Guinea, Guyana, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mali, Malta, Nigeria, Pakistan, Romania, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic and Yugoslavia.

2/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-first Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/31/35).

3/ Ibid., Thirty-second Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/32/35).

4/ Ibid., Thirty-third Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/33/35 and Corr.1).

5/ Ibid., Thirty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/34/35 and Corr.1).

6/ Ibid., Thirty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/35/35).

II. MANDATE OF THE COMMITTEE

5. The present mandate of the Committee was specified in paragraphs 2 and 3 of General Assembly resolution 35/169 C, paragraph 2 of resolution 35/169 D and paragraph 2 of resolution ES-7/3. By those paragraphs the General Assembly:

(a) Requested the Committee to keep the situation relating to the question of Palestine under review and to report and make suggestions to the General Assembly or to the Security Council as may be appropriate;

(b) Authorized the Committee to continue to exert all efforts to promote the implementation of its recommendations, to send delegations or representatives to international conferences where such representation would be considered by it to be appropriate and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its thirty-sixth session and thereafter;

(c) Requested the Secretary-General to ensure that the Special Unit would, in consultation with the Committee, continue to discharge the tasks detailed in paragraph 1 of General Assembly resolution 32/40 B and paragraph 2 (b) of resolution 34/65 D;

(d) Requested the Committee to study thoroughly the reasons for the refusal of Israel to comply with the relevant United Nations resolutions, particularly resolution 31/20 of 24 November 1976, in which the General Assembly endorsed the recommendations of the Committee and the numerous resolutions demanding the withdrawal of Israel from the occupied Palestinian and other Arab territories, including Jerusalem, and to submit the study to the Assembly.

III. ORGANIZATION OF WORK

A. Election of officers

6. From January to April 1981 the Committee retained its bureau from 1980 on a provisional basis until the new officers were elected.

7. At its 65th meeting, on 4 May 1981, the Committee elected the following officers:

<u>Chairman:</u>	Mr. Massamba SARRE (Senegal)
<u>Vice-Chairmen:</u>	Mr. Raúl ROA-KOURI (Cuba) Mr. Farid ZARIF (Afghanistan)
<u>Rapporteur:</u>	Mr. Victor J. GAUCI (Malta)

B. Participation in the work of the Committee

8. The Committee reconfirmed that those States Members of the United Nations and Permanent Observers to the United Nations which wished to participate in the work of the Committee as observers could do so, and it again welcomed in that capacity Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Mauritania, the Syrian Arab Republic, Viet Nam, the League of Arab States, the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the Palestine Liberation Organization, which continued in 1981 to participate in the work of the Committee.

9. In order to encourage the contribution of all sectors of opinion to its work, the Committee authorized the Chairman, as it had done in 1976 and 1977, to request the Secretary-General again to invite all States Members of the United Nations, members of the specialized agencies and regional intergovernmental organizations which were not already participating in the work of the Committee, to do so if they so wished, either as observers or by oral or written communication of any suggestions and proposals which they considered useful to the work of the Committee. This invitation was to be brought to the particular attention of all those States directly interested in the Middle East situation and the members of the Security Council, especially its permanent members. At their request, Morocco and the United Arab Emirates also participated in the work of the Committee as observers from 10 July 1981.

C. Re-establishment of the Working Group (Task Force)

10. The Committee once again unanimously decided that the Working Group (Task Force) which it had established in 1977 should continue to function in order to facilitate the work of the Committee by: (a) keeping up to date with events which affect the work of the Committee and suggesting action which the Committee could

usefully undertake, and (b) assisting the Committee in any other specific assignment related to its work. The following were reappointed members of the Working Group: Malta (Chairman), Afghanistan, Cuba, Guinea, Guyana, India, Senegal, Tunisia and, as representatives of the people directly concerned, the Palestine Liberation Organization. In addition, the German Democratic Republic continued to serve on the Working Group during the period of its term of membership of the Security Council.

IV. ACTION TAKEN BY THE COMMITTEE

A. Action taken in accordance with paragraphs 2 and 3 of General Assembly resolution 35/169 C

1. Reaction to developments in the occupied territories

11. The Committee closely followed developments in the occupied territories and on several occasions authorized its Chairman to communicate to the Secretary-General and to the President of the Security Council its concern at the Israeli Government's practices and policies in those territories.

12. On every occasion in which the Government of Israel took any action which, in the opinion of the Committee, was in violation of international law and General Assembly and Security Council resolutions, such actions were invariably brought to the attention of the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council. These letters dealt with illegal Israeli settlements in the occupied territories, the expropriation by the Israeli authorities of vast areas of Arab-owned land, and other violations of the rights of the Palestinian people.

13. The Committee regretted that the Commission established by the Security Council under resolution 446 (1979) to examine the situation relating to settlements in the Arab territories occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, had not been active during the year and expressed the hope that it would be duly reconstituted in order to enable it to continue the important work it had done in the past two years, always with the fullest co-operation of the Committee.

14. The Chairman drew the attention of the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council to the latest developments in the case of the Mayors of Hebron and Halhoul and the Sharia Judge of Hebron who were arbitrarily expelled by the Israeli military authorities from their respective cities, and requested that these eminent, elected leaders be permitted to return to their cities and to participate in the appeal of their cases. This letter, dated 29 September 1980, was circulated as document A/35/513-S/14209.

15. On behalf of the Committee, the Chairman subsequently again expressed his gravest concern at the further defiance by Israel of international opinion and of resolutions 468 (1980) and 469 (1980) of the Security Council concerning the case of the Mayors of Hebron and Halhoul. He noted that it behoved the international community to protest strongly against these illegal actions by the Israeli authorities and to insist that the Mayors should be permitted to return to their homes and families. The Chairman reiterated the Committee's position on this case in the strongest terms on 9 December 1980. The first letter dated 24 October 1980 was circulated as document A/35/565-S/14235; the second was circulated as document A/35/740-S/14292.

16. The Chairman, on behalf of the Committee, conveyed the Committee's grave concern at those steps by Israel which were undoubtedly aimed at strengthening its annexation of the occupied Palestinian territories in flagrant violation of international law, world public opinion and General Assembly and Security Council resolutions. The Chairman also stressed that further urgent action needed to be taken by the United Nations, and in particular by the Security Council, to call the attention of Israel to the danger inherent in such policies of annexation and the overdue necessity, for its immediate and complete withdrawal from the illegally occupied territories. This letter dated 27 February 1981 was circulated as document A/36/114-S/14389.

17. The Chairman also conveyed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council, a copy of a document by Mattityahu Drobles, of the World Zionist Organization, dated September 1980 and entitled "Settlement in Judea and Samaria - Strategy, policy and plans". He pointed out that according to reliable information, the report had been adopted by the Government of Israel in January 1981. Perusal of the document, he added, left no doubt of Israel's intention to annex the Arab territories it had illegally occupied, and that the "autonomy" that Israel envisages for those occupied territories would not apply to the territories but only to the "Arab population thereof". The Chairman stressed that the report spoke of lands being seized right away for the purpose of establishing settlements and cutting off the Arab population in order to make it difficult for it to form a territorial and political continuity. He also noted that plans appeared to be in hand to establish 12 to 15 additional settlements per annum over the next five years, with an intended increase of the Jewish population by 120,000 to 150,000. This letter dated 19 June 1981 was circulated as document A/36/341-S/14566.

18. The report on the Israeli Government's announced intention of building a canal across the Gaza strip linking the Dead Sea to the Mediterranean was of particular concern to the Committee. The Chairman, on behalf of the Committee, stressed that the project, fraught with consequences for the future and the status of the Gaza strip, constituted a violation of United Nations resolutions and a challenge to world public opinion. He also added that, on this occasion, Israel did not even claim the pretext as it had often done in the past, that it was undertaking the project for reasons of security. This letter dated 7 April 1981 was circulated as document A/36/177-S/14430.

19. By letter dated 8 May 1981, the Chairman also conveyed the serious concern of the Committee at the situation created by the acts of aggression committed by Israel in Lebanon. The attacks perpetrated on several occasions by Israel against Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon had caused the death of several Palestinian civilians. He added that it was vital to draw the attention of Israel to the dangers involved in the acts committed against the Palestinian people in Lebanon. This letter was circulated as document A/36/237-S/14477. Subsequent events led to the sending of a delegation to Beirut by the Committee which determined the extent of the damage and loss of life in the Lebanon. This is reflected in the delegation's report.

20. The Israeli ban on the channeling of Arab funds directed for assistance to Palestinians in the occupied Palestinian territories through the Joint Committee for the Occupied Territories in Amman was of particular concern to the Committee. The Acting Chairman consequently conveyed the Committee's serious concern and strong protest. This letter dated 24 August 1981 was circulated as document A/36/449-S/14641.

21. On 17 September 1981, at the request of the Committee, the Chairman conveyed to the Secretary-General and to the President of the Security Council the Committee's gravest concern at Israel's continuing excavation of a tunnel under the Al-Haram Al-Sharif which endangered historic Islamic buildings and had been the cause of clashes between Arabs and Jews in Jerusalem. He also conveyed the Committee's strong feeling that urgent action should be taken to impress on Israel the dangers inherent in the cause it was following without due regard for Arab religious sensitivities. The letter was circulated as document A/36/519-S/14695.

22. In response to the invitation of Mr. Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization, a delegation of the Committee visited Lebanon from 24 to 26 August 1981 to see at first hand the extent of the damage done by the Israeli air and sea attacks in the month of July 1981. The delegation noted that the damage caused was, as far as could be seen, confined to civilian targets and appeared to be aimed at terrorizing the civilian population and destroying its morale with little heed paid by Israel to the high cost in human lives in attempting to achieve this aim.

23. The delegation was received by Mr. Yasser Arafat who stressed that the Palestine Liberation Organization had the fullest confidence in the United Nations and wished to achieve its objectives within its framework. He also expressed appreciation for the work of the Committee and stressed the need for the Committee's assistance in finding a peaceful solution within the United Nations framework. The report of the delegation was circulated as document A/36/521-S/14698.

24. The Committee noted that a delegation of non-aligned Member States had also visited Lebanon at the invitation of Mr. Yasser Arafat and had arrived at conclusions similar to those of the Committee's delegation.

25. At the invitation of the Soviet Committee of Solidarity with the Countries of Asia and Africa, a delegation of the Committee visited the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics from 3 to 7 August 1981. The opportunity was taken to discuss with the Soviet Committee of Solidarity ways and means of increasing co-operation in the field of dissemination of information on the Question of Palestine.

2. Review of events relating to the Middle East

26. In reviewing events which have taken place on the Middle East question, the Committee deems it necessary to stress again that the participation of the Palestine Liberation Organization, the representative of the Palestinian people, is indispensable to a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the Question of Palestine which is at the heart of the Middle East conflict. The Committee recalled that in General Assembly resolution 34/65 B the General Assembly had noted with concern that the Camp David Accords had been concluded outside the framework

of the United Nations and without the participation of the Palestine Liberation Organization. Both that resolution and General Assembly resolution 35/169 B had rejected and declared invalid those provisions of the Accords which ignored, infringed, violated or denied the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including the right of return, the right of self-determination and the right of national independence and sovereignty in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, and which envisaged and condoned continued Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories occupied by Israel since 1967.

27. The Committee noted that in spite of this strong opposition, attempts were still being made to proceed with negotiations which disregard, infringe, violate or deny the inalienable rights of the Palestinians and hence go against the provisions safeguarding the rights of the Palestinian people.

28. The Committee continues to entertain the gravest concern at the action of the Israeli authorities in the occupied Arab territories in violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949, international law and practice, and General Assembly and Security Council resolutions. Among these actions were Israel's legislation affecting the status of Jerusalem, the establishment of new settlements, the enlargement of previously established settlements, the Mediterranean-Dead Sea Canal project passing through the occupied Gaza strip and the excavations of tunnels in Jerusalem which endanger historic Islamic buildings. The Committee recommends that effective steps should now be taken to put an end to these aggressive acts by Israel which give rise to an escalation of tensions in the region.

29. The Committee recalls that, particularly on the status of Jerusalem and on the establishment of settlements in the occupied territories, the views of the international community have been quasi-unanimous, and that the new action taken by Israel represent a provocative escalation of tension.

30. Similarly, the Committee regards as another provocative violation of the decision of the Security Council, the expulsion of the mayors of Halhoul and Al-Khalil from the occupied Arab territories and the continued refusal by Israel to permit them to return to their homes and families to carry out the functions to which they had been duly elected.

31. The Committee noted with appreciation and was encouraged by the renewed interest being taken by the countries of the European Economic Community in their search for a just solution for the situation in the Middle East and for the restoration of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian people.

32. The Committee also noted with satisfaction the declaration by L. I. Brezhnev, Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet and General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, which contained a proposal to go back to honest collective search of an all-embracing just and realistic settlement in the Middle East. This could be done in the framework of a specially convened international conference with the participation of all interested parties, naturally including the Palestine Liberation Organization.

3. Attendance at conferences

33. In accordance with paragraph 3 of General Assembly resolution 35/169 C, which, inter alia, authorized the Committee to send delegations or representatives to international conferences where such representation would be considered appropriate, the Committee accepted several invitations in 1981.

34. The Committee was represented at the Third Islamic Summit Conference in Mecca-Taif, Saudi Arabia from 25 to 28 January 1981; at the Conference of Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Non-Aligned Countries in New Delhi from 9 to 13 February 1981; at the meeting of the Palestine National Council in Damascus from 11 to 15 April 1981; at the International Conference on Sanctions against South Africa in Paris from 20 to 27 May 1981; at the Twelfth Islamic Conference of Ministers for Foreign Affairs, held in Baghdad from 1 to 6 June 1981; and at the thirty-sixth session of the Council of Ministers and eighteenth summit Conference of the Organization of African Unity, held in Nairobi from 15 to 28 June 1981.

35. On each of those occasions representatives of the Committee took the opportunity to make known the work of the Committee and its recommendations and to discuss ways and means of promoting the implementation of those recommendations. There was conclusive evidence of considerable understanding of, and sympathy for, the problems of the Palestinian people as well as of interest in the work of the Committee and United Nations action on the question.

4. Action taken by other organizations

36. The Committee followed with the greatest interest action taken during the year by other organizations on questions relevant to the work of the Committee. Such action included:

(a) The Eleventh Arab Summit Conference held at Amman, Jordan, from 25 to 27 November 1980, which reiterated its stand on the Palestinian question and reaffirmed its support of PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people for the purpose of the restitution of all its rights including the right to self-determination and the establishment of an independent state on its own territory. The Conference reasserted the right of the Palestinian Arab people, as represented by PLO, to return to its land and to determine its own destiny and pointed out that it was PLO which alone had the right to take upon itself the responsibility for the future of the Palestinian people. The Conference emphasized that Security Council resolution 242 (1967) did not constitute an appropriate basis for a solution to the Middle East crisis and particularly the Palestine question. It also reaffirmed its rejection of the Camp David Accords. The Conference emphasized that the liberation of Arab Jerusalem was a national duty and a national obligation, proclaimed the rejection of all measures taken by Israel, requested all nations of the world to adopt clear and defined positions in opposition to the Israeli measures and resolved to break off all relations with any country recognizing Jerusalem as the capital of Israel or transferring its embassy there. The Final Declaration of the Eleventh Arab Summit was circulated as document A/35/719-S/14289.

(b) The Third Islamic Conference Summit held at Mecca-Taif, Saudi Arabia, from 25 to 28 January 1981, which adopted a resolution entitled "The Islamic

programme of action against the Zionist enemy" and another entitled "The cause of Palestine and the Middle East". In those resolutions the Islamic Conference reaffirmed its stand on the question and its strong support of the Palestinian people led by the Palestine Liberation Organization, its sole legitimate representative. The resolutions rejected any situation that would prejudice Arab sovereignty over Jerusalem, categorically rejected the Camp David Accords and refused to recognize separate and partial solutions to the Palestinian question. The resolutions also invited the General Assembly of the United Nations to reject the credentials of the Israeli delegation to the United Nations, as representative of a Government that declares Jerusalem its capital, and invited the General Assembly to freeze the membership of Israel in view of its failure to implement relevant United Nations resolutions. These resolutions are reproduced in document A/36/138.

(c) The Conference of Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Non-Aligned countries held in New Delhi from 9 to 13 February 1981, which reaffirmed its stand on the question of Palestine in the New Delhi Declaration, adopted a resolution which is reproduced in document A/36/116.

(d) The Commission on Human Rights which, at its thirty-seventh session held from 2 February to 13 March 1981, adopted resolutions condemning (i) Israeli policies and practices in Palestine and other Arab occupied territories intended to annex parts of the occupied territories; (ii) the establishment of Israeli settlements therein and the transfer of an alien population thereto; (iii) the arming of settlers in the occupied territories to commit acts of violence against Arab civilians; and (iv) the evacuation, deportation, expulsion, displacement and transfer of Arab inhabitants of the occupied territories, and the denial of their right to return.

The Commission also condemned the destruction and demolition of Arab houses; mass arrests, collective punishment, administrative detention and ill-treatment of the Arab population; the pillaging of archaeological and cultural property; the interference with religious freedom and practices; the systematic Israeli campaign of repression against universities in the occupied Palestinian territories and the illegal exploitation of the natural wealth, resources and population of the occupied territories.

The Commission furthermore expressed its deep concern at the consequences of Israel's systematic refusal to apply to Palestinian and other Arab territories occupied by Israel since 1967, including Jerusalem the Geneva Convention of 12 August 1949 relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War ^{7/} in all its provisions. These resolutions are reproduced in document A/36/344-S/14567.

(e) The Afro-Asian People's Solidarity Organization, which at its Thirteenth Council Session in Aden, Democratic Yemen, from 20 to 26 March 1981, reiterated its condemnation of the Camp David Accords, and its strong support of the Palestine Liberation Organization and requested once more the full and unconditional withdrawal of Israel from all occupied Palestinian and Arab lands, including

^{7/} United Nations, Treaty Series, vol. 75, No. 973. p. 2070.

Jerusalem. It also called on the European States to recognize the Palestine Liberation Organization as the only representative of the Palestinian people.

(f) The Fifth Session of the Al-Quds (Jerusalem) Committee of the Organization of the Islamic Conference held at Fez, Morocco, on 23 and 24 April 1981, recommended that contacts should be made with European head of States and with the Japanese, Australian, Canadian and New Zealand head of States with a view to convincing those countries of the need to recognize the right of the Palestinian people to return to self-determination and to the establishment of their own independent State and of the need to recognize PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. It also recommended that contacts be made with the new United States Administration and to convey to it the Islamic countries indignation at the policy it has been following of supporting Israel at all levels. It further recommended that contacts be continued with the Vatican in order to convince it to recognize PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. The meeting confirmed the need to make the necessary contacts with the friendly member parties of the Socialist International in order to work for the exclusion of the Israeli Labour Party from the International. It also recommended that relations should be strengthened between the Islamic States and Latin American States in order to counter and end the spread of Zionist influence in those countries. The meeting recommended that an information campaign be launched throughout Europe and the United States with a view to securing further official and public support for the cause of Al-Quds and Palestine; and that the third international symposium on Al-Quds be organized in Washington, D.C. These recommendations are reproduced in document A/36/379-S/14590.

(g) The Twelfth Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers held at Baghdad, from 1 to 5 June 1981, firmly reiterated its stand on the Question of Palestine. It decided to endeavour to secure the adoption of a new resolution by the Security Council that explicitly provides for the inalienable national rights of the Palestinian people; to suspend the membership of Israel in the United Nations and its specialized agencies for its refusal to comply with relevant resolutions of the Organization; to apply the sanctions provided for in Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations to Israel, in view of its overt intransigence and violations of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and Universal Declaration of Human Rights; to accept the representation of PLO in the remaining capitals of Islamic States as the sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.

It also adopted a resolution expressing its serious concern over Israel's project to dig a canal in occupied Palestine linking the Mediterranean to the Dead Sea. It strongly condemned the new Israeli aggression against the natural resources and national inalienable rights of the Palestinian people; it called upon States and Governments throughout the world to refrain from contributing financial, manpower or technical assistance to the implementation of this project; and warned institutions, companies and individuals throughout the world against participation in the implementation of this project, which shall render them liable to the imposition of economic sanctions against them. It also adopted resolutions on Israeli violations in Hebron (Al Khalil); on Israeli violations of mosques and Islamic Holy Places in occupied Palestine; on continued settlements in and judaization of the occupied Palestinian and Arab territories; on the expulsion of

Palestinian citizens from occupied Palestinian territories; on Israeli acts of aggression against the Palestinian camps in Lebanon; on the issuance of a Palestinian stamp; and reaffirmed the observance in all Islamic countries of Islamic Solidarity Day with the Palestinian People (21 August every year). These resolutions are reproduced in document A/36/421-S/14626.

(h) The thirty-seventh session of the Council of Ministers of the Organization of African Unity, held at Nairobi from 15 to 28 June 1981, devoted particular attention to the problem of Palestine and the Middle East. It adopted one resolution on the subject by which it condemned any separate treaty which violated the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people; it also stressed that no peaceful solution could be found without the participation of PLO and the recognition of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people; and it commended the work of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian people.

**B. Action taken in accordance with paragraph 2
of General Assembly resolution ES-7/3**

37. In paragraph 2 of resolution ES-7/3, the General Assembly requested the Committee to study thoroughly the reasons for the refusal of Israel to comply with the relevant United Nations resolutions, particularly resolution 31/20 of 24 November 1976, in which the General Assembly endorsed the recommendation of the Committee, and with the numerous resolutions demanding the withdrawal of Israel from the occupied Palestinian and other Arab territories, including Jerusalem, and to submit the study to the Assembly.

38. In that connexion, the Committee recommended that a panel of three experts be appointed to undertake the study requested by the General Assembly.

**C. Action taken in accordance with paragraph 2
of General Assembly resolution 35/169 D**

39. In paragraph 2 of resolution 35/169 D the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to ensure that the Special Unit on Palestinian Rights, in consultation with the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and under its guidance, continue to discharge the task detailed in paragraph 1 of General Assembly resolution 32/40 B and paragraph 2 (b) of resolution 34/65 D.

40. The Committee wishes to stress once more the importance it attaches to the work done by the Special Unit on Palestinian Rights. It feels that the experience of the last four years in which the Special Unit has been in existence justifies an extension of its work programme and its responsibilities.

41. The Committee is convinced that the studies and pamphlets prepared and published by the Special Unit are a positive contribution to a better understanding of the question of Palestine. It feels that particular attention should be paid to this aspect of the Special Unit's work and that every effort should be made both to increase the number of pamphlets published annually and to reach an even wider reading public. In this connexion, the Committee suggests that arrangements should be made for these pamphlets to be translated into languages other than the official languages of the United Nations so as to facilitate their reading by those whose languages are not among the official languages of the United Nations.

42. In accordance with paragraph 2 of resolution 34/65 D, two seminars on Palestinian Rights were organized during 1981 by the Special Unit, the first at Colombo from 10 to 14 August 1981 and the second at Havana from 29 August to 4 September 1981. The Committee was represented at both those seminars and wishes once more to confirm its belief that the seminars, by bringing together academicians and other influential persons interested in the question of Palestine, constitute a valuable contribution towards informing the international community of the various facets of the question. The Committee also regards as most useful the publication by the United Nations of the papers presented at these seminars, and feels that more seminars of this nature should be held in the forthcoming biennium. The report of these two seminars are annexed to the present report of the Committee (annex II and III).

43. The Committee recalled that in paragraph 1 of resolution 34/65 D the General Assembly had requested the Secretary-General to redesignate the Special Unit as the Division for Palestinian Rights and to provide it with the resources necessary to discharge the increased responsibilities assigned to it by the Assembly. It recalled also that in paragraph 3 of resolution 35/169 D the General Assembly had requested the Secretary-General to keep under constant review the question of the strengthening of the Special Unit on Palestinian Rights. The Committee hoped that the Special Unit would be further strengthened in order to discharge any expanded programme of work that the General Assembly might entrust to it.

44. The Committee observed that the response to the invitation to observe the International Day of Solidarity continued to be enthusiastic and, consequently, recommended that the observance of Solidarity Day should follow the same pattern in 1981. It is expected that many Governments will once more observe the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People in an appropriate manner.

45. The Committee also noted with satisfaction that the requests contained in paragraphs 5 and 7 of General Assembly resolution 34/65 D had been complied with, that a series of United Nations commemorative postage stamps on Palestinian Rights had been issued in January 1981 and that a photographic display has been set up at United Nations Headquarters designed to keep visitors informed of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.

46. The Committee noted with appreciation that the Department of Public Information had produced a poster emphasizing the right of the Palestinian people to return to their homes.

47. It is the intention of the Committee to make wider use of these and other display materials on suitable occasions, particularly during the seminars and away from Headquarters.

48. The Committee was most appreciative of the action of the Solidarity Committee of the German Democratic Republic which, with the co-operation of the Committee generously produced a calendar for 1982 which had as its theme the rights of the Palestinian people.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COMMITTEE

49. The Committee remains convinced that positive action by the Security Council on the Committee's recommendations would create the necessary conditions for a just and lasting peace since these recommendations contain the basic principles relating to the problem of Palestine within the Middle East situation. These recommendations have been repeatedly endorsed by the General Assembly at its thirty-first session and all subsequent sessions. The Committee, therefore, unanimously decided once more to reiterate the validity of the recommendations, which are annexed to the present report (Annex I).

50. The Committee recommends that the General Assembly should, with stronger emphasis, again urge the Security Council to take positive and urgent action on those recommendations which have repeatedly been brought to its attention. In doing so the Committee recommends that the Security Council should be guided constantly by the following basic principles relating to the problem of Palestine within the Middle East situation:

(a) The question of Palestine is at the heart of the problem of the Middle East and consequently no solution to the Middle East problem can be envisaged without taking into account the rights of the Palestinian people;

(b) The realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to return to their homes, and to self-determination, independence and national sovereignty would contribute to a solution of the crisis in the Middle East;

(c) The participation of the Palestine Liberation Organization, the representative of the Palestinian people, on an equal footing with all other parties on the basis of General Assembly resolution 3236 (XXIX) and 3375 (XXX), is indispensable in all efforts, deliberations and conferences on the Middle East undertaken under the auspices of the United Nations;

(d) The inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force and the obligation which devolves on Israel to withdraw completely and quickly from all territory so occupied.

51. The Committee wishes to stress in particular that, at the seventh emergency special session, held at Headquarters, New York from 22 to 29 July 1980, the General Assembly by an overwhelming majority had strongly endorsed the right of the Palestinian people to establish its own independent sovereign State.

52. The Committee once more draws the attention of the General Assembly to its considered opinion that all agreements and treaties that could affect the future of the Palestinian people, its inalienable rights and the status of the occupied Palestinian territories, which ignore, infringe on, violate or deny the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people or are negotiated without the participation of the Palestine Liberation Organization, the representative of the Palestinian people, contravene General Assembly resolutions and have no validity.

53. The Committee lays great stress on the importance of a wider understanding of the just cause of the Palestinian people as a major contribution towards an equitable, lasting solution of the question of Palestine. The Committee consequently feels that it should continue its efforts to enhance this understanding so as to encourage the implementation of its recommendations whose objective is to enable the Palestinian people to attain its inalienable rights and to achieve peace in the Middle East, with due consideration of the concerns of all the parties.

ANNEX I

Recommendations of the Committee endorsed by the
General Assembly at its thirty-first session a/

I. BASIC CONSIDERATIONS AND GUIDELINES

59. The question of Palestine is at the heart of the Middle East problem, and, consequently, the Committee stressed its belief that no solution in the Middle East can be envisaged which does not fully take into account the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people.

60. The legitimate and inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to return to their homes and property and to achieve self-determination, national independence and sovereignty are endorsed by the Committee in the conviction that the full implementation of these rights will contribute decisively to a comprehensive and final settlement of the Middle East crisis.

61. The participation of the Palestine Liberation Organization, the representative of the Palestinian people, on an equal footing with other parties, on the basis of General Assembly resolutions 3236 (XXIX) and 3375 (XXX) is indispensable in all efforts, deliberations and conferences on the Middle East which are held under the auspices of the United Nations.

62. The Committee recalls the fundamental principle of the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force and stresses the consequent obligation for complete and speedy evacuation of any territory so occupied.

63. The Committee considers that it is the duty and the responsibility of all concerned to enable the Palestinians to exercise their inalienable rights.

64. The Committee recommends an expanded and more influential role by the United Nations and its organs in promoting a just solution to the question of Palestine and in the implementation of such a solution. The Security Council, in particular, should take appropriate action to facilitate the exercise by the Palestinians of their right to return to their homes, lands and property. The Committee, furthermore, urges the Security Council to promote action towards a just solution, taking into account all the powers conferred on it by the Charter of the United Nations.

65. It is with this perspective in view and on the basis of the numerous resolutions of the United Nations, after due consideration of all the facts, proposals and suggestions advanced in the course of its deliberations, that the Committee submits its recommendations on the modalities for the implementation of the exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.

a/ See Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-second Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/32/35), Annex I.

II. THE RIGHT OF RETURN

66. The natural and inalienable right of Palestinians to return to their homes is recognized by resolution 194 (III), which the General Assembly has reaffirmed almost every year since its adoption. This right was also unanimously recognized by the Security Council in its resolution 237 (1967); the time for the urgent implementation of these resolutions is long overdue.

67. Without prejudice to the right of all Palestinians to return to their homes, lands and property, the Committee considers that the programme of implementation, of the exercise of this right may be carried out in two phases:

Phase one

68. The first phase involves the return to their homes of the Palestinians displaced as a result of the war of June 1967. The Committee recommends that:

- (i) The Security Council should request the immediate implementation of its resolution 237 (1967) and that such implementation should not be related to any other condition;
- (ii) The resources of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and/or of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, suitably financed and mandated, may be employed to assist in the solution of any logistical problems involved in the resettlement of those returning to their homes. These agencies could also assist, in co-operation with the host countries and the Palestine Liberation Organization, in the identification of the displaced Palestinians.

Phase two

69. The second phase deals with the return to their homes of the Palestinians displaced between 1948 and 1967. The Committee recommends that:

- (i) While the first phase is being implemented, the United Nations in co-operation with the States directly involved, and the Palestine Liberation Organization as the interim representative of the Palestinian entity, should proceed to make the necessary arrangements to enable Palestinians displaced between 1948 and 1967 to exercise their right to return to their homes and property, in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions, particularly General Assembly resolution 194 (III);
- (ii) Palestinians not choosing to return to their homes should be paid just and equitable compensation as provided for in resolution 194 (III).

III. THE RIGHT TO SELF-DETERMINATION, NATIONAL
INDEPENDENCE AND SOVEREIGNTY

70. The Palestinian people has the inherent right to self-determination, national independence and sovereignty in Palestine. The Committee considers that the evacuation of the territories occupied by force and in violation of the principles of the Charter and relevant resolutions of the United Nations is a conditio sine qua non for the exercise by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights of Palestinians to their homes and property and with the establishment of an independent Palestinian entity, the Palestinian people will be able to exercise its rights to self-determination and to decide its form of government without external interference.

71. The Committee also feels that the United Nations has an historical duty and responsibility to render all assistance necessary to promote the economic development and prosperity of the Palestinian entity.

72. To these ends, the Committee recommends that:

(a) A time-table should be established by the Security Council for the complete withdrawal by Israeli occupation forces from those areas occupied in 1967; such withdrawal should be completed no later than 1 June 1977;

(b) The Security Council may need to provide temporary peace-keeping forces in order to facilitate the process of withdrawal;

(c) Israel should be requested by the Security Council to desist from the establishment of new settlements and to withdraw during this period from settlements established since 1967 in the occupied territories. Arab property and all essential services in these areas should be maintained intact;

(d) Israel should also be requested to abide scrupulously by the provisions of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, and to declare, pending its speedy withdrawal from these territories, its recognition of the applicability of that Convention;

(e) The evacuated territories, with all property and services intact, should be taken over by the United Nations, which with the co-operation of the League of Arab States, will subsequently hand over these evacuated areas to the Palestine Liberation Organization as the representative of the Palestinian people;

(f) The United Nations should, if necessary, assist in establishing communications between Gaza and the West Bank;

(g) As soon as the independent Palestinian entity has been established, the United Nations, in co-operation with the States directly involved and the Palestinian entity, should, taking into account General Assembly resolution 3375 (XXX), make further arrangements for the full implementation of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, the resolution of outstanding problems and the establishment of a just and lasting peace in the region, in accordance with all relevant United Nations resolutions;

(h) The United Nations should provide the economic and technical assistance necessary for the consolidation of the Palestinian entity;

ANNEX II

Report of the third United Nations Seminar on the Question of Palestine held at Colombo from 10 to 14 August 1981

1. In accordance with the terms of General Assembly resolution 34/65 D, the third United Nations Seminar on the question of Palestine, with its central theme, "the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People", took place at the Bandaranaike Memorial International Conference Hall, Colombo from 10 to 14 August 1981. Seven sessions were held at which 11 panelists presented papers on various aspects of the question of Palestine.
2. The United Nations Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People was represented by a delegation consisting of Mr. Massamba Sarré (Senegal); Chairman, Mr. Gerhard Schroter (German Democratic Republic); Mr. Vijay Nambiar (India); Mr. Henri Rasolondraibe (Madagascar); Qazi Shaukat Fareed (Pakistan) and Mr. Zehdi L. Terzi (Palestine Liberation Organization). Mr. V. Nambiar acted as Rapporteur of the Seminar.
3. The opening session of the Seminar, on 10 August 1981, was addressed by Mr. Tyronne Fernando, Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sri Lanka who, in welcoming the participants, noted the useful role played by these seminars in acquainting the public with the facts surrounding the question of Palestine, and suggested that the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People should examine how the papers presented at the Seminar could be given the widest possible dissemination through the information system of the United Nations. He also drew attention to the Government of Sri Lanka's recognition of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and its full support to the Palestinian cause at all international forums where Sri Lanka had, along with other States, worked hard for the participation of the Palestine Liberation Organization in the processes for the settlement of the question of Palestine. At the same session, Mr. Massamba Sarré, Chairman of the Committee, gave a brief account of the Committee and its work and stressed the importance which was placed on publicity for the question of Palestine and on the necessity to ensure that all facts surrounding the issue reached the public. Mr. Faisal Aweida, the Special Representative of Mr. Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization, thanked the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for the interest it has been taking in promoting the just cause of the Palestinian people and asked the Committee to impress upon the international community the need to find ways and means of implementing United Nations resolutions on the Question of Palestine. At the sixth session, Mr. Aweida conveyed to the Seminar a message from Chairman Yasser Arafat on behalf of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization. At the closing session Mr. M. H. Mohamed, Minister of Transport, made a statement on behalf of the Government of Sri Lanka.

4. Five panels were established to consider different aspects of the central theme, "The inalienable rights of the Palestinian people". These panels, the panelists and titles of the papers presented were as follows:

A. Panel 1. Fundamental Rights of the Palestinian People

Dr. M. S. Agwani (India); Dr. Stanislaw Matosek (Poland); Dr. Fouard Moughrabi (United States of America) presented the following papers entitled "The Fundamental Rights of the Palestinian People", "Certain Aspects of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People" and "The Palestinian Right to Self Determination", respectively.

B. Panel 2. Legal Issues in the Palestine Question

Dr. Türkkaya Ataöv (Turkey) and Dr. Mohammed Akbar Kherad (Afghanistan) presented papers entitled "The Use of Palestinian Waters and International Law", and "The National Identity and the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People" respectively.

C. Panel 3. Human Rights and Palestine

Mrs. Salwa Abu Khadra (Palestinian); Dr. Hassan Haddad (United States); and Dr. Sardar Mohammad (Pakistan) presented papers entitled "The Palestinian Question and the Human Rights of the Palestinian Child"; "Fundamental Rights of the Palestinians: the Primal Crime and the Ambiguities of Chosenness" and "Restoration of Human Rights of the Palestinian People: the Role of the United Nations and the Super-Powers" respectively.

D. Panel 4. The Palestine Issue and Asian Public Opinion

Dr. Abdel Malik Ali Ahmed Auda (Egypt) and Mr. Mervyn de Silva (Sri Lanka) presented papers entitled "The Question of Palestine and Asian Public Opinion" and "Old Images, New Perceptions - Opinion Trends in Sri Lanka" respectively.

E. Panel 5. The Nature of the Palestine Liberation Organization

Mr. Afif Safiyeh (Palestinian) presented a paper entitled "The PIO: the Challenge and the Response".

An introductory statement on Israeli settlement policies in the Occupied Arab Territories was also presented by Professor Fouad Moughrabi (United States) as a basis for discussion.

5. The exchange of views with which each meeting was concluded indicated that there was general agreement amongst the participants over a wide range of issues relating to the restoration of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. The discussions covered all aspects of the rights of the Palestinian people and the manner in which they were systematically and continuously violated by Israel. It was agreed that the question of Palestine was at the core of the Middle East problem and was the result of an accumulation of illegalities. This was a concern not merely of the Palestinian people, but of all the Arab people as well as the people of all countries of the world in terms of the moral, political and human issues arising therefrom.

6. In view of the depth of analysis contained in the papers presented at the Seminar, and in accordance with established practice, they will be published by the United Nations along with the report of the Seminar as a contribution to a wider understanding of the question of Palestine.

7. In discussing the fundamental rights of the Palestinian people the Seminar felt that a near-universal consensus had been achieved in the community of nations concerning fundamental aspects of the question of Palestine. Attention was drawn particularly to General Assembly resolution 3210 (XXIX) which considered the Palestinian People to be the principal party to the question of Palestine and the Palestine Liberation Organization as its representative. This resolution, which duly recognized the fundamental rights of the Palestinian people, had been adopted by a large majority of the Member States of the United Nations. Realization of an international consensus was a matter of time since the historical process had already been set in motion and the moral and diplomatic balance of forces had shifted in favour of the Palestinian people. It was further pointed out that mere rhetorical support of the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination was no longer an adequate response to the situation. What was required was concrete action by countries to strongly urge the supporters of Israel, especially the United States, to compel Israel to conform to the will of the international community.

8. The failure of successive American administrations to accept the international consensus had encouraged Israel to pursue further its expansionist policies, but enlightened liberal opinion in the United States was now beginning to raise serious questions about the nature of America's relationship with the State of Israel. Israel's colonial practices in the occupied Palestinian and other Arab territories as well as its wanton aggression against other Arab countries such as Lebanon, Iraq, Syrian Arab Republic, etc., are contributing to its isolation in the international community and to the erosion of its support in the United States.

9. The Seminar focused on the sad plight of the Palestinian children who were among the most seriously affected by the Israeli policies in the occupied Palestinian territories. Specific instances of maltreatment of children by the occupation forces were highlighted along with an account of the manner in which the Israeli authorities interfered with the system of education. The Seminar agreed that the United Nations had a special responsibility to ensure that Palestinian children were not deprived of their most elementary human rights and dignity.

10. The participants in the Seminar agreed that the institutionalisation and practice of discrimination on the basis of race and religion conducted by the State of Israel against the people of Palestine is contrary to the Charter of the United Nations and to the norms of the international community.

11. The Seminar agreed that there should be no abridgement of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people as defined in relevant United Nations resolutions and as accepted by the vast majority of the international community nor any deviation from the fundamental principles which the international community had

reaffirmed as the basis of a just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine. These inalienable rights and fundamental principles are:

- (a) The right of the Palestinians to return to their homes and property from which they had been displaced and uprooted;
- (b) The right to self-determination without external interference and the right to national independence and sovereignty;
- (c) The right to establish an independent State in Palestine.
- (d) The question of Palestine is at the heart of the problem of the Middle East and no solution to that problem can be envisaged without taking into account the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people;
- (e) The implementation of these inalienable rights of the Palestinian people will contribute to a final solution of the Middle East crisis;
- (f) The participation of the Palestine Liberation Organization, the representative of the Palestinian people, on an equal footing with all other parties on the basis of General Assembly resolution 3236 (XXIX) of 22 November 1974 and 3375 (XXX) of 10 November 1975 is indispensable to all efforts, deliberations and conferences on the Middle East which takes place under the auspices of the United Nations;
- (g) The inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force and the consequent obligation for Israel to withdraw completely and speedily from all territory so occupied.

12. The Seminar noted that Israel's arrogant defiance of United Nations resolutions, international law and world public opinion had assumed intolerable proportions. Its decision to annex Jerusalem and to move its capital to that City, its unprovoked attack on Iraq and its indiscriminate bombing of Lebanon which had resulted in a large scale loss of life were condemned by the international community including most of the countries who are regarded as Israel's closest friends and supporters. The people of Lebanon as well as the inhabitants of the Palestinian camps in southern Lebanon have long suffered from the continued aggression and barbarous attacks launched by Israel. To put an end to Israel's intransigence, the Security Council was strongly urged to consider recourse action under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter. Such action was required in view of Israel's persistence in ignoring the appeals to reasons that have been addressed to it from all quarters. Israel's action was not only a serious obstacle to a peaceful settlement in the Middle East but a most serious threat to international peace and security. One reason for Israel's intransigence was the moral, material and political support it received from countries such as the United States. The efforts by the United States to achieve a partial settlement outside the United Nations framework and without the participation of the Palestine Liberation Organization as well as the denial of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people have further aggravated Israel's intransigent attitude.

13. The opinion was expressed that, by furnishing sophisticated weapons and equipment to Israel, the United States of America was responsible for Israel's aggressive policies which had been internationally condemned. Israel's obvious motivation for its action was the consolidation of the expansion of occupation to large portions of the area, in violation of internationally established principles and the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. To accede to such a situation would be to accept a change in the norms of international relations and to jeopardize international peace and security.

14. The Seminar was convinced that the process of changing the demographic composition of the occupied territories through the establishment of settlements/colonies, the construction of the Mediterranean - Dead Sea Canal, the exploitation of scarce water resources for the benefit of the Israeli settlers at the cost of untold hardship to the Palestinian inhabitants, were all clearly intended to achieve complete annexation of the occupied territories in violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949, a/ and of United Nations resolutions. Contrary to Israel's contention, these actions could not create a right.

15. The Seminar considered specific instances of the hardships resulting from the establishment of settlements/colonies in the illegally occupied Arab territories or confiscated lands owned by Arabs. Attention was drawn, particularly, to the grave situation that had arisen through the exploitation, by Israel, of Palestinian water resources for the benefit of Israel and of the populations of the newly established settlements at the expense of the Arab inhabitants. The use of Palestinian waters was linked with Israel's escalated designs for complete annexation of the occupied territories, and was categorized as a clear and gross violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949.

16. Several participants observed that the Camp David Accords represented a denial of the right of self-determination of the Palestinian people and the breakdown of this framework represented the failure of attempts to determine by unilateral or partial agreements the future of the Palestinian people and the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967 by Israel. No state had the right to undertake any actions, measures or negotiations that could affect the future of the Palestinian people, its inalienable rights and the occupied Palestinian territories without the participation of the Palestine Liberation Organization on an equal footing.

17. Great stress was placed by the Seminar particularly on the importance attached to presenting to the international public all the facts relevant to the question of Palestine in order that the issues would be viewed from a correct perspective.

18. It was recognized that considerable difficulty existed in overcoming the obstacles placed by vested interests in the dissemination of accurate information. These obstacles were mainly the result of a distinct bias against the Palestinian people and open sympathy for Israel shown by the major international news and media networks controlled by Western countries upon which many of the countries of the Third World had to rely for the international news circulated through their own press.

a/ United Nations, Treaty Series, Vol. 75, No. 973, p. 287.

19. The Seminar was convinced that in order to counter the political and historical untruths and distortions which have so far misled world public opinion and accounted for misunderstandings on the situation in Palestine, every effort should be made to step up the widespread dissemination of information and to ensure reliable reporting and balanced coverage as a major contribution to the achievement of a just solution of the problem of Palestine.

20. The participants agreed that Asian public opinion is a valuable pillar of support for the Palestinian cause which forms part of the political ideals and objectives which Asian public opinion believes.

21. Over the years there have been important developments which have resulted in the strengthening of relations between the Arab and other Asian States, and a positive evolution of the attitudes towards the question of Palestine. There has also been a gradual growth in bilateral relations between the Palestinian people represented by the Palestine Liberation Organization, and the people and Governments of Asian States. The growing effectiveness of information dissemination on the Palestine question through the adoption of scientific mass communication methods was a positive step which was evident in the response and the support emanating from all sectors and shades of Asian public opinion for the Palestinian cause. The participants hoped that the media in Asian countries would give more attention to the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people in order to enable the people of those countries to better understand and appreciate the basic elements of the question of Palestine.

22. It was emphasized that the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and the United Nations Special Unit on Palestinian Rights, and the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat, had an important role to play in the widest possible dissemination of information and in moulding public opinion through the presentation of all the facts pertaining to the question of Palestine.

23. The Seminar was provided with details of the origins and growth as well as the organizational structure of the Palestine Liberation Organization and its responses to the vicissitudes of political development in the Middle East. The Seminar noted that the Palestine Liberation Organization had unified a geographically and demographically dispersed Palestinian people and was channeling their struggles toward a common goal, the right of return, self-determination and independent statehood. The Seminar noted that an increasing number of countries had recognized the Palestine Liberation Organization and that besides enjoying observer status in the United Nations and its specialized agencies and being a full member in the League of Arab States, in the Conference of Islamic States and the Movement of the Non-Aligned countries, all socialist countries and a majority of the Third World countries as well as a member of West European countries had officially recognized the Palestine Liberation Organization. Successive Presidents of the European Council of Ministers, had met with the Chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organization as a party directly concerned in any endeavour for the solution of the Middle East crisis. It was noted also that a vast majority of States had allowed the Palestine Liberation Organization to open information and political offices in their capitals.

24. The Seminar concluded its work with an expression of appreciation by the participants to the Government of Sri Lanka for its assistance and co-operation in permitting the Seminar to be held at Colombo and for the hospitality and courteous services extended to them.

ANNEX III

Report of the Fourth United Nations Seminar on the Question of Palestine,
held at Havana from 31 August to 4 September 1981

1. In accordance with the terms of General Assembly resolution 34/65 D, the Fourth United Nations Seminar on the Question of Palestine, with its central theme "The Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People" took place at the Palacio de las Convenciones, Havana, from 31 August to 4 September 1981. Eight meetings were held at which fifteen panelists presented papers on various aspects of the Question of Palestine.
2. The United Nations Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People was represented by a delegation consisting of Mr. Massamba Sarré, (Senegal), Chairman; Mr. Farid Zarif (Afghanistan), Vice Chairman; Mr. Andreas V. Mavrommatis (Cyprus), and Mr. Zehdi L. Terzi (Palestine Liberation Organization). Mr. Mavrommatis acted as Rapporteur of the Seminar.
3. The opening session was attended by Mr. Jesús Montané Oropesa, alternate member of the Political Bureau and Chief of the Department of International Affairs of the Communist Party of Cuba who represented President Fidel Castro Rus.
4. The opening session of the Seminar, on 31 August 1981, was addressed by Mr. José Raúl Viera Linares, Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba, who, on behalf of his Government, welcomed the holding of the Seminar in Cuba since it was devoted to one of the most noble causes of contemporary history because of the long suffering of the Palestinian people. He added that the promotion of this type of Seminar reaffirmed the priority accorded by the United Nations General Assembly and the movement of Non-Aligned Countries to the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. He stressed also the importance of increasing the solidarity of the international community with Palestine and of bringing to international public opinion full knowledge of the facts of the tragedy of the Palestinian people.
5. At the same session, Mr. Massamba Sarré, Chairman of the Committee, gave a brief account of the Committee and its work and stressed the importance of ensuring that all facts surrounding the question of Palestine reached the public so that a proper understanding of the issues would be achieved. A message from Mr. Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization, was conveyed to the Seminar by Mr. Abdullah Abdullah, his special representative to the Seminar.
6. At the opening session of the Seminar, a minute of silence was observed in memory of two distinguished Latin American leaders recently killed in air accidents: the President of Ecuador, Jaime Roldós Aguilera, and the Commander of the National Guard and former Head of State of Panama, General Omar Torrijos. The Seminar commenced its next session with the observance of one minute of silence in memory of the late Mohammad Ali Rajai and Mohammad Javad Bohanar, President and

Prime Minister of Iran, respectively, news of whose tragic deaths had been received officially that afternoon.

7. The closing session was addressed by Mr. Vecino Alegret, Minister of Higher Education of Cuba.

8. Six panels were established to consider different aspects of the central theme "the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people". These panels, the panelists and titles of the papers presented were as follows:

A. Panel 1: Israeli Settlement Policies in the Occupied Arab Territories

Dr. Janet Abu-Lughod (United States) and Mr. Raja Shihadeh (Palestinian) presented papers entitled "Israeli Settlements in Occupied Arab Land: Conquest to Colony" and "Analysis of the Legal Structure of Israeli Settlements in the Occupied West Bank of Jordan" respectively.

B. Panel 2: Human Rights and Palestine

Dr. Muhammad Hallaj (Palestinian), Dr. Julio Prado Vallejo (Ecuador) and Dr. John Quigley (United States) presented papers entitled "Political Aborticide: Israel's Palestinian Policy", "Human Rights and Palestine" and "Human Rights and Palestine: Recent Developments" respectively.

C. Panel 3: The Nature of the Palestine Liberation Organization

Dr. Bayan Nuwaih al Hout (Palestinian) presented a paper entitled "The Nature of the Palestine Liberation Organization: The Identity".

D. Panel 4: Legal Issues in the Palestine Question

Dr. Ibrahim Abu-Lughod (Palestinian) and Dr. Horacio Sevilla Borja (Ecuador) presented papers entitled "Retrieving Palestinian National Rights" and "Some Considerations on the Establishment of a Palestinian State" respectively.

E. Panel 5: The Palestine Issue and Latin American Public Opinion

Dr. Juan Abughattas Abughattas (Peru), Dr. Domingo Alberto Rangel (Venezuela), Dr. Camilo Octavio Perez (Panama) and Dr. Miguel D'Estafano Pisani (Cuba) presented papers entitled "The Perception of the Palestinian Question in Latin America", "Zionist Control of the Communications Media and of the Cultural System in Venezuela and The Struggle of the Palestinian People", "The Palestine Issue and Latin American Public Opinion" and "The Fundamental Rights of the Palestinian People" respectively.

F. Panel 6: Fundamental Rights of the Palestinian People

Dr. Humberto Diaz-Casanueva (Chile), Mr. David Gilmour (United Kingdom) and Lic. José Antonio Garcia Lara (Cuba) presented papers entitled "Implications of the Process of Implementing the Fundamental Rights of the Palestinian People", "The Fundamental Rights of the Palestinian People" and "The Rights of the Palestinian People" respectively.

9. It was clear from the exchange of views that there was consensus among the participants on the main points raised by the panelists as well as over a wide range of issues relating to the restoration of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. The discussions covered all aspects of the rights of the Palestinian people and the manner in which they were consistently violated by Israel. It was agreed that the situation in Palestine was not merely the concern of the Palestinian people and the Arab nation but involved the entire international community, insofar as it constitutes a threat to international peace and security, and is a violation of internationally accepted principles.

10. In view of the depth of analysis contained in the papers presented at the Seminar, and in accordance with established practice, they will be published by the United Nations along with the report of the Seminar as a contribution to a wider understanding of the Palestine Question.

11. The Seminar noted that the fundamental rights of the Palestinian people had been defined and reaffirmed by the United Nations and other organizations. It has been Israel's intransigent policy, recently intensified, and the support it receives from other States, particularly the United States, which placed obstacles in the way of full attainment of those rights. It was suggested that the international community should take action in accordance with chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations in view of Israel's violations of international law including persistent violations of Article 25 of the Charter.

12. The Seminar stressed the importance of the role played by the United Nations in finding a just solution to the problem of Palestine. It was recognized that although much had been done by the international community to support the Palestinian people in its struggle to attain and freely exercise its inalienable rights, yet the United Nations should continue and intensify support to the Palestinian people and ensure that the principles of the Charter and the resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council were not violated. It should also assist in the preservation of the rights of the Palestinian people and take timely measures to forestall violation of those rights and to prevent Israel's genocidal aggression which interferes with the implementation of Palestinian rights and thus affects international peace and security. This was the transcendent responsibility of the United Nations and of Member States.

13. The Seminar was convinced that any partial agreement arrived at outside the framework of the United Nations which sought to find a solution which affected the rights of the Palestinian people or the occupied Palestinian territories had no validity unless full recognition was given to the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and the Palestine Liberation Organization as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. In this connexion, there was consensus among the panelists that the Camp David Accords represented a violation of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people as defined in United Nations resolutions and that, to that extent, they were invalid.

14. The Seminar was in complete agreement on the fundamental issues concerning the rights of the Palestinian people as defined in United Nations resolutions and was of the opinion that no deviation should be permitted from these rights. Among these rights were:

(a) The right of the Palestinian people to self-determination without external interference and the rights to national independence and sovereignty in Palestine;

(b) The right to territorial integrity and national unity;

(c) The right of the Palestinians to attain their legitimate aspirations;

(d) The right of the Palestinian people to establish their own independent and sovereign State in Palestine;

(e) The right of the Palestinians to return to their ancestral homes and property from which they have been forcibly displaced and uprooted;

(f) The right of the Palestinians in the occupied Palestinian territories to permanent sovereignty over their natural resources;

(g) The right of the Palestinian people to free development.

15. It was suggested that to enhance its effectiveness in safeguarding these rights, the international community should be unswerving in its commitment to the attainment of those rights by the Palestinian people, should give moral and material assistance to the Palestinian people in their struggle, including armed struggle, for national liberation, and should call for mandatory sanctions to be applied against Israel as an aggressor State.

16. The Seminar agreed that Israeli violations of the human rights of the Palestinian people living in the occupied Palestinian territories had been persistent, gross, systematic and indiscriminate. There was no evidence to suggest that they were temporary or sporadic aberrations likely to diminish or cease. On the contrary, there were sufficient grounds to believe that Israel's disregard for Palestinian human rights was a manifestation of its ultimate intentions and a strategic commitment in its oppressive relationship to the Palestinian people. The Seminar heard a detailed analysis of Israeli aims and motivations. It also heard a report on the recent (July 1981) attacks by Israel on Beirut and Palestinian refugee camps and Lebanese civilians in southern Lebanon, the conclusion drawn from which was that there was a methodical genocidal onslaught.

17. The participants in the Seminar were of the opinion that in occupied Palestine denial of human rights formed part of a broader denial, that of the Palestinian people's very existence as a nation. Violations of individual human rights, therefore, had to be viewed within the larger context of the denial of national existence.

18. A persistent feature had been an effort on the part of the Government of Israel to eradicate almost all manifestations of Palestinian national existence. Israel's ability to employ highly developed technology in its efforts to displace and subjugate the Palestinians had facilitated economic domination over them - a domination that had significantly increased the seriousness of the more traditional forms of human rights deprivations. These deprivations had been amply documented by international agencies and non-governmental organizations. Not only in the territories occupied in 1967 have these violations of human rights been taking place at an accelerated rate, but recently there have been mounting violations of

rights of Palestinians within the areas Israel has occupied since 1948. Many specific examples of these violations were referred to in the discussion. The Seminar was particularly concerned at the information that a 1980 survey of Israeli Jewish high school students had found that 64 per cent believed that Palestinians in Israel did not deserve equal rights which was indicative of racist indoctrination.

19. The participants in the Seminar expressed their opinion that the similarity between the Israeli and South African régimes should be analysed and be subject to special study concerning the violation of human rights, racism, and colonialism, and the threat that both régimes constitute to international peace and security.

20. The participants at the Seminar considered it ironic that at a time when the Government of Israel was negotiating with Egypt purportedly to accord autonomy to Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza, additional measures had been taken to reinforce the Zionist takeover of the West Bank and Gaza through the establishment of new settlements/colonies and to suppress opposition to the occupation.

21. It was critical at such a time that international pressure should be more effectively mobilized to protect the human and national rights of the Palestinian people and to put an end to the existing pattern of violations daily perpetrated.

22. The participants also considered that Palestinian freedom fighters should be accorded the status of prisoners of war. They further considered that they could not be extradited for anything done in their capacity as combatants.

23. Reference was made to the special relation that exists between Israel and several Latin American countries as well as to the active presence in the region of economic, financial and military interest of international Zionism.

24. The view was expressed that sections of the Latin American and Caribbean press depended too much on pro-Israeli news agencies and tended to reproduce their dispatches as received. This is prejudicial to the Palestinians since the majority of the principal agencies are sympathetic towards Israel. Zionist strategy depended on the manipulation of facts, men and language - by ensuring a unilateral flow of information concerning all Middle Eastern affairs, by the hiring of well-placed journalists to write anti-Palestinian items and by conveying adverse images of the Palestinians as terrorists. The long term strategy based on this idea had had a definitive influence on Latin American public opinion. In order that more positive results could be achieved in the efforts for the better enlightenment of public opinion in Latin America and the Caribbean on the question of Palestine, concrete measures should be taken, particularly the following:

- (a) The intensification of the dissemination of information on Palestine by the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat;
- (b) The establishment of centres for Palestinian studies in Latin America and the Caribbean in the countries where they do not exist;
- (c) The sponsorship of seminars on the question of Palestine under the auspices of the United Nations especially in those countries of Latin America which are committed to the Palestine cause or do not oppose it;

(d) Special studies to be undertaken regarding the relations between Israel and several Latin American armed forces;

(e) The establishment of offices of the Palestine Liberation Organization in the Latin American countries where they do not exist at present;

(f) Political, technical and material support to all organizations and regional publications which disseminate objective information on the ordeal of the Palestinian people and its legitimate rights;

(g) A census of Palestinians and other Arabs living in Latin American countries.

25. A suggestion was made that a seminar on the question of Palestine especially organized for the benefit of the United States would prove most beneficial as North American public opinion should be made aware in the clearest terms that the international consensus on the attainment of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and the establishment of a sovereign Palestinian State in the occupied territories would not constitute a threat to the existence of Israel.

26. The Seminar noted that in the 14 years that elapsed since its illegal occupation of the West Bank and Gaza, Israel, in defiance of the world community, had systematically passed a large number of military orders and practised policies to facilitate the absorption of the occupied territories while at the same time preventing the development of the Palestinian community, expelling its leaders and attempting to subjugate it completely. Within the over-all objective, the establishment of settlements/colonies on expropriated land and land improperly declared state land has resulted in consolidating the occupation and in the de facto annexation of the occupied territories. The Seminar stressed that the occupied territories of the West Bank and Gaza belong to the Palestinian people and to nobody else. Israel's prime motive in continuing the occupation was not strategic but expansionist and colonialist.

27. The means used to put these policies into effect range from brute force and primitive might to resource deprivation and economic sanctions. Though these had been used from the beginning of the occupation in 1967 an intensification was expected in the next few years. Already for instance, agricultural strangulation through rigorous control of water, a scarce resource in Palestine, was evident. New Israeli settlements/colonies were given priority in access to water at the expense of the Arab inhabitants who, when consequently deprived of their present sources of water, were denied permission to drill new wells to replace what they had lost. The strategy was obviously intended to compel the Arab population to emigrate as were the tactics of confiscation of lands, the imposition of collective punishment, and the practice of torture.

28. Specific examples were given of the manner in which Israel executed its settlements policy and the Seminar heard a detailed analysis of the legal structure of the settlements based on ordinances passed at the time of the British mandate, Jordanian laws, Israeli laws and Israeli military orders (of which there are about 1,000 at this time) passed by the military commander of the West Bank. The Seminar was unanimous in its view that Israel's colonial settlement policy, the demographic changes and the changes effected in existing laws were in clear violation of international law particularly the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 and were part

of Israel's designs to consolidate its illegal annexation of the occupied territories.

29. In considering the evolution of the Palestine Liberation Organization, the Seminar noted that it had developed from an organization which had to strive for the recognition of its own people into an organization recognized by the Arab States and the vast majority of the international community as the sole legitimate representative of its people. The Seminar noted also the supreme importance of the Palestine Liberation Organization as a unifying factor among the Palestinians and the role it played in consolidating their sense of identity, a significant development towards the attainment of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. This sense of identity accounted for the continued military steadfastness of the Palestinians, the pragmatic relation between them and the other Arab States, the credibility of the Palestine Liberation Organization, its recognition as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people by the Palestinian people itself and the international community and the steady growth of its democratic traditions.

30. When the Seminar considered the recent history of the Palestinian people, reference was made by the panelists to the tremendous support which all the Arab States rendered to the Palestinian people in order to sustain its struggle for national liberation.

31. The Seminar concluded with the expression by the participants of their appreciation to the Government of Cuba for its assistance and co-operation in permitting the Seminar to be held at Havana and for the warm hospitality, excellent facilities and courteous services extended to them.

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REPORT
OF THE
COMMITTEE ON THE EXERCISE OF
THE INALIENABLE RIGHTS
OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

OFFICIAL RECORDS: THIRTY-SEVENTH SESSION

SUPPLEMENT No. 35 (A/37/35)



UNITED NATIONS

60 P.

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UNITED NATIONS

New York, 1982

NOTE

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[12 October 1982]

CONTENTS

	<u>Paragraphs</u>	<u>Page</u>
LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL		v
I. INTRODUCTION	1 - 4	1
II. MANDATE OF THE COMMITTEE	5 - 7	2
III. ORGANIZATION OF WORK	8 - 18	3
A. Election of officers	8 - 9	3
B. Participation in the work of the Committee	10 - 13	3
C. Re-establishment of the Working Group	14 - 18	3
IV. ACTION TAKEN BY THE COMMITTEE	19 - 114	5
A. Action in accordance with paragraphs 2 and 3 of General Assembly resolution 36/120 A	19 - 102	5
1. Review of the situation relating to the question of Palestine and efforts to implement the recommendations of the Committee	19 - 23	5
2. Reaction to developments in the occupied territories	24 - 97	5
3. Attendance at conferences	98 - 100	15
4. Action taken by other organizations	101 - 102	15
B. Action taken in accordance with paragraphs 2 and 3 of General Assembly resolution 36/120 B	103 - 111	18
C. Action taken in accordance with paragraph 2 of General Assembly resolution 36/120 C	112 - 114	19
V. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COMMITTEE	115 - 119	20

ANNEXES

I. Recommendations of the Committee endorsed by the General Assembly at its thirty-first session	21
II. Report of the Fifth United Nations Seminar on the Question of Palestine held at United Nations Headquarters, New York from 15 to 19 March 1982	24

CONTENTS (continued)

Page

III.	Report of the Sixth United Nations Seminar on the Question of Palestine held at the Mediterranean Conference Centre, Valletta, Malta, from 12 to 16 April 1982	31
IV.	Report of the Seventh United Nations Seminar on the Question of Palestine held at the Centre International d'Echanges, Dakar, Senegal, from 9-13 August 1982	42

LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

22 September 1982

Sir,

I have the honour to enclose herewith the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for submission to the General Assembly in accordance with paragraph 3 of resolution 36/120 A.

Accept, Sir, the assurances of my highest consideration.

(Signed) Massamba SARRE
Chairman of the Committee
on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights
of the Palestinian People

His Excellency
Mr. Javier Pérez de Cuéllar
Secretary-General of the United Nations

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, originally composed of 20 members and later enlarged to 23, 1/ was established by the General Assembly in resolution 3376 (XXX) on 10 November 1975. Its first report 2/ was submitted to the General Assembly at its thirty-first session and contained specific recommendations proposed by the Committee to enable the Palestinian people to exercise its inalienable rights, as previously recognized and defined by the General Assembly.
2. The Committee's recommendations were first endorsed by the General Assembly at its thirty-first session as a basis for the solution of the question of Palestine.
3. In its reports to the General Assembly at each of its subsequent sessions, 3/ the Committee retained its recommendations unchanged. On each occasion they were again endorsed by the General Assembly with renewed emphasis. After a thorough discussion of the Committee's report and an appraisal of the situation in Palestine, the General Assembly also reviewed and renewed the mandate of the Committee.
4. However, despite repeated urgings by the Committee, its recommendations have not yet been acted upon by the Security Council; neither have they been implemented. The situation in the occupied territories arising from Israeli practices remains extremely tense with frequent eruptions of violence and armed conflict. The latest Israeli invasion into Lebanon caused enormous loss of life and property.

II. MANDATE OF THE COMMITTEE

5. In specific terms the present mandate of the Committee was defined in paragraphs 2 and 3 of General Assembly resolution 36/120 A, paragraphs 2 and 3 of resolution 36/120 B and paragraph 2 of resolution 36/120 C.

6. By those paragraphs the General Assembly requested and authorized the Committee:

(a) To keep the situation relating to the question of Palestine under review and to report and make suggestions to the General Assembly or to the Security Council, as appropriate;

(b) To continue to exert all efforts to promote the implementation of its recommendations, to send delegations or representatives to international conferences where such representation was considered appropriate and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its thirty-seventh session and thereafter;

(c) To act as Preparatory Committee for the International Conference on the Question of Palestine, to hold sessions particularly for this purpose and to make recommendations regarding, inter alia, the site, scheduling of and participation in the Conference, and its provisional agenda.

7. By virtue of paragraphs 2 and 3 of resolution 36/120 B, the Secretary-General was requested:

(a) To ensure that the Special Unit on Palestinian Rights continued to discharge the tasks detailed in paragraph 1 of General Assembly resolution 32/40 B and paragraph 2 (b) of resolution 34/65 D in consultation with the Committee and under its guidance;

(b) To provide the Special Unit with the necessary additional resources to accomplish its tasks and to expand its work programme, inter alia, through:

- (i) The organization of seminars in North America in addition to the regional seminars;
- (ii) More widespread dissemination of its publications in all the United Nations official languages;
- (iii) Translation of those publications into languages other than the official languages of the United Nations;

III. ORGANIZATION OF WORK

A. Election of officers

8. During January and early February 1982, the Committee retained unchanged its bureau from 1981, pending consideration of election of officers at its first meeting for 1982.

9. At its 76th meeting, on 11 February 1982, which was opened by the Secretary-General, the Committee decided to re-elect the following officers:

<u>Chairman:</u>	Mr. Massamba Sarré (Senegal)
<u>Vice-Chairmen:</u>	Mr. Raúl Roa-Kouri (Cuba) Mr. Mohammed Farid Zarif (Afghanistan)
<u>Rapporteur:</u>	Mr. Victor J. Gauci (Malta)

B. Participation in the work of the Committee

10. The Committee reconfirmed that those States Members of the United Nations and Permanent Observers to the United Nations which wished to participate in the work of the Committee as observers could do so, and it again welcomed in that capacity Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Mauritania, Morocco, the Syrian Arab Republic, the United Arab Emirates, Viet Nam, the League of Arab States, the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the Palestine Liberation Organization, which continued in 1982 to participate in the work of the Committee.

11. In its consistent effort to encourage the contribution of all sectors of opinion to its work, the Committee once more authorized the Chairman - as it had done in 1976, 1977 and 1981 - again to request the Secretary-General to invite all States Members of the United Nations, members of the specialized agencies and regional intergovernmental organizations not already participating in the work of the Committee to do so if they so wished, either as observers or through transmission of oral or written suggestions and proposals which they considered useful to the work of the Committee.

12. As in the past, this invitation was to be brought to the particular attention of all States directly interested in the Middle East situation and to the members of the Security Council, especially its permanent members.

13. As a result, and at their request, Ecuador and Czechoslovakia also participated in the work of the Committee as observers from 31 March 1982 and 24 May 1982, respectively.

C. Re-establishment of the Working Group

14. The Committee once again unanimously decided that the Working Group which it had established in 1977 should continue to function in order to facilitate the work of the Committee by: (a) keeping up to date with events which affect the work of the Committee and suggesting action which the Committee could usefully undertake, and (b) assisting the Committee in any other specific assignment related to its work.

15. The Committee decided to reconfirm the present membership of the Working Group: Malta (Chairman), Afghanistan, Cuba, German Democratic Republic, Guinea, Guyana, India, Senegal, Tunisia, and, as representative of the people directly concerned, the Palestine Liberation Organization. The Committee also accepted the principle of enlargement of the Working Group. In consequence, and at their request, Pakistan, Turkey and the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic also participated from 21 January 1982, 30 March 1982 and 8 December 1981, respectively.

16. The Committee also decided that, in addition to the enlargement of the Working Group, three sub-groups should be established. The first of these sub-groups, together with the Special Unit, would monitor daily events in the occupied territories and, as appropriate, draft letters for signature and transmittal by the Chairman to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council.

17. The second sub-group would assist the Special Unit in the detailed work of organizing seminars.

18. The third sub-group would have the task of:

(a) Periodically reviewing, with the assistance of the Special Unit, progress made in the studies which had already been planned, and arrangements for reproducing those published in languages other than the official languages of the United Nations;

(b) Updating studies and the film produced by the Special Unit;

(c) Improving the organization of the Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian people.

IV. ACTION TAKEN BY THE COMMITTEE

A. Action in accordance with paragraphs 2 and 3 of General Assembly resolution 36/120 A

1. Review of situation relating to the question of Palestine and efforts to implement the recommendations of the Committee

19. In compliance with the request of the General Assembly in paragraphs 2 and 3 resolution 36/120 A, the Committee continued to keep the situation relating to the question of Palestine constantly under review and to exert all efforts to promote the implementation of its recommendations.

20. In consequence of a series of events, its Chairman was authorized on several occasions to express the grave concern of the Committee regarding practices and policies of the Israeli Government which, in the opinion of the Committee, were in direct contravention of international law, contrary to the spirit of General Assembly and Security Council resolutions, and contradictory to the Committee's recommendations.

21. These communications, in the main, dealt with illegal Israeli settlements in the occupied territories, the annexation of vast areas of Arab-owned land, other violation of the rights of the Palestinian people, and the Israeli invasion of Lebanon.

22. These practices, policies and violations by Israel led the Committee, in addition to its letters of protest, to express strong belief that the Commission established by the Security Council under its resolution 446 (1979) to examine the situation relating to Israeli settlements in the Arab and Palestinian territories occupied since 1967 should be reactivated as a matter of priority.

23. It was recalled that the Commission had unanimously adopted its latest report on 25 November 1980, which had not yet been considered by the Security Council. The Committee consequently urged the Council to give immediate consideration to the report, and that its recommendations be acted upon with the utmost urgency (A/37/240-S/15120).

2. Reaction to developments in the occupied territories

(a) Emergency special session of the General Assembly

24. On account of the aggravated tension in the area, the Committee, in terms of its mandate, had recommended in 1980 the convening of an emergency special session of the General Assembly to consider the matter. This was held from 22 to 29 July 1980.

25. On that occasion, by 112 votes to 7, with 24 abstentions, the General Assembly requested and authorized the Secretary-General, in consultation, as appropriate, with the Committee, to take necessary measures towards implementation of the Committee's recommendations as a basis for the solution of the question of Palestine (resolution ES-7/2 of 29 July 1980).

26. Under the same resolution, the General Assembly decided to adjourn the session temporarily, and authorized the President of the regular session of the Assembly to resume its meetings upon request from Member States.

27. In consideration of further rapid and grave deterioration of conditions in the occupied territories, the seventh emergency special session was reconvened from 20 to 28 April 1982, following on a decision taken by Ministers of the Non-Aligned Countries at a meeting of the Co-ordinating Bureau, held in Kuwait from 5 to 8 April 1982.

28. At that resumed session, by a roll-call vote of 86 to 20, with 36 abstentions, the General Assembly, amongst other provisions, once more urged the Security Council to recognize the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people as defined in General Assembly resolution ES-7/2 and to endorse the recommendations of the Committee as had been done by the Assembly in its resolution 31/20 and in subsequent resolutions. The President of the regular session of the General Assembly was, furthermore, again authorized to resume meetings of the seventh emergency special session upon request from Member States (resolution ES-7/4 of 28 April 1982).

29. In his statement before the resumed emergency special session, the Chairman of the Committee regretted that the serious worsening of the situation in the region had not yet led the Security Council to take necessary steps. He recalled that, since the first adjournment of the emergency special session Israel had not only made claims to the occupied Arab and Palestinian territories but had proceeded to speed up the process of steady annexation of the occupied territories of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

30. The Chairman stressed that the recommendations previously endorsed by the General Assembly still formed the only framework in which the question of the Middle East, and more particularly the question of Palestine, could find a just and global solution.

31. The Committee expressed appreciation for the high level of attendance and participation in debate at the resumed session, and the wide-spread support extended for the attainment of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.

32. It was also gratifying that several Western European States had joined the overwhelming majority of the international community in censuring Israel regarding its settlements policy, violation of basic human rights and attempts to make Jerusalem its capital. Many of those Member States had also underlined the necessity of associating the Palestine Liberation Organization in any negotiations concerning the West Bank and Gaza.

33. The Committee recalled with appreciation the call of socialist countries to proceed with honest collective efforts aiming at an all-embracing, just and durable settlement in the Middle East, achieved within the framework of a specially convened international conference, under the aegis of the United Nations, and with the participation of all interested parties, including the Palestine Liberation Organization.

34. The Committee expressed satisfaction that the resumed emergency special session had gone far in alerting the attention of the international community to

Israeli contravention of General Assembly and Security Council resolutions and of generally accepted principles of international law.

35. In consequence of large-scale hostilities resulting from the illegal Israeli invasion and continued occupation of a large part of Lebanon in June 1982, the General Assembly was again requested to resume, for the second time in 1982, its seventh emergency special session from 25 to 26 June 1982.

36. At that session, by a recorded vote of 127 to 2, the General Assembly reaffirmed once again its conviction that the question of Palestine was the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict and that no comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the region would be achieved without the full exercise by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights (resolution ES-7/5 of 26 June 1982).

37. In his statement before the resumed seventh emergency special session on 25 June, the Chairman of the Committee said that the regrettable situation which prevailed in Lebanon was but one of the aspects of the Middle East crisis, and its core problem, the question of Palestine. Failure to settle the latter question posed a serious threat to international peace and security.

38. The Chairman added that, if in the course of the session it should be possible to settle the situation which prevailed in Lebanon, two objectives would then have been achieved. Lebanon would have been saved from destruction and talks would have been initiated which might provide serious encouragement for still further discussion likely to lead to a definitive settlement of the Middle East question.

39. In that context, the Chairman reiterated that the following should be recalled: the recommendations made by the Committee regarding the withdrawal of Israel from all occupied Arab territories; the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, independence and sovereignty without foreign interference; the return of all refugees to Palestine; the implementation by Israel of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949; and, finally the most important, the participation of the Palestine Liberation Organization, the sole representative of the Palestinian people in any discussion, negotiation or approach which might lead to determining the future of the Palestinian people.

40. On account of the ominous further deterioration of the situation and the inability of the Council to act, the seventh emergency special session was reconvened for the third time in 1982, from 16 to 19 August. During this resumed session the General Assembly adopted three resolutions.

41. By a recorded vote of 120 to 2, with 20 abstentions, the General Assembly called for the full exercise in Palestine of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination without external interference, and to national independence. The resolution also once again urged the Security Council, in the event of continued failure by Israel to comply with the demands contained in its resolutions 465 (1980), 508 (1982), 509 (1982), 515 (1982) and 518 (1982), to meet in order to consider practical ways and means in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter.

42. By the same resolution, the General Assembly once again called upon the Secretary-General to initiate contacts with all the parties to the Arab-Israeli conflict in the Middle East, including the Palestine Liberation Organization, the representative of the Palestinian people, with a view to convening an international

conference, under the auspices of the United Nations, to find concrete ways and means of achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting solution, conducive to peace in conformity with the principles of the Charter and relevant resolutions (resolution ES-7/6 of 19 August 1982).

43. By the second resolution, adopted by a recorded vote of 123 to 2, with 18 abstentions, the General Assembly decided to convene the International Conference on the Question of Palestine at the headquarters of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, in Paris, from 16 to 27 August 1983 (resolution ES-7/7 of 19 August 1982).

44. The General Assembly also decided, by the third resolution adopted by a recorded vote of 102 to 2, with 34 abstentions, to commemorate 4 June of each year as the International Day of Innocent Children Victims of Aggression.

45. In his statement before the resumed seventh emergency special session, on 16 August, the Chairman of the Committee, referring to the Israeli invasion of Lebanon, stressed that this operation, which had already resulted in thousands of Lebanese and Palestinian civilian victims, had been planned well in advance, designed to bring about a final solution to the Palestinian problem through the use of force. Thus the military operations conducted by Israel in Lebanon were another manifestation of the political war against the Palestine Liberation Organization.

46. The Chairman added that Israel continued to flout the fundamental principles contained in the Charter of the United Nations and to violate numerous resolutions of the same organization which had created the State of Israel. To fail to put an end to the tragedy in Lebanon would be tantamount to undermining once and for all the moral authority of the United Nations, in which mankind's collective hopes were vested for a world of peace and justice.

47. The Chairman recalled that the Organization itself had been considering the real context in which this tragedy could and should have to end, that is, the withdrawal of Israel from all the occupied Arab and Palestinian territories, including Jerusalem, and the restoration of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including the creation of an independent State of its own homeland. In this context, the Chairman cited the recommendations of the Committee which had been adopted by the General Assembly in 1976 and repeatedly reconfirmed since then.

48. The Committee played a constructive role in drafting resolutions for consideration by the General Assembly.

(b) Communications with the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

49. In further pursuance of its mandate, in a letter dated 22 January 1982 (A/37/75-S/14844), the acting Chairman of the Committee drew the attention of the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council to Israeli plans to evacuate all Palestinian Bedouins from a great swath of the Negev Desert.

50. It was pointed out that of approximately 40,000 Bedouins in the area, some 15,000 had been resettled in two large tracts of land near Beersheba. Another 6,000 were to be removed from an area where a new Israeli air base was planned and

an additional 19,000 throughout the rest of the desert were to be resettled under the Israeli Government's plans.

51. The Acting Chairman expressed the view of the Committee that it was vital to draw the attention of Israel to the dangers involved in these acts which could only further exacerbate the tensions in the area.

52. By letter dated 18 February 1982 (A/37/94-S/14879), the Committee Chairman expressed his concern at the latest developments regarding the closing of the Bir Zeit University, a matter previously brought to the attention of the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council on 13 November 1981 (A/36/688-S/14754).

53. He cited reports that the Israeli Government had again ordered the closing of the University for a period of two months and recalled that this was the second occasion on which similar action had been taken over a four-month period. It was also reported that 50 students and teachers at the University had been arrested.

54. The Chairman reiterated the Committee's conviction that it was of the greatest importance that energetic action should be taken, particularly by the Security Council, to put an end to such repressive acts and policies which endangered international peace and security.

55. By letter dated 8 March 1982 (A/37/109-S/14897), the Committee Chairman appealed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council to request decisive steps to protect the rights of the Palestinian people living in the occupied territories. This letter related to violations of human rights in the occupied Arab territories of the West Bank and Gaza; it related particularly to recently reported action by the Israeli authorities in the Jalazum Refugee Camp where youths were arrested without charge and held for interrogation for prolonged periods of time.

56. In a letter dated 24 May 1982 (A/37/240-S/15120), the Chairman again expressed the concern of the Committee regarding the repressive activities of Israeli authorities. He drew attention to Israeli action taken against Palestinian demonstrators exercising their right to protest against policies imposed upon them in the illegally occupied territories. He referred to reports which indicated that there had been an attack by Israeli soldiers against a girls' school and that new shooting incidents had taken place at the Dome of the Rock.

57. The Committee expressed its concern at the continuation of Israeli policy of establishing illegal settlements in the occupied territories in violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 12 August 1949 and United Nations resolutions.

58. In a subsequent letter dated 18 June 1982, circulated as document A/37/301-S/15244, the Chairman expressed the grave concern of the Committee regarding the decision of the Israeli authorities to dissolve the elected city council of two West Bank towns, Dura and Nablus. He again urged that the strictest respect for the resolutions of the United Nations should be ensured, in this case those aimed at enabling the Palestinian people to exercise its inalienable rights.

59. In a letter dated 9 July 1982 (A/37/339-S/15290), the Chairman again took up the matter of Bir Zeit University, stating that reports indicated that the Israeli Government once more had ordered its closure, this time because of students'

protests against the invasion of Lebanon. In the same communication, the Chairman pointed out that, according to reliable press reports, the lawfully elected Mayor of Djenin had been removed from office for refusing to meet the Israeli civilian governor of the occupied Palestinian territories.

60. By letter dated 14 September 1982 (A/37/449-S/15393), the Chairman referred to reports that the Israeli Government had allocated \$18.5 million to establish three new settlements in the illegally occupied West Bank and had announced its approval to establish still seven more. The letter pointed out that these 10 new settlements would bring the total number to 109, all of which were in violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 12 August 1949 and various related resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council, especially Council resolution 465 (1980).

61. In addition, the letter quoted reports concerning the shooting and killing of Arab youths by Israeli border police in the West Bank city of Nablus and near the town of Telkarim on 3 and 6 September, respectively. On behalf of the Committee, he reasserted once more the need for appropriate energetic measures without delay to protect the rights of the Palestinian inhabitants in the occupied territories.

62. On receipt of reports of the massacre of Palestinians committed in the Shatila and Sabra camps, the Chairman, in a letter dated 20 September 1982 (A/37/462-S/15410), expressed the extreme concern of the Committee at this atrocious action which was a direct consequence of Israel's invasion of Lebanon. He drew attention once again to the conviction of the Committee that such tragedies could have been avoided had the Security Council taken positive action on the recommendations of the Committee which have been repeatedly endorsed by the General Assembly.

63. The Chairman therefore urged in the strongest terms that appropriate action be taken by the Security Council without further delay to implement the Committee's recommendations.

(c) Action within the Security Council in relation to:

(i) The situation in the occupied territories

64. In addition to transmitting letters of protests and taking a leading role throughout the seventh special emergency session of the General Assembly, the Committee through its Chairman, participated in meetings of the Security Council called to consider the greatly deteriorating situation in the occupied Arab and Palestinian territories, and closely followed the proceedings.

65. The Council devoted five meetings between 24 March and 2 April 1982 to consideration of current Israeli activities and policies.

66. In his statement to the Security Council on 24 March 1982, the Chairman reiterated the recommendations of the Committee as presented to and adopted repeatedly by the General Assembly since its thirty-first session. He stressed that it was time for the Council to put these recommendations into effect. Any delay in carrying them out would only serve to increase tension in the area, as borne out by the cycles of violence which had been triggered off. Meanwhile the Security Council should also take all necessary measures to contain the events in El-Bireh where the elected Municipal Council had been disbanded.

67. On 2 April 1982, the Council proceeded to vote on a draft resolution under which the Security Council would have denounced Israeli measures imposed on the Palestinian population, such as dismissal of elected mayors by Israeli authorities, as well as violation of the liberties and rights of inhabitants of the occupied West Bank and the Gaza Strip; these actions followed the measures taken by Israel on the Golan Heights, which had been declared to be without legal validity by the Council.

68. The Council would have called upon Israel, the occupying power, to rescind its decision disbanding the elected Municipal Council of El-Bireh and its decision to remove the mayors of Nablus and Ramallah from their posts. It would also have reaffirmed that all the provisions of the Geneva Convention of 1949 relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War continued to apply in full. The resolution was not adopted, owing to the negative vote of a permanent member.

69. The Council met again on 13 April 1982 at the request of His Majesty King Hassan II of Morocco, in his capacity as Chairman of the Jerusalem Committee of the Islamic Conference, and Iraq, in its capacity as current Chairman of the Islamic Conference, to consider the very grave situation which had arisen from the attack against the holy sanctuary of the sacred Al-Aqsa Mosque and the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem. Six meetings were held on this question. On 20 April, the Council proceeded to vote on a draft resolution which would have condemned the acts of sacrilege perpetrated within the precincts of Al-Haram Al-Shareef.

70. The resolution would have deplored any act or encouragement of destruction or profanation of the Holy Places, religious buildings and sites in Jerusalem. It would have called upon Israel, the occupying power, to observe and apply scrupulously the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention and the principles of international law governing military occupation and to refrain from causing any hindrance to the discharge of the established functions of the High Islamic Council in Jerusalem. The draft resolution again was not adopted owing to the negative vote of a permanent member of the Council.

(ii) The Israeli invasion of Lebanon

71. In reaction to the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in early June 1982, steps were taken by the Security Council and by the General Assembly to alleviate the deterioration of conditions and loss of human life. In the face of continuing suffering among Lebanese and Palestinian populations in southern Lebanon and west Beirut, the Committee, through its Chairman, availed itself of every opportunity to help bring an end to conflict and closely followed the debate in the Security Council.

72. At its 1st meeting, on 5 June, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 508 (1982) calling upon all parties to cease immediately and simultaneously all military activities within Lebanon and across the Lebanese-Israeli border. On 6 June, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 509 (1982) demanding that Israel withdraw its military forces forthwith and unconditionally to the internationally recognized boundaries of Lebanon and that all parties observe the terms of resolution 508.

73. The Government of Lebanon and the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization indicated their readiness to comply. The Government of Israel declined.

74. On 8 June, the Council, through the negative vote of a permanent member, failed to adopt a draft resolution by which it would have condemned Israel for not complying with the two previous Council resolutions 508 (1982) and 509 (1982).

75. On the same day, in a letter circulated as document A/37/274-S/15188, the Chairman of the Committee stated that if Israeli forces were not immediately and unconditionally withdrawn there was a great risk of the conflict spreading to the whole region. He appealed to the Secretary-General to request that decisive steps be taken forthwith by the Security Council to ensure that this explosive situation be brought to an immediate end.

76. In a subsequent letter dated 15 June, the Chairman referred to Israel's continued occupation of the greater part of Lebanon, the loss of human life, intense suffering and endless destruction. In the face of such Israeli action, it was essential that decisive steps be taken by the Security Council to put an end to the bloodshed and the threat to international peace and security. He expressed the Committee's strong belief that Israel should withdraw its forces immediately and unconditionally in accordance with Security Council resolutions 508 (1982) and 509 (1982). This letter was circulated as document A/37/288-S/15222.

77. After further consultation, the Council, on 19 June and 4 July, unanimously adopted resolutions 512 (1982) and 513 (1982) respectively. These called upon all parties to respect the rights of the civilian populations, to refrain from all acts of violence against these populations and to take all appropriate measures to alleviate human suffering. All parties were called upon to facilitate the dispatch and distribution of aid. Normal supplies of vital facilities were to be restored.

78. The Council, however, through the negative vote of a permanent member, failed to adopt a further draft resolution on 26 June, in which it would have requested all parties to observe an immediate cessation of hostilities throughout Lebanon. The same draft would also have demanded an immediate withdrawal of Israeli forces engaged around Beirut to a distance of 10 kilometres from the periphery of that city as a first step towards the complete withdrawal of Israeli forces from Lebanon, and the simultaneous withdrawal of the Palestinian armed forces from Beirut to the existing camps.

79. The armed conflict continued and intensified despite occasional agreements on a cease-fire. The Council consequently met on several occasions during the months of July and August. Resolutions 515 (1982) and 516 (1982) were unanimously adopted on 29 July and 1 August calling for cessation of military action and removal of restraints on the distribution of humanitarian aid. Other draft resolutions presented were not adopted, for lack of unanimity in the Council.

80. When the Council met again on 3 August, it had before it the report of the Secretary-General pursuant to its resolution 516 (1982) which recalled the assurances of the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Lebanese Government regarding their full co-operation in the deployment of United Nations observers in and around Beirut. The report also indicated that the Israeli Cabinet would discuss this matter on 5 August.

81. In a statement on behalf of Members of the Security Council, the President of the Council expressed serious concern regarding the prevailing high state of tension and the reports of military movements and continued outbreaks of firing

and shelling in and around Beirut. He stated that the Council considered it vital that the provisions of resolution 516 (1982) be fully implemented.

82. On 4 August, the Council, by 14 votes to none, with 1 abstention, adopted resolution 517 (1982) which called for the prompt return of Israeli troops around Beirut to their position held prior to the adoption of resolution 516 (1982); the Council decided to meet again to consider the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of that resolution.

83. The Council further indicated that, in the event of the failure of any parties to the conflict to comply with the provisions of the resolution, the Council would then consider adopting effective ways and means in accordance with the provisions of the Charter. The Council also authorized the Secretary-General, as an immediate step, to increase the number of United Nations observers in and around Beirut.

84. At its meeting on 6 August, because of the negative vote of a permanent member, the Council failed to adopt a draft resolution calling upon States Members of the United Nations to refrain from supplying Israel with any weapons and from providing it with military aid until full withdrawal of Israel forces from all Lebanese territory has been accomplished.

85. The latest resolution on the question, 518 (1982), was unanimously adopted by the Council on 12 August. By that resolution it was demanded that Israel and all parties to the conflict observe strictly the terms of Security Council resolutions relevant to the immediate cessation of all military activities within Lebanon and, particularly, in and around Beirut.

86. The Council further demanded the immediate lifting of all restrictions on the city of Beirut in order to permit the full entry of supplies to meet the urgent needs of the civilian population. In addition, the Council requested United Nations observers in and around Beirut to report on the situation, and demanded that Israel co-operate fully in the effort to secure effective deployment of the observers. The Secretary-General was requested to report to the Council as soon as possible on the implementation of the resolution.

87. One additional draft resolution was also presented by Egypt and France to the Council on 29 July and given preliminary consideration at that time without being put to the vote. Its main provisions demanded an immediate and lasting cease-fire throughout Lebanon, departure of all non-Lebanese forces except those which would be authorized by the legitimate and representative authorities of Lebanon, and simultaneous withdrawal of Israeli and Palestinian forces from West Beirut. The draft resolution reaffirmed the right of all States in the region to existence and security, as well as the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people, including the right to self-determination with all its implications (see S/15317 and S/PV.2384).

88. In introducing the draft resolution, the representative of Egypt stated, inter alia, that Egypt and France had embarked on this new initiative to help achieve a just, lasting and comprehensive, peaceful settlement not only for the extremely pressing crisis of Lebanon but also for the ever-chronic Middle East problem, a settlement fulfilling the rights of all States and peoples of the region to existence and security, to territorial integrity and sovereignty, and particularly the national legitimate rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination and to statehood in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

89. The representative of Egypt also drew attention to that part of the draft resolution calling for restoration of durable peace and security in the region within the framework of negotiations, on the understanding that the Palestinian people shall be represented in the negotiations and consequently that the Palestine Liberation Organization shall participate therein.

90. The Permanent Observer of the Palestine Liberation Organization, in a subsequent statement, observed that these and other elements mentioned by the representative of Egypt were constructive, and he expressed the hope that they would eventually be included in the draft resolution.

(d) Other action relating to the question of Palestine

91. Throughout the period of the conflict and independently of the action taken by the Council, the United States of America dispatched a special envoy to Lebanon, who conducted direct negotiations with the Governments of Israel and Lebanon. A negotiated cease-fire was finally secured on 20 August 1982, guaranteeing all the necessary safeguards for the Palestinians in Lebanon. The provisions of this agreement were precariously maintained for several days.

92. Subsequently, Israel violated both the cease-fire agreements and Security Council resolutions by its actions of 15 September which consolidated its position and extended its advance into Beirut, thus further endangering the safety of the Palestinians as evidenced by the massacre on 17 September 1982 of several hundred Palestinians in the refugee camps of Shatila and Sabra.

93. Subsequently, on 1 September, the President of the United States of America made detailed proposals, summarizing the position of his country regarding a comprehensive Middle East settlement which, in the view of the Government of the United States, would take into account the preoccupation of all parties and would respond to the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people.

94. On 9 September, the twelfth Arab Summit Conference, held at Fez (Morocco), concluded its second part by adopting an eight-point peace plan for the Middle East which reaffirmed the rights of the Palestinian people and called for the establishment of an independent Palestinian State, with Jerusalem as its capital. The Plan demanded the withdrawal of Israel from the territories captured during the 1967 war, including Arab Jerusalem, and the dismantling of all settlements established on those territories. The United Nations was called upon to oversee a transition period for the West Bank and Gaza for a few months with the Security Council guaranteeing peace among all States of the region, including the independent Palestinian State, and respect of these principles.

95. The Chairman, who had attended the Fez Summit Conference on behalf of the Committee reported on the results. The Committee noted with satisfaction the high degree of convergence between the proposals of the Fez Summit and the long-standing recommendations of the Committee.

96. The Committee took note of the six-point plan for a Middle East settlement presented on 15 September 1982 by L. I. Brezhnev, Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet and General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. The Committee noted with satisfaction that the plan agreed on major points with the recommendations of the Committee which had been repeatedly endorsed by the General Assembly.

97. The condition in the territories illegally occupied by Israel in the course of its aggressively expansionist policies remained. This is the situation which the Committee asks the General Assembly to consider thoroughly in the light of experience gained so far.

3. Attendance at conferences

98. In accordance with paragraph 3 of resolution 36/120 A, in which the General Assembly, inter alia, authorized the Committee to send delegations or representatives to international conferences where such representation would be considered appropriate, the Committee accepted several invitations in 1982.

99. In 1982 the Committee was represented at the Extraordinary Ministerial Meeting of the Co-ordinating Bureau of the Non-Aligned Countries on the Question of Palestine in Kuwait from 5 to 8 April; the sixth session of the Jerusalem Committee of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, at Ifrane, Morocco, from 6 to 9 May; Conference on Palestine organized by the League of Arab States, at Paris, from 11 to 15 May; the Ministerial Meeting of the Co-ordinating Bureau of the Non-Aligned Countries, at Havana, from 30 May to 4 June; the International Council for Solidarity with the Palestinian People, at Basle, from 26 to 27 June; the Extraordinary Meeting of the Co-ordinating Bureau of the Non-Aligned Countries on the Question of Palestine, at Cyprus, from 15 to 17 July; the thirteenth Ministerial Meeting of the Islamic Conference, at Niamey, from 20 to 26 August; and the twelfth Summit Conference of the Arab League held at Fez, Morocco, from 6 to 9 September.

100. On each of these occasions, representatives of the Committee took the opportunity to make known the work of the Committee and its recommendations and to discuss ways and means of promoting the implementation of those recommendations. Conclusive evidence of considerable understanding of, and sympathy for, the problems of the Palestinian people as well as of interest in the work of the Committee and United Nations action on the question was again noted with appreciation and encouragement.

4. Action taken by other organizations

101. The Committee continued to follow with great interest action taken by other organizations on matters relevant to its work. Such action taken in 1981 after the Committee had submitted its report to the thirty-sixth session of the General Assembly, was duly noted and appreciated. This included: the resolution adopted at the 68th Conference of the Inter-Parliamentary Union held at Havana, from 15 to 23 September 1981; the communiqué of the meeting of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the States Members of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, held at United Nations Headquarters on 3 October 1981.

102. In 1982, action relevant to the work of the Committee undertaken by other organizations included that of the Commission on Human Rights, the Co-ordinating Bureau of the Non-Aligned Countries, the Islamic Conference, and the Committee Al-Qods (Jerusalem), as follows:

(a) Commission on Human Rights

At its thirty-eighth session held from 1 February to 12 March 1982 the Commission adopted resolutions in which it strongly condemned:

- (i) The annexation of parts of the occupied territories, including Jerusalem;
- (ii) The establishment of new Israeli settlements and expansion of the existing settlements on private and public Arab lands, and the transfer of an alien population thereto;
- (iii) The arming of settlers in the occupied territories to commit acts of violence against Arab civilians, the perpetuation of acts of violence by these armed settlers against individuals, causing injury and death and wide scale damage to Arab property;
- (iv) The evacuation, deportation, expulsion, displacement and transfer of Arab inhabitants of the occupied territories, and the denial of their right of return;
- (v) The confiscation and expropriation of Arab property in the occupied territories and all other transactions for the acquisition of land involving Israeli authorities, institutions or nationals on the one hand, and inhabitants or institutions of the occupied territories on the other;
- (vi) The destruction and demolition of Arab houses;
- (vii) Mass arrests, collective punishments, administrative detention and ill-treatment of the Arab population, the torture of persons under detention, and the inhuman conditions in prisons;
- (viii) The pillaging of archeological and cultural property;
- (ix) The interference with religious freedoms and practices as well as with family rights and customs;
- (x) The systematic Israeli repression against universities in the occupied territories, restricting and impeding academic activities of Palestinian universities by subjecting selections of courses, text-books and educational programmes, admission of students and appointment of faculty members to the control and supervision of the military occupation authorities;
- (xi) The illegal exploitation of the natural wealth, resources and population of the occupied territories.

The Commission also condemned the failure of Israel to acknowledge the applicability of the Geneva Convention of 12 August 1949 relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, in Palestine and other Arab territories occupied since 1967.

The Commission furthermore determined that the persistent defiance by Israel of the resolutions and authority of the United Nations and the systematic violations of human rights in the occupied Arab territories, including Palestine, constitutes a continuing threat to international peace and security.

In addition, the Commission reaffirmed the basic principle that the future of the Palestinian people can only be decided with its full participation in all efforts, through its representative, the Palestine Liberation Organization. The Commission also expressed strong opposition to all partial agreements and separate treaties and declared that they had no validity in so far as they purported to determine the future of the Palestinian people and of the Palestinian territories occupied by Israel since 1967, including Jerusalem (E/1982/12-E/CN.4/1982/30).

On 8 September the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and protection of Minorities of the Commission on Human Rights adopted a draft resolution condemning Israel for its indiscriminate bombardment and destruction of Lebanese cities and Palestinian refugee camps.

(b) The Co-ordinating Bureau of the Non-Aligned Countries

- (i) The Extraordinary Ministerial Meeting of the Co-ordinating Bureau of the Non-Aligned Countries, held at Kuwait from 5 to 8 April 1982, reaffirmed its position on the question of Palestine and the Middle East and adopted a plan of action for consideration by the resumed emergency special session. Its comprehensive recommendations are contained in document A/37/205-S/14990;
- (ii) The Ministerial Meeting of the Co-ordinating Bureau of the Non-Aligned Countries, held at Havana from 30 May to 4 June 1982, expressed recognition and commendation of the work of the Committee and decided once again to urge the Security Council to adopt effective measures to implement the Committee's recommendations. The Ministers agreed to support fully the work of the Preparatory Committee for the International Conference on the Question of Palestine to be convened in accordance with General Assembly resolution 36/120 C (A/37/333-S/15278).
- (iii) The Extraordinary Meeting of the Co-ordinating Bureau of the Non-Aligned Countries on the Question of Palestine, held in Cyprus from 15 to 17 July 1982, adopted a communiqué and programme of action relating to the events in Lebanon. The Ministers, at that meeting, decided to request the President of the General Assembly to resume once more the seventh emergency special session not later than the end of August 1982. In addition, the Ministers called upon States Members of the United Nations to review the decision contained in resolution 36/120 C regarding the convening of an International Conference on the Question of Palestine. The Ministers proposed that the date of the Conference be advanced to 1983 (A/37/366-S/15327).

(c) The Thirteenth Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers

The thirteenth Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers, held at Niamey from 22 to 26 August 1982, reaffirmed its stand regarding the Palestinian question and the Middle East by adopting nine resolutions on the subject that extended solidarity with the just cause of Palestinian aspirations.

(d) The sixth session of the Al-Quds (Jerusalem) Committee

The sixth session of the Al-Quds (Jerusalem) Committee was held at Ifrane, Morocco, from 6 to 9 May 1982. The Committee reviewed the situation currently prevailing in Al-Quds and in Palestine and stressed the crime committed by the Zionist authorities, which deliberately murdered two Muslim believers in the precinct of the Al-Aqsa Mosque, seeking thereby to wipe out the Islamic heritage in Al-Quds and in occupied Palestine.

"The Committee," states the declaration, "then stressed the study of the reactions registered following that abominable crime, adding that some countries had taken up the Zionist allegations attributing those crimes to a single individual and not considering them as forming part of the policy of aggression adopted by Israel against the Holy Places.

The Committee renews its determination to continue its support and to mobilize all potentials for the restoration of the inalienable rights of the militant Palestinian people.

"The Al-Quds Committee," states the declaration, "adopted resolutions on support for the resistance of the Palestinian people inside the occupied territories and support for the PLO in its struggle for the restoration of their rights. It also adopted resolutions stressing the need to carry out political and information campaigns and took practical measures for the implementation of those resolutions. In addition, it adopted the resolutions of the Governing Board of the Al-Quds Fund."

B. Action taken in accordance with paragraphs 2 and 3 of General Assembly resolution 36/120 B

103. In paragraph 2 of resolution 36/120 B, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to ensure that the Special Unit on Palestinian Rights continued to discharge the tasks entrusted to it in consultation with the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian people and under its guidance.

104. In paragraph 4 of resolution 36/120 B, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to take necessary action on the redesignation of the Special Unit on Palestinian Rights as the Division for Palestinian Rights in keeping with the political importance of its work and its expanded work programme. The Committee noted with appreciation that the Secretary-General had taken action accordingly.

105. The Committee expressed its strong conviction that the Special Unit had contributed extensively towards broadening general awareness and knowledge of the facts relating to the question of Palestine. The Committee noted with appreciation that action had been taken to provide the Special Unit with additional resources and to redesignate it as a Division in accordance with the request made by the General Assembly in paragraph 3 of resolution 36/120 B.

106. In accordance with paragraph 3 of resolution 36/120 B, three seminars on Palestinian Rights were organized in 1982. For the first time a North American Regional Seminar was organized in New York from 15-19 March 1982 in addition to regional seminars in Valletta, Malta, from 12 to 16 April and in Dakar, Senegal from 9 to 13 August.

107. It was the considered opinion of Committee members who attended these events that the collective contribution of the academicians, parliamentarians and other leading opinion makers participating in the seminars would serve to further understanding among the international community of the intricate and many-faceted issues that make up the Palestinian question.

108. The reports of the seminars held at New York, Valletta and Dakar, together with the programme for action and appeal for a Western European initiative in the Near East issued in Valletta are annexed to the present report. The Committee stresses the importance of these seminars and recommends that the Division for Palestinian Rights should continue to expand its efforts on the basis of the experience hitherto gained.

109. The Committee urges the Division on Palestinian Rights to devote increased attention to regions where impartial information on the question of Palestine is lacking so as to reform public opinion on this issue. These efforts should go beyond distribution of information material and include establishment of contacts with the media.

110. The Committee noted that, with the co-operation of the Department of Public Information and other units of the Secretariat, steps were being taken to produce a film on Palestinian rights and to provide copies of the photographic exhibit of Palestinian Rights installed at United Nations Headquarters for wider use by United Nations information centres. The Committee requested the Department of Public Information to expand its activities and coverage concerning the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.

111. The Committee observed with appreciation that the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People had been commemorated in many capitals in 1981 and recommended that observance of the Day in 1982 and subsequent years should follow the same pattern. It is expected that many Governments will once again observe the Day in an appropriate manner.

C. Action taken in accordance with paragraph 2 of General Assembly resolution 36/120 C

112. By paragraph 2 of General Assembly resolution 36/120 C, the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People was authorized to act as Preparatory Committee for the International Conference on the Question of Palestine scheduled to be held no later than 1984 in accordance with paragraph 1 of the same resolution. The date was later changed to 16 to 27 August 1983.

113. A detailed report of activities concerning preparations for the Conference has been issued separately.

114. It is the hope of the Committee that the proceedings of the Working Group of the Preparatory Committee which are open to all States Members of the United Nations and Permanent Observers to the United Nations would be widely followed since it is the wish of the Committee to encourage universal participation in the International Conference on the Question of Palestine, the importance of which is evidenced daily by the alarming deterioration of conditions in the region.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COMMITTEE

115. The Committee remains firm in its conviction that positive action by the Security Council on the Committee's recommendations would advance prospects for a just and lasting peace in the Middle East since the recommendations constitute the basic principles relating to the problem of Palestine, the core of the conflict. The Committee therefore unanimously decided once again to reiterate the validity of the recommendations as annexed to the present report (annex I).

116. The Committee regrets having to point out that in spite of repeated endorsement of these recommendations by the General Assembly, action has not been taken by the Secretary-General to implement those recommendations. The Committee is convinced that the repression of Palestinians in the occupied territories as well as the tragic events which occurred in Lebanon could have been avoided if the Security Council had taken timely and positive action on the Committee's recommendations. The Committee remains convinced that the situation in the entire Middle East region would benefit from the peaceful resolution of the Palestinian issue.

117. The Committee derives satisfaction in that the General Assembly, at its resumed seventh emergency special session, reaffirmed by a near unanimous vote, on 25 June 1982, its conviction that the question of Palestine is at the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict and that no comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the region will be achieved without the participation on an equal footing of all the parties to the conflict, including the Palestine Liberation Organization as the representative of the Palestinian people, and without the full exercise by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights.

118. The Committee also feels that every effort should continue to be made to achieve a wider understanding of the just cause of the Palestinian people as a major contribution towards an equitable, lasting solution of the question of Palestine. In this connexion, the Committee lays great stress on the importance of universal participation in the International Conference on the Question of Palestine which is to take place in 1983.

119. The Committee stresses that this Conference will provide an overdue but unique opportunity for the international community to guide positive developments in the area and to ensure that it will be utilized to promote ways and means for effective exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.

Recommendations of the Committee endorsed by the General Assembly
at its thirty-first session a/

I. BASIC CONSIDERATIONS AND GUIDELINES

59. The question of Palestine is at the heart of the Middle East problem, and, consequently, the Committee stressed its belief that no solution in the Middle East can be envisaged which does not fully take into account the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people.

60. The legitimate and inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to return to their homes and property and to achieve self-determination, national independence and sovereignty are endorsed by the Committee in the conviction that the full implementation of these rights will contribute decisively to a comprehensive and final settlement of the Middle East crisis.

61. The participation of the Palestine Liberation Organization, the representative of the Palestinian people, on an equal footing with other parties, on the basis of General Assembly resolutions 3236 (XXIX) and 3375 (XXX) is indispensable in all efforts, deliberations and conferences on the Middle East which are held under the auspices of the United Nations.

62. The Committee recalls the fundamental principle of the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force and stresses the consequent obligation for complete and speedy evacuation of any territory so occupied.

63. The Committee considers that it is the duty and the responsibility of all concerned to enable the Palestinians to exercise their inalienable rights.

64. The Committee recommends an expanded and more influential role by the United Nations and its organs in promoting a just solution to the question of Palestine and in the implementation of such a solution. The Security Council, in particular, should take appropriate action to facilitate the exercise by the Palestinians of their right to return to their homes, lands and property. The Committee, furthermore, urges the Security Council to promote action towards a just solution, taking into account all the powers conferred on it by the Charter of the United Nations.

65. It is with this perspective in view and on the basis of the numerous resolutions of the United Nations, after due consideration of all the facts, proposals and suggestions advanced in the course of its deliberations, that the Committee submits its recommendations on the modalities for the implementation of the exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.

II. THE RIGHT OF RETURN

66. The natural and inalienable right of Palestinians to return to their homes is recognized by resolution 194 (III), which the General Assembly has reaffirmed almost every year since its adoption. This right was also unanimously recognized by the Security Council in its resolution 237 (1967); the time for the urgent implementation of these resolutions is long overdue.

67. Without prejudice to the right of all Palestinians to return to their homes, lands and property, the Committee considers the programme of implementation of the exercise of this right may be carried out in two phases:

Phase one

68. The first phase involves the return to their homes of the Palestinians displaced as a result of the war of June 1967. The Committee recommends that:

- (i) The Security Council should request the immediate implementation of its resolution 237 (1967) and that such implementation should not be related to any other condition;
- (ii) The resources of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and/or of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, suitably financed and mandated, may be employed to assist in the solution of any logistical problems involved in the resettlement of those returning to their homes. These agencies could also assist, in co-operation with the host countries and the Palestine Liberation Organization, in the identification of the displaced Palestinians.

Phase two

69. The second phase deals with the return to their homes of the Palestinians displaced between 1948 and 1967. The Committee recommends that:

- (i) While the first phase is being implemented, the United Nations in co-operation with the States directly involved, and the Palestine Liberation Organization as the interim representative of the Palestinian entity, should proceed to make the necessary arrangements to enable Palestinians displaced between 1948 and 1967 to exercise their right to return to their homes and property, in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions, particularly General Assembly resolution 194 (III);
- (ii) Palestinians not choosing to return to their homes should be paid just and equitable compensation as provided for in resolution 194 (III).

III. THE RIGHT TO SELF-DETERMINATION, NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE AND SOVEREIGNTY

70. The Palestinian people has the inherent right to self-determination, national independence and sovereignty in Palestine. The Committee considers that the evacuation of the territories occupied by force and in violation of the principles of the Charter and relevant resolutions of the United Nations is a conditio sine qua non for the exercise by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights of Palestinians to their homes and property and with the establishment of an independent Palestinian entity, the Palestinian people will be able to exercise its rights to self-determination and to decide its form of government without external interference.

71. The Committee also feels that the United Nations has an historical duty and responsibility to render all assistance necessary to promote the economic development and prosperity of the Palestinian entity.

72. To these ends, the Committee recommends that:

(a) A time-table should be established by the Security Council for the complete withdrawal by Israeli occupation forces from those areas occupied in 1967; such withdrawal should be completed no later than 1 June 1977;

(b) The Security Council may need to provide temporary peace-keeping forces in order to facilitate the process of withdrawal;

(c) Israel should be requested by the Security Council to desist from the establishment of new settlements and to withdraw during this period from settlements established since 1967 in the occupied territories. Arab property and all essential services in these areas should be maintained intact;

(d) Israel should also be requested to abide scrupulously by the provisions of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, and to declare, pending its speedy withdrawal from these territories, its recognition of the applicability of that Convention;

(e) The evacuated territories, with all property and services intact, should be taken over by the United Nations, which with the co-operation of the League of Arab States, will subsequently hand over these evacuated areas to the Palestine Liberation Organization as the representative of the Palestinian people;

(f) The United Nations should, if necessary, assist in establishing communications between Gaza and the West Bank;

(g) As soon as the independent Palestinian entity has been established, the United Nations, in co-operation with the States directly involved and the Palestinian entity, should, taking into account General Assembly resolution 3375 (XXX), make further arrangements for the full implementation of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, the resolution of outstanding problems and the establishment of a just and lasting peace in the region, in accordance with all relevant United Nations resolutions;

(h) The United Nations should provide the economic and technical assistance necessary for the consolidation of the Palestinian entity;

ANNEX II

Report of the Fifth United Nations Seminar on the Question
of Palestine held at United Nations Headquarters, New York
from 15 to 19 March 1982

1. The Fifth United Nations Seminar on the Question of Palestine, with its central theme "The Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People", took place at United Nations Headquarters in New York from 15 to 19 March 1982, in accordance with the terms of General Assembly resolution 36/120 B. Nine meetings were held, at which 20 panelists presented papers on various aspects of the Question of Palestine.
2. The United Nations Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People was represented by a delegation consisting of Mr. Massamba Sarré (Senegal), Chairman of the Committee; Mr. Raúl Roa-Kouri (Cuba), Vice Chairman; Mr. Victor J. Gauci (Malta), Rapporteur; Mr. H. Ott (German Democratic Republic); Mr. Natarajan Krishnan (India); and Mr. Zehdi L. Terzi, Permanent Observer of the Palestine Liberation Organization to the United Nations. Mr. Victor J. Gauci acted as Rapporteur of the Seminar.
3. The opening session of the Seminar, on 15 March 1982, was addressed by Mr. William B. Buffum, Under-Secretary-General for Political and General Assembly Affairs of the United Nations. In welcoming the participants on behalf of the Secretary-General, Mr. Buffum observed that efforts to find a just solution to the question of Palestine remained one of the main preoccupations of the United Nations; these efforts should be maintained since as long as the problem persisted it posed a threat to international peace and security. He expressed the hope that the Seminar would be a major contribution to future consideration of the question in the United Nations which was widely accepted as the framework within which a comprehensive solution had to be found.
4. At the same session, Mr. Massamba Sarré, Chairman of the Committee, gave a brief account of the Committee's work and stressed the importance of ensuring that all facts surrounding the question of Palestine reach the public so that a proper understanding of the issues would be achieved.
5. The opening session of the Seminar was also addressed by Mr. Natarajan Krishnan, Acting President of the United Nations Council for Namibia, Mr. Gervais Charles, Rapporteur of the United Nations Special Committee against Apartheid and Mr. Frank Owen Abdullah, Chairman of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples.
6. A message from Mr. Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization was conveyed to the Seminar by Mr. Zehdi L. Terzi, Permanent Observer of the Palestine Liberation Organization.
7. The Seminar was attended by Mrs. Lucille Mair, Secretary-General designate of the International Conference on the Question of Palestine.
8. Seven panels were established to consider different aspects of the central theme "The inalienable rights of the Palestinian people". These panels and their panelists were as follows:

- A. Panel I: The Nature and the Role of the Palestine Liberation Organization:
Mr. Khaled Abu Hudayb.
- B. Panel II: The Palestine Issue and North American Public Opinion:
Professor Thomas Naylor, Rev. Donald Wagner,
Dr. Philip Rivera.
- C. Panel III: The Palestine Question in the Context of Military Occupation:
Prof. Harold McDougal, Dr. Khaliq Nakhleh, Dr. Egbal Ahmed.
- D. Panel IV: Domestic and Strategic Influences in the Formation of
American and Canadian Policies:
Dr. Mordecai Briemberg, Prof. Mark Solomon, Mr. Jack O'Dell,
Miss Gail Pressberg.
- E. Panel V: The Fundamental Rights of the Palestinian People:
Prof. Jamal Nassar, Rev. Joseph L. Ryan, S.J.,
The Honourable Senator Heath Macquarrie.
- F. Panel VI: The Evolution of American and Canadian Policies on the
Question of Palestine:
Prof. Frank Epp, Prof. Paul Noble, Prof. John Quigley.
- G. Panel VII: The Role of the United Nations in Seeking Effective Measures
to Enable the Palestinian People to Attain and Exercise its
Rights:
Prof. Charlotte Teuber, His Excellency, Mr. Victor J. Gauci.

9. In view of the well-researched and in-depth analysis contained in the papers presented at the Seminar, and in accordance with established practice, the papers will be published in full by the United Nations, with the report of the Seminar, as a contribution to a wider understanding of the question of Palestine.

10. The presentation of papers at each meeting was followed by a lively, spontaneous and stimulating exchange of views. Discussion covered all aspects of the question of Palestine, particularly the rights of the people which, it was agreed, were being systematically and continuously violated by Israel.

11. It was consistently maintained that failure to resolve the Palestinian issue in accordance with various United Nations resolutions would only exacerbate the crisis and present an ever-increasing threat to international peace and security. The stability of the region, the attainment of an environment in which all inhabitants can live as a community and the achievement of peace depended directly upon the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and its aspirations.

12. The Seminar was provided with a detailed account of the institutions of the Palestine Liberation Organization. It was noted that the Palestine Liberation Organization had wide-ranging and increasing responsibilities in the political, economic, social, educational and cultural fields.

13. It was observed that Israel was waging a total war to obliterate continuous Palestinian efforts to assert their rights, and among the most sinister aspects of its policy was the deliberate suppression of Palestinian institutions by Israel.

14. The Palestinian struggle for survival was also total and not limited to military activities. This fact had been underplayed in the media.

15. In order to propagate a more comprehensive and fair understanding of the real nature of the Palestine Liberation Organization, new links should be established which would make up for the failure of the mass media to report all the facts surrounding the issue as well as its tendency to present them with a bias against the Palestine Liberation Organization. Renewed efforts should be made to counter negative and unbalanced attitudes in North America. Diverse and strengthened efforts should be made to dispel the erroneous impression propagated by the media that the Palestine Liberation Organization was only a military organization bent on terrorism. Its activities in the economic, social, educational, cultural and welfare fields, if better known, would lead to a clearer understanding in North America and to the realization that the Palestine Liberation Organization provides a political platform as well as infrastructure for socio-economic progress of its people which constitutes the very essence of a State.

16. In brief, as its objective, the Palestinian Liberation Organization does not seek confrontation, but rather the co-operation of all peace-loving peoples.

17. In discussing the fundamental rights of the Palestinian people, the Seminar noted with appreciation that these rights had not only been defined by the United Nations but also regularly reaffirmed. Attention was drawn particularly to:

(a) General Assembly resolution 3236 (XXIX) which elaborated these inalienable rights; and

(b) General Assembly resolution 3210 (XXIX) which considered the Palestinian people to be a principal party to the question of Palestine and invited the Palestine Liberation Organization, the representative of the Palestinian people, to participate in the deliberations of the General Assembly on the question of Palestine.

Both these resolutions were emphasized in resolution ES-7/2 adopted by the General Assembly at its seventh emergency special session.

18. The Seminar was of the opinion that no deviation should be permitted from the rights recognized by these General Assembly resolutions, the most important being:

(a) The right of the Palestinians to return to their homes and property in Palestine, from which they have been forcibly displaced and uprooted;

(b) The right of the Palestinian people to self-determination without external interference;

(c) The right of the Palestinian people to establish their own independent and sovereign State in Palestine;

(d) The right to territorial integrity and national unity;

(e) The right of the Palestine Liberation Organization, the representative of the Palestinian people, to participate on an equal footing in all efforts, deliberations and conferences on the question of Palestine and the situation in the Middle East within the framework of the United Nations.

19. It was agreed that the heart of the Middle East problem, the question of Palestine, inevitably will remain the central issue which must be resolved if peace was to be based on reason.

20. In this context, many elements in the Camp David Accords were pointed out, which, through the refusal to accept the Palestine Liberation Organization, the representative of the Palestinian people, as an equal partner in the negotiations, by attempting to determine the destiny of the Palestinian people in their absence, and by denying them their fundamental rights, violated United Nations resolutions. This aspect is particularly evident in the interpretation and implementation of the Accords by Israel.

21. In discussing the Palestinian issue and North American public opinion, after a detailed analysis of the more important factors involved, it was concluded that while there was gradual awareness building in the United States as to the Palestinian cause and their fundamental human rights, there was still major barriers which stood in opposition to Americans accepting the Palestinian cause as just and human.

22. There were additional violations of international law by Israel which featured in the discussions, particularly its bombings of Lebanon, its attack on the Iraqi nuclear reactor, subject though it was to International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards, and the annexation of the Syrian Golan Heights. In the course of the Seminar, it was noted with extreme concern that once again Israel had resorted to repressive measures by forcibly dismantling the elected municipal council of Al-Bireh, a town in the occupied territory lying to the north of Jerusalem. This arbitrary action had led to widespread unrest leading to casualties inflicted by the Israeli occupying forces.

23. Since only an elementary stage of awareness on the Palestinian question has been reached in the North American continent, there was a need for striking a positive responsive chord in order to gain a hearing. It was suggested that an increased and better organized campaign should be made on behalf of the Palestinian aspect on a variety of levels from churches to Arab-American groups to grass-roots organizing efforts. The role of the non-governmental organizations was considered as particularly relevant in this regard. This level of activity should consider both political and non-political initiatives.

24. The Seminar had the benefit of hearing, from a resident of the occupied West Bank, a first-hand account of the harsh living conditions imposed by Israel under its military occupation. The Seminar also greatly appreciated the impressions and conclusions drawn by impartial observers who had visited the West Bank and Gaza in recent times and seen for themselves the oppressive measures applied in the context of military occupation.

25. Particular mention was made of the occupation authority's military order No. 854 which placed crippling restrictions on higher education in the occupied territories through extensive censorship of teaching materials and restrictions on extracurricular programmes and events and on the freedom of movement of individual students and faculty members.

26. The conclusion was drawn that military order No. 854 was part and parcel of Israel's so-called "iron-fist" policy adopted in the wake of the Camp David accords and that it violated international law and The Hague Conventions. It was pointed out however that, far from submission, this military order had resulted in a renewal of Palestinian consciousness and resistance.

27. Nevertheless, an analysis of the statements made and plans announced by Israeli leaders made it clear that there was a very real danger that the West Bank and Gaza would be annexed by Israel and that the Arab inhabitants would either be exiled or reduced to living in reservations. It was contended that the world was at present starkly witnessing the final phases of Israeli attempts at the liquidation of Palestine.

28. Parallels were drawn between Israeli policies in Galilee occupied in 1948, and the West Bank which was occupied in 1967. It was shown that in both regions, good agricultural land - military occupation had been used to achieve the twin targets of land and people - on the one hand, the judaization through settlements, and on the other hand, depopulation by dispersal of the existing Arab inhabitants. The same considerations as applied to the West Bank, applied equally to the Gaza Strip.

29. In evaluating United States policy in the Middle East, in a detailed documented analysis, it was argued that, regionally and globally, the immediate consequences of the American-Israeli alliance was United States support for Israel's persistent assault upon Palestinian rights. A repeated tolerance for Israel's truculent activities in the region had been demonstrated over a period of time.

30. At the core of the policy was a military response to rising regional aspirations for self-determination and nationalization of resources. As part of that core was a continuing hostility to the Palestine Liberation Organization which is perceived by United States policy makers as the cornerstone of regional and external radicalization. In contrast, Western Europe showed growing signs of pressing for its own independent approach to the regional crisis, including a clear commitment to Palestinian self-determination.

31. It was maintained that there was a strong factual basis for attributing to the United States responsibility for violations by Israel of the rights of the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza since continued financial assistance to Israel had permitted persistence in those violations, of which the United States was fully aware and which the administration had frequently criticized.

32. Among the examples given were the United States reaction to the acquisition of the West Bank and Gaza and Israel's refusal to withdraw from those territories, as well as Israel's policy of illegal settlements in the occupied territories which, though condemned, could be continued because of the high level of funding by the United States that was indirectly used to finance the settlements. It was held that by pursuing this policy the United States was in breach of its international-legal obligations towards the Palestinian people.

33. There had been a long-term tendency in United States policy to make Palestine an exception from the traditional commitment to the universal principle of self-determination. This inconsistency could be traced to Israel's standing in American thought and politics and the consequent essentially irreconcilable commitment of succeeding administrations to that country.

34. The evaluation of Canadian policy on the question of Palestine was also traced, Canada's independent role in foreign policy was stressed, backed by well documented analysis. It was stated that Canada's interests in the Middle East stemmed basically from various considerations but that it was only in times of crisis that the situation attracted concentrated Canadian attention. The view was expressed that there was a distinct pro-Israeli leaning in Canada's attitude and policies, mainly due to conceptions of legitimacy held by the political élite, the structure of interests of the Government and the views of allies, all of which basically pointed in the same direction and led Canadians to lose sight of the Palestinians as a people with an identity and national consciousness.

35. An important ingredient in the development of Canadian popular and government opinion was the strength and efficiency of a number of pro-Israel lobbies and pressure groups. It was noted, however, that there was in Canada a slow awakening sense of co-responsibility for the current situation in the area and a broadening recognition of its inequities and iniquities. There had been a growing perception of the aims of Israel. Much of this awareness was the result of the intransigence of Israel, no less than an increased sensitivity to the fate and state of the Palestinians. Slight though the improvement had been there were discernibly some prospects for even-handedness in Canada's approach to the problem of the Middle East. The West Bank and Gaza had been identified as clearly defined territory in which the Palestinians had a right to a homeland.

36. It was noted that a possible means of alerting the North American public to Israel's denial of Palestinian self-determination would be to draw parallels between the status of Namibia and the status of Palestine. Both Palestine and Namibia are former League of Nations Mandates, and are at present occupied by racist régimes. The alertness of the North American public to the problem of South Africa's illegal occupation of Namibia could facilitate their understanding of Israel's illegal occupation.

37. The Seminar traced and emphasized the important role of the United Nations as the framework within which a settlement of the question of Palestine could be found. The Organization had a responsibility to seek effective measures to put an end to Israel's illegal occupation and policies and practices, and to provide a solution which respected the resolutions of the United Nations. The longer an equitable solution was delayed, the more complex and intractable became the problem.

38. The question of Palestine fell squarely within the ambit of the United Nations, which inherited the problem at the very beginning of its existence. The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People had been given the mandate to draw up a programme of implementation to enable the Palestinians to exercise their inalienable rights. This the Committee had done after thorough analysis of the problem, after soliciting opinions from all concerned, and after having reviewed opinions previously expressed on the question.

39. The Committee's recommendations have been repeatedly endorsed by the General Assembly but not yet implemented because of the negative vote of one of the permanent members in the Security Council.

40. The Committee's recommendations advocated a just and peaceful solution based on United Nations resolutions and international law, which would guarantee the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. Progress was still awaited. The

Committee has, therefore, been authorized to promote implementation of its recommendations through dissemination of information and energetic insistence on keeping the cause of the Palestinians at the forefront of attention of the international community within and outside the United Nations.

41. The task had proved to be a difficult one because the adverse campaign of media misinformation relentlessly continued. The Committee has striven to redress the distortions and misinterpretations on the issue of Palestine.

42. The international character of the Holy City of Jerusalem attracted frequent reference. It was stressed that Israel's decision to annex Jerusalem and to move its capital to that City had been condemned and declared null and void by the international community. It was emphasized that Israel's legislation and its actions on Jerusalem should never be accepted by the international community.

43. In view of the ongoing repression by Israel in the occupied territories, the Committee also has to monitor events and report violations as they occur.

44. The Committee had already gathered overwhelming support within the United Nations behind its recommendations. Action by the Security Council was still awaited. The Committee appreciated that there were still some obstacles to be overcome, but there was a noticeable shift even in the ranks of those influential countries which at the present time stood on the sidelines.

45. The Committee intended to solidify the support already gained and to encourage positive moves which would strengthen the momentum for an equitable solution. Many encouraging statements had been noted, and the principle of self-determination of peoples had received a boost in the Helsinki Final Act. The spirit of Helsinki was universal in its scope and application.

46. Reference was made to the International Conference on the Question of Palestine which was expected to take place not later than 1984. It was hoped that that conference would bring concrete results by climaxing the search for effective measures which would enable the Palestinian people peacefully to attain and exercise its inalienable rights. The United Nations should continue to make every effort and engage all related agencies to help in that effort - the achievement of an equitable, lasting solution to the plight of the Palestinian people.

47. The Seminar concluded its work with an expression by the Chairman of appreciation to the participants, especially the panelists who had, by their dedication and care in preparing their papers, contributed greatly to the success of the Seminar.

Report of the Sixth United Nations Seminar on the Question
of Palestine held at the Mediterranean Conference Centre,
Valletta, Malta, from 12 to 16 April 1982

1. The Sixth United Nations Seminar on the Question of Palestine with the title "The Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People" as its central theme, was held at the Mediterranean Conference Centre, Valletta, Malta, from 12 to 16 April 1982, in accordance with the terms of General Assembly resolution 36/120 B. Eight meetings were held and 16 panelists presented papers on various aspects of the question of Palestine.
2. The United Nations Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People was represented by a delegation consisting of Mr. Massamba Sarré (Senegal), Chairman of the Committee; Mr. Victor J. Gauci (Malta), Rapporteur; Mr. Abdullah Kamil (Indonesia); Dr. Ferenc Somogyi (Hungary); Mr. Bechir Chebaane (Tunisia); and Mr. Zehdi L. Terzi, Permanent Observer of the Palestine Liberation Organization to the United Nations. His Excellency Mr. Victor J. Gauci acted as Rapporteur of the Seminar.
3. The Seminar was attended by Mrs. Lucille Mair, Secretary-General Designate of the International Conference on the Question of Palestine.
4. The opening session of the Seminar on 12 April 1982 was convened in the distinguished presence of the Acting-President of the Republic of Malta, The Honourable Dr. Daniel Micallef and was addressed by The Honourable Dr. Alex Sceberras Trigona, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Culture of the Republic of Malta.
5. The Minister outlined the justified struggle of the Palestinian people for self-determination and stressed the recognition and support, including diplomatic accreditation to the Palestine Liberation Organization, given by Malta to their cause. Over many years the Palestinian people, despite many disappointments, continue to place their faith in the United Nations. This faith deserves to be rewarded with an equitable and peaceful outcome for the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people.
6. The role of the United Nations in disseminating objective information on the Palestine issue was also outlined; the Seminar in Valletta was considered an important forerunner to active European involvement in the search for an equitable solution. It was necessary to investigate the constraints that so far have prevented Western Europe from making its effective contribution to a constructive Middle East policy.
7. The Venice Declaration, which spoke forthrightly of the rights of the Palestinian people and its representation, was an important element in European involvement, but the hopes raised in that Declaration have not yet been fulfilled. The Valletta Seminar could serve to consolidate progress and to identify new avenues to pursue, so that progress will no longer be delayed.
8. At the same opening session. Mr. Massamba Sarré, Chairman of the Committee, gave a brief account of the Committee's work. He also highlighted Europe's role in the shaping of history, as well as in the formation of world opinion. In this

context, he emphasized the importance of the Seminar as one approach in helping to ensure that the rights of the Palestinians would be implemented.

9. The tragic violence perpetrated in Jerusalem by Israeli soldiers reported on that same day was a grim reminder of the constant deterioration of the situation and the consequent need for a new momentum in the search for a solution. The Seminar immediately decided to send a telegram to the President of the Security Council and another to the Chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organization, Mr. Arafat, deploring the Israeli action.

10. A message from Mr. Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization was conveyed to the Seminar by Mr. Mourad Essa Bahloul, Representative of the Palestine Liberation Organization in Malta.

11. A message from the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States, Mr. Chedli Klibi, was conveyed to the Seminar by his personal representative to the Seminar, Mr. Youssef Al-Fayoumi.

12. The Seminar was graced by the presence of His Eminence Msgr. Hilarion Capucci, Archbishop of Jerusalem who addressed an inspiring message to the Seminar. He emphasized the essentially humanitarian nature of the problem of the Palestinians which should call for a universally positive response. The Palestinians wanted recognition as a people, entitled to their own nation and to their flag, thus attaining their inherent dignity, and liberty as any human person.

13. Six panels were established so as to consider different aspects of the central theme "The Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People". These panels and their panelists were as follows:

(a) The Fundamental rights of the Palestinian people

The Hon. Mr. Andrew Faulds, M. P. (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

Senator Luigi Granelli, M.P. (Italy)

Mr. Vladimir Ivanovich Kesselyov (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics)

Dr. Vladimir S. Koshelev (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic)

Dr. Jerzy Piotrowski (Poland)

(b) The Nature and the role of the Palestine Liberation Organization

Dr. Sami Musallam (Palestinian)

(c) Israeli settlements policies in the occupied Arab territories

Dr. Becir Meholjic (Yugoslavia)

Mr. Bela Szilagyi (Hungary)

(d) The Palestine issue and European public opinion

Mr. Charles Saint-Prot (France)

The Hon. Mr. Ernest Ross, M. P. (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

(e) The evolution of European attitudes and policies on the question of Palestine

Mr. Tiji de Clerq (Belgium)

Mr. Jean Le Drian (France)

Mr. Leonidas Kyrkos (Greece)

Dr. George Vella (Malta)

(f) The role of the United Nations and the search for effective measures to enable the Palestinian people to attain and exercise its rights

Mr. Marcel Dinu (Romania)

The Hon. Mr. Giancarlo Pajetta, M. P. (Italy)

Dr. Ingo Schoenfelder (German Democratic Republic)

14. In accordance with established practice, the opening statements and the papers presented by the panelists will be published in full by the United Nations, together with the report of the Seminar, as a further contribution towards objective appraisal of the question of Palestine.

15. The vigorous discussions which followed the presentation of papers at each meeting covered several aspects of the question of Palestine and helped further to elaborate on some of the points made by the panelists.

16. The Seminar agreed that a lasting and stable peace in the Middle East required the attainment by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights. The continued occupation of Arab lands and the arrogant disregard of the rights of the Arab people of Palestine had made the Palestinian issue one of the most acute problems of our time requiring a political settlement on the basis of internationally recognized principles.

17. The United Nations has consistently reiterated and reaffirmed the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, but these continued to be violated and their realization frustrated by Israel, in defiance of international public opinion and in violation of international law.

18. The Seminar noted that in addition to the non-aligned countries of Europe the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and other Socialist European countries had consistently supported the inalienable rights of the Palestinians and had made constructive suggestions in attempts to enable the Palestinian people to exercise those rights.

19. Among these suggestions was the effort to renew the Geneva-Middle East Conferences, with the participation on an equal footing of the representatives of the Palestine Liberation Organization; the joint United States-Soviet Statement of October 1977; and the proposal by L. I. Brezhnev, Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet and General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union for an honest, collective search for an all-embracing, just and realistic settlement in the Middle East. This could be done in the framework of a specially-convened international conference with the participation of all interested parties, including the Palestine Liberation Organization.

20. The European Economic Community more recently had adopted a constructive attitude on this issue and had endorsed the principle that recognition of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people was one of the basic conditions for a lasting peace in the region, together with the need to provide international guarantees for the security of all the States in the region and the need to associate the Palestine Liberation Organization in the comprehensive peace negotiations.

21. It was felt that urgent and concerted action was required from the United States of America and members of the European Economic Community to be fully behind all international efforts to stop the Israeli process of acquisition of territory by force, which in itself was contrary to international law and presented a serious impediment to a peaceful solution of the problem.

22. Reference was also made to the proposals by Prince Fahd of Saudi Arabia which were considered as a possibility for initiating a dialogue among the interested parties.

23. The Seminar was of the view that there was a clear linkage between the right of Palestinians to self-determination and their right to return to Palestine. It felt that too often plans for recognition of the Palestinian people's right to self-determination were restricted in application to those Palestinians who had remained in Palestine under Israeli occupation, and no account was made for the return of Palestinian refugees. This omission did not apply to the recommendation by the United Nations Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People.

24. The nature and representative role of the Palestine Liberation Organization was discussed in detail. It was pointed out that more States had recognized the Palestine Liberation Organization and have established relations with it than with Israel. It was incontestable that the Organization was more than a political party or liberation front - it was an institution which has the functions of a State and provides a national framework for different Palestinian mass organizations and individuals.

25. The question of Jerusalem and its importance was emphasized. Israel's decision to enact legislation proclaiming Jerusalem as its capital was regarded as one of the most serious indications of its insincerity in placing insurmountable obstacles against a comprehensive peace settlement. The attempt unilaterally to impose a juridical status of the Holy City, which is unique in its religious and universalist character, was in direct contradiction to international law and has implications well beyond the issue of Palestinian rights.

26. The Seminar was given a detailed account of the aggressively expansionist settlements policy continuously pursued by Israel, in violation of accepted international norms. In spite of the strong demonstration of world public opinion against this policy, it had gained added momentum since 1977. It was evident that the Israeli leadership had a double aim: to change the demographic structure of the area and reduce the proportion of the Arab population in Jerusalem.

27. Recent repressive measures, such as the dismissal of legally-elected mayors and the brutal repression of the spontaneous demonstrations of the inhabitants, increased tension and constituted a threat to international peace and, in particular, to the security of the Mediterranean region. It was clear that these policies were a further step in the preparations for a planned Israeli annexation of the occupied Palestinian Arab territories.

28. The host country notified the Seminar that in response to the appeal of His Majesty King Khalid of Saudi Arabia, it had temporarily closed its airports as a gesture of support and solidarity with the Arab and Moslem people, over the Israeli attack on the holy Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem and against unarmed Palestinian people.

29. In discussing European public opinion on the question of Palestine, it was stated that the media in Western Europe, though giving coverage to events in the Middle East, generally tended to convey a bias in their reportage on the Middle East conflict from the question of Palestine. When the Palestinian cause was referred to their legitimate armed struggle was often distorted as terrorism.

30. It was noted that there was evidence of manipulation of major sections of public opinion in Western Europe. This was made possible, on the one hand, by the existence of a powerful and influential group hostile to the Palestinian cause in particular and to the Arab people in general and, on the other hand, because of certain shortcomings in the field of information among the Arab information services.

31. A change was, however, noticeable over the past few years. The Palestinian cause was a just one, and, once heard, its conviction was irrefutable. The misinformation, or even "conspiracy of silence" was now being challenged in many Western European countries, within the influential ranks of church organizations, trade unions, academic and parliamentary institutions. In addition, the European disenchantment with the Israeli policies under the Likud Government was growing with each additional act of repression and intransigence.

32. The principal role of the media in projecting an image favourable to Israel was traced and its origins discussed. The Zionists are most influential in the domain of the media, which they mobilize to transform the fundamental nature of the problem, to subordinate the legitimate aspirations of Palestinians to Zionist designs and to the Jewish historical experience, and to disassociate the Palestinian cause from other national liberation movements. To counteract this, it was felt that attempts should be made to prove that any hostility towards Israeli policies had no relation to anti-semitism and that European security was in no way directly tied to Israeli politics.

33. In tracing the evolution of Western European policies and attitudes on the question of Palestine, the influence of the United States of America on these attitudes was stressed. It was suspected that even those Western European nations

which were more sympathetic to the plight of the Palestinians and were normally prepared to support them nevertheless felt reluctant to isolate the position of the United States and were awaiting the outcome of the policy review by the present United States administration.

34. It was noted that Israel relied heavily on United States aid and in particular on military aid, so as to maintain a quantitative and qualitative superiority over its Arab neighbours. This policy is also backed by some Western European countries, not only in economic aid but also in military assistance, in addition to the immigration of Jewish manpower into Israel from all over Europe and North America.

35. The new awakening on the issue dates back to 1973. The first solid counter-reaction took the form of the oil embargo, and this gave rise to a significant shift in attitudes. There has been a gradual shift noticeable in the official policy followed by Western European governments, and an even more pronounced change in public opinion, as evidenced by the many pro-Palestinian demonstrations and the formation of pro-Palestinian groups. This movement at the grass-roots level is gaining momentum; it needs to be fed with new information and encouraged to become more vocal.

36. It was suggested that there should be a sophisticated information campaign for a better understanding of the true Palestinian cause, at all levels of influence such as the media, trade unions, youth organizations, non-governmental organizations and religious institutions. This could include the production of a film which dramatizes the question of Palestine. The infrastructure and the means already exist and it was only a question of co-ordination and organization.

37. The United Nations role in the search for a solution to the problem of Palestine was reviewed and carefully analysed. It was maintained that the United Nations had a great responsibility to give effect to a solution stemming directly from the provisions of the United Nations Charter and from General Assembly resolution 181 (II) of 29 November 1947 and other relevant resolutions of the United Nations.

38. In reviewing the history of United Nations involvement in the question, it was noted that considerable progress had been made in the recognition of the political aspects of the legitimate Palestinian demands and in defining the basic principles for a settlement of the Middle East conflict and the Palestine issue through peaceful means.

39. While recognizing the limitations within which the United Nations worked, it was agreed that it was possible for the United Nations to make further progress on this issue through the continued efforts of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, the International Conference scheduled to take place no later than 1984, and further action in the General Assembly and the Security Council and other United Nations bodies.

40. Such action could include, within the Security Council, the positive examination of the recommendations of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and the adoption of a comprehensive resolution which would give recognition to the Palestinian peoples' inalienable rights and the right of all States in the region to exist in peace and within secure boundaries.

41. Within the General Assembly it was suggested that decisions should be adopted which would ensure that the International Conference on the Question of Palestine would find effective ways and means of achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the problem.

42. In this connection it was recalled that the Co-ordinating Bureau of the Non-Aligned Movement had at its meeting in Kuwait in April 1982 called upon the Secretary-General to undertake at the earliest possible time, contacts with all parties to the Arab-Israeli conflict with a view to finding concrete ways and means to achieve a comprehensive, just and lasting solution. That meeting had also called upon the President of the General Assembly to resume the meeting of the seventh emergency special session on the question of Palestine no later than 20 April 1982.

43. The United Nations remained the only appropriate international framework capable of solving the problems of the Middle East and Palestine. Other partial agreements, such as the Camp David Accords negotiated outside the framework of the United Nations and without the participation of representatives of the Palestine Liberation Organization, made no effective provision for the exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, thus complicating and retarding the prospects of a comprehensive solution.

44. The moral and political authority of the United Nations should be used to bring about an objective approach to the question of Palestine.

45. Gratitude was expressed to the panelists for the high quality and depth which characterized the studies they had submitted and which had generated so much stimulating debates.

46. A Programme of Action was adopted by the Seminar (appendix I) which also addressed an Appeal to Western European Governments for justice in Palestine (appendix II). A further Appeal for a Western European initiative in the Near East was addressed by the Western European participants in the Seminar (appendix III).

47. The Seminar concluded with the adoption of its report and with an expression of gratitude by the participants to the Government of Malta for permitting the Seminar to be held in Valletta, for the co-operation and generous assistance it had extended in the organization of the Seminar, for the interest it had taken in its proceedings and for the friendly atmosphere in which it was held.

Appendix I

Programme of Action

I

A sophisticated campaign should be launched in Western Europe to promote the Palestinian cause, and to do it at all levels - the media, trade unions, youth and women's organizations, non-governmental organizations and religious institutions. This could include the production of an information film which dramatizes the Palestinian question. Existing means and resources may be utilized to pursue this aim.

II

The Secretary-General of the United Nations is urged to ensure that the Special Unit on Palestine Rights concentrate its efforts on increasing its contacts throughout Europe by establishing closer liaison with non-governmental organizations, the media and the other groups interested in the question of Palestine, so as to organize one or more regional meetings on the question of Palestine, at an appropriate time to be agreed upon, which would give maximum publicity to the just cause of the Palestinian people and promote effective governmental action to achieve an equitable solution.

Appendix II

The Valletta Appeal to Western Europe for Justice in Palestine
Malta, 16 April 1982

We, the participants in the Sixth United Nations Seminar on the Question of Palestine,

Concerned at the situation in illegally-occupied Palestine,

Concerned also at the acts of repression frequently and currently perpetrated by Israel on the Arab inhabitants of these territories,

Concerned at the threat to peace in the area as a result of these acts,

Deploring Israel's continued refusal to abide by United Nations resolutions, its violation of international law and the Charter of the United Nations and its defiance of world public opinion,

Anxious to promote a just and peaceful solution,

Conscious of the potentially constructive role that Western Europe can, and has a moral responsibility to, play in promoting a resolution of the problem,

Convinced that an impartial consideration of the question of Palestine by all Governments would undoubtedly lead to the restoration of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people and to a just solution of the question, thus remove existing tensions which constitute a threat to international peace and security,

Appeal to the Governmental organizations and people of Western Europe to urge their Governments urgently to adopt an impartial approach to the question of Palestine and to assume their proper role in restoring the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people on the basis of the recommendations of the United Nations Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People thereby promoting a peaceful solution to a problem which has endangered international peace and security for an entire generation.

Appendix III

Appeal for a Western European initiative in the Near East

For 35 years the situation of the Palestinian people has been constantly deteriorating: half of these people have been deprived of their lands and are living in the unacceptable condition of refugees; the other half are living under occupation and are the victims of repression, as is shown by the recent incidents in the West Bank area.

A defenceless people has been subjected to a veritable martyrdom, in violation of all the rules of international law and all the resolutions of the United Nations since 1947.

We, Europeans of all political and intellectual tendencies, who are participating in the Sixth United Nations Seminar on the Question of Palestine behind held in Malta, have the duty to declare that the situation imposed on the Palestinian people is intolerable and that it is time for a just solution to this problem to be found.

Europe should demand that the State of Israel put an end to its aggressive and expansionist policy and withdraw from all the occupied Arab and Palestinian territories. The exercise by the Palestinian refugees of their right to return should be guaranteed. Like all other peoples, the Palestinian people should have the right of exercising their inalienable right to self-determination within a sovereign State on the territory of their fatherland and on the soil of their ancestors.

In addition, talks towards the achievement of a just and lasting peace in the Near East should be opened with the participation of all the parties concerned, including the Palestine Liberation Organization, which is the sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.

From Malta, we address an appeal to the parliamentarians, political parties, trade unions, organizations for solidarity and intellectuals of the European Community to give their support to an initiative which will express the desire of the European peoples to see the Palestinian people at last living in their own homeland in peace, freedom and dignity.

This initiative, which will include official recognition of the Palestine Liberation Organization as the sole representative of the Palestinian people, should be based on the United Nations resolutions in favour of recognition of the inalienable national rights of the Palestinians as constituting the basis for a just and lasting peace in the Near East. Only this global peace will guarantee the security of all the peoples and States of the region, and it remains the essential condition for security throughout the Mediterranean area.

Accordingly, the signatories invite all those forces that are concerned for justice and peace to organize a European Conference to be held in Athens in November 1982.

Malta, 15 April 1982

Signatories:

Tyl DECLERCQ, Christian-Democrat Senator from Belgium

Andrew FAULDS, Labour Member of Parliament from the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

Luigi GRANELLI, Christian-Democrat Senator from Italy

Leonidas KYRKOS, Communist Deputy from the European Assembly (Greece)

Jean-Yves LE DRIAN, Socialist Deputy from France

Giancarlo PAJETTA, Communist Deputy from Italy

Ernie ROSS, Labour Member of Parliament from the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

Charles SAINT-PROT, Chairman of the Committee for Peace in the Near East (France)

George VELLA, Labour Member of Parliament from Malta

Report of the Seventh United Nations Seminar on the Question of Palestine held at the Centre International d'Echanges, Dakar, Senegal, from 9-13 August 1982

1. The Seventh United Nations Seminar on the Question of Palestine with the title "The Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People" as its central theme was held at the Centre International d'Echanges, Dakar, Senegal, from 9 to 13 August 1982. Seven meetings were held and 14 panelists presented papers on various aspects of the question of Palestine.
2. The United Nations Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People was represented by a delegation consisting of Mr. Massamba Sarré (Senegal), Chairman of the Committee; Mr. John Aje (Nigeria); Mr. Cheick Cissé (Mali); Mr. André Tahindro (Madagascar); and Mr. Alexandros Vikis (Cyprus) who served as Rapporteur of the Seminar.
3. The Seminar was opened on 9 August 1982 by His Excellency Mr. Habib Thiam, Prime Minister of the Republic of Senegal on behalf of His Excellency Mr. Abdou Diouf, the Head of State of the Republic of Senegal. The Prime Minister expressed the great concern felt by the Government and people of Senegal regarding developments on the question of Palestine. For this reason, he declared, the President of the Republic of Senegal had welcomed the opportunity to provide the venue for the seminar. He reaffirmed Senegal's consistent support for the Palestinian people in its efforts to attain and exercise its rights. The failure to find a just, comprehensive and lasting solution for the problem of Palestine endangered international peace and security. In this context, Senegal once again called for Israel's withdrawal from all the territories it has illegally occupied, including the Holy City of Al Quds. He strongly condemned Israel's aggression in Lebanon. In the opinion of Senegal, the aspirations of a people or nation could not be destroyed by aggression. Senegal's participation in the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) reflected its active interest and concern in the Middle East problem, in general, and in the question of Palestine, in particular.
4. At that session Mr. Massamba Sarré, Chairman of the Committee, gave an account of the Committee's work and referred to the tragic events in Lebanon in the months of June and July this year. He referred also to the repressive measures taken in the West Bank and Gaza by Israel which seemed to be the forerunner of annexation. He stressed that the slaughter in Lebanon could have been avoided if the Palestinians had been able to exercise their rights in their own land.
5. At the same session, a statement was made by Mrs. Lucille Mair, Secretary-General of the International Conference on the Question of Palestine, who stressed the need for the active participation of all countries in the Conference and in the preparatory activities connected with it.
6. Mr. Moncef el May, Political Counsellor of the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States conveyed to the Seminar a message from Mr. Chedli Klibi, its Secretary-General, who extended his greetings to the Seminar and drew attention to the severe loss of life in Lebanon of unarmed Lebanese and Palestinians, - caused by Israel's aggression. To remain silent in the face of such aggression would be tantamount to complicity in these acts. He appealed to all nations to unite in opposition to this aggression.

7. A message from Mr. Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization was conveyed by Dr. Adnan Abdel Rahim, his Special Representative to the Seminar. In this message, Chairman Arafat expressed his appreciation of the work of the Seminar which represented solidarity with the people of Palestine. He stated that Israel continues its destruction of Palestinian institutions established by both the Palestine Liberation Organization and the United Nations, and is responsible for over 30,000 deaths. He hoped that the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People would help to reveal Israel's real aims. Peace could only be achieved when Palestinians could exercise their right to self-determination. He wished to assure the Seminar that the struggle continues and that the Palestinian people would never surrender.

8. His Excellency Abdel Haq Tazzi, Representative of His Majesty King Hassan of Morocco, Chairman of the Al Quds Committee addressed the Seminar on behalf of His Majesty and appealed to the world body to do everything necessary to compel Israel to withdraw from the Holy City and to preserve its status in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions.

9. The meetings of the Seminar were presided over by His Excellency Mr. Moustapha Niasse, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, His Excellency Mr. Falilou Kane, Minister of State for Commerce and former Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and by Mr. Massamba Sarre, the present Chairman of the Committee. The closing session of the Seminar was addressed by Mr. Moustapha Niasse, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs who reaffirmed the position of Senegal on the situation in the Middle East and the question of Palestine.

10. During this Seminar, four panels of experts were established to consider different aspects of the central theme, the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. These panels and their panelists were as follows:

(a) The fundamental rights of the Palestinian people

Ms. Gay McDougall (United States of America); Dr. Alfred Moleah (South African); Mrs. Saturnin Soglo (Benin) and Dr. Seydou Madani Sy (Senegal)

(b) Israeli policies in the occupied Arab territories

Ms. Rita Giacaman (Palestinian); Mr. Ilan Halevi (Palestinian); and Mr. Maki N'Diaye (Mali)

(c) Africa and Palestine: Measures to promote solidarity and mutual support in the search for peace

Mr. Luis de Almeida (Angola); Mr. Aaron Shihepo (Namibian); Prof. Harold McDougall (United States of America); Dr. Alice Palmer (United States of America) and Mr. Babacar Sine (Senegal)

(d) The role of the Palestine Liberation Organization in the social, cultural, economic and political development of the Palestinian people

Mr. Mohammed Akbar Kherad (Afghanistan); and Dr. Adnan Abdel Rahim (Palestinian).

11. In accordance with established practice, the opening statements and the papers presented by the panelists will be published in full by the United Nations together with the report of the Seminar as a contribution to its objective appraisal of the question of Palestine and a wider understanding of the issues relating to it. The recommendations of the seminar are attached to the report.

12. The discussions which followed the presentation of papers at each meeting covered many aspects of the question of Palestine and elaborated on some of the points made by the panelists. The main points made in the papers and in the discussions demonstrated broad agreement amongst the participants over a wide range of issues relating to the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people which were systematically and continually violated by Israel. There was unanimity on the universal condemnation of these violations and of the moral, political and human issues arising therefrom.

13. The Israeli genocidal attack against the Palestinian people in Lebanon and the wanton massacre of Lebanese civilian populations since the month of June of this year gave ample proof of Israel's criminal intentions as well as of its determination to resort to genocide in order to achieve its expansionist aims. By its defiance of United Nations resolutions and violations of the Geneva Conventions of 1949, Israel had set itself above the law. The seminar was of the view that these developments demonstrate that there could be no resolution of the Middle East conflict until a just, comprehensive and lasting solution was found for the question of Palestine based on the exercise by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights. It was further noted that the mere rhetorical support of the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination was no longer an adequate response to the situation. What was required was concrete action by States to urge the supporters of Israel, especially the United States of America, to compel Israel to conform to the will of the international community.

14. The Seminar was particularly concerned that Israel could exploit the events in Lebanon to annex the West Bank and Gaza. The Seminar felt it to be its duty to focus international attention on this possibility and the need to ensure that Israel did not further violate international law with impunity. Israel's acts of repression, which occurred with increasing frequency in the occupied Palestinian and Arab territories should be stopped.

15. In light of the recent Israeli aggression against the Palestinian and Lebanese people in Lebanon there was general agreement on the following:

(a) The refusal of successive United States administrations to accept the international consensus of condemnation of Israeli aggression and expansionism has encouraged Israel to pursue further its expansionist policies and to launch its genocidal military operation in Lebanon against the Palestinian and the Lebanese people;

(b) Serious questions were raised concerning the nature of the special relationship of the United States of America with the State of Israel and the responsibility and complicity of the United States administration in the situation created in Lebanon by the recent and continuing Israeli aggression;

(c) Israeli intransigence and aggressiveness was encouraged by the material, political and moral support it received from the United States. It was thus emphasized that all such support should immediately cease as it only encourages Israel;

(d) For the purpose of putting an end to Israel's genocidal operation in Lebanon, the Security Council was strongly urged to consider the imposition of sanctions against Israel;

(e) The participants in the seminar expressed their admiration at the bravery of the Palestinian and Lebanese defenders of Lebanon and extended their wholehearted support to the Palestine Liberation Organization and all the Lebanese patriotic forces;

16. When the fundamental rights of the Palestinian people were discussed, it was noted that there is a growing international consensus on the fundamental rights of the Palestinian people in spite of opposition by the State of Israel. The inalienable rights and fundamental principles which are a requisite for a just, comprehensive and lasting solution to the Palestine question are the following:

(a) The right of the Palestinians to return to their homes and property from which they had been displaced and uprooted;

(b) The right to self-determination without external interference and the right to national independence and sovereignty;

(c) The right to establish an independent State in Palestine;

(d) The question of Palestine is at the heart of the problem of the Middle East and no solution to that problem can be envisaged without taking into account the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people;

(e) The implementation of these inalienable rights of the Palestinian people will contribute to a just solution of the Middle East crisis;

(f) The participation of the Palestine Liberation Organization, the representative of the Palestinian people, on an equal footing with all other parties on the basis of the General Assembly resolutions 3231 (XXIX) of 22 November 1974 and 3375 (XXX) of 10 November 1975 is indispensable to all efforts, deliberations, and conferences on the Middle East which take place under the auspices of the United Nations;

(g) The inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force and the consequent obligation for Israel to withdraw completely and speedily from all territories so occupied.

17. There is international consensus that the restitution of these rights is a sine qua non for establishing a just, comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East. Until these rights are attained, the Palestinian people will strive to regain them by all means at their disposal.

18. The participants at the seminar emphasized that the problem of Palestine could only be solved with the participation of the Palestinian people headed by the Palestine Liberation Organization, its sole and legitimate representative in any negotiations. It was stated that the Camp David Accords, by refusing to accept the Palestine Liberation Organization as an equal partner in the negotiations, by attempting to determine the destiny of the Palestinian people in their absence, and by denying them their fundamental rights, violated United Nations resolutions. The Israeli invasion of Lebanon is further evidence of the real intentions of Israel

and of the real content of the so-called "autonomy" offered to the Palestinians by the Camp David Accords.

19. In the discussion on Israel's policies in the occupied Arab territories, the participants noted that Israel was alone in holding that the Fourth Geneva Conventions of 1949 did not apply to the West Bank and Gaza, and the Syrian Golan Heights, the Arab territories it illegally occupies, and that constant and repeated violations of these Conventions continued daily. Israel's policy of settlements, collective punishments, administrative detention, expulsions and confiscation of land and water resources and the dismissal of duly elected mayors were clear examples of these violations.

20. The reports of Israel's treatment of Lebanese, Palestinian and others captured in the invasion of Lebanon and its refusal to grant them prisoner of war status are cause for deepest concern. The four Geneva Conventions of 1949 apply in their entirety to the conduct of hostilities by Israel in Lebanon. Captured combatants of the Palestine Liberation Organization must be treated as prisoners of war within the meaning of the Geneva Convention. At the very minimum, captured members of the Palestine Liberation Organization and other individuals affiliated with them, together with all Lebanese and Palestinian civilians detained, are entitled to the full panoply of protections set forth in the Fourth Geneva Convention for the protection of civilians and the customary international law of belligerent occupation.

21. Israel's policy in the occupied Arab territories was seen clearly as aimed at dispossessing the non-Jewish inhabitants of Palestine as a prelude to the annexation of the territories, in the path of the illegal annexation of the Syrian Golan Heights and of the city of Jerusalem. The dismissal of Palestinian elected municipal councils and the imposition of an Israeli so-called "civilian administration", as well as the so-called "village leagues" at its service clearly constitutes steps towards such an annexation.

22. The Seminar heard a detailed account of the role of women in the occupied territories. It was noted that, in spite of having to adjust to the effects of military occupation, women played a major part in inhibiting the destruction of the social and cultural infrastructure, in preserving the Palestinian identity and in preparing the way for the reconstruction of a Palestinian society. Furthermore, women's organizations worked not merely for the improvement of the status of women, but were mobilized for the struggle for national rights and to resist the occupation.

23. Along with the physical dispossession of their land and water resources, the Palestinian Arab inhabitants, both in the occupied territories and in Israel itself, face the unhappy prospect of having even their culture eroded by the imposition of discriminatory laws and practices, particularly the repeated and arbitrary closures of educational institutions. It was suggested that the United Nations and specialized agencies should take action to stop these practices. It was underlined that the Palestinian Arab citizens of the State of Israel have been subjected, since 1948, to systematic dispossession and discrimination, in violation of Israel's formal commitments.

24. The seminar was informed of the recent military order 973, introduced with the evident aim of exerting economic pressure on the Palestinian people. This order, promulgated on 9 July 1982, places yet further restrictions on the transfer of

funds into the occupied territories. This order is aimed at imposing further control on Palestinian political, economic, cultural and social life, thus compounding Palestinian dependency on and domination by the Israeli State.

25. Attention was drawn to the close parallels between the policies of Israel in its treatment of the Palestinians and the apartheid policies of South Africa. The denial of the right to self-determination, with its attendant subjection to alien and discriminatory rule was unfortunately the lot of Africans in South Africa and Namibia and of the Palestinians both within Israel and in the illegally occupied Arab territories.

26. In examining the contribution of Africa to the Palestinian cause, the seminar stressed that Africa's support for the cause was based on the sympathetic identification of a common struggle against imperialism, and colonialism as well as on solidarity with the Arabs for their support in the struggle of African nations against imperialism.

27. It was emphasized that for some time African-Americans have felt a sense of solidarity with the just struggle of the Palestinian people because of their common struggle against all forms of racism, including zionism. In view of the recognized bias of the western mass media, especially that of the United States, the seminar recommended that serious efforts should be made to present to the international public all the facts relevant to the question of Palestine in order that the issues would be viewed from a correct perspective. The seminar was heartened by a new awareness of the situation among the American people growing out of the Israeli invasion of Lebanon.

28. The seminar noted that the United Nations had repeatedly reaffirmed the fundamental rights of the Palestinian people and that it had for over 35 years attempted to find a solution for the problem of Palestine. The recommendations of the United Nations Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian people formed a firm basis for such a solution but had unfortunately not been implemented so far, since the Security Council had been unable to take positive action owing to the negative vote of a permanent member.

29. It was recommended that the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People should take measures in order to ensure the continuation and intensification of United Nations support for the Palestinian people and ensure that the violations of the principles of the United Nations Charter and the resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council do not continue.

30. The participants consider that the present Israeli aggression and invasion of the sovereign State of Lebanon demands a response by the Security Council acting under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter. The failure of the United Nations to take such measures would create a crisis of credibility similar to that faced by the League of Nations in the wake of fascist Italy's invasion of Ethiopia.

31. The seminar expressed its concern at the alarming financial situation of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) which threatened the closure of schools and, in fact, its entire mission owing to a lack of funds. It was recommended that the international community should assume the responsibility of aiding the Palestinian refugees and should ensure that UNRWA should have a special fixed budget to which Member States should

contribute on the same basis as their contributions to the budget of the United Nations and to which voluntary contributions should be possible.

32. The role of the Palestine Liberation Organization in the struggle of the Palestinian people was examined. It was noted that the organization had wide ranging responsibilities in the political, economic, social and cultural fields, and provided a political platform as well as infrastructure for socio-economic progress of its people. The United Nations agencies are urged to increase their aid to the Palestine Liberation Organization in its cultural and educational activities and enable the PLO to intervene actively in defining national goals within the curricula of UNRWA schools.

33. The success of the Palestine Liberation Organization in this area, and the fact that it constituted the foundation of a viable State had led Israel to wage a total war against it ever since it was formed. The massive military action in Lebanon was the latest manifestation of this attempt to obliterate the Palestine Liberation Organization.

34. Confidence was expressed in the Palestine Liberation Organization's ability to continue to be the focal point of the Palestinian people's struggle to exercise its inalienable rights, and to establish the Palestinian State as a factor for peace and stability in the region.

35. In concluding their work, the participants in the seminar expressed their gratitude to the Head of State of Senegal, His Excellency Mr. Abdou Diouf, for his directives which contributed to the seminar's success and reflected Senegal's commitment to the just cause of the Palestinian people. They warmly thanked the Government and people of Senegal for their assistance in holding the seminar.

APPENDIX

Recommendations

1. The Seminar recommends that the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People should establish a working group composed of its members and experts to consider the utility and the viability of convening a War Crime's Tribunal to assess Israel's conduct of hostilities vis-à-vis the international laws and customs of war.
2. The Seminar urges the Committee to request the Secretary-General of the United Nations to demand that:
 - (a) Israel produce immediately a comprehensive list of all persons detained as a result of the invasion of Lebanon;
 - (b) The International Committee of the Red Cross be given full access to all facilities in which these detainees are being held;
 - (c) Those combattants and civilians be accorded the full panoply of protections of the Third and Fourth Geneva Conventions of 1949, respectively.
3. The members of the Seminar request the Committee to:
 - (a) Support efforts for sending delegations to investigate and assess the extent of damage brought by the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in both infrastructural and human terms;
 - (b) Recommend the co-ordination of activities, both in terms of investigation and programme implementation, between United Nations agencies and other agencies (governmental or voluntary) that are operating in the area;
 - (c) Recommend the intensification of efforts to channel adequate amounts of material resources and manpower so that families and the general population affected may be relieved as quickly as possible. Aid should include: rebuilding and fixing of settled areas, particularly West Beirut, Tyre, Sidon and all refugee camps; blood donations, food distribution, medical aid and rehabilitation for the injured.

All the above should be implemented in close association and co-ordination with the Palestine Liberation Organization.

4. The members of the Seminar request the Committee to:
 - (a) Support national institutions in the occupied territories in their economic, social and cultural development efforts, including research grants for Palestinians, allocation of funds to support productive projects and scholarships to train Palestinian manpower appropriately;
 - (b) Support educational institutions in the occupied territories through the allocation of funds, appropriate training of manpower, and most importantly, at present, join international educational institutions in

protesting the repeated closure of schools and universities, which constitute a form of collective punishment;

- (c) Recommend the initiation of a programme of investigative visits to the occupied territories by United Nations officials (formal and/or informal) so as to gain a better understanding of the depth and intensity of the problem of occupation as well as for co-ordination purposes.

All the above should be undertaken in close association and in co-operation with Palestinian national institutions, bodies or organizations.

5. The Seminar recommends that the ties, similarities, and even identity between Zionism and apartheid be widely publicized, especially in Africa, the Caribbean, and African-American communities in the United States of America, that a special fund be established for such purpose and that non-governmental organizations be enlisted.

6. The Seminar recommends that the Committee undertake the necessary measures to establish a special fund for the dissemination of information on Palestinian rights and to invite contributions to be made to it by States Members of the United Nations. The special fund should be administered by a sub-committee of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, and should be authorized to launch a programme of direct action so as to disseminate relevant information and make disbursements to the non-governmental organizations so that this information may reach specific constituencies.

7. The participants propose that the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People recommend to the General Assembly that it invest the Committee with the powers, pursuant to General Assembly resolution, to issue travel documents to Palestinians which could serve in lieu of passports with States Members of the United Nations recognizing the resolution, and also to declare products extracted from land and water resources expropriated from Palestinians on the West Bank and Gaza Strip as contraband, to be seized in international commerce by any observing Member State, such products to be held in trust for the Palestinian people.



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**REPORT
OF THE
COMMITTEE ON THE EXERCISE OF
THE INALIENABLE RIGHTS
OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE**

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

OFFICIAL RECORDS: THIRTY-EIGHTH SESSION

SUPPLEMENT No. 35 (A/38/35)



UNITED NATIONS

New York, 1983

NOTE

Symbols of United Nations documents are composed of capital letters combined with figures. Mention of such a symbol indicates a reference to a United Nations document.

[12 October 1983]

CONTENTS

	<u>Paragraphs</u>	<u>Page</u>
LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL		v
I. INTRODUCTION	1 - 5	1
II. MANDATE OF THE COMMITTEE	6	2
III. ORGANIZATION OF WORK	7 - 15	3
A. Election of officers	7	3
B. Participation in the work of the Committee	8	3
C. Re-establishment of the Working Group	9 - 15	3
IV. ACTION TAKEN BY THE COMMITTEE	16 - 93	5
A. Action taken in accordance with paragraphs 3 and 4 of General Assembly resolution 37/86 A	16 - 85	5
1. Review of the situation relating to the question of Palestine and efforts to implement the recommendations of the Committee	16 - 30	5
2. Reaction to developments in the occupied territories	31 - 54	7
(a) Emergency special session of the General Assembly	31 - 34	7
(b) Communications to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council	35 - 41	8
(c) Action taken within the Security Council	42 - 54	9
3. Attendance at Conferences	55 - 58	11
4. Action taken by other organizations	59 - 85	12
(a) Session of the Political Consultative Committee of the States Parties to the Warsaw Treaty	61 - 64	13
(b) Seventh session of the Al-Quds (Jerusalem) Committee of the Organization of the Islamic Conference	65 - 67	13
(c) Thirty-ninth session of the Commission on Human Rights	68 - 70	14

CONTENTS (continued)

	<u>Paragraphs</u>	<u>Page</u>
(d) Seventh Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries	71 - 78	15
(e) Meeting of Heads of State and Government of the Members of the European Community, convening as the European Council	79 - 83	16
(f) European Parliament	84 - 85	17
B. Action taken in accordance with paragraph 2 of resolution 37/86 B	86 - 91	17
C. Action taken in accordance with paragraph 2 of resolution 36/120 C	92 - 93	18
V. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COMMITTEE	94 - 98	18

ANNEXES

I. Recommendations of the Committee endorsed by the General Assembly at its thirty-first session		20
II. Report of the Eighth United Nations Seminar on the Question of Palestine, held at Jakarta from 9 to 13 May 1983		23

LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

28 September 1983

Sir,

I have the honour to enclose herewith the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for submission to the General Assembly in accordance with paragraph 4 of resolution 37/86 A.

Accept, Sir, the assurances of my highest consideration.

(Signed) Massamba SARRE
Chairman of the Committee on the
Exercise of the Inalienable Rights
of the Palestinian People

His Excellency
Mr. Javier Pérez de Cuéllar
Secretary-General of the United Nations

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian Peoples 1/ was established by General Assembly resolution 3376 (XXX) of 10 November 1975. Its first report, 2/ submitted to the Assembly at its thirty-first session, contained specific recommendations proposed by the Committee to enable the Palestinian people to exercise its inalienable rights, as previously recognized and defined by the Assembly.
2. The Committee's recommendations were first endorsed by the General Assembly at its thirty-first session - seven sanguinary years ago - as a basis for the solution of the question of Palestine.
3. In its reports to the General Assembly at each subsequent session, 3/ the Committee retained its recommendations unchanged. On each occasion they were again endorsed by the Assembly with renewed emphasis. After a thorough discussion of the Committee's report and an appraisal of the situation in Palestine, the Assembly also reviewed and renewed the mandate of the Committee.
4. Despite repeated urgings by the Committee, however, its recommendations have not yet been acted upon by the Security Council, neither have they been implemented. Meanwhile, the situation in the occupied Palestinian and other Arab territories arising from Israeli practices remains extremely tense and last year erupted into massive violence and armed conflict, which caused tremendous loss of life and raised a storm of protest and resentment throughout the world.
5. Throughout this difficult period, the Palestinian people remain with their rights arrogantly trampled upon, their legitimate aspirations unfulfilled, yet they maintain their hope in resolute international action to inspire a peaceful political solution. This year, after intensive preparations, an International Conference on the Question of Palestine was held at Geneva from 29 August to 7 September 1983 to assess the present situation, and made recommendations accordingly.

II. MANDATE OF THE COMMITTEE

6. The latest mandate of the Committee was specified in paragraphs 3 and 4 of General Assembly resolution 37/86 A of 10 December 1982, paragraph 2 of resolution 37/86 B of 10 December 1982 and paragraph 2 of resolution 36/120 C of 10 December 1981. By those paragraphs the Assembly:

(a) Requested the Committee to keep the situation relating to the question of Palestine under review and to report and make suggestions to the Assembly or the Security Council, as appropriate;

(b) Authorized the Committee to continue to exert all efforts to promote the implementation of its recommendations, to send delegations or representatives to international conferences where such representation would be considered by it to be appropriate, and to report thereon to the Assembly at its thirty-eighth session and thereafter;

(c) Requested the Secretary-General to ensure that the Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat continued to discharge the tasks detailed in paragraph 1 of Assembly resolution 32/40 B, paragraph 2 (b) of resolution 34/65 D and paragraph 3 of resolution 36/120 B, in consultation with the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and under its guidance;

(d) Authorized the Committee to act as the Preparatory Committee for the International Conference on the Question of Palestine, to hold sessions particularly for this purpose and to make recommendations regarding, inter alia, the site, scheduling of and participation in the Conference, and the provisional agenda of the Conference.

III. ORGANIZATION OF WORK

A. Election of officers

7. At its 87th meeting, on 6 January 1983, which was opened by the Secretary-General, the Committee decided to re-elect the following officers:

Chairman: Mr. Massamba Sarré (Senegal)
Vice-Chairmen: Mr. Raúl Roa-Kouri (Cuba)
Mr. Mohammed Farid Zarif (Afghanistan)
Rapporteur: Mr. Victor J. Gauci (Malta)

B. Participation in the work of the Committee

8. The Committee reconfirmed that those States Members of the United Nations and Permanent Observers to the United Nations that wished to participate in the work of the Committee as observers could do so, and during 1983 it again welcomed in that capacity Algeria, Czechoslovakia, Ecuador, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Mauritania, Morocco, the Syrian Arab Republic, the United Arab Emirates, Viet Nam, the League of Arab States, the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the Palestine Liberation Organization. These States and organizations continued throughout 1983 to participate in the work of the Committee. In answer to previous invitations, and at their request, Niger and Nicaragua also participated as observers from 22 October 1982 and from 22 April 1983, respectively.

C. Re-establishment of the Working Group

9. The Committee once again unanimously decided that the Working Group that it had established in 1977 should continue to function in order to facilitate the work of the Committee by: (a) keeping up to date with events that affected the work of the Committee and suggesting action that the Committee could usefully undertake and (b) assisting the Committee in any other specific assignment related to its work.

10. The Committee decided to reconfirm the present membership of the Working Group: Malta (Chairman), Afghanistan, Cuba, German Democratic Republic, Guinea, Guyana, India, Pakistan, Senegal, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic and, as representative of the people directly concerned, the Palestine Liberation Organization. In view of its added responsibilities, the Committee accepted the principle of enlargement of the Working Group, which became open to all members and observers.

11. At its 88th meeting, on 26 January, the Committee also decided that the representative of India should act as deputy for the Chairman of the Working Group during any unavoidable absence connected with other pressing and simultaneous engagements.

12. It was further decided that the three subgroups of the Working Group previously established should be continued.

13. The first of these subgroups, together with the Division for Palestinian Rights, monitors daily events in the occupied territories and, as appropriate, drafts letters for signature and transmittal by the Chairman to the Secretary-General, the President of the Security Council or the President of the General Assembly.

14. The second subgroup assists the Division in the detailed work of organizing seminars.

15. The third subgroup has the task of: (a) periodically reviewing, with the assistance of the Division, progress made in the studies that already had been planned, and arrangements for reproducing those already published in languages other than the official languages of the United Nations; (b) updating studies and films produced by the Division; and (c) implementing the organization of the Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian people.

IV. ACTION TAKEN BY THE COMMITTEE

A. Action taken in accordance with paragraphs 3 and 4 of General Assembly resolution 37/86 A

1. Review of the situation relating to the question of Palestine and efforts to implement the recommendations of the Committee

16. The Committee continued to follow closely developments in the occupied Palestinian and other Arab territories and, on several occasions, in response to events on the spot, authorized its Chairman to communicate to the Secretary-General and to the President of the Security Council its concern at the Israeli Government's practices and policies in those territories.

17. These communications dealt mainly with illegal Israeli settlements in the occupied territories, the annexation of vast areas of Arab-owned land, and other widespread violation by Israel of the rights of the Palestinian people.

18. Those practices, policies and violations by Israel led the Committee, in addition to its letters of protest, to urge that the commission established by the Security Council in its resolution 446 (1979) to examine the situation relating to Israeli settlements in the Arab and Palestinian territories occupied since 1967 - should be re-activated as a matter of priority. It was recalled, in particular, that the Commission had unanimously adopted its latest report as far back as 25 November 1980, but the report had not yet been considered by the Security Council, despite specific and persistent urging by the Committee that the report be considered immediately and its recommendations urgently acted upon (A/37/240-S/15120).

19. The Committee draws the attention of the international community to the fact that, in the course of 1983, the Government of Israel has pursued its relentless policy of establishing and enlarging settlements in the occupied territories despite the illegality of those actions, the censure of international opinion, the decisions of the United Nations, and even against public and parliamentary questioning of that policy within Israel itself.

20. Those policies constitute a network of settlement programmes and several other administrative and economic procedures designed to force individual and mass transfers of the indigenous Arab population from the West Bank and Gaza in order to accomplish Israel's objective of evacuating the Arab inhabitants from those territories.

21. It is the declared policy of Israel to place up to 400,000 non-indigenous, colonial settlers in the West Bank within the next five years and 1.4 million Jews over the next 30 years (see A/37/604-S/15482). As a result, the total number of such settlers in the West Bank and East Jerusalem has already increased from 91,000 in April 1979 to some 140,000 in 1982 (see A/38/282, para. 39 (d)).

22. Approximately 153 illegal Israeli settlements are estimated to have been established in the West Bank and East Jerusalem by the end of 1982. This represents an area of some 2,453 km², which is equivalent to 44 per cent of the total West Bank territory, including East Jerusalem (see A/38/282, para. 39 (a) and (b)). In still further violation of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, 4/ and in

defiance of General Assembly and Security Council resolutions, the Government of Israel approved, on 16 January 1983, the establishment of four more new settlements in the West Bank (see A/38/78-S/15572).

23. A close look at these Israeli settlement activities reveals that Israel's intention is to fragmentize the demographic, geographic, economic and social unity of the occupied Arab territories.

24. Education has also been seriously affected by Israeli policy in the occupied territories. As a result of the application of military order number 854 of 8 July 1982, 28 professors of Palestinian origin were expelled for refusing, as a matter of principle, to sign a "pledge" not to support any "terrorist organization". Seven professors of foreign nationality were debarred for the same reason (see A/38/278, para. 116).

25. Frequent closing of universities and schools has seriously disrupted academic life. For example, between February 1982 and February 1983, 14 such institutions were closed temporarily.

26. Frequent eruption of violence and armed conflict has also had devastating effect on civilian life. It has been estimated that between 1967 and 1981 a total of 1,291 houses were demolished, often as a result of punitive action (see A/38/278, appendix I). During the period 1 September 1981 to 25 July 1982, no less than 453 violent incidents occurred, involving the civilian population and resulting in arrest, injury and even death (see A/37/485, para. 154). The violence subsequently assumed even graver dimensions.

27. It is clear that Israel intends to pursue a policy of colonization based on outmoded concepts and in violation of international law and United Nations resolutions. Democratically elected mayors and city councils have been summarily dismissed and replaced by Israeli administrators, the latest such incident having taken place at Hebron. The Israeli occupying authorities in that city have not only pursued a policy of establishing illegal settlements on the outskirts of the city, but have now started a new phase by placing settlements within the central city itself, surrounded by old, well established Arab neighbourhoods, causing widespread resentment and friction.

28. Furthermore, Israeli settlement is draining the West Bank's own underground water resources and Palestinian farmers are kept short of essential water supplies.

29. It is no less disturbing that, since 1981, elections cannot be held in the West Bank, undoubtedly because the results would be unfavourable to Israel (see A/36/177-S/14430).

30. In addition, widespread reports indicated that the Islamic and Christian religious sites had been subjected to several acts of desecration and sacrilegious acts by Israeli settlers. It was established that these acts had been carried out with the knowledge of the Israeli occupation authorities.

2. Reaction to developments in the occupied territories

(a) Emergency special session of the General Assembly

31. As a result of the aggravated tension in the area, the Committee, in terms of its mandate, recommended in 1980 the convening of an emergency special session of the General Assembly. The first meetings were held from 22 to 29 July 1980. Because of the subsequent grave developments in the region, it was found necessary to reconvene the seventh emergency special session in 1982 during the periods 20 to 28 April, 25 to 26 June and from 16 to 19 August. 5/

32. As a result of still further deterioration of the situation by the tragic events in Lebanon, and owing to the inability of the Security Council to take action, the seventh emergency special session was reconvened for the fourth time on 24 September 1982.

33. At that session, the General Assembly adopted, by a recorded vote of 147 to 2, with no abstentions, resolution ES-7/9 of 24 September 1982 in which it condemned the criminal massacre of Palestinian and other civilians in Beirut on 17 September 1982; urged the Security Council to investigate, through the means available to it, the circumstances and extent of the massacre and to make public the report on its findings as soon as possible [no such investigation has yet been reported]; decided to support fully the provisions of Council resolutions 508 (1982) and 509 (1982), in which the Council, inter alia, had demanded that (a) Israel withdraw all its military forces forthwith and unconditionally to the internationally recognized boundaries of Lebanon and (b) all parties to the conflict cease immediately and simultaneously all military activities within Lebanon and across the Lebanese-Israeli border; demanded that all Member States and other parties observe strict respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity, unity and political independence of Lebanon within its internationally recognized boundaries; reaffirmed the fundamental principle of the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force; resolved that, in conformity with its resolution 194 (III) and subsequent resolutions, the Palestinian refugees should be enabled to return to their homes and property, and demanded that Israel comply unconditionally and immediately with the resolution; urged the Council, in the event of continued failure by Israel to comply with the demands contained in resolutions 508 (1982) and 509 (1982) and resolution ES-7/9, to meet in order to consider practical ways and means in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations; called upon all States and international agencies and organizations to continue to provide the most extensive humanitarian aid possible to the victims of the Israeli invasion of Lebanon; and decided to adjourn the seventh emergency special session temporarily and to authorize the President of the latest regular session of the Assembly to resume its meetings upon request from Member States.

34. As at the three previous resumed sessions, the Committee continued to play its customary role, including the drafting of resolution ES-7/9 for consideration by the General Assembly. The Committee nevertheless feels bound to observe that none of these resolutions has been implemented.

(b) Communications to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

35. In the course of the period under review, and in response to events on the spot, several letters were sent to the President of the Council and to the Secretary-General as follows.

36. In his letter dated 29 October 1982 (A/37/587-S/15476), the Chairman drew the attention of the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council to press reports confirming the death of a Palestinian youth from the Balata refugee camp as a result of action taken by Israeli settlers. Following that incident, protest demonstrations had been organized in most of the towns and refugee camps in the occupied Palestinian territories. It had been reported that Israeli troops opened fire on the demonstrators and that the Israeli occupation authorities had threatened to close down all schools in the West Bank in order to prevent pupils from taking part in such demonstrations. In the light of those developments, the Chairman, expressing the view of the Committee, urged the Secretary-General to use his good offices in order that measures might be taken to protect the rights of Palestinians in the occupied territories.

37. On 8 November 1982 (A/37/604-S/15482), the Chairman expressed the deep concern of the Committee regarding the persistence of the Israeli policy of establishing settlements in the occupied Palestinian territories. He cited reports that the Deputy Prime Minister and Housing Minister of Israel had announced, on 3 November 1982, that another five settlements would be established in the West Bank. The Chairman stressed that the continuation of that policy of changing the demographic character of the occupied territories in violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 12 August 1949 and in defiance of General Assembly and Security Council resolutions, could only aggravate the tense and explosive situation which already existed in the occupied Palestinian territories.

38. On 21 January 1983 (A/38/78-S/15572), the Chairman again took up the matter of the Israeli policy of establishing non-indigenous colonial settlements in the occupied Palestinian territory of the West Bank. He said it had been reliably reported that the Government of Israel had approved, on 16 January 1983, the establishment of four new settlements in the occupied West Bank. Further referring to the repressive measures being taken against Palestinians in the occupied territories, he noted that the Committee had learned that the occupying authorities had adopted a policy of mass arrests, assembling trade-unionists, students, teachers, writers and journalists who were summoned for interrogation and, in many cases, imprisonment. Also, it had been reliably reported that persons who had been termed "Palestinians detained for security reasons" had started a hunger strike in protest against the inhumane conditions of detention in the prisons of Al-Khalil and Jenin.

39. In a letter dated 22 March 1983 (A/38/122-S/15653), the Chairman expressed the Committee's deep concern at further evidence of violation of legal and human rights on the part of the occupying Israeli authorities against the Palestinians on the West Bank. He referred to an occasion on 10 March 1983, when Israeli soldiers were discovered and prevented from detonating explosives intended for destruction of the Al-Aqsa Mosque. On a previous occasion, on 4 March, a time bomb had been discovered at that Mosque. In the same letter, the Chairman reported still further anti-Palestinian activities perpetrated by the occupying authorities. These included the wounding of a young Palestinian at Jerusalem on 12 March, and the subsequent beating of a Palestinian woman and her children who had come to

his aid. On the same day, Israeli troops had broken into the local school at the Shufat refugee camp, attacked students and beat them severely. Meanwhile, at Hebron, occupying authorities had ordered the closing of the Polytechnic Institute in retaliation for previous student participation in anti-occupation demonstrations. Al-Khalil University and schools at Halhoul, Yatta, Beit Sahour and Nablus had also been ordered closed. At Yatta, on 16 March, it had been reported that Israeli settlers were continuing to terrorize the occupied population. Booby traps had been discovered at the gate of the Haifa High School in the town of Jenin, which were fortunately discovered and detonated. On 17 March, it had been reported that Israeli occupation troops had opened fire on Palestinian anti-occupation demonstrators at Beit Sahour. One school had been ordered closed until further notice, bringing to five the number of schools so closed in the Bethlehem area. At the same time, curfews remained on Palestinian refugee camps and particularly brutal measures had been taken against the Dheiseh Camp.

40. On 30 March 1983 (A/38/128-S/15667), the Chairman drew attention to a particularly distressing event in the occupied territories of the West Bank concerning widely reported illness among Arab schoolgirls. Local residents had believed the illness to have been induced by some kind of poison, perhaps even gas poisoning, in the girls' classrooms. It had been variously reported that from 250 to some 1,000 young people had been so affected. The Chairman said he was aware that investigators from the International Committee of the Red Cross and the United Nations had been called upon and, pending results of their investigations, he urged the Secretary-General to exert the full authority of his office to ascertain the extent, cause and perpetrators of that abhorrent event. This matter was subsequently taken up by the Security Council in informal consultations on 4 April 1983 and a report on the subject (S/15756) was transmitted to the Council by the Secretary-General on 10 May.

41. On 18 July 1983 (A/38/306-S/15880), the Chairman referred to reports that the Israeli Government intended to carry out its decision to restore an old quarter of Hebron and establish non-indigenous colonial settlers there, despite the local Arab resistance. He emphasized that this policy was exceptional in that the planned settlements would be situated in the very centre of the town of Hebron, not on the outskirts, and would be surrounded by long-established Arab quarters. The Chairman went on to point out that that policy had exacerbated tensions and had given rise to numerous manifestations of violence and other related acts in the town. He referred to the burning of some 90 per cent of the Arab stalls in the town market and the dismissal of the acting mayor of the town, the latter action having been approved by the Israeli cabinet on 10 July 1983. In that connection, the Chairman quoted an official statement by the Israeli labour opposition party, which said that any attempt to create a mixed city in Hebron against the wishes of the Arab population would cause generations of grief.

(c) Action taken within the Security Council

42. In addition to transmitting letters on matters of urgency to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council, the Committee, through its Chairman, participated in meetings of the Security Council called to consider the accelerating tension in the occupied Arab and Palestinian territories. Between 12 November 1982 and 2 August 1983, the Council devoted 10 meetings to consideration of current Israeli activities and policies.

43. On 12 November 1982, the Security Council met at the request of the Arab Group and of the Organization of the Islamic Conference to consider the question of Israel's perseverance in its policy of establishing settlements in the occupied Arab and Palestinian territories.
44. In his statement to the Council on that occasion, the Chairman of the Committee expressed the fear that, under the cover of the tragic events in Lebanon, and profiting from the fact that the troubles it had created in that country were monopolizing world attention, Israel might be emboldened to put into effect its plans for the illegal annexation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip to satisfy its ambitions based on alleged political security considerations.
45. In defiance of international public opinion and international law, Israel had not only continued to strengthen its existing settlements, but had indicated that several new settlements would be established by means of illegal confiscation of land at the expense of the Arab inhabitants. He stressed that the settlements were not mere agricultural co-operatives but rather urban centres, often at commuting distance from Israeli metropolitan zones, thus hindering a future solution.
46. Nearly every day there had been reports of repressive measures taken against the civilian population of the West Bank and Gaza. News representatives had spoken of demonstrations suppressed by force with, inevitably, loss of human life. Schools had been closed for reasons that were hardly convincing. Foreign teachers had been forced to sign political declarations under threat of deportation. Mayors and other elected officials had been relieved of their duties.
47. In response to further requests from the Arab Group, the Security Council resumed consideration of the situation in the occupied Arab territories on 11, 14 and 16 February and 20 May 1983. It was decided that the Council would meet again to consider the item at a future date.
48. The Security Council also met in informal consultations on 4 April 1983, in order to consider the alleged poisoning of young girls in the occupied territories of the West Bank. In a statement made by the President of the Council on 4 April following the consultations (S/15680), the Secretary-General was requested to conduct independent inquiries concerning the causes and effects of the serious problem of the reported cases of poisoning, and urgently to report on the findings.
49. Immediately upon receipt of that statement, the Secretary-General, who had already been in touch with the Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO), requested that an independent inquiry be conducted by WHO in pursuance of the wishes of the Security Council.
50. On 10 May 1983, a report on this subject (S/15756) was accordingly transmitted to the Security Council. The report concluded that the WHO inquiry had not been able to identify any specific cause or causes of the emergency. However, the initial medical records and interviews with cases in the first outbreak and with local health and other authorities suggested that an environmental agent could have provoked at least some cases in the first outbreak.
51. It was the recommendation of the Director-General of WHO that, in view of the anxiety under which the population lived in the occupied territories, and given the susceptibility of girls during the stressful transitional period of adolescence, everything possible should be done to protect the local population from unnecessary

alarm. For that purpose, the presence of WHO should be made available in the event of any suspected recrudescence of this ill-defined health emergency. Although it was considered unlikely that patients would suffer any significant sequelae, there should be provision for clinical follow-up by WHO, should any of the young people or their families so request.

52. In response to further requests from the Arab Group, in the light of recent attacks perpetrated against Arab civilians in the occupied Arab territories, and especially the killing and wounding of students at the Islamic College of the Arab city of Al-Khalil on 26 July 1983, the Security Council met on 28 and 29 July and on 1 and 2 August 1983 in a series of five meetings. The Council had before it a draft resolution that would have condemned these attacks and would have reaffirmed its determination, in the event of non-compliance by Israel, to examine practical ways and means in accordance with the relevant provisions with the Charter of the United Nations in order to secure full implementation of the resolution.

53. The Security Council would also have determined that the policies and practices of Israel in establishing settlements in Palestine and other Arab territories occupied in 1967, including Jerusalem, had no legal validity, constituted a major and serious obstacle to achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East, and were in contravention of paragraph 49 (6) of the Geneva Convention Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War of 12 August 1949.

54. Owing to the negative vote of one permanent member, the Security Council failed to adopt the resolution.

3. Attendance at conferences

55. In accordance with paragraph 4 of resolution 37/86 A of 10 December 1982, in which the General Assembly authorized the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People to send delegations or representatives to international conferences where such representation would be considered appropriate, the Committee accordingly accepted several such invitations in late 1982 and in 1983.

56. In late 1982, the Committee was represented at the Sixty-ninth Inter-Parliamentary Conference on the Question of Palestine held in Rome from 12 to 23 September 1982; the Meeting of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs and Heads of Delegation of the Non-Aligned Countries, held in New York from 4 to 9 October 1982; the Conference of the International Association of Democratic Lawyers on Palestine and Peace in the Middle East, held at Brussels from 23 to 24 October 1982; the Thirty-ninth Ordinary Session of the Council of Ministers and the Nineteenth Session of the Assembly of Heads of States and Governments of the Organization of African Unity, which were scheduled to be held at Tripoli from 15 to 21 November and 23 to 26 November 1982, respectively.

57. In 1983, the Committee was represented at the sixteenth session of the Palestine National Council, held at Algiers from 14 to 18 February; the Seventh Summit Conference of the Non-Aligned Countries, held at New Delhi from 7 to 11 March 1983; the meeting of the Parliamentary Association for Euro-Arab Co-operation, held at The Hague from 25 to 26 March 1983; the Conference on Namibia held at Paris from 25 to 29 April 1983; the International Conference on the

Alliance between South Africa and Israel, held at Vienna from 11 to 13 July 1983; and the Second World Conference to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination, held at Geneva from 1 to 12 August 1983.

58. On each of those occasions, representatives of the Committee took the opportunity to make known the work of the Committee and its recommendations and to discuss ways and means of promoting their implementation. The Committee noted, with appreciation and encouragement, conclusive evidence of considerable understanding of, and sympathy for, the problems of the Palestinian people as well as interest in the work of the Committee.

4. Action taken by other organizations

59. The Committee continued to follow with great interest action taken by other organizations on matters relevant to its work. Such action taken in 1982, after the Committee had submitted its report 6/ to the thirty-seventh session of the General Assembly, was duly noted and appreciated. This included the final communiqué of the Meeting of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs and Heads of Delegation of the Non-Aligned Countries, held in New York from 4 to 9 October 1982 (A/37/540-S/15454, annex); and the resolution on the question of Palestine adopted at the sixty-ninth Inter-Parliamentary Conference, held at Rome from 12 to 23 September 1982.

60. In 1983, action relevant to the work of the Committee undertaken by other organizations included that of the Political Consultative Committee of the States Parties to the Warsaw Treaty, the Al-Quds (Jerusalem) Committee, the Commission on Human Rights, the Seventh Conference of Heads of State or Government of the Non-Aligned Countries, the Heads of State and Government of the Members of the European Community convening as the European Council, and the European Parliament (see paras. 62 to 85).

(a) Session of the Political Consultative Committee
of the States Parties to the Warsaw Treaty

61. The session of the Political Consultative Committee of the States Parties to the Warsaw Treaty was held at Prague on 4 and 5 January 1983.

62. At that session, the Committee adopted a political declaration (A/38/67-S/15556, annex) which, inter alia, attached particular importance to the solution of the conflict in the Middle East. The participants in the session sharply denounced Israel's invasion of Lebanon, the Israeli aggression against the Palestinian and Lebanese peoples, and the bestial extermination of the civilian population of West Beirut. They held that, in its aggressive acts, Israel had been encouraged by those who granted it aid and support from outside. They demanded the immediate and complete withdrawal of Israeli troops from Lebanon, and safeguards for the independence, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of that country.

63. The participants were favourably disposed towards the principles for solving the problem of a Middle East settlement put forward at the Twelfth Arab Summit Conference, held at Fez, Morocco, from 6 to 9 September 1982, and voiced the conviction that a comprehensive settlement in the Middle East must provide for: complete withdrawal of Israeli troops from all Arab territories occupied since 1967, including the eastern part of Jerusalem; recognition of the legitimate rights of the Arab people of Palestine, including the right to create its own independent State; safeguarding the right of all States in the area to secure and independent existence and development; termination of the state of war and installation of peace between the Arab States and Israel; and elaboration and adoption of international guarantees of a peaceful settlement.

64. It was declared that the solution of these tasks necessitated the convening of an international conference with the participation of all interested parties, including the Palestine Liberation Organization, as the sole legitimate representative of the Arab people of Palestine. An important role could and must be played by the United Nations.

(b) Seventh session of the Al-Quds (Jerusalem) Committee
of the Organization of the Islamic Conference

65. The seventh session of the Al-Quds (Jerusalem) Committee of the Organization of the Islamic Conference was held at Marrakech, Morocco, on 21 and 22 January 1983.

66. Having considered the results of the Arab Summit Meeting, held at Fez from 6 to 9 September 1982, the Committee decided to subscribe to the peace plan adopted at that meeting as a new basis for achieving a just and lasting settlement of the Middle Eastern question.

67. In its final declaration, the Al-Quds Committee called urgently for the setting up of a strategy to face the danger created by the continued Israeli settlements policy at Al-Quds and its surroundings as well as in other parts of occupied Palestinian territories. Further, the Committee appealed to Islamic countries to implement its resolutions without delay, by creating national organizations entrusted with collecting donations to face Israel's continued settlement policy. The Committee also called for the promotion of contacts with

the Vatican as well as with the World Council of Churches and other Christian institutions in order to secure support for the Arab peace plan.

(c) Thirty-ninth session of the Commission on Human Rights

68. At its thirty-ninth session, held from 31 January to 11 March 1983, the Commission on Human Rights adopted four resolutions dealing with the situation in the occupied Arab territories, including Palestine (1983/1 A and B, 1983/2 and 1983/3). In resolution 1983/1 A, the Commission strongly condemned Israeli policies and practices, administrative and legislative measures to promote and expand the establishment of settler colonies as well as the following practices in the occupied Arab territories, including Jerusalem:

"(a) The annexation of parts of the occupied territories including Jerusalem;

"(b) The continuing establishment of new Israeli settlements and expansion of the existing settlements on private and public Arab lands, and the transfer of an alien population thereto;

"(c) The arming of settlers in the occupied territories to commit acts of violence against Arab civilians, and the perpetration of acts of violence by these armed settlers against individuals, causing injury and death and wide-scale damage of Arab property;

"(d) The evacuation, deportation, expulsion, displacement and transfer of Arab inhabitants of the occupied territories, and the denial of their right to return;

"(e) The confiscation and expropriation of Arab property in the occupied territories and all other transactions for the acquisition of land involving Israeli authorities, institutions or nationals on the one hand, and inhabitants or institutions of the occupied territories on the other;

"(f) The destruction and demolition of Arab houses;

"(g) Mass arrests, collective punishments, administrative detention and ill-treatment of the Arab population and the torture of persons under detention, and the inhuman conditions in prisons;

"(h) The pillaging of archaeological and cultural property;

"(i) The interference with religious freedoms and practices as well as with family rights and customs;

"(j) The systematic Israeli repression against cultural and educational institutions, especially universities, in the occupied Palestinian territories, closing them or restricting and impeding their academic activities by subjecting selection of courses, textbooks and educational programmes, admission of students and appointment of faculty members to the control and supervision of the military occupation authorities and by the expulsion of numerous faculty members of several universities for refusing to sign statements containing political positions, in flagrant defiance and disregard of their right to academic freedom;

"(k) The illegal exploitation of the natural wealth, water and other resources and the population of the occupied territories;

"(l) The dismantlement of the municipal services by dismissing the elected mayors as well as the municipal councils and forbidding Arab aid funds."

69. In resolution 1983/1 B, the Commission reaffirmed that the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War of 12 August 1949 was applicable to all the Arab territories occupied by Israel since 1967, including Jerusalem; and condemned the failure of Israel to acknowledge the applicability of that Convention to the territories it had occupied since 1967.

70. In resolution 1983/2, the Commission declared that Israel's decision of 14 December 1981 to impose its laws, jurisdiction and administration on the occupied Syrian Golan Heights constituted an act of aggression under the provisions of Article 39 of the Charter of the United Nations and General Assembly resolution 3314 (XXIX); and called upon Israel to rescind its decision, and firmly emphasized the overriding necessity of total and unconditional withdrawal by Israel from all Palestinian and Syrian territories occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, which was an essential prerequisite for the establishment of a comprehensive and just peace in the Middle East. In resolution 1983/3, the Commission condemned in the strongest terms the large-scale massacre of Palestinian civilians in the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps for which the responsibility of the Israeli Government had been established; and reaffirmed the inalienable right of the Palestinians to return to their homes and property, from which they had been displaced and uprooted by Israel, and called for their return in the exercise of their right to self-determination.

(d) Seventh Conference of Heads of State or Government
of Non-Aligned Countries

71. The Seventh Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries, which was held at New Delhi from 7 to 12 March 1983, considered, inter alia, the questions of Palestine and Lebanon, as well as the situation in the Middle East, and adopted several paragraphs on these matters in a political declaration (see A/38/132-S/15675 and Corr.1).

72. On the question of Palestine, the Conference decided to set up a Committee, at the level of Heads of State, to co-operate with the seven-member Arab Committee to support the rights of the Arab Palestinian people in accordance with international law and the will of non-aligned countries and their peoples (A/38/132-S/15675, annex, para. 98).

73. The Conference strongly condemned Israel for its continued occupation of Palestinian and other Arab territories and for its persistent acts of repression against the Palestinian people, and demanded the United Nations Security Council to invoke the powers vested in it with a view to imposing on Israel the relevant sanctions prescribed in the United Nations Charter until Israel complied fully with the relevant decisions of the Council concerning Palestine and the Middle East as well as those relating to Lebanon in Council resolutions 508 (1982) and 509 (1982) (ibid., para. 87).

74. The Conference considered it necessary, especially since Israel's aggression of 1967, to reaffirm all the principles and resolutions previously adopted by the Non-Aligned Movement in regard to the question of Palestine and the Middle East situation (ibid., para. 101).

75. The Conference expressed its support for and adopted the Arab Peace Plan proclaimed at the Twelfth Arab Summit Conference, held at Fez, Morocco, and emphasized that this Plan constituted a framework for establishing a just and durable peace in the Middle East (ibid., para. 102 (a)).

76. The Conference reaffirmed the principles on which it extended its solid support to the legitimate cause of the Palestinian people and rejected all plans, arrangements and agreements which did not conform to those principles (see ibid., para. 84).

77. The Heads of State or Government welcomed the resolutions of the sixteenth session of the Palestinian National Council, held in Algeria from 12 to 22 February 1983, and affirmed their full solidarity with the Palestine Liberation Organization (ibid., para. 85).

78. The Conference stressed the urgent need to undertake concrete action to achieve a just and comprehensive peace on the basis of the principles enunciated in its declaration (ibid., para. 86).

(e) Meeting of Heads of State and Government of the Members of the European Community, convening as the European Council

79. At its meeting at Brussels on 22 March 1983, the European Council adopted several conclusions on the situation in the Middle East (A/38/L24-S/15657).

80. The Council was convinced that all parties should work towards the achievement of withdrawal of all foreign forces from Lebanon and a resumption of negotiations aimed at a comprehensive peace settlement, and expressed support for the efforts of the United States of America to achieve this objective.

81. It was stressed that a lasting peace could only be built on the right to a secure existence for all States in the region, including Israel, and justice for all the peoples, including the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination. These rights must be mutually recognized by the parties themselves. Negotiations will have to embrace all the parties concerned, including the Palestinian people, and the Palestine Liberation Organization will have to be associated with them.

82. The Council concluded that the initiative of the President of the United States of 1 September 1982 indicated a way to peace and the Arab summit meeting at Fez demonstrated a readiness for it. They added that the conclusions of the sixteenth session of the Palestine National Council could and should contribute to the peace process.

83. The Council stressed that the time had come for Israel to show that it stood ready for genuine negotiations on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), in the first place by refraining from enlarging existing settlements or creating new ones. These settlements were contrary to international law and a major and growing obstacle to peace efforts.

(f) European Parliament

84. At its meeting on 19 May 1983, the European Parliament adopted a resolution regarding the situation in the Middle East. The resolution called on the Foreign Ministers of the European Community meeting in Luxembourg in late May 1983 to take a decision reaffirming the Community's vital role in finding a solution to the political problems of the Middle East. The Foreign Ministers were called upon to use every available means in the context of their common foreign and external economic policy to urge Israel to call an immediate halt to its settlement policy in the West Bank and Gaza.

85. In addition, the Parliament urged the Community to take part in the International Conference on the Question of Palestine.

B. Action taken in accordance with paragraph 2 of resolution 37/86 B

86. In paragraph 2 of resolution 37/86 B of 10 December 1982, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to ensure that the Division of Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat continued to discharge the tasks entrusted to it, in consultation with the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and under its guidance.

87. In accordance with that resolution, it had originally been intended that three seminars should be held in the course of 1983. However, in view of the rescheduling of the International Conference on the Question of Palestine and consequently of its preparatory meetings, it was decided that only one seminar could be held in 1983, on account of the heavier concentration of work. The eighth seminar on Palestinian rights accordingly took place at Jakarta from 9 to 13 May 1983. The report of that seminar is annexed to the present document (see annex II).

88. The Committee continued to stress the importance of seminars and recommended that the Division for Palestinian Rights should continue to expand its efforts in this regard on the basis of experience hitherto gained. Committee members attending those events again confirmed that the collective contributions of academicians, parliamentarians and other participating opinion makers had served to promote wider and more objective understanding of the Palestinian question.

89. The Committee noted that, with the co-operation of the Department of Public Information and other offices of the Secretariat, the film on Palestinian rights had been updated, as had the photographic exhibit on Palestinian rights installed at United Nations Headquarters, which was available to United Nations information centres for wide distribution.

90. In addition, the Committee noted that the Division continued to pursue its obligation to prepare and distribute studies on matters relating to the Palestinian question and to have some of them translated into languages other than the official languages of the United Nations.

91. Regarding the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, the Committee observed with appreciation that this had been duly commemorated in many capitals in 1982. It was hoped that more and more Governments would not only continue to observe the Day in their customary manner but even to do so in a more meaningful and effective manner.

C. Action taken in accordance with paragraph 2 of resolution 36/120 C

92. By paragraph 2 of General Assembly resolution 36/120 C of 10 December 1981, the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People was authorized to act as the Preparatory Committee for the International Conference on the Question of Palestine, scheduled to be held not later than 1984, in accordance with paragraph 1 of the same resolution. The date was subsequently advanced to 16 to 27 August 1983 and later changed to 29 August to 7 September 1983. Members of the Committee attended all the regional meetings held in connection with Conference preparations.

93. A detailed report of activities concerning preparations for the Conference has been issued separately; so has the report of the Conference itself (A/CONF.114/42).

V. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COMMITTEE

94. The Committee, after the intensive activities of the year under review, has abundant evidence that its original recommendations have now been clearly understood by nations and peoples in all geographic regions in the world and that those recommendations are seen to be fair, legally founded, and peaceful, and should therefore be lasting when implemented.

95. The Committee is also greatly encouraged by the positive outcome of the International Conference on the Question of Palestine and feels that a new impetus has now been given to modalities for the attainment of the rights of the Palestinian people as the prerequisite for an overall settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict. The recommendations of the Committee are duly reflected in the Geneva Declaration on Palestine and the Programme of Action (see A/CONF.114/42) adequately covers the steps needed for implementation.

96. The Committee considers the final documents of the International Conference on the Question of Palestine to be of great value for a comprehensive, just and lasting political settlement of the question of Palestine. While unanimously supporting the Geneva Declaration and the Programme of Action, the Committee appeals to the General Assembly at its thirty-eighth session and to the Security Council to endorse those documents and to give full support for their implementation.

97. The Committee therefore recommends resolute action by all nations, particularly those in the region, through the Security Council, so that the present destructive momentum will be revised, conflict will cease and a steady course of action in the search for durable and comprehensive peace will be set in motion.

98. The Committee also recommends that concrete actions be undertaken in order to convene an international peace conference on the Middle East as it was proposed at the International Conference on the Question of Palestine and appeals to all parties concerned, as well as the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics to co-operate fully on this matter.

Notes

1/ The Committee is composed of the following members: Afghanistan, Cuba, Cyprus, German Democratic Republic, Guinea, Guyana, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mali, Malta, Nigeria, Pakistan, Romania, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic and Yugoslavia.

2/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-first Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/31/35).

3/ Ibid., Thirty-second Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/32/35); ibid., Thirty-third Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/33/35 and Corr.1); ibid., Thirty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/34/35 and Corr.1); ibid., Thirty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/35/35 and Corr.1); ibid., Thirty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/36/35); and ibid., Thirty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/37/35 and Corr.1).

4/ United Nations, Treaty Series, vol. 75, p. 287.

5/ An account of the seventh emergency special session, and its three subsequent resumed sessions, is contained in the Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/37/35), paras. 24 to 48.

6/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/37/35).

ANNEX I

Recommendations of the Committee endorsed by the General Assembly at its thirty-first session a/

I. BASIC CONSIDERATIONS AND GUIDELINES

59. The question of Palestine is at the heart of the Middle East problem, and, consequently, the Committee stressed its belief that no solution in the Middle East can be envisaged which does not fully take into account the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people.

60. The legitimate and inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to return to their homes and property and to achieve self-determination, national independence and sovereignty are endorsed by the Committee in the conviction that the full implementation of these rights will contribute decisively to a comprehensive and final settlement of the Middle East crisis.

61. The participation of the Palestine Liberation Organization, the representative of the Palestinian people, on an equal footing with other parties, on the basis of General Assembly resolutions 3236 (XXIX) and 3375 (XXX) is indispensable in all efforts, deliberations and conferences on the Middle East which are held under the auspices of the United Nations.

62. The Committee recalls the fundamental principle of the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force and stresses the consequent obligation for complete and speedy evacuation of any territory so occupied.

63. The Committee considers that it is the duty and the responsibility of all concerned to enable the Palestinians to exercise their inalienable rights.

64. The Committee recommends an expanded and more influential role by the United Nations and its organs in promoting a just solution to the question of Palestine and in the implementation of such a solution. The Security Council, in particular, should take appropriate action to facilitate the exercise by the Palestinians of their right to return to their homes, lands and property. The Committee, furthermore, urges the Security Council to promote action towards a just solution, taking into account all the powers conferred on it by the Charter of the United Nations.

65. It is with this perspective in view and on the basis of the numerous resolutions of the United Nations, after due consideration of all the facts, proposals and suggestions advanced in the course of its deliberations, that the Committee submits its recommendations on the modalities for the implementation of the exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.

II. THE RIGHT OF RETURN

66. The natural and inalienable right of Palestinians to return to their homes is recognized by resolution 194 (III), which the General Assembly has reaffirmed almost every year since its adoption. This right was also unanimously recognized by the Security Council in its resolution 237 (1967); the time for the urgent implementation of these resolutions is long overdue.

67. Without prejudice to the right of all Palestinians to return to their homes, lands and property, the Committee considers the programme of implementation of the exercise of this right may be carried out in two phases:

Phase one

68. The first phase involves the return to their homes of the Palestinians displaced as a result of the war of June 1967. The Committee recommends that:

- (i) The Security Council should request the immediate implementation of its resolution 237 (1967) and that such implementation should not be related to any other condition;
- (ii) The resources of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and/or of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, suitably financed and mandated, may be employed to assist in the solution of any logistical problems involved in the resettlement of those returning to their homes. These agencies could also assist, in co-operation with the host countries and the Palestine Liberation Organization, in the identification of the displaced Palestinians.

Phase two

69. The second phase deals with the return to their homes of the Palestinians displaced between 1948 and 1967. The Committee recommends that:

- (i) While the first phase is being implemented, the United Nations in co-operation with the States directly involved, and the Palestine Liberation Organization as the interim representative of the Palestinian entity, should proceed to make the necessary arrangements to enable Palestinians displaced between 1948 and 1967 to exercise their right to return to their homes and property, in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions, particularly General Assembly resolution 194 (III);
- (ii) Palestinians not choosing to return to their homes should be paid just and equitable compensation as provided for in resolution 194 (III).

III. THE RIGHT TO SELF-DETERMINATION, NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE AND SOVEREIGNTY

70. The Palestinian people has the inherent right to self-determination, national independence and sovereignty in Palestine. The Committee considers that the evacuation of the territories occupied by force and in violation of the principles of the Charter and relevant resolutions of the United Nations is a conditio sine qua non for the exercise by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights of Palestinians to their homes and property and with the establishment of an independent Palestinian entity, the Palestinian people will be able to exercise its rights to self-determination and to decide its form of government without external interference.

71. The Committee also feels that the United Nations has an historical duty and responsibility to render all assistance necessary to promote the economic development and prosperity of the Palestinian entity.

72. To these ends, the Committee recommends that:

(a) A timetable should be established by the Security Council for the complete withdrawal by Israeli occupation forces from those areas occupied in 1967; such withdrawal should be completed no later than 1 June 1977;

(b) The Security Council may need to provide temporary peace-keeping forces in order to facilitate the process of withdrawal;

(c) Israel should be requested by the Security Council to desist from the establishment of new settlements and to withdraw during this period from settlements established since 1967 in the occupied territories. Arab property and all essential services in these areas should be maintained intact;

(d) Israel should also be requested to abide scrupulously by the provisions of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, and to declare, pending its speedy withdrawal from these territories, its recognition of the applicability of that Convention;

(e) The evacuated territories, with all property and services intact, should be taken over by the United Nations, which with the co-operation of the League of Arab States, will subsequently hand over these evacuated areas to the Palestine Liberation Organization as the representative of the Palestinian people;

(f) The United Nations should, if necessary, assist in establishing communications between Gaza and the West Bank;

(g) As soon as the independent Palestinian entity has been established, the United Nations, in co-operation with the States directly involved and the Palestinian entity, should, taking into account General Assembly resolution 3375 (XXX), make further arrangements for the full implementation of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, the resolution of outstanding problems and the establishment of a just and lasting peace in the region, in accordance with all relevant United Nations resolutions;

(h) The United Nations should provide the economic and technical assistance necessary for the consolidation of the Palestinian entity.

Notes

a/ Official Documents of the General Assembly, Thirty-second Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/32/35).

Report of the Eighth United Nations Seminar on the Question of
Palestine, held at Jakarta from 9 to 13 May 1983

1. The Eighth United Nations Seminar on the Question of Palestine with "The inalienable rights of the Palestinian people" as its central theme, was held in the Hotel Indonesia, Jakarta, Republic of Indonesia, from 9 to 13 May 1983, in accordance with the terms of General Assembly resolution 36/120 B. Seven meetings were held and 16 panelists presented papers on various aspects of the question of Palestine.
2. The United Nations Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People was represented by a delegation consisting of Mr. Massamba Sarré (Senegal), Chairman of the Committee, Mr. Farid Zarif (Afghanistan), Vice-Chairman of the Committee, Mr. T. P. Sreenivasan (India), Mr. Boer Mauna (Indonesia), Mr. Khalid Mahmood (Pakistan), Mr. Darko Silović (Yugoslavia) and Mr. Z. L. Terzi (Palestine Liberation Organization). Mr. Sarré was Chairman and Mr. Boer Mauna Rapporteur of the Seminar.
3. The opening session of the Seminar on 9 May 1983 was addressed by Mr. Mochtar Kusumaatmadja, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, who stated that the Government and people of Indonesia had maintained a long-standing policy of unswerving support for all efforts by the international community to achieve the effective exercise by the Palestinian people of their inalienable rights. Indonesia's position had always been based on the firm conviction that lasting peace could only be established in the Middle East when the question of Palestine had been settled on an equitable and just basis.
4. The Seminar was being convened during a time when the Palestinians were being subjected to ever greater brutal oppression and killings. All of these heinous acts that had brought untold tragedy to the Palestinian people and to Lebanon, had sharply increased the danger of world-wide conflagration and had brought neither peace nor security to Israel.
5. While the terrorization of the Palestinian inhabitants of Lebanon continued, the population of the occupied territories had also experienced intensified repression, intimidation and a reign of terror.
6. A comprehensive, just and lasting solution must be achieved through the restoration to the Palestinian people of their inalienable rights to self-determination and independence and to the establishment of their own sovereign State. No solution could be comprehensive and just unless the Palestine Liberation Organization fully participated in the negotiations of that solution and its implementation. Peace and security in the region could only be based on Israel's total and unconditional withdrawal from all occupied Arab territories, including Jerusalem.
7. The Foreign Minister expressed the hope that on the basis of the deliberations at the Seminar, both the participants and the large international press corps at Jakarta would do their part in heightening awareness and strengthening solidarity with the Palestinian people. He appealed particularly to the Indonesian press to give maximum coverage to the Seminar.

8. At the same opening session, Mr. Massamba Sarré, Chairman of the Committee, gave a brief account of the Committee's work. He emphasized the importance of the Seminar as a step towards ensuring that the rights of the Palestinians would be implemented. The Seminar itself was part of a programme to ensure that the facts relating to the question of Palestine reached not only those who were willing to listen but also those who had hitherto consistently refused to do so or had been denied access to the facts. For a long time, biased reporting had had the unfortunate effect of always presenting the Palestinian people and their hopes and ambitions in an unfavourable light or of completely ignoring them. If all the facts were known, the resultant understanding of the question would convince the international community of the just cause of the Palestinians. The International Conference on the Question of Palestine later in the year was a further step in the search for a solution to the problem. It was absolutely essential that every Government should participate in that Conference and play an active role in it.

9. A message from Mr. Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization, was conveyed to the Seminar by Mr. Zehdi L. Terzi, Permanent Observer of the Palestine Liberation Organization to the United Nations. Mr. Arafat's message referred to the heroic Palestinian people who had confronted and frustrated the military assault in Lebanon. The Zionists had then resorted to the act of genocide of unarmed defenceless civilians whose only protection was an assurance by the United States that adequate safeguards would be guaranteed. No such safeguards were in sight. The Palestine Liberation Organization had affirmed its adherence to all relevant United Nations resolutions on the question of Palestine. The Palestinian people would persist in carrying the olive branch on the road to peace but would carry, as well, the gun to secure and ensure the peace process and to secure their safety and survival and the attainment and exercise of their inalienable rights.

10. Mrs. Rasil Basu, principal officer of the International Conference on the Question of Palestine, made a statement on behalf of the Secretary-General of the International Conference at the opening session. She outlined the objectives of the Conference and reviewed the work done by the four regional preparatory meetings, held in Africa, Latin America, Asia and West Asia, in preparation for the Conference. Those regional meetings were designed to build a firm political, juridical and socio-economic foundation for the International Conference. Each focused on a specific aspect of the larger Palestinian question. All four meetings underscored that the United Nations must be challenged to sharpen its focus and undertake more concrete steps regarding the question of Palestine.

11. Mr. H. Z. A. Oesman, Assistant Secretary-General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, made a statement at the opening session. He said that, despite numerous United Nations resolutions on the recognition of the historical rights of the Palestinian people, and the approval of the Fez Peace Plan by the Non-Aligned Movement, the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the League of Arab States, including the Palestine Liberation Organization, the State of Israel was becoming more and more obstinate and oppressive without the least consideration for the official and popular international public opinion that stood by the Palestinian people in their legitimate struggle. The international community must put pressure not only on Israel but also on the country which was behind that entity in order to compel it to abide by United Nations resolutions and particularly by those relating to the problem of Palestine and its people. The big Powers in the world, with the support of other States, should impose peace by cutting the Zionist, racist entity to its proper size, by depriving it of supplies and assistance and by imposing necessary sanctions against it, he concluded.

12. Dr. Muhammad H. El-Farra, Assistant Secretary-General of the League of Arab States, addressed the second meeting of the Seminar. In reviewing the historical transformation in the status of Palestine since the time of the Ottoman Empire up to the present, he cited the 1917 Balfour Declaration as Britain's "worst breach of faith". The League of Arab States wanted to see a just and lasting peace in Palestine which took Palestinian rights into account. It was against the basic concept of zionism, which created an exclusively Jewish State on land purloined by force; a "master race" based on a religion, and a militant, expansionist policy, which was implemented in total disregard of the national rights of the Palestinian people. There could be no peace as long as Israeli leaders continued to gloss over the realities of the Palestinian people. The United States must realize that, in dealing with the future of a people, the people must be consulted. Their future must be discussed with their representatives. The Palestine Liberation Organization was the sole legitimate representative of the people of Palestine and without its active participation there could be no peace.

13. The closing meeting was addressed by Mr. Munawir Siadzali, Minister for Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia.

14. Five panels were established to consider different aspects of the central theme "The inalienable rights of the Palestinian people". These panels and their panelists were as follows:

- (a) Israeli policies and practices in the occupied Palestinian and Arab territories in the light of the recent events in the region

Panelists: Mr. Ignatius Benedict Fonseka (Sri Lanka); Mr. Raja Shehadeh (Palestinian); Dr. Muhammad Aziz Shukri (Syrian Arab Republic);

- (b) Asia and Palestine: measures to promote solidarity and mutual support in the search for peace

Panelists: Mr. Hardi (Indonesia); Mr. Nobuo Asai (Japan); Professor K. P. Saksena (India); Mr. Yu Mengjia (China); Mr. Saeeduddin Ahmed Dar (Pakistan);

- (c) The status of the Holy City of Jerusalem

Panelists: Dr. Abdelwahab Bouhdiba (Tunisia); Mr. August Marpaung (Indonesia); Dr. Raouf Nazmi (Egypt); Dr. Kemal Oke (Turkey); H.E. Mr. Kacem Zhiri (Morocco);

- (d) The role of the Palestine Liberation Organization in the social, cultural, economic and political development of the Palestinian people

Panelist: Mr. Janusz Zebrowski (Poland);

- (e) The role of the United Nations in the search for effective measures to enable the Palestinian people to attain and to exercise its inalienable rights with special emphasis on the importance of the International Conference on the Question of Palestine

Panelists: Dr. Oleg V. Kovtunovich (USSR); Dr. Amin Rais (Indonesia).

15. The Seminar decided that in accordance with previous practice, the papers presented by the panelists should be published in full by the United Nations together with the report of the Seminar. It was felt that that would be a valuable contribution towards an objective appraisal of the question of Palestine.

16. The discussions that followed the presentation of papers covered several aspects of the question of Palestine and demonstrated a general consensus on the issues relating to the problem.

17. The Seminar agreed that the attainment by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights was a sine qua non for a just and durable peace in the Middle East. The attainment of those rights as well as international law and the provisions of the relevant United Nations resolutions required that Israel should withdraw immediately from the Arab lands it had illegally occupied since 1967. The continued occupation merely served to exacerbate tensions in the area and posed a threat to international peace and security.

18. In spite of the fact that the United Nations had consistently reaffirmed the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, Israel had continued to violate them and prevent their realization in defiance of international public opinion and in violation of international law.

19. The Seminar noted that the vast majority of the international community was already convinced of the justice of the cause of the Palestinian people and that many constructive suggestions had been made in attempts to enable the Palestinian people to exercise its rights.

20. Asia's interest in and commitment to the cause of the Palestinian people was highlighted by many participants. It was pointed out that, while diplomatic relations had existed between some Asian States and Israel, Israel's policy of aggression and expansion had resulted in changing the attitudes of several of those States. It was only natural that those who had emerged from the status of colonies should be sympathetic to the struggle of the Palestinian people, who were now being subjected to similar oppression. The conflict in the Middle East, at the core of which was the question of Palestine, was of immediate concern to all Asian States since the struggle of the Palestinian people was inseparable from peace in Asia and the world as a whole.

21. Attention was drawn to the fact that Asian support for the rights of the Palestinian people could be traced to the very beginnings of the problem and that Asian nations had supported the just cause of the Palestinians when the question was first discussed in the United Nations in 1947. That support had continued throughout the years.

22. It was recalled that special attention had been paid to the problem at the Asian African Conference at Bandung in April 1955. The final communiqué of that Conference had contained the following paragraph:

"In view of the existing tension in the Middle East, caused by the situation in Palestine and of the danger of that tension to world peace, the Asian African Conference declared its support of the rights of the Arab people of Palestine and called for the implementation of the United Nations resolutions on Palestine and the achievement of the peaceful settlement of the Palestine question."

23. That support was based on the fundamental and universal principles of peace, freedom, independence, justice and human rights that the Bandung Conference upheld.

24. In order to strengthen the support for the Palestinian cause that already existed in Asia, it was suggested that special United Nations information centres should be established in various cities in Asia in order to establish closer liaison with the media and to ensure that factual information on the question of Palestine was disseminated. The media, particularly the more influential sections of the press, had a special responsibility in this regard.

25. In order to promote solidarity with the Palestinian people, it was suggested that Asian States which had not already done so should sever diplomatic relations with Israel and declare contraband all produce extracted from land and water resources expropriated from Arab lands. Further, Governments should build up pressure on the United States to act in accordance with United Nations resolutions.

26. Israel's policies and practices in the West Bank and Gaza and other occupied Arab territories were condemned as violations of the human rights of the inhabitants of those territories. Those policies and practices were seen as clear precursors of annexation in violation of international law and opinion. They were seen as aimed at creating "facts" which would make any negotiation on the future of the occupied territories a negotiation on the future of the Arab inhabitants rather than on the sovereignty of the Palestinian people.

27. The Seminar held that military occupation did not and could not displace or transfer sovereignty and that annexation of occupied territory was a violation of the Charter of the United Nations and the tenets of international law. The Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, of which Israel was one of the signatories, applied to the occupied Palestinian and other Arab territories. Any step towards annexation, therefore, would be illegal just as the annexation of Jerusalem and the Golan Heights were declared null and void and without legal effect by resolutions of the United Nations.

28. Israel's illegal policies of land acquisition, settlements and repression in the West Bank and Gaza were also clear violations of international law and practice. Those Israeli policies and practices had been extensively documented by the United Nations Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices affecting the Human Rights of the Population of the Occupied Territories, which was established in 1968. The repeated renewal of that Special Committee's mandate, in spite of Israel's refusal to co-operate with it, reflected the international community's concern over the situation in the occupied territories. However, in spite of all the efforts of that Committee and the General Assembly, the human rights situation in those territories had continued to deteriorate.

29. The Special Committee, after objective consideration of the evidence, both oral and written, presented to it, had come to the conclusion that the fundamental right to self-determination in the occupied territories had been disregarded. A policy had been elaborated and was being implemented which was designed to extend Israeli sovereignty over the occupied territories.

30. In violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949, Israel had established over 130 settlements in the West Bank, Gaza and the Golan Heights and was proceeding with plans to establish several more. Those settlements were now

inhabited by Israeli citizens transferred by the Government of Israel. The progression of settlements and encroachment which commenced in 1967 still continued and was facilitated by illegal acquisition of land which belonged to the Arab inhabitants. The establishment of settlements and all that it was giving rise to by way of changes in the legal and administrative institutions in the occupied territories as well as in the way it affected the human rights situation there were increasingly becoming the backbone of Israel's policy of annexation.

31. In addition, there were other measures such as Military Order 854, which was clearly aimed at preventing the evolution of the higher educational institutions and at suppressing every manifestation of Palestinian patriotism. Military Order 854 and its implications, the Seminar noted, had been widely condemned not only by Governments, but also by leading academics.

32. The reality reflected in the reports of the Special Committee showed that the Government of Israel was in the process of annihilating, if not eliminating, a people by illegally creating a situation designed to drive them out of their homeland or to remain in a state of perpetual subjugation.

33. Concern was expressed by the Seminar at the speed with which those policies were being implemented in spite of the international outcry against them. The Seminar felt that a halt and reversal of those policies was urgently required. Recent developments had greatly increased the importance of the time factor. Each day's delay permitted Israel to tighten further its grip on the illegally occupied Arab and Palestinian territories and to carry out its policy of annexation, which was increasingly acknowledged as a major obstacle to peace.

34. The policies and practices pursued by Israel in the occupied territories were illegal because in the final analysis, the occupation itself was illegal.

35. The status of the Holy City of Jerusalem was the subject of considerable discussion. Its history was traced and the conclusion reached that the final status of Jerusalem would be among the most difficult of the issues to solve. The Seminar confirmed that the occupation and Judaization of Jerusalem posed a challenge to the universal conscience and that Israel's unilateral acts to annex the city should continue to be condemned and declared null and void and without legal effect in accordance with relevant resolutions of the United Nations. The Security Council should adopt measures to enforce its decisions.

36. It was not its sacred or religious aspects which gave rise to problems. Israel had annexed Jerusalem by force and was attempting to Judaize it. The annexation of Jerusalem and its gradual Judaization by Israel were calculated to obliterate the unique character of the Holy City. The Israeli practices in Jerusalem had caused an impediment to the decolonization of Jerusalem, which was inseparable from the emergence of Palestine as a State.

37. It was stated that the right of self-determination, an inalienable right of the Palestinian people, extended to the population of Jerusalem itself and the Palestinians, represented by the Palestine Liberation Organization, were justified in insisting on Jerusalem as the capital of the State of Palestine when it was established. Ultimately it was within the framework of respect for the fundamental principles of the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination that the status of Jerusalem would find its solution. The status of Jerusalem as envisaged in United Nations resolutions remained the basis of a solution.

38. The Seminar heard an analysis of the socio-economic contribution of the Palestinian people in the countries throughout which they were dispersed. As a result of the loss of their land, they had turned from agriculture, which had been their main occupation, to urban employment such as light industry, building and the commercial and social service sectors. Some had entered the legal, medical and other professions and a few had attained high positions in the lands of their adoption.

39. Economic activity at present constituted a very modest part of Palestinian potential, since the majority of the Palestinians were still employed by non-Palestinian employers and only political independence and the end of the Palestinian diaspora would enable Palestinians to build up their own economy.

40. The Palestine Liberation Organization's success in organizing the Palestinian people, not only on the political level but also on the social, economic, cultural and administrative levels had created a structural framework for the Palestinian national identity and would be available when a Palestinian State was established.

41. The Seminar urged all States which had not as yet done so to recognize the Palestine Liberation Organization as the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, and to extend full diplomatic recognition to it.

42. The Seminar noted that the United Nations had given its constant attention to the question of Palestine and that apart from the General Assembly and the Security Council where various aspects of the problem were continually discussed, several other United Nations bodies also dealt with the problem. However, a solution was no nearer now than it had been in 1947.

43. The inability of the United Nations to resolve the problem was traced to the gross violations of its resolutions and of international law and conventions by Israel even though Israel had acceded to those conventions. It was stated that Israel was able to persist in this defiance because it enjoyed the support of the United States which, by the use of the veto in the Security Council, was able to block any action to implement the recommendations of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People.

44. A proposal was made that certain issues could be referred to the International Court of Justice for an advisory opinion. Among these, special emphasis was given to the value of obtaining an advisory opinion on what the legal consequences are for other States, of the continued presence of Israel in the Palestinian and other occupied Arab territories in violation of Security Council resolutions and international law and conventions. Some participants, however, questioned the advisability of adopting that course of action.

45. The path to peace lay in the attainment by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights and required that the right of all States in the area to security should be guaranteed and that all parties to the conflict, including Israel and the Palestinian State, when it was created, must assume obligations to respect the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of each other and to settle any disputes that might arise by peaceful means.

46. Such a settlement required international guarantees. The role of guarantor could be assumed by the Security Council.

47. The Seminar was reminded that proposals for a peaceful solution based on United Nations decisions and resolutions such as those of the non-aligned States, the Fez Arab peace plan and the Soviet proposal, should and could contribute to a just settlement of the problem.
48. The Seminar agreed that the implementation of the relevant United Nations resolutions would lead to a just, durable and comprehensive solution of the problem of Palestine.
49. The International Conference on the Question of Palestine scheduled for August 1983 could make a valuable contribution to a peaceful solution by drawing the attention of world public opinion to the tragedy of the Palestine people and by fostering activities in the search for a just solution. That Conference should stress the responsibility of all States Members of the United Nations for the attainment of a lasting peace in the Middle East. It was urged that participation at the Conference should be at the highest possible level.
50. A suggestion was made that the United Nations, particularly the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, should arrange a new system to gather and pool information on all the world-wide activities relating to Palestine.
51. It was suggested that the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People should send missions to capitals of Governments which had not so far extended their full support to the just cause of the Palestinian people, in order to endeavour to persuade them to adopt a more positive attitude in promoting the attainment of Palestinian rights.
52. The Seminar expressed its appreciation to the Government of the Republic of Indonesia for its kind co-operation in providing a venue for the Seminar and for all the courtesy and assistance it had extended to the participants to ensure that the Seminar was a success. The interest in the Seminar shown by the Government was a reflection of its deep commitment to the just cause of the Palestinian people.

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GENERAL ASSEMBLY

OFFICIAL RECORDS: THIRTY-NINTH SESSION

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UNITED NATIONS

New York, 1984

NOTE

Symbols of United Nations documents are composed of capital letters combined with figures. Mention of such a symbol indicates a reference to a United Nations document.

[5 October 1984]

CONTENTS

	<u>Paragraphs</u>	<u>Page</u>
LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL		v
I. INTRODUCTION	1 - 9	1
II. MANDATE OF THE COMMITTEE	10	2
III. ORGANIZATION OF WORK	11 - 17	3
A. Election of officers	11 - 12	3
B. Participation in the work of the Committee	13 - 16	3
C. Re-establishment of the Working Group	17	3
IV. ACTION TAKEN BY THE COMMITTEE	18 - 132	4
A. Action taken in accordance with paragraphs 3 and 5 of General Assembly resolution 38/58 A	18 - 124	4
1. Review of the situation relating to the question of Palestine and efforts to implement the recommendations of the Committee	18 - 38	4
2. Reaction to developments affecting the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people	39 - 89	7
(a) Communications to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council.....	39 - 64	7
(b) Action taken within the Security Council	65 - 85	10
(c) Other action relating to the question of Palestine	86 - 89	12
3. Attendance at conferences	90	13
4. Action taken by the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, United Nations bodies, regional and other organizations	91 - 124	14
(a) The Fourth Islamic Summit Conference	94 - 98	14
(b) Conference of Ministers of Information of Non-Aligned Countries	99 - 100	15
(c) Fortieth session of the Commission on Human Rights	101 - 107	15

CONTENTS (continued)

	<u>Paragraphs</u>	<u>Page</u>
(d) Declaration by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the States members of the European Economic Community	108 - 113	17
(e) The seventy-first Inter-Parliamentary Conference	114 - 117	18
(f) The Al-Quds (Jerusalem) Committee of the Organization of the Islamic Conference	118 - 122	18
(g) Second regular session of the Economic and Social Council	123 - 124	19
B. Action taken in accordance with paragraphs 2 and 3 of General Assembly resolution 38/58 B	125 - 132	19
V. ACTION TAKEN BY THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INFORMATION IN ACCORDANCE WITH GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 38/58 E	133 - 142	21
VI. ACTION TAKEN BY THE SECRETARY-GENERAL IN ACCORDANCE WITH PARAGRAPHS 5, 6, 7 AND 8 OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 38/58 C	143 - 154	23
VII. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COMMITTEE	155 - 160	25

Annexes

I. Recommendations of the Committee endorsed by the General Assembly at its thirty-first session		27
II. Geneva Declaration on Palestine and Programme of Action for the Achievement of Palestinian Rights		30
III. Report of the ninth United Nations Seminar on the Question of Palestine		40
IV. North American Non-governmental Organization Symposium on the Question of Palestine: the North American Declaration		51
V. International Meeting of Non-governmental Organizations on the Question of Palestine: resolution of non-governmental organizations .		55

LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

18 September 1984

Sir,

I have the honour to enclose herewith the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for submission to the General Assembly, in accordance with paragraph 5 of resolution 38/58 A.

Accept, Sir, the assurances of my highest consideration.

(Signed) Massamba SARRE
Chairman of the Committee
on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights
of the Palestinian People

His Excellency
Mr. Javier Pérez de Cuéllar
Secretary-General of the United Nations

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, established by General Assembly resolution 3376 (XXX) of 10 November 1975, is currently composed of 23 Member States. 1/
2. The first report of the Committee 2/ contained specific recommendations designed to enable the Palestinian people to exercise its inalienable rights, as previously recognized and defined by the General Assembly. Those recommendations were first endorsed by the Assembly at its thirty-first session, as a basis for the solution of the question of Palestine.
3. In its subsequent reports to the General Assembly, 3/ the Committee retained its original recommendations unchanged. On each occasion they were again endorsed by the Assembly with renewed emphasis.
4. After a thorough discussion of the Committee's reports and an appraisal of the situation in Palestine, the General Assembly each year has renewed and, as necessary, reviewed the mandate of the Committee.
5. Despite repeated urgings by the Committee, however, the Security Council has not yet been able to act on the recommendations of the Committee, nor have they yet been implemented in the area.
6. Meanwhile, arising from Israeli practices, tension and violence persist in the illegally occupied Palestinian and other Arab territories, including Jerusalem. In particular, widespread conflict resulted from the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982.
7. In consequence, as authorized by the General Assembly, the original date proposed for the International Conference on the Question of Palestine was advanced, and the Conference was held from 29 August to 7 September 1983 at Geneva. The Committee made all the necessary preparations for the widely attended Conference, which assessed the situation and made appropriate recommendations, contained in the Geneva Declaration on Palestine 4/ and the Programme of Action for the Achievement of Palestinian Rights (see annex II to the present report), 5/ endorsed by acclamation by the participants.
8. The inalienable rights and aspirations of the Palestinian people remain unattained. Tension and violence in the area prevail. It therefore remains the hope and expectation of the Committee that resolute and concerted international action will lead to a peaceful political solution to their plight.
9. For this purpose, the Committee attaches importance to the early convening of the proposed international peace conference on the Middle East and appreciates the contacts already initiated in that regard. The momentum for a peaceful solution must be maintained through practical action.

II. MANDATE OF THE COMMITTEE

10. The latest mandate of the Committee was specified in paragraphs 3 and 5 of General Assembly resolution 38/58 A and paragraphs 2 and 3 of resolution 38/58 B, of 13 December 1983. By those paragraphs the Assembly:

(a) Requested the Committee (i) to keep under review the situation relating to the question of Palestine and the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Achievement of Palestinian Rights 5/ adopted by the International Conference on the Question of Palestine and (ii) to report and make suggestions to the General Assembly or the Security Council, as appropriate;

(b) Authorized the Committee (i) to continue to exert all efforts to promote the implementation of its recommendations, (ii) to send delegations or representatives to international conferences and (iii) to report thereon to the General Assembly at its thirty-ninth session and thereafter.

The General Assembly also:

(a) Requested the Secretary-General to ensure that the Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat continued to discharge the tasks assigned to it, in consultation with the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and under its guidance;

(b) Requested the Secretary-General to provide the Division for Palestinian Rights with the necessary resources to accomplish its tasks and to expand its work programme through: (i) closer contacts with the media and wider dissemination of the Division's information material, particularly where information on the question of Palestine is inadequate; and (ii) increased contacts with non-governmental organizations and the convening of symposia and meetings for non-governmental organizations in different regions in order to heighten awareness of the facts relating to the question of Palestine.

III. ORGANIZATION OF WORK

A. Election of officers

11. The Committee, at its 98th meeting, on 9 January 1984, decided to re-elect the following officers:

Chairman: Mr. Massamba Sarré (Senegal)
Vice-Chairmen: Mr. Raúl Roa-Kouri (Cuba)
Mr. Mohammed Farid Zarif (Afghanistan)
Rapporteur: Mr. Victor J. Gauci (Malta)

12. The Committee, at its 105th meeting, on 18 September 1984, elected by acclamation Mr. Oscar Oramas Oliva (Cuba) as Vice-Chairman in place of Mr. Raúl Roa-Kouri (Cuba) who had departed from New York on another assignment for his country.

B. Participation in the work of the Committee

13. As in previous years, the Committee, at its first meeting of the year, reconfirmed that all States Members of the United Nations and Permanent Observers to the United Nations desiring to participate in the work of the Committee as observers could do so.

14. During 1984 the Committee again welcomed in that capacity all the States and organizations that had participated in the preceding year. 6/ The Committee also welcomed the participation of Lebanon in the work of the Committee as an observer from 18 September 1984. As in previous years, the Committee decided to invite the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) to participate in the work of the Committee as an observer, to attend all its meetings, and to make observations and proposals for the consideration of the Committee.

15. In view of the critical situation of Palestinians in the occupied territories, especially after the Israeli invasion of Lebanon, the Committee also authorized its Chairman, at its 99th meeting, on 22 February 1984, to address a letter to the Secretary-General requesting him to invite all States Members of the United Nations to participate more actively in the work of the Committee. The Secretary-General was also asked to direct the attention of all Member States to the call for the convening of an international peace conference on the Middle East.

16. Because of the importance attached by the Committee to the proposed conference, a letter to that effect was sent on 22 February 1984 to the Secretary-General; it was transmitted to Member States on 12 March 1984.

C. Re-establishment of the Working Group

17. The Committee, at its 99th meeting, decided that the Working Group, originally created in 1977, should be re-established and constituted as before, on the understanding that any member or observer could participate in its proceedings. 7/

IV. ACTION TAKEN BY THE COMMITTEE

- A. Action taken in accordance with paragraphs 3 and 5 of General Assembly resolution 38/58 A
1. Review of the situation relating to the question of Palestine and efforts to implement the recommendations of the Committee

18. In terms of its mandate, the Committee kept the situation in Palestine constantly under review and continued to exert all efforts to promote the implementation of its recommendations.

19. Accordingly, in response to a series of events which directly affected the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, the Committee authorized its Chairman and Acting Chairman, on several occasions, to communicate its grave concern to the Secretary-General and to the President of the Security Council.

20. Those communications, for the most part, dealt with practices and policies of the Israeli Government which, in the opinion of the Committee, were not only in direct contravention of international law and of the fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War of 12 August 1949, 8/ but were also contrary to the spirit of General Assembly and Security Council resolutions on the subject and contradictory to the recommendations of the Committee itself.

21. The communications thus expressed concern over the continuing Israeli occupation of the Palestinian and Arab territories and its policies of establishing illegal Jewish settlements in the occupied Palestinian territories, the confiscation of Arab-owned land and widespread and frequent violation by Israel of the rights of the Palestinian people. The communications also draw attention to reported plans of the Israeli Government to apply its legislation to the occupied territories. They also expressed the constant concern of the Committee over Israeli actions affecting the lives and well-being of Palestinians living as refugees in Lebanon.

22. Those Israeli actions led the Committee, in addition to its letters of protest, to urge as a priority matter the re-activation of the Commission established by the Security Council under its resolution 446 (1979) to examine the situation relating to Israeli settlements in the Arab and Palestinian territories occupied since 1967. The Committee pointed out that the latest report of the Commission had been adopted as far back as 25 November 1980, but had still not been considered by the Security Council, despite persistent urging by the Committee.

23. In its previous reports, the Committee drew the attention of the international community to the extent of the measures taken by the Government of Israel in establishing and enlarging settlements in the occupied territories, notwithstanding the illegality of such action, the censure of international opinion and the decisions of the United Nations. The Committee noted that there had been public and parliamentary questioning of such policies within Israel itself. The Committee recalled that both the General Assembly and the Security Council had declared such actions to be illegal.

24. During the year under review, the Committee noted that according to a study prepared for the Economic and Social Council which contained information supplied by the Jordanian authorities (see A/39/233-E/1984/79, para. 8), by the end of 1983, Israel had expropriated 47.4 per cent of the West Bank territory. Israeli sources have asserted that Israel now controls between 50 and 60 per cent of the land in the occupied territories. Of the expropriated land, 26 per cent has been allocated to Israeli settlements. Estimates based on Israeli and Palestinian data indicate that, by now, almost all of the Jordan Valley's potentially cultivable land has been expropriated for new Israeli settlements.

25. The impact of Israeli policies in the occupied territories has been particularly evident in so far as national resources are concerned, especially water (see A/39/326-E/1984/111, paras. 40 and 41). In effect, restrictive measures have been imposed on the Palestinian population of the area requiring that usage of water be maintained at 1967 levels. On the other hand, preferential treatment has been reported to be practised by the occupying authorities in supplying water to Israeli settlers (see A/39/233-E/1984/79, para. 11).

26. The Committee also noted that, in relentless pursuit of its policy, Israel continues to establish settlements that limit or impair the expansion and growth of Palestinian towns and villages. In a new development, Israel has initiated the establishment of an urban settlement in the very centre of Hebron, as detailed in the letter from the Chairman of the Committee to the Secretary-General (A/39/116-S/16366). Similar action has also been taken in Jerusalem.

27. There is at the same time an overall annual decline in residential construction in towns and villages of the occupied territories (see A/39/233-E/1984/79, paras. 12-14). New construction of housing barely covers the need resulting from the natural increase in population. For many years, no low-income housing has been publicly subsidized. In addition, punitive demolition of houses continues at an accelerated rate; this is made worse by a new measure of sealing houses or rooms with concrete. Absence of construction to replace dilapidated and substandard housing, together with restrictive policies of the occupying authorities concerning building permits and transfer of funds from abroad, is expected to worsen the serious housing condition.

28. Longer-term trends are ominous. According to document A/39/233-E/1984/79, paragraph 15, present indications are that the Israeli Government will continue to establish settlements in the occupied territories aiming at a projected minimum of 100,000 Israelis in such settlements by 1987 and 190,000 by the year 2010. The numbers exclude Israelis in East Jerusalem and other Palestinian localities incorporated into the city immediately after the 1967 war.

29. The Committee notes and stresses in particular that the same document, in paragraphs 19 and 20, draws attention to the conflict and confrontation, often leading to violence, that has resulted from this persistent Israeli settlement policy. The settlers form a privileged class, have the support of the administering authorities and the Government of Israel, are permitted to carry firearms and have often resorted to the use of these firearms to harass and terrorize Palestinian people, thus becoming a force of oppression against these Arabs. The report points out that the system appears to be designed to attract Israeli settlers and to compel the Palestinians to leave the territories.

30. The Committee notes from the report that, despite the fact that the settlers are there in violation of the fourth Geneva Convention, they are enabled by the occupying authorities to pursue their activities within the occupied territories without hindrance. On the other hand, Palestinian people are subjected to frequent curfews which restrain their activities. In addition, Palestinians in the occupied territories, even those in refugee camps, have been subjected to frequent harassment, mostly because of their justified resistance to the objective of Israel to relocate them elsewhere, so as to undermine Palestinian defense of their just cause.

31. The Committee also notes that security checks carried out by the Israeli occupation authorities, including soldiers, police and settlers, at any time of day or night against the Arab population in the occupied territories have become a routine practice. The resulting tension is further exacerbated by the fact that Palestinians are subject to the jurisdiction of military courts, against which there is no appeal. Additionally, frequent closing of Arab schools and universities has severely disrupted academic life.

32. Confrontation has extended even to places of religious worship; more recently, violent acts were attributed to Jewish terrorist groups intending to damage or destroy Islamic holy places. Other desecration has taken place under the guise of archaeological excavation.

33. Apart from social considerations, it should be added that the policies designed to promote, protect and develop the illegal settlements have had a direct economic effect on the Palestinian population resulting in severe structural changes in the economy of the occupied territories (see A/39/233-E/1984/79, paras. 16-18).

34. These changes have diminished the importance of the agricultural sector, but without the corresponding development of an industrial base. There has been a relative lack of employment opportunity in the occupied territories, with consequent daily commuting to Israel by the Palestinian labour force. Furthermore, production of goods has been reoriented towards those that can be sold to and through Israel, while Palestinian consumption is met by increased imports from Israel.

35. The net result is that the economic policies of the occupying Power have created a situation of total dependence of the economies of the West Bank and Gaza, by controlling their production and reducing their capacity to create employment in such a manner as to diminish their potential for independent economic development.

36. The Committee wishes to bring forcefully to the notice of the General Assembly all these details, which are accurately reported examples of Israeli actions which are seriously affecting the daily lives of the Palestinian people and are clearly in violation of the relevant provisions of the Geneva Conventions.

37. After the increased tension occasioned by the Israeli invasion of Lebanon, the Committee deplored the action taken by the Israeli occupation forces in entering the Ein El-Helweh Palestinian refugee camp outside Sidon on 15 May 1984. Subsequent events resulted in violence and loss of life and, as a result, the Security Council met on 21 May 1984 to consider the matter. The President of the Council announced at the conclusion of that meeting that consideration of the item would be continued at a later date.

38. The Committee also noted that the Security Council met on 29, 30 and 31 August and on 4 and 6 September 1984 to consider all practices and measures taken by the Israeli occupying authorities in southern Lebanon, the western Beqaa and the Rashaya region. The Council did not adopt a draft resolution submitted by Lebanon owing to the negative vote of a permanent member of the Council.

2. Reaction to developments affecting the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people

(a) Communications to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

39. In further pursuit of its mandate, the Committee, through its Chairman, transmitted, as occasion demanded, several letters on matters of urgency to the Secretary-General and to the President of the Council.

40. On 4 November 1983, the Chairman drew attention to the decision of the Israeli authorities to close down Bethlehem University for two whole months (A/38/569-S/16126), partly because of an exhibition given at the University, entitled "Palestinian Heritage" which, according to the occupying authorities, contained "inflammatory" material.

41. Student council members responsible for the exhibition were arrested. On announcing the closing of the University, the co-ordinator of Israeli activities in the West Bank stated that Israel intended "to respond with extreme severity in the future to any manifestation of breaches of order" in the occupied territories.

42. In the light of that development, the Chairman, expressing the view of the Committee, stressed that such a repressive Israeli policy could only aggravate the extremely tense situation in the occupied Palestinian Arab territories and thereby increase the threat to international peace and security in the region.

43. On 18 November 1983, the Chairman expressed the deep concern of the Committee regarding the Israeli arrest of two Israeli Arabs on the grounds that they were "in breach of security law" for having attended the Geneva International Conference on the Question of Palestine and having met with representatives of the Palestine Liberation Organization in working sessions of the Conference (A/38/595-S/16171).

44. Expressing concern that similar action might be taken against other participants from Israel in the Conference, the Chairman protested against that discriminatory action which amounted to an act of intimidation, since the two persons arrested were merely pursuing their legitimate activities on behalf of their non-governmental organizations at a Conference organized under the aegis of the United Nations.

45. The Chairman urged that the Committee's concern be conveyed to the Israeli authorities and that any restriction placed on the two persons arrested be lifted. That matter was taken up later by the Chairman in his letter of 24 February 1984.

46. On 24 February 1984, in follow-up action regarding the arrest of the two Israeli Arabs by the Israeli authorities, the Chairman pointed out that, although both persons concerned were subsequently released from custody, their movements had been restricted to their home towns for a period of six months. The

Chairman again protested against that action and urged the Secretary-General to convey the Committee's concern to the Israeli authorities (A/39/117-S/16373).

47. On 9 January 1984, the Chairman of the Committee referred to current discussion in the Israeli Knesset on two proposed new laws that would extend Israeli legislation into the occupied West Bank and the Gaza Strip (A/39/70-S/16261).

48. The Chairman pointed out that the Committee understood from reliable reports that an amendment to one of the laws had gone so far as to authorize the Israeli occupying authorities to impose the application of Israeli legislation in a number of cases with the purported aim of replacing Jordanian legislation in the occupied West Bank. The Chairman also drew attention to reports that a new provision had been approved which authorized the Israeli Minister for Justice to apply civil and criminal laws in the occupied territories subject to approval of the constitutional sub-committee of the Knesset, but without the approval of that body.

49. The Chairman expressed the Committee's belief that such measures were indicative of one more step in the Israeli process of annexing the occupied territories and discriminating against the Palestinian people, and that such measures were to be considered in flagrant violation of the principles of international law and the innumerable resolutions of the Security Council on the question. The Chairman reaffirmed that appropriate and vigorous measures should be taken without delay to protect the legitimate rights of the Palestinians living in the occupied territories.

50. On 6 February 1984, the Acting Chairman of the Committee referred to an attempt to desecrate the holiest Moslem shrine in Jerusalem - the Dome of the Rock and Al-Aqsa Mosque, which is considered the third most sacred place in Islam, after Makkah and Al-Madinah (A/39/99-S/16327).

51. The attempted destruction occurred on 27 January 1984, but was fortunately foiled by Arab guards. According to the accounts of both the police and Moslem leaders, a Moslem guard, aware of the intrusion, appealed for help. As policemen arrived, two intruders fled, leaving behind explosives and hand grenades purportedly issued by the Israeli Army.

52. The Acting Chairman pointed out that, over recent months, many such instances of explosives placed at entrances to churches and mosques had been reported. He urged that the attention of members of the General Assembly and the Security Council be drawn to those events, which had raised the concern even of Israeli leaders.

53. In his letter of 23 February 1984, the Chairman of the Committee again took up the matter of the Israeli policy of establishing Jewish settlements in the occupied territories (A/39/116-S/16366). He pointed out that, despite representations made in his previous letter of 18 July 1983 (A/38/306-S/15880), it had been reported that "the Government of Israel is determined to renew the Jewish presence in Hebron and will help rebuild its old Jewish Quarter" and that "even if the Hebron Arabs did oppose such a presence it would not alter the Government's objectives of renewing the Jewish Quarter in Hebron".

54. The Chairman added in his letter that despite a reported freeze on settlements in what the Israeli Government had termed "Judea" and "Samaria", the corner-stone

of yet another new settlement, to be called "Ganei Modiin", had been laid on 19 January 1984 in the "Benjamin" region, as the area between Ramallah and Nablus is now termed by Israel. He reiterated the Committee's concern over the Israeli settlements policy.

55. On 26 March 1984, the Acting Chairman of the Committee referred to still further reports that yet another new settlement, named Eruvin, had been established on 4 March 1984 in the Gush Etzion region to the north of the Arab town of Hebron (A/39/157-S/16442).

56. The Acting Chairman also referred to two confidential plans prepared with the object of developing what has been termed "greater Jerusalem". In effect, this would result in three new Israeli centres being established around Jerusalem.

57. On a related matter, the Acting Chairman referred to reports of the proposed expansion of the municipal limit of the city of Jerusalem to the north-east areas of the West Bank, so as to provide land for the city's industrial growth.

58. In a letter dated 19 April 1984, the Acting Chairman of the Committee reiterated the Committee's concern at the action taken by the Government of Israel to complete its plan to make Jerusalem the capital of Israel (A/39/201-S/16493). He recalled Security Council resolution 478 (1980) of 20 August 1980, which had called upon those States that had transferred their diplomatic missions to Jerusalem to withdraw such missions from the Holy City.

59. The Committee reaffirmed that withdrawal of diplomatic missions from Jerusalem reflected the concern of Governments for the sentiment and opinion of the vast majority of the international community, as well as respect for decisions of the Security Council.

60. In this connection, the Acting Chairman drew attention to a report that the Government of El Salvador had officially transferred its embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. In consequence, the reported move by the Government of El Salvador was regretted by the Committee as detrimental to a satisfactory solution of the question of the status of the Holy City and contrary to the spirit of Security Council and General Assembly resolutions on the subject.

61. On 16 May 1984, the Acting Chairman of the Committee drew attention to news items regarding an Israeli search operation which had taken place the day before at the Ein El-Helweh Palestinian refugee camp outside Sidon in Lebanon, with subsequent casualties and arrests among the Palestinian refugees and destruction of property.

62. He expressed the belief of the membership of the Committee that it was unconscionable that the Israeli army of occupation should have taken such action against refugees (A/39/263-S/16568).

63. On 25 June 1984, the Chairman referred to still further action taken by Israel of establishing three new settlements in its continuing process of annexing the occupied territories of the West Bank. The Chairman also drew attention to a report that the Israeli Minister for Finance had approved an additional budget of 1.5 billion shekels to be invested in new settlements in the Gaza Strip on lands belonging to Arabs (A/39/329-S/16646).

64. In a letter addressed to the Secretary-General on 8 August 1984 (A/39/403), the Chairman drew attention to a number of United Nations reports detailing the effects of the Israeli occupation on the enjoyment of the political, social, economic and cultural rights of the Palestinian people and on its opportunities for development. To the letter were annexed the relevant reports prepared by the International Labour Office, the World Health Organization and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

(b) Action taken within the Security Council

65. In addition to transmitting letters on matters of urgency to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council, the Committee, through its Chairman, participated in activities of the Council when matters relating to the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, or violation of those rights, were considered.

66. On 11 November 1983, following informal consultations of the Security Council in which the Chairman of the Committee was involved, the President of the Council read out a statement (S/16142).

67. The statement expressed the profound concern of Council members at recent and current developments in northern Lebanon, which had caused and were still causing widespread suffering and loss of human lives. The members appealed to all parties concerned to exercise the utmost restraint and freely seek to attain, and to respect, an immediate cessation of hostilities, to settle their differences exclusively by peaceful means and to refrain from the threat or use of force.

68. Appreciation was expressed for the work of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in providing emergency humanitarian assistance to Palestinian and Lebanese civilians around the city of Tripoli. Members of the Security Council would continue to follow the situation in Lebanon with the greatest attention.

69. Subsequently, on 23 November 1983, the Security Council, without debate, unanimously adopted a resolution on the events taking place in northern Lebanon (resolution 542 (1983)).

70. In that resolution, the Security Council deplored the loss of human life caused by those events and reiterated its call for the strict respect for the sovereignty, political independence and territorial integrity of Lebanon within its internationally recognized boundaries.

71. The parties concerned were requested to accept a cease-fire immediately and to observe scrupulously the cessation of hostilities. They were also invited to settle their differences exclusively by peaceful means and to refrain from the threat or use of force.

72. The parties concerned were also asked to comply with the provisions of that resolution which requested the Secretary-General to follow the situation, to consult with the Government of Lebanon and to report to the Council. Tribute was again paid to UNRWA and ICRC in providing emergency humanitarian assistance to Palestinian and Lebanese civilians.

73. In pursuance of that request, the Secretary-General submitted a report to the Security Council on 21 December 1983 (S/16228), in which he referred to a request by the Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) regarding the departure of the armed elements of PLO from Tripoli. The Secretary-General recalled that, in his statement of 3 December (S/16194), during consultations of the Security Council, he had informed the Council of his decision to authorize the flying of the United Nations flag alongside the national flag of the country concerned on the ships which would evacuate the armed elements of PLO from Tripoli. That decision was taken on purely humanitarian grounds to facilitate the resolution of a situation which had already cost many innocent lives and caused great destruction. The evacuation would involve some 4,000 men carrying personal weapons only. After consultations with the members of the Security Council on 3 December 1983, the President of the Council confirmed that the Secretary-General's statement had the support of the members of the Council (S/16195).

74. In a letter dated 21 December 1983 (S/16230) the Permanent Representative of Greece informed the Secretary-General that, in response to a request made by the Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization, the Hellenic Government had decided, for humanitarian reasons, to make five vessels available to him for transporting Palestinian forces from the Lebanese port of Tripoli to Democratic Yemen, Yemen, Tunisia and Algeria. The operation had been conceived and carried out in collaboration with the French Government after consultations with the other Governments concerned. The Greek vessels flew the United Nations flag in addition to the national flag throughout the operation. The evacuation operation had taken place on 20 December and had been carried out successfully.

75. On 26 January 1984, following consultations held on that date, the President of the Security Council issued a statement (S/16293) regarding legislation then under consideration by the Israel Knesset.

76. In his statement, the President of the Council noted a letter dated 11 January 1984 on that matter from the Permanent Representative of Israel (S/16269). The President recalled previous resolutions stressing the applicability of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War of 12 August 1949, 8/ and urged that no steps be taken which could lead to further aggravation of tension in the area.

77. On 21 May 1984, at the request of the Arab Group contained in a letter dated 17 May 1984 from the Permanent Representative of Kuwait to the United Nations (S/16569), the Council met to consider "the most recent act of aggression committed by Israel against the refugee camp of Palestinians at Ein El-Helweh in South Lebanon".

78. The Chairman of the Committee intervened in the debate and stated that the very fact that the Security Council and the General Assembly had met so often to consider the question of Palestine and related events in Lebanon was confirmation of the international community's deep concern. He added that the Israeli operation carried out on 15 and 16 May 1983 was a flagrant violation of human rights as defined in the Charter of the United Nations and of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

79. The Chairman said that the Committee had noted that, taking advantage of the tragedy in Lebanon, Israel was trying to silence the Palestinians who were

legitimately protesting against the occupation of their territory and was pursuing its illegal plans to annex the West Bank and Gaza in defiance of international law and world public opinion. He noted that that policy of annexation had even been condemned by a certain section of Israeli public opinion which had the merit of understanding that Israel's security lay in dialogue with the parties concerned, rather than in annexation of territory.

80. Stressing the importance of convening an international peace conference on the Middle East, the Chairman said that such a Conference would have beneficial effects on the whole region, and particularly on Lebanon, whose unity and territorial integrity must be safeguarded. Faced with the constant worsening of the situation in the region, the Security Council had the duty and responsibility to take appropriate measures to put an end to those tragic events and to bring about the renewal of the policy of dialogue among all the parties concerned.

81. At the conclusion of the meeting, the President of the Security Council said that further discussion of the item would take place at a later date.

82. In response to an urgent request by the Permanent Representative of Lebanon dated 24 August 1984 (S/16713), the Security Council met on 29, 30 and 31 August and on 4 and 6 September 1984 to consider all practices and measures taken by the Israeli occupying authorities in southern Lebanon, the western Begaa and the Rashaya region.

83. In the course of the debate, the Chairman of the Committee stated that it was the duty and the responsibility of the Security Council to take all appropriate steps to save Lebanon from imminent disintegration. He reiterated that the framework for peace in the region had been defined by the General Assembly in its resolution 38/58 C which called for the convening of an international peace conference on the Middle East. He drew attention to the encouraging replies received to that proposal and to the fact that the international community as a whole supported a just and comprehensive settlement of the Middle East question, as shown by the decisions adopted by several recent intergovernmental and non-governmental meetings.

84. The Security Council had before it a draft resolution sponsored by Lebanon (S/16732), by which the Council would have reiterated its call for strict respect for the sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of Lebanon within its internationally recognized boundaries. The Council would also have affirmed that the provisions of the fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 applied to the territories occupied by Israel in southern Lebanon, the western Begaa and the Rashaya district and would have called upon Israel to respect strictly the rights of the civilian population in those areas, in compliance with that Convention.

85. Because of the negative vote by a permanent member, the Security Council did not adopt the draft resolution.

(c) Other action relating to the question of Palestine

86. The Committee noted that on 30 July 1984 the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, in its declared desire to contribute to the establishment of peace in the Middle East, put forward proposals on a Middle East settlement and ways of reaching it, (see A/39/368-S/16685). The principles of this settlement comprised, inter alia:

(a) The inadmissibility of the capture of foreign lands through aggression and, consequently, the return of all the territories occupied by Israel since 1967 to the Arabs, the dismantling of the settlements established by Israel in those territories and the inviolability of borders between Israel and its Arab neighbours;

(b) The guarantee in practice of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, whose sole legitimate representative is the PLO, to self-determination and to the establishment of its own independent State on the Palestinian lands - the West Bank of the River Jordan and the Gaza Strip - which could be handed over by Israel for a short transitional period, not exceeding a few months, under United Nations control; the Palestinian State would itself determine the nature of its relations with neighbouring countries, including the possibility of forming a confederation; the opportunity for the Palestinian refugees to return to their homes or receive appropriate compensation for the property left behind by them;

(c) East Jerusalem should be returned to the Arabs and become an inalienable part of the Palestinian State;

(d) The right of all States in the region to a secure and independent existence and development should be effectively guaranteed, with, of course, full reciprocity;

(e) An end should be put to the state of war, and peace should be established between the Arab States and Israel;

(f) International guarantees of the settlement.

87. It was stressed by the proponent of the proposals that the only right and effective way of ensuring a radical solution to the Middle East problem was through collective efforts with the participation of all parties concerned, in other words, through talks within the framework of an international conference on the Middle East specially convened for the purpose. The proposals also contained provisions concerning the aims of such a conference, its participants and the organization of work.

88. The Soviet Union appealed to all parties to the conflict to act on the basis of a sober assessment of each other's legitimate rights and interests, and to all other States not to hamper, but to contribute to, the quest for such a settlement.

89. The Committee noted with satisfaction that those proposals conformed on major points with its own long-standing recommendations and constituted, inter alia, a positive response by the Soviet Union towards the appeal contained in paragraph 98 of the Committee's report of last year. 9/

3. Attendance at conferences

90. In accordance with its mandate, the Committee was represented at the Fourteenth Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers, held at Dhaka, Bangladesh, from 6 to 11 December 1983; the fourth summit meeting of the Islamic Conference, held at Casablanca from 16 to 19 January 1984; the Sixth Congress of the Afro-Asian Peoples' Solidarity Organization, held at Algiers from 27 to 30 May 1984; the Conference of Arab Solidarity with the Struggle for Liberation in Southern Africa, held at Tunis from 7 to 9 August 1984; and the International Dialogue on the United Nations and the Peace Forces, held at Geneva from 10 to 12 September 1984.

4. Action taken by the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, United Nations bodies, regional and other organizations

91. The Committee continued to follow with great interest action taken by other organizations on matters relevant to its work. Action taken in 1983 after the Committee had submitted its report 9/ to the thirty-eighth session of the General Assembly was duly noted and appreciated.

92. This action included: the statement of the Al-Quds Committee at its eighth meeting held in New York, 30 September 1983; the paragraphs on the Middle East and Palestine in the Final Communiqué adopted at the Meeting of Ministers and Heads of Delegations of the Non-Aligned Countries to the thirty-eighth session of the General Assembly, held in New York from 4 to 7 October 1983 (see A/38/495-S/16035, annex, paras. 47-57); the communiqué issued following the co-ordinating meeting of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, held in New York on 10 October 1983 (A/39/236-S/16535, annex); the paragraphs adopted in the Final Communiqué of the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting on the Middle East, held at New Delhi from 23 to 29 November 1983; the resolutions and the paragraphs on the question of Palestine of the final declaration adopted at the Fourteenth Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers, held at Dhaka, Bangladesh, from 6 to 11 December 1983 (see A/39/133-S/16417, annexes I and IV); and the twelfth session of the Presidium of the Afro-Asian Peoples' Solidarity Organization, held at Nicosia, Cyprus, from 13 to 15 December 1983.

93. Action relevant to the work of the Committee undertaken by other organizations in 1984 included meetings held by: the Fourth Islamic Summit Conference on the Palestine Question and the Situation in the Middle East; the Ministers of Information of Non-Aligned Countries; the Commission on Human Rights at its fortieth session; the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of States Members of the European Economic Community; the seventy-first Inter-Parliamentary Conference; the Al-Quds (Jerusalem) Committee and the Economic and Social Council at its second regular session, as indicated in paragraphs 94-124 below.

(a) The Fourth Islamic Summit Conference

94. The Fourth Islamic Summit Conference was held at Casablanca from 16 to 19 January 1984. At that time, the Conference adopted several resolutions relating to the question of Palestine (see A/39/131-S/16414 and Corr. 1, annex II).

95. By its resolution 1/4-P (IS), the Conference reaffirmed that a just peace in the region could only be achieved on the basis of complete and unconditional withdrawal by Israel from all the occupied Arab territories, and on the recovery by the Palestinian people of their inalienable national rights.

96. The Conference reaffirmed that Al-Quds al-Sharif, the capital of Palestine, was an integral part of the occupied Palestinian territory and that Israel must unconditionally and totally withdraw from it and restore it to Arab sovereignty. It was further reaffirmed that no solution could be considered as comprehensive, just and acceptable unless the PLO participated in its formulation as an independent party on equal footing with the other parties concerned.

97. The Conference called upon member States to work collectively for the adoption of a new Security Council resolution which would provide explicitly for the withdrawal of Israel from all the occupied Palestinian and Arab territories,

including the City of Al-Quds al-Sharif, and safeguard the inalienable national rights of the Palestinian people, including their right to return to their homeland and to achieve self-determination in accordance with United Nations resolutions, particularly resolution 3236 (XXIX), and the recommendations of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People.

98. By resolution 2/4-P (IS) on the city of Al-Quds al-Sharif, the Fourth Islamic Summit Conference urged all countries to refrain from dealing with the occupying authorities in any way that could be exploited as a recognition and acceptance of Al-Quds al-Sharif as the capital city of Israel.

(b) Conference of Ministers of Information of Non-Aligned Countries

99. A meeting of the Conference of Ministers of Information of Non-Aligned Countries was held at Jakarta from 26 to 30 January 1984. At that time, the Ministers agreed to support the Department of Public Information of the United Nations Secretariat, particularly in expanding publication and audio-visual coverage of facts and of developments pertaining to the question of Palestine and the struggle of the Palestinian people to attain and exercise its inalienable rights (see A/39/139-S/16430, annex, sect. IV, para. 21).

100. The Ministers found it necessary to contribute towards increasing awareness by the international community of the economic and social burdens borne by the Palestinian people as a result of the continued Israeli occupation and its negative effect on the economic development of the West Asian region as a whole (ibid.).

(c) Fortieth session of the Commission on Human Rights

101. At its fortieth session, held from 6 February to 16 March 1984, the Commission on Human Rights adopted five resolutions dealing with the situation in the occupied Arab territories, including Palestine (1984/1 A and B, 1984/2, 1984/3, 1984/11 and 1984/20). 10/

102. In resolution 1984/1 A, the Commission strongly condemned Israeli policies and practices, administrative and legislative measures to promote and expand the establishment of settler colonies in the occupied territories, as well as the following specific aspects:

"(a) The annexation of parts of the occupied territories, including Jerusalem;

"(b) The continuing establishment of new Israeli settlements and expansion of the existing settlements on private and public Arab lands, and the transfer of an alien population thereto;

"(c) The arming of settlers in the occupied territories to commit acts of violence against Arab civilians, and the perpetration of acts of violence by these armed settlers against individuals, causing injury and death and wide-scale damage to Arab property;

"(d) The arming of settlers in the occupied territories to strike at Muslim and Christian religious and holy places;

"(e) The evacuation, deportation, expulsion, displacement and transfer of Arab inhabitants of the occupied territories, and the denial of their right to return;

"(f) The confiscation and expropriation of Arab property in the occupied territories and all other transactions for the acquisition of land involving Israeli authorities, institutions or nationals on the one hand, and inhabitants or institutions of the occupied territories on the other;

"(g) The destruction and demolition of Arab houses;

"(h) Mass arrests, collective punishments, administrative detention and ill-treatment of the Arab population, the torture of persons under detention and the inhuman conditions in prisons;

"(i) The pillaging of archaeological and cultural property;

"(j) The interference with religious freedoms and practices as well as with family rights and customs;

"(k) The systematic Israeli repression against cultural and educational institutions, especially universities, in the occupied Palestinian territories, closing them or restricting and impeding their academic activities by subjecting selection of courses, textbooks and educational programmes, admission of students and appointment of faculty members to the control and supervision of the military occupation authorities and by the expulsion of numerous faculty members of several universities for refusing to sign statements containing political positions, in flagrant defiance and disregard of their right to academic freedom;

"(l) The illegal exploitation of the natural wealth, water and other resources and the population of the occupied territories;

"(m) The dismantling of municipal services by dismissing the elected mayors as well as the municipal councils and forbidding Arab aid funds."

103. In its resolution 1984/1 B, the Commission reaffirmed that the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War was applicable to all the Arab territories occupied by Israel since 1967, including Jerusalem, and expressed its deep concern at the consequences of Israel's systematic refusal to apply that Convention.

104. In its resolution 1984/2, the Commission called upon Israel to rescind forthwith its decision of 14 December 1981 to impose its laws, jurisdiction and administration on the Syrian Golan Heights, and firmly emphasized the overriding necessity of the total and unconditional withdrawal by Israel from all Palestinian and Syrian territories occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, which was an essential prerequisite for the establishment of a comprehensive and just peace in the Middle East.

105. In its resolution 1984/3, the Commission condemned Israel for its persistence in developing the colonization of the occupied territories, including Jerusalem, which aimed at changing their demographic composition, institutional structure and status.

106. In its resolution 1984/11, the Commission strongly condemned anew Israel's responsibility for the large-scale massacre in the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps, which constituted an act of genocide, and expressed its grave concern that, until a just and equitable solution to the problem of Palestine had been implemented, the Palestinian people would be exposed to grave dangers such as the appalling massacre perpetrated in the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps.

107. In its resolution 1984/20, the Commission urged Israel to release immediately not only all those civilians arbitrarily detained since its invasion and continued occupation of Lebanese territories, but also those whom Israel rearrested and detained again in Ansar Camp, thereby violating the agreement on the exchange of prisoners concluded with ICRC in November 1983.

(d) Declaration by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the States members of the European Economic Community

108. On 27 March 1984, at Brussels, the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Ten States members of the European Economic Community adopted a declaration on the question of the Middle East (see A/39/161-S/16456, annex).

109. The Ministers recognized the need for a settlement guaranteeing peace among all States of the region which should include the right to existence and security of all these States, including Israel. The declaration also stated that all the parties concerned had conceded that settlement must take account of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people. In the view of the Ten, that would entail acceptance of the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, with all that that implied.

110. The declaration further stated that it had been universally acknowledged that all the problems which existed between Israel and its neighbours must be resolved in accordance with the principles recognized by the international community, including non-recourse to the use of force and non-acquisition of territory by force. That meant that, in accordance with Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), Israel must put an end to the territorial occupation which it had maintained since the conflict of 1967. A negotiated settlement would require the continuing and independent expression of the will of the Palestinian people, and the PLO must be associated with the negotiations.

111. The Ten States members of the Community expressed concern at the collapse of the hopes engendered in September 1982 by certain converging and promising peace initiatives and they declared that the absence of all progress towards a negotiated solution since then had exacerbated antagonism and entrenched the positions of those who favoured confrontation.

112. The declaration also noted that certain recent developments, such as the meeting of the Islamic Conference in Casablanca and the resumption of dialogue between Jordan and the Palestinians, had been encouraging.

113. The Ten requested all parties to re-examine their positions with a view to reducing the gap between them, taking particularly into account elements contained in the Reagan Plan and in the Fez Declaration. They also called upon the Government of Israel to put an end to its policy of establishing settlements in the occupied territories, and undertook to support any constructive step which might be initiated by the parties concerned.

(e) The seventy-first Inter-Parliamentary Conference

114. At its seventy-first Conference, held at Geneva from 2 to 7 April 1984, the Inter-Parliamentary Union adopted a resolution entitled "Escalation of the dangers threatening international peace and security in the Middle East region".

115. The resolution declared all Israeli policies and practices of, or aimed at, annexation of the occupied Palestinian and other Arab territories, including Jerusalem and the Golan Heights, to be illegal and in violation of international law and of the relevant resolutions of the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union. The resolution strongly deplored any political, economic, financial, military and technical support to Israel that encouraged Israel to commit acts of aggression and to consolidate and perpetuate its occupation and annexation of Arab territories.

116. In addition, the resolution condemned Israel's aggression, policies and practices against the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territories and outside these territories, particularly in southern Lebanon, including the expropriation and annexation of territory, the establishment of settlements, assassination attempts and other terrorist, aggressive and repressive measures which were in violation of the Charter of the United Nations, the principles of international law and the relevant international conventions.

117. The Inter-Parliamentary Union reaffirmed its full support for the Arab and Palestinian peoples under the leadership of the PLO, and rejected all agreements and arrangements which violated the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to return to their homeland and to self-determination and the establishment of their own sovereign Palestinian State in Palestine.

(f) The Al-Quds (Jerusalem) Committee of the Organization of the Islamic Conference

118. At its special session held at Fez, Morocco, on 19 and 20 April 1984, the Al-Quds (Jerusalem) Committee adopted a final communiqué (see A/39/257-S/16562, annex).

119. The final communiqué stated that the Committee had examined Israel's various attempts to exert pressure on different countries to transfer their embassies from Tel Aviv to Al-Quds. In the view of the Committee, such a transfer on the part of Costa Rica and El Salvador impinged upon Arab rights and violated international law. In addition, the Committee had examined the moves being made in order to obtain a decision for the transfer of the Embassy of the United States of America to Al-Quds.

120. In its final communiqué, the Al-Quds (Jerusalem) Committee recommended that it be left to its Chairman to preside over a delegation and to proceed to the United States of America, in order to undertake necessary contacts with the United States Administration. Contacts should also be made with the permanent members of the Security Council in order to gain their support.

121. The Committee also recommended that all relations with Costa Rica and El Salvador should be severed, in compliance with Islamic resolutions calling upon all member States to break relations with any country that had decided to transfer its embassy to Al-Quds, or had recognized that city's annexation by Israel, or its status as Israel's capital.

122. The communiqué also recommended the adoption of a unified Islamic stand aimed at explaining to any country that Islamic States would implement the resolutions of the Third Islamic Summit, namely, resolution 1/3 C, paragraph 2, of the Al-Quds (Jerusalem) Committee special session, held at Casablanca from 16 to 18 April 1980.

(g) Second regular session of the Economic and Social Council

123. At its second regular session of 1984, the Economic and Social Council considered the provision of economic and social assistance to the Palestinian people by the appropriate agencies and organizations of the United Nations system. The Council, in particular, reviewed the results of an inter-agency meeting which was held pursuant to General Assembly resolution 38/145 to develop a co-ordinated programme of assistance and ensure its implementation, with the participation of the PLO, the Arab host countries and relevant intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations.

124. In its resolution 1984/56 of 25 July 1984, the Council drew the attention of the international community, the United Nations system and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations to the need to ensure that their aid to the occupied Palestinian territories was disbursed only for the benefit of the Palestinian people and was not used in any manner to serve the interests of the Israeli occupation authorities. The Council requested the competent bodies of the United Nations system to intensify their efforts, in co-operation with the PLO, to provide economic and social assistance to the Palestinian people and requested that such assistance in the Arab host countries should be rendered in co-operation with the PLO and with the consent of the Arab host Government concerned.

B. Action taken in accordance with paragraphs 2 and 3 of General Assembly resolution 38/58 B

125. The Committee had intended to hold three regional seminars on the question of Palestine during 1984, in Europe, Africa and Latin America. The Committee decided, however, that the European and African seminars should be combined and that the Latin American Seminar should be postponed until early 1985.

126. Accordingly, the ninth United Nations regional Seminar on the Question of Palestine took place in Tunis from 14 to 17 August 1984 at a critical time in the efforts of the United Nations to advance the prospects of a solution. The report of that important seminar is annexed to the present report (see annex III).

127. The Committee once more had occasion to confirm the importance of seminars and its conviction that, given the collective contributions of academicians, parliamentarians and other opinion-makers at such events, the seminars had considerable influence in promoting wide-ranging and more objective understanding of the Palestinian question and in urging governmental action for a just solution, as for instance called for at the Tunis Seminar.

128. The Committee noted with appreciation that, in further compliance with General Assembly resolution 38/58 B, the Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat continued to prepare, update and distribute studies on matters relating to the question of Palestine.

129. In pursuit of the objective of further increasing its contacts with non-governmental organizations, the Division for Palestinian Rights, under the guidance of the Committee, organized a North American non-governmental organization symposium on the question of Palestine. This symposium was held at United Nations Headquarters from 25 to 27 June 1984, as the first in a series of non-governmental symposiums and international meetings held in response to General Assembly resolution 38/58 B.

130. More than 60 organizations and some 20 panelists participated in the North American symposium. The Committee noted with appreciation that the symposium concluded its work by the adoption of a declaration, which is annexed to the present report (see annex IV).

131. An international non-governmental organization meeting on the question of Palestine was held at Geneva from 20 to 22 August 1984 with the participation of 102 organizations and 26 panelists. The Committee noted with appreciation the resolution adopted at the meeting, which is annexed to the present report (see annex V).

132. The International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People was duly observed by the United Nations on 29 November 1983 at its Headquarters in New York and at the United Nations Office at Geneva. The Committee noted with appreciation that the day had been equally commemorated in many capitals in 1983.

133. By resolution 38/58 E of 13 December 1983, the General Assembly requested the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat, in full co-operation and co-ordination with the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, to: (a) disseminate all information on the activities of the United Nations system relating to Palestine; (b) expand publications and audio-visual coverage of the facts and developments pertaining to the question of Palestine; (c) publish newsletters and articles in its relevant publications on Israeli violations of the human rights of the Arab inhabitants of the occupied territories, and organize fact-finding missions to the area for journalists; (d) organize regional encounters for journalists; (e) disseminate appropriate information on the results of the International Conference on the Question of Palestine.

134. The Committee noted with appreciation that the Department of Public Information continued to disseminate information on the activities relating to Palestine within the United Nations system through articles, press releases, newsletters and pamphlets. In particular, that Department had issued a newsletter in Arabic, English, French and Spanish covering the content and outcome of the International Conference on the Question of Palestine.

135. Another pamphlet containing the Declaration and Programme of Action adopted by the Conference, as well as information on attendance and the texts of relevant resolutions adopted subsequently at the thirty-eighth session of the General Assembly, had been issued in all the official languages of the United Nations. In addition, the UN Chronicle reported extensively on the consideration given to the question of Palestine by the General Assembly at its thirty-eighth session.

136. Further coverage of the Palestine question was presented in radio news programmes which were broadcast in the official languages of the United Nations and in many other languages. The question of Palestine was also the subject of special feature programmes.

137. A fact-finding news mission to the Middle East was also organized. A team of 10 prominent journalists and media representatives from around the world visited Tunisia, Egypt, Jordan and the Syrian Arab Republic from 23 April to 11 May 1984.

138. The purpose of the mission was to provide an opportunity for members of the team to acquaint themselves with first-hand and in-depth information regarding the various aspects of the Palestinian question. The mission received extensive media coverage in all the countries it visited and participants published numerous articles on their return to their home countries.

139. The Committee noted with appreciation that the first in a series of regional journalists' encounters on the question of Palestine was held at Vienna, Austria, from 4 to 7 June 1984. The objective of the encounter was to promote a better understanding of the question among leaders of the media by bringing them together with experts on the subject for brief, informal discussions.

140. Accordingly, 17 high-level European journalists from the press, radio and television media participated in the encounter. The journalists were impressed by

the high calibre of the panelists and by the informal and candid character of the presentations made. It was their belief that the encounter, which they found useful, informative and interesting, had greatly increased their knowledge of the subject. A similar encounter for African journalists was held at Arusha, United Republic of Tanzania, from 28 to 31 August 1984.

141. The United Nations information centres throughout the world held activities in connection with the observance of Solidarity Day. The centres continued to make available to the public Department of Public Information publications on the question of Palestine as well as publications prepared for, and under the guidance of, the Committee.

142. In addition, the Department of Public Information continued to screen the films entitled "Palestinian people do have rights" and "Palestinians of 1983" in information centres. More than 100 copies of the films have been distributed in four languages to all information centres and offices of the United Nations Development Programme.

VI. ACTION TAKEN BY THE SECRETARY-GENERAL IN ACCORDANCE
WITH PARAGRAPHS 5, 6, 7 AND 8 OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY
RESOLUTION 38/58 C

143. Paragraph 5 of the Geneva Declaration on Palestine, 4/ endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 38/58 C, recommended that an International Peace Conference on the Middle East be convened on the basis of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the relevant resolutions of the United Nations, with the aim of achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict, an essential element of which would be the establishment of an independent Palestinian State in Palestine.

144. Accordingly, the Secretary-General was requested, in consultation with the Security Council, urgently to convene the Conference. General Assembly resolution 38/58 C invited the Security Council to facilitate the organization of the Conference and also requested the Secretary-General to report on his efforts no later than 15 March 1984. It was further decided that the report of the Secretary-General on the subject would be considered by the General Assembly at its thirty-ninth session.

145. The Committee noted that, in his interim report of 13 March 1984 (A/39/130-S/16409), the Secretary-General reviewed action taken regarding the proposed Conference, including a letter addressed by him on 9 March 1984 to the 15 members of the Security Council, as well as to those Governments which were directly involved in the Arab-Israeli conflict but were not members of the Security Council, and to the PLO.

146. The Committee further noted that replies to the Secretary-General's letter of 9 March 1984 had been received from the Governments concerned and from the PLO. 11/

147. On 4 May 1984, in a letter addressed to the Secretary-General (A/39/234-S/16531), the Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People conveyed the Committee's appreciation for the contacts which the Secretary-General had initiated on the convening of an International Peace Conference on the Middle East.

148. In the course of his letter, the Chairman stressed the substantive significance of the support given to the recommendations of the Committee. The recommendations had been formulated free from the pressure of events and, on the basis of consensus, they not only respected all previous decisions of the United Nations, but also went further by prescribing a comprehensive formula for a peaceful and fair solution.

149. Although those recommendations had yet to be acted upon, mainly because the protagonists themselves had adhered to positions which made it difficult to reach agreement on fundamental principles, they now had gained quasi-universal acceptance, especially as recently amplified by the International Conference on the Question of Palestine held at Geneva in August and September 1983.

150. The Chairman said that a new, resolute approach to the problem was necessary, and such was the purpose of the proposed Conference called for in General Assembly resolution 38/58 C.

151. On behalf of the Committee, he expressed the belief that the Conference would represent an important and overdue step forward, and he urged co-operation by all concerned so as to ensure a positive outcome in the common interest.

152. The Committee further noted that in his additional report (A/39/13G/Add.1-S/16409/Add.1), the Secretary-General stated that, from the replies he had received and the discussions he had held with the Governments and authorities concerned, it was evident that the convening of the proposed Conference would require, in the first place, the agreement in principle of the parties directly concerned, as well as the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics to participate in the Conference. The Secretary-General also stated that it was clear from the replies of the Governments of Israel and the United States that they were not prepared to participate in the proposed Conference.

153. The Committee noted that the Secretary-General would continue to follow the questions closely and to keep Member States informed of further developments.

154. The Committee nevertheless expressed regret over the negative attitude of Israel and the United States and decided to maintain its efforts for the earlier convening of its proposed Conference, while urging the understanding and co-operation of all concerned for the resolution of a problem fundamental to the maintenance of international peace and security, and involving a clear case of the application of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination.

VII. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COMMITTEE

155. The Committee is increasingly convinced that positive action by the Security Council to act on the Committee's recommendations would advance prospects for a just and lasting peace in the Middle East; it recalls that those recommendations are solidly founded on fundamental and internationally-recognized principles relating to the problem of Palestine, the core of the conflict.

156. The Committee, therefore, once more unanimously reiterates the validity of the recommendations and annexes them to the present report (annex I). It also recommends that the General Assembly should again renew its urging of the Security Council to take positive and overdue action on those recommendations.

157. The Committee also reaffirms the validity of the recommendations adopted by the International Conference on the Question of Palestine, held at Geneva in August and September 1983, which are annexed to the present report (see annex II).

158. The Committee believes that it should consolidate its efforts to increase awareness and understanding of its recommendations, which are specifically designed to enable the Palestinian people to attain its inalienable rights, as well as to achieve peace in the Middle East, with due regard for the concerns of all the parties to the conflict in the region. In this connection, it is encouraged by the better understanding of those recommendations which is now increasingly evident in all regions of the world.

159. The Committee feels that, at this critical juncture, a concentrated effort to find a just solution to the question of Palestine and to end the unacceptable plight of the Palestinian people is long overdue.

160. The Committee is convinced that the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, recommended by the General Conference and endorsed in General Assembly resolution 38/58 C, will provide an opportunity for all parties concerned to participate in negotiations which should lead to a just solution of the problem. The Committee, therefore, strongly recommends that international action should henceforth concentrate on the preparations necessary for the convening of this Conference and contribute to its successful and peaceful outcome.

Notes

1/ The Committee is composed of the following members: Afghanistan, Cuba, Cyprus, German Democratic Republic, Guinea, Guyana, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mali, Malta, Nigeria, Pakistan, Romania, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic and Yugoslavia.

2/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-first Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/31/35).

3/ Ibid., Thirty-second Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/32/35); ibid., Thirty-third Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/33/35 and Corr.1); ibid., Thirty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/34/35 and Corr.1); ibid., Thirty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/35/35 and Corr.1); ibid., Thirty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/36/35); ibid., Thirty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/37/35 and Corr. 1); and ibid., Thirty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/38/35).

4/ Report of the International Conference on the Question of Palestine, Geneva, 29 August-7 September 1983 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.83.I.21), chap. I, sect. A.

5/ Ibid., chap. I, sect. B.

6/ The observers of the Committee are as follows: Algeria, Czechoslovakia, Ecuador, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Mauritania, Morocco, Nicaragua, Niger, Syrian Arab Republic, United Arab Emirates, Viet Nam, League of Arab States, Organization of the Islamic Conference and Palestine Liberation Organization.

7/ Current membership of the Working Group is as follows: Malta (Chairman), Afghanistan, Cuba, German Democratic Republic, Guinea, Guyana, India (alternate Chairman), Pakistan, Senegal, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic and, as representative of the people directly concerned, the Palestine Liberation Organization.

8/ United Nations, Treaty Series, vol. 75, No. 973, p. 287

9/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/38/35).

10/ See Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1984, Supplement No. 4 (E/1984/14-E/CN.4/1984/77), chap. II.

11/ The replies received from Governments were circulated in the following documents: A/39/130-S/16409 and Add.1; A/39/202-S/16494; A/39/208-S/16503; A/39/214-S/16507; A/39/216-S/16509; A/39/217-S/16510; A/39/218-S/16511; A/39/219-S/16512 and Corr.1; A/39/222; A/39/224-S/16517; A/39/225-S/16518; A/39/227-S/16523; A/39/231-S/16527; A/39/235-S/16533; A/39/238-S/16543; A/39/255-S/16557; A/39/259-S/16565; A/39/275-S/16584; A/39/287-S/16602; A/39/416-S/16708.

Recommendations of the Committee endorsed by the General Assembly
at its thirty-first session a/

I. Basic considerations and guidelines

59. The question of Palestine is at the heart of the Middle East problem, and, consequently, the Committee stressed its belief that no solution in the Middle East can be envisaged which does not fully take into account the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people.

60. The legitimate and inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to return to their homes and property and to achieve self-determination, national independence and sovereignty are endorsed by the Committee in the conviction that the full implementation of these rights will contribute decisively to a comprehensive and final settlement of the Middle East crisis.

61. The participation of the Palestine Liberation Organization, the representative of the Palestinian people, on an equal footing with other parties, on the basis of General Assembly resolutions 3236 (XXIX) and 3375 (XXX) is indispensable in all efforts, deliberations and conferences on the Middle East which are held under the auspices of the United Nations.

62. The Committee recalls the fundamental principle of the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force and stresses the consequent obligation for complete and speedy evacuation of any territory so occupied.

63. The Committee considers that it is the duty and the responsibility of all concerned to enable the Palestinians to exercise their inalienable rights.

64. The Committee recommends an expanded and more influential role by the United Nations and its organs in promoting a just solution to the question of Palestine and in the implementation of such a solution. The Security Council, in particular should take appropriate action to facilitate the exercise by the Palestinians of their right to return to their homes, lands and property. The Committee, furthermore, urges the Security Council to promote action towards a just solution, taking into account all the powers conferred on it by the Charter of the United Nations.

65. It is with this perspective in view and on the basis of the numerous resolutions of the United Nations, after due consideration of all the facts, proposals and suggestions advanced in the course of its deliberations, that the Committee submits its recommendations on the modalities for the implementation of the exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.

II. The right of return

66. The natural and inalienable right of Palestinians to return to their homes is recognized by resolution 194 (III), which the General Assembly has reaffirmed almost every year since its adoption. This right was also unanimously recognized by the Security Council in its resolution 237 (1967); the time for the urgent implementation of these resolutions is long overdue.

67. Without prejudice to the right of all Palestinians to return to their homes, lands and property, the Committee considers that the programme of implementation of the exercise of this right may be carried out in two phases:

Phase one

68. The first phase involves the return to their homes of the Palestinians displaced as a result of the war of June 1967. The Committee recommends that:

- (i) The Security Council should request the immediate implementation of its resolution 237 (1967) and that such implementation should not be related to any other condition;
- (ii) The resources of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and/or of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, suitably financed and mandated, may be employed to assist in the solution of any logistical problems involved in the resettlement of those returning to their homes. These agencies could also assist, in co-operation with the host countries and the Palestine Liberation Organization, in the identification of the displaced Palestinians.

Phase two

69. The second phase deals with the return to their homes of the Palestinians displaced between 1948 and 1967. The Committee recommends that:

- (i) While the first phase is being implemented, the United Nations in co-operation with the States directly involved, and the Palestine Liberation Organization as the interim representative of the Palestinian entity, should proceed to make the necessary arrangements to enable Palestinians displaced between 1948 and 1967 to exercise their right to return to their homes and property, in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions, particularly General Assembly resolution 194 (III);
- (ii) Palestinians not choosing to return to their homes should be paid just and equitable compensation as provided for in Assembly resolution 194 (III).

III. The right to self-determination, national independence and sovereignty

70. The Palestinian people has the inherent right to self-determination, national independence and sovereignty in Palestine. The Committee considers that the evacuation of the territories occupied by force and in violation of the principles of the Charter and relevant resolutions of the United Nations is a conditio sine qua non for the exercise by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights of Palestinians to their homes and property and with the establishment of an independent Palestinian entity, the Palestinian people will be able to exercise its rights to self-determination and to decide its form of government without external interference.

71. The Committee also feels that the United Nations has an historical duty and responsibility to render all assistance necessary to promote the economic development and prosperity of the Palestinian entity.

72. To these ends, the Committee recommends that:

(a) A timetable should be established by the Security Council for the complete withdrawal by Israeli occupation forces from those areas occupied in 1967; such withdrawal should be completed no later than 1 June 1977;

(b) The Security Council may need to provide temporary peace-keeping forces in order to facilitate the process of withdrawal;

(c) Israel should be requested by the Security Council to desist from the establishment of new settlements and to withdraw during this period from settlements established since 1967 in the occupied territories. Arab property and all essential services in these areas should be maintained intact;

(d) Israel should also be requested to abide scrupulously by the provisions of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, and to declare, pending its speedy withdrawal from these territories, its recognition of the applicability of that Convention;

(e) The evacuated territories, with all property and services intact, should be taken over by the United Nations, which with the co-operation of the League of Arab States, will subsequently hand over these evacuated areas to the Palestine Liberation Organization as the representative of the Palestinian people;

(f) The United Nations should, if necessary, assist in establishing communications between Gaza and the West Bank;

(g) As soon as the independent Palestinian entity has been established, the United Nations, in co-operation with the States directly involved and the Palestinian entity, should, taking into account General Assembly resolution 3375 (XXX), make further arrangements for the full implementation of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, the resolution of outstanding problems and the establishment of a just and lasting peace in the region, in accordance with all relevant United Nations resolutions;

(h) The United Nations should provide the economic and technical assistance necessary for the consolidation of the Palestinian entity.

Notes

a/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-second Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/32/35).

ANNEX II

A. Geneva Declaration on Palestine a/

In pursuance of General Assembly resolutions 36/120 C of 10 December 1981, ES-7/7 of 19 August 1982 and 37/86 C of 10 December 1982, an International Conference on the Question of Palestine was convened at the United Nations Office at Geneva from 29 August to 7 September 1983 to seek effective ways and means to enable the Palestinian people to attain and to exercise their inalienable rights. The Conference was opened by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, and presided over by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Senegal, Moustapha Niassé.

* * *

1. The Conference, having thoroughly considered the question of Palestine in all its aspects, expresses the grave concern of all nations and peoples regarding the international tension that has persisted for several decades in the Middle East, the principal cause of which is the denial by Israel, and those supporting its expansionist policies, of the inalienable legitimate rights of the Palestinian people. The Conference reaffirms and stresses that a just solution of the question of Palestine, the core of the problem, is the crucial element in a comprehensive, just and lasting political settlement in the Middle East.

2. The Conference recognizes that, as one of the most acute and complex problems of our time, the question of Palestine - inherited by the United Nations at the time of its establishment - requires a comprehensive, just and lasting political settlement. This settlement must be based on the implementation of the relevant United Nations resolutions concerning the question of Palestine and the attainment of the legitimate, inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including the right to self-determination and the right to the establishment of its own independent State in Palestine and should also be based on the provision by the Security Council of guarantees for peace and security among all States in the region, including the independent Palestinian State, within secure and internationally recognized boundaries. The Conference is convinced that the attainment by the Palestinian people of their inalienable rights, as defined by General Assembly resolution 3236 (XXIX) of 22 November 1974, will contribute substantially to the achievement of peace and stability in the Middle East.

3. The Conference considers the role of the United Nations in the achievement of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East to be essential and paramount. It emphasizes the need for respect for, and application of the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations, the resolutions of the United Nations relevant to the question of Palestine and the observance of the principles of international law.

4. The Conference considers that the various proposals, consistent with the principles of international law, which have been presented on this question, such as the Arab peace plan adopted unanimously at the Twelfth Arab Summit Conference (see A/37/696-S/15510, annex), held at Fez, Morocco, in September 1982, should serve as guidelines for concerted international effort to resolve the question of Palestine. These guidelines include the following:

(a) The attainment by the Palestinian people of its legitimate inalienable rights, including the right to return, the right to self-determination and the right to establish its own independent State in Palestine;

(b) The right of the Palestine Liberation Organization, the representative of the Palestinian people, to participate on an equal footing with other parties in all efforts, deliberations and conferences on the Middle East;

(c) The need to put an end to Israel's occupation of the Arab territories, in accordance with the principle of the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force, and, consequently, the need to secure Israeli withdrawal from the territories occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem;

(d) The need to oppose and reject such Israeli policies and practices in the occupied territories, including Jerusalem, and any de facto situation created by Israel as are contrary to international law and relevant United Nations resolutions, particularly the establishment of settlements, as these policies and practices constitute major obstacles to the achievement of peace in the Middle East;

(e) The need to reaffirm as null and void all legislative and administrative measures and actions taken by Israel, the occupying Power, which have altered or purported to alter the character and status of the Holy City of Jerusalem, including the expropriation of land and property situated thereon, and in particular the so-called "Basic Law" on Jerusalem and the proclamation of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel;

(f) The right of all States in the region to existence within secure and internationally recognized boundaries, with justice and security for all the people, the sine qua non of which is the recognition and attainment of the legitimate, inalienable rights of the Palestinian people as stated in subparagraph (a) above.

5. In order to give effect to these guidelines, the Conference considers it essential that an international peace conference on the Middle East be convened on the basis of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the relevant resolutions of the United Nations, with the aim of achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict, an essential element of which would be the establishment of an independent Palestinian State in Palestine. This peace conference should be convened under the auspices of the United Nations, with the participation of all parties to the Arab-Israeli conflict, including the Palestine Liberation Organization, as well as the United States of America, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, and other concerned States, on an equal footing. In this context the Security Council has a primary responsibility to create appropriate institutional arrangements on the basis of relevant United Nations resolutions in order to guarantee and to carry out the accords of the international peace conference.

6. The International Conference on the Question of Palestine emphasizes the importance of the time factor in achieving a just solution to the problem of Palestine. The Conference is convinced that partial solutions are inadequate and delays in seeking a comprehensive solution do not eliminate tensions in the region.

B. Programme of Action for the Achievement of Palestinian Rights

The International Conference on the Question of Palestine agreed that no effort should be spared to seek effective ways and means to enable the Palestinian people to attain and exercise their rights in Palestine in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights b/ and the principles of international law. The Conference, taking into consideration the Geneva Declaration on Palestine (see sect. A above), recommended the following Programme of Action.

"I

The International Conference on the Question of Palestine recommends that all States, individually or collectively, consistent with their respective constitutions and their obligations under the Charter of the United Nations and in conformity with the principles of international law, should:

(1) Recognize the great importance of the time factor in solving the question of Palestine;

(2) Intensify efforts for the establishment of an independent Palestinian State within the framework of a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement to the Arab-Israeli conflict in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, the relevant United Nations resolutions and the guidelines of the Geneva Declaration on Palestine;

(3) Consider the continued presence of Israel in the occupied Palestinian and other Arab territories, including Jerusalem, as exacerbating instability in the region and endangering international peace and security;

(4) Oppose and reject, as a serious and continuing obstacle to peace, the expansionist policies pursued by Israel in the Palestinian and other Arab territories occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, and in particular the alteration of the geographic nature and demographic composition, and the Israeli attempt to alter, through domestic legislation, the legal status of those territories, and all the measures taken in violation of the Geneva Convention relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War, c/ and the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, d/ both of 12 August 1949, and of the Hague Regulations of 1907, e/ such as the establishment and expansion of settlements, the transfer of Israeli civilians into those territories and the individual and mass transfers therefrom of the Arab Palestinian population;

(5) Refrain from providing Israel with assistance of such a nature as to encourage it militarily, economically and financially to continue its aggression, occupation and disregard of its obligations under the Charter and the relevant resolutions of the United Nations;

(6) Not encourage migration to the occupied Arab territories until Israel has put a definitive end to the implementation of its illegal policy of establishing settlements in the Palestinian and other Arab territories occupied since 1967;

(7) Fully comply with the relevant resolutions of the United Nations and its specialized agencies on the Holy City of Jerusalem, including those which reject Israel's annexation of Jerusalem and its declaration of that city as its capital;

(8) Undertake universal efforts to protect the Holy Places and urge Israel to take measures to prevent their desecration;

(9) Consider ways and means of meeting the threat that Israel poses to regional security in Africa in view of Israel's disregard of United Nations resolutions, and its close collaboration with the apartheid régime in the economic, military and nuclear fields, thereby contributing to the continued illegal occupation of Namibia and enhancing the régime's repressive and aggressive capacity;

(10) Encourage, through bilateral and multilateral contacts, all States, including Western European and North American States which have not done so, to welcome all peace initiatives based on the recognition of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, which were also welcomed by Chairman Yasser Arafat in his address to the International Conference on the Question of Palestine;

(11) Seek and develop ways and means to enable the Palestinian people to exercise sovereignty over their national resources;

(12) Express concern that Israel debars Palestinians from economic activity and access to national resources on Palestinian territory, in consistent violation of General Assembly resolutions on the right of the Palestinians to permanent sovereignty over their national resources;

(13) Declare null and void and counter such measures and practices applied by Israel in the occupied Palestinian and other Arab territories, including Jerusalem, as the annexation and the expropriation of land, water resources, and property and the alteration of the demographic, geographic, historical and cultural features thereof;

(14) Undertake measures to alleviate the economic and social burdens borne by the Palestinian people as a result of the continued Israeli occupation of their territories since 1967;

(15) Consider contributing or increasing special contributions to the proposed budgets, programmes and projects of the relevant organs, funds and agencies of the United Nations system that have been requested to provide humanitarian, economic and social assistance to the Palestinian people, with particular reference to:

(a) General Assembly resolution 33/147 of 20 December 1978 and the appeal of the Governing Council of the United Nations Development Programme at its thirtieth session for additional special contributions amounting to at least \$8 million during the third programming cycle (1982-1986) aimed at helping to meet the economic and social needs of the Palestinian people; f/

(b) The proposed programme budget of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development for the biennium 1984/85 regarding the establishment within the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development of a special economic unit, g/ as requested by that Conference at its sixth session at Belgrade; h/

(c) Establishing a special legal aid fund to assist Palestinians in securing their rights under conditions of occupation, i/ in accordance with the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War;

(16) Ensure that the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East can meet the essential needs of the Palestinians without interruption or any diminution in the effectiveness of its services;

(17) Review the situation of Palestinian women in the occupied Palestinian and other Arab territories and, in view of their special hardships, urge the Preparatory Committee of the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women, to be held at Nairobi in 1985, to include this item on the agenda of the Conference;

(18) Review, if they have not yet done so, in conformity with their national legislation, their economic, cultural, technical and other relations with Israel, and the agreements governing them with the aim of ensuring that these regulations and agreements will not be interpreted or construed as implying in any way recognition of any modification of the legal status of Jerusalem and of the Palestinian and other Arab territories occupied by Israel since 1967, or an acceptance of Israel's illegal presence in those territories;

(19) Recognize that the process of enabling the Palestinian people to exercise its inalienable rights in Palestine is a significant contribution to the restoration of the rule of law in international relations;

(20) Assure the observance of the stipulations provided in General Assembly resolution 181 (II) guaranteeing to all persons equal and non-discriminatory rights in civil, political, economic and religious matters and the enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms, including freedom of religion, speech, publication, education, assembly and association;

(21) Express concern that the laws applicable in the occupied Arab territories have been totally eclipsed by a plethora of military orders that have been designed to establish a new "legal régime" in violation of the Hague Regulations of 1907, and the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War;

(22) Act in accordance with their obligations under existing international law, in particular with regard to the Geneva Conventions of 1949 which require States Parties to respect and to ensure respect for those Conventions in all circumstances, and in particular ensure the respect by Israel for the Geneva Conventions of 1949 in the occupied Palestinian and other Arab territories;

(23) Express concern that the Palestinians and other Arabs in the occupied territories are deprived of juridical and other kinds of protection, that they are victims of repressive legislation, involving mass arrests, acts of torture, destruction of houses, and the expulsion of people from their homes, acts which constitute flagrant violations of human rights;

(24) Recognize the necessity that Palestinian and Lebanese prisoners detained by Israel be accorded the status of prisoners of war in accordance with the Geneva Convention relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War of 1949, c/ if combatants, or in accordance with the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War of 1949, d/ if civilians;

(25) Strive for the adoption of international measures so that Israel will implement in the West Bank and Gaza the provisions of the Hague Regulations of 1907

and the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons, in the light of Security Council resolution 465 (1980);

(26) Recognize, if they have not yet done so, the Palestine Liberation Organization as the representative of the Palestinian people and establish with it appropriate relations;

(27) Encourage, in conformity with their national legislations, the formation of national committees in support of the Palestinian people;

(28) Encourage the observance of 29 November as the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, in a most effective and meaningful way;

(29) Request the General Assembly at its thirty-eighth session to designate a Year of Palestine, to be observed at the earliest possible time, taking into consideration the factors necessary to ensure its effective preparation for the purpose of galvanizing world-wide public opinion and support for further implementation of the Geneva Declaration on Palestine and the Programme of Action.

"II

The International Conference on the Question of Palestine stresses the obligation of all Member States, under the Charter of the United Nations, to enable the United Nations through an expanded and more effective role to fulfil its responsibility for achieving a solution to the question of Palestine. To this end:

"A

States participating in the Conference invite the Security Council, as the organ with primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security:

(1) To suppress continuing and growing acts of aggression and other breaches of the peace in the Middle East which endanger peace and security in the region and the world as a whole;

(2) To take prompt, firm and effective steps and actions to establish an independent sovereign Palestinian State in Palestine through the implementation of the relevant United Nations resolutions, by facilitating the organization of the international peace conference on the Middle East, as called for in paragraph 5 of the Geneva Declaration on Palestine (see sect. A above), and by creating in this context the appropriate institutional arrangements on the basis of relevant United Nations resolutions in order to guarantee and carry out the accords of the international peace conference, including the following:

(a) Taking measures consistent with the principle of the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force to ensure Israel's withdrawal from the Palestinian and other Arab territories occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, with a specific timetable;

(b) Undertaking effective measures to guarantee the safety and security and legal and human rights of the Palestinians in the occupied territories pending the

withdrawal of the Israeli forces from the Palestinian and other Arab territories occupied by Israel since 1967, including Jerusalem;

(c) Subjecting those territories, following the withdrawal of Israel, to a short transitional period, under the supervision of the United Nations, during which period the Palestinian people would exercise its right to self-determination;

(d) Facilitating the implementation of the right to return of the Palestinians to their homes and property;

(e) Supervising elections to the constituent assembly of the independent Palestinian State in which all Palestinians shall participate, in exercise of their right to self-determination;

(f) Providing, if necessary, temporary peace-keeping forces in order to facilitate the implementation of subparagraphs (a) to (e) above.

"B

Meanwhile the Security Council is also invited to:

(1) Take urgent action to bring about an immediate and complete cessation of such Israeli policies in the occupied territories and, in particular, the establishment of settlements as have been determined by the Security Council to have no legal validity and as a serious obstruction to achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East;

(2) Consider urgently the reports of the Commission established under its resolution 446 (1979) of 22 March 1979, which examined the situation concerning settlements in the Arab territories occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, and to reactivate the above-mentioned Commission;

(3) Initiate action to terminate Israel's exploitative policies which go against the indigenous economic development of the occupied territories, and to compel Israel to lift its restrictions on water use and well-drilling by Palestinian farmers as well as its diversion of West Bank water resources into the Israeli water grid systems;

(4) Keep under its constant attention the actions committed by Israel against the Palestinian people in violation of the stipulations provided for in relevant General Assembly resolutions, in particular the stipulations of resolution 181 (II) of 29 November 1947 guaranteeing to all persons equal and non-discriminatory rights and freedoms;

(5) Consider, in the event of Israel's persistent non-compliance with the relevant United Nations resolutions which embody the will of the international community, appropriate measures in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, to ensure Israel's compliance with these resolutions.

"C

(1) Taking into account the recommendations of the five regional preparatory meetings of the International Conference on the Question of Palestine j/ and United

Nations resolutions concerning economic and social assistance to the Palestinian people, the Secretary-General of the United Nations is requested to convene a meeting of the specialized agencies and other organizations associated with the United Nations, as well as representatives of the Palestine Liberation Organization and of those countries which are hosts to Palestinian refugees and other potential sources of assistance to develop a co-ordinated programme of economic and social assistance to the Palestinian people and to ensure its implementation.

(2) The meeting should also look into the most effective inter-agency machinery to co-ordinate and sustain and intensify United Nations assistance to the Palestinian people.

"D

The dissemination of accurate and comprehensive information world wide and the role of non-governmental organizations and institutions remain of vital importance in heightening awareness of and support for the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination and to the establishment of an independent sovereign Palestinian State. To these ends:

(1) The United Nations Department for Public Information, in full co-operation and constant consultations with the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, should:

(a) Co-ordinate all information activities of the United Nations system on Palestine through the Joint United Nations Information Committee;

(b) Expand publications and audio and visual coverage of the facts and of developments pertaining to the question of Palestine;

(c) Publish newsletters and articles in its respective publications on Israeli violations of human rights of the Arab inhabitants in the occupied territories and organize fact-finding missions for journalists to the area;

(d) Organize regional encounters for journalists;

(e) Disseminate appropriate information on the results of the International Conference on the Question of Palestine;

(2) The relevant organizations of the United Nations system should organize meetings, symposia and seminars on topics within their terms of reference and relating to specific problems of the Palestinian people by establishing closer liaison with non-governmental organizations, the media and other groups interested in the question of Palestine.

"III

The International Conference on the Question of Palestine, convinced of the important role of world-wide public opinion in resolving the question of Palestine, and in the implementation of the Declaration and Programme of Action, urges and encourages:

(1) Intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations to increase awareness by the international community of the economic and social burdens borne by the Palestinian people as a result of the continued Israeli occupation and its negative effects on the economic development of the West Asian region as a whole;

(2) Non-governmental organizations and professional and popular associations to intensify their efforts to support the rights of the Palestinian people in every possible way;

(3) Organizations such as those of women, teachers, workers, youths and students to undertake exchanges and other programmes of joint action with their Palestinian counterparts;

(4) Women's associations, in particular, to investigate the conditions of Palestinian women and children in all occupied territories;

(5) The media and other institutions to disseminate relevant information to increase public awareness and understanding of the question of Palestine;

(6) Institutions of higher education to promote the study of the question of Palestine in all its aspects;

(7) Various jurists' associations to establish special investigative commissions to determine the violations by Israel of the Palestinians' legal rights and to disseminate their findings accordingly;

(8) Jurists to initiate with their Palestinian counterparts consultations, research and investigations on the juridical aspects of problems affecting the southern African and Palestinian struggles, in particular the detention of political prisoners and the denial of prisoner-of-war status to detained members of the national liberation movements of southern Africa and Palestine;

(9) Parliamentarians, political parties, trade unions, organizations for solidarity and intellectuals, particularly in Western Europe and North America, to join their counterparts in other parts of the world in giving their support, where it has not been done, to an initiative which would express the desire of the international community to see the Palestinian people at last living in their own independent homeland in peace, freedom and dignity."

Notes

a/ See Report of the International Conference on the Question of Palestine, Geneva, 29 August-7 September 1983 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.83.I.21), chap. I.

b/ See General Assembly resolution 217 A (III).

c/ United Nations, Treaty Series, vol. 75, No. 972, p. 135.

d/ Ibid., No. 973, p. 287.

Notes (continued)

e/ Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, The Hague Conventions and Declarations of 1899 and 1907 (New York, Oxford University Press, 1915), p. 100.

f/ See Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1983, Supplement No. 9 (E/1983/20).

g/ A/C.5/38/4, para. 8 (c).

h/ Recommendation 146 (VI) of 2 July 1983 of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development.

i/ Recommendation 19 of the Latin American Regional Preparatory Meeting, Managua, Nicaragua, 12-15 April 1983 (A/CONF.114/2).

j/ African region, A/CONF.114/1; Latin American region, A/CONF.114/2; Western Asian region, A/CONF.114/3; Asian region, A/CONF.114/4; European region, A/CONF.114/5.

ANNEX III

Report of the ninth United Nations Seminar on the Question of Palestine, held at Tunis from 14 to 17 August 1984

1. With the kind consent and assistance of the Government of Tunisia and in accordance with General Assembly resolution 38/58 B, the ninth United Nations Seminar on the Question of Palestine was held in the Palais du Congrès, Tunis, Tunisia, from 14 to 17 August 1984.
2. The "Inalienable rights of the Palestinian people" was the Seminar's central theme.
3. Eight meetings were held at which 19 panelists presented papers on various aspects of the question of Palestine. The frank and open discussion which followed the presentations of the papers afforded participants an opportunity to engage in a wide-ranging examination of important aspects of the question and to focus particular attention on means for the attainment of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.
4. The large attendance at the meetings reflected both the importance attached to the problem and the widespread interest in finding a just and lasting solution for the unacceptable plight of the Palestinian people.
5. The United Nations Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People was represented at the Seminar by a delegation consisting of Mr. Massamba Sarré (Senegal), Chairman of the Committee and leader of the delegation; Mr. Victor J. Gauci (Malta), Rapporteur of the Committee; Mr. Vladimir F. Skofenko (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic); Mr. Mohamed Lessir (Tunisia); Mr. Cheikh Sylla (Senegal) and Mr. Zehdi L. Terzi (Palestine Liberation Organization). Mr. Victor J. Gauci acted as Rapporteur of the Seminar.
6. Mr. Massamba Sarré, Chairman of the Committee, in his opening remarks, referred to the long-standing importance devoted to the question of Palestine by the United Nations and to the impressive support for the recommendations made by the Committee which was established in 1976. He also drew attention to the Committee's encouraging success in its persistent efforts to provide objective information on the subject and its conviction that, when the facts were known and understood, the way to a just solution would be facilitated.
7. Stressing the Committee's concern about the time factor, he pointed out that events on the spot had proved time and time again that delay only made the search for a solution more difficult. It was therefore all the more regrettable that progress towards the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East was being obstructed, since a conference could prove to be a major breakthrough in the situation. The Secretary-General of the United Nations was to be commended for his efforts in that direction and it behoved all States to extend every support to him. The Seminar could be a spur to such efforts.
8. In that connection he also referred to the discernible positive evolution of Western European thought on the question of Palestine and the necessity to devote particular attention to Europe in an attempt to promote among Western European Governments a better appreciation of the Committee's recommendations. For that

reason, an attempt had been made to have at the Seminar as many European policy makers and parliamentarians as possible, while maintaining an equitable geographic distribution.

9. The Committee considers that the best forum in which to work for a solution remains the United Nations, particularly the Security Council. Unfortunately, Israel's attitude in rejecting United Nations resolutions and its policy towards the Palestinians and its Arab neighbours, as well as its actions in Jerusalem and concerning the establishment of settlements in the occupied territories, have greatly exacerbated tensions and placed formidable obstacles to a peaceful solution of the question.

10. Addressing the opening meeting, Mr. Mahmoud Mestiri, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs of Tunisia, stated that Tunisia had always stood for international legality and remained convinced that the United Nations provided the natural framework for the solution of the Palestinian question. Its decisions and recommendations offered the elements necessary to achieve a durable solution.

11. In contrast to Israel's adamant refusal to respond positively to any proposal for peace, the Arab States and the Palestine Liberation Organization had amply demonstrated their desire for peace by their ready acceptance of any peace initiative based on justice and law.

12. Tunisia considered that the Fez Plan, based as it was on international legality as borne out by United Nations resolutions, particularly United Nations General Assembly resolution 181 (II) of 27 November 1947, coincided with President Bourguiba's ideas and included the essential principles for a just and durable solution to the problem.

13. The opening session was addressed by Mr. Adnan Omrane, Under-Secretary-General of the League of Arab States, Mr. Seydou Traore, on behalf of the United Nations Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration of the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, Mr. Mamadou Kante, Executive Secretary of the Organization of African Unity, Mr. Alfred Jassnowski on behalf of the United Nations Special Committee against Apartheid, Mr. Yin Dexin, Chargé d'Affaires of China, Mr. Boris L. Kolokolov, Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics), Mr. Hussein Mecharrafa, Ambassador in charge of Egyptian interests in Tunisia.

14. At the same meeting, Mr. Chafiq Al-Hout, member of the Central Committee of the Palestine National Council and leader of the delegation of the Palestine Liberation Organization, outlined the current situation of the Palestinian people and conveyed to the United Nations and the Seminar the thanks of his organization for the efforts being made on behalf of the Palestinian people.

15. Messages addressed to the Seminar were received from the Foreign Minister of India and the Foreign Minister of Sri Lanka.

16. The Seminar also received a message from the Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization, Mr. Yasser Arafat, conveyed by Mr. Chafiq Al-Hout, leader of the delegation of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). The text of the message is attached to the report (see appendix to the present annex).

17. Five panels were established to consider different aspects of the central theme "The inalienable rights of the Palestinian people". These panels and their panelists were as follows:

I. The role of the United Nations and other forums and organizations in the search for peace in the Middle East:

Panelists: Dr. Jozsef BIRO (Hungary), former Minister and Member of Parliament; Dr. Mohammed Hassan EL-ZAYYAT (Egypt), Member of Parliament, former Minister for Foreign Affairs; Mr. Alex KOROMA (Sierra Leone), Member of Parliament; Mr. Albrecht KONECNY (Austria), Member of Parliament; Mr. Ernie ROSS (United Kingdom), Member of Parliament; Mr. Abdoulaye SACKO (Mali), Member of Parliament; Dr. Ibra Mamadou WANE (Senegal), Member of the National Assembly, former Minister of Education.

II. The International Peace Conference on the Middle East (General Assembly resolution 38/58 C), the need for such a Conference; efforts and prospects to promote a successful outcome, and benefits thereof:

Panelists: Mr. Klaas de VRIES (Netherlands), Member of Parliament; Mr. Jean-Claude RAHAGA (Madagascar), Member of Parliament; Mr. Azouz REBAI (Tunisia), Member of Parliament; Dr. Ingo SCHOENFELDER (German Democratic Republic), Lecturer, Karl Marx University; Mr. Vasily G. SOLODOVNIKOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics), Chairman of the Russian Palestinian Society; Mr. Redzo TERZIC (Yugoslavia), Member of Parliament.

III. African and European co-operation in seeking effective measures to enable the Palestinian people to attain and exercise its inalienable rights:

Panelists: Mr. Lasse BUDTZ (Denmark), Member of Parliament; Mr. Claude DEJARDIN (Belgium), Member of Parliament.

IV. The role of the Palestine Liberation Organization in the social, cultural, economic and political development of the Palestinian people and in the attainment of its political objectives:

Panelist: Mr. Khalid EL-HASSAN (Palestinian), Chairman, Foreign Affairs Committee of the Palestine National Council.

V. The status of the Holy City of Jerusalem:

Panelists: Mr. Bulent AKARCALI (Turkey), Member of Parliament; Mr. Abdelwahab BOUHDIBA (Tunisia), Professor, University of Tunis; Mr. Jerzy PIOTROWSKI (Poland), Member, Polish Institute of International Affairs.

18. The Seminar decided that, in view of the depth of analysis contained in the papers presented at the Seminar and in accordance with previous practice, the papers presented by the panelists should be published in full by the United Nations, together with the report of the Seminar. It was felt that that would be another valuable contribution towards a more objective appraisal of the question of Palestine.

19. On the day preceding the opening of the Seminar, the Chairman of the Executive Committee of the PLO, Mr. Yasser Arafat, received the Committee delegation and the panelists and engaged in a frank and cordial discussion. In the course of the discussion, the Chairman of the PLO reaffirmed his faith in, and support of, the efforts of the United Nations in promoting a peaceful solution, and again reiterated his support of all United Nations resolutions on the question of Palestine. He also confirmed the solidarity of the Palestinians in the occupied territories behind the PLO in their struggle for genuine self-determination. That had been confirmed in two successive public opinion polls held in the occupied territories in October and December 1983, when 93 per cent and 95 per cent of the Palestinians polled had declared unequivocal support for the PLO.

20. The Chairman also explained in detail the repression and taxation without representation to which the Palestinian people were being subjected in the occupied territories of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, as well as the efforts being deployed by Israel to deny the Palestinian people financial aid channelled through international institutions.

21. The Seminar was in full agreement that the overdue necessity of finding a just solution to the question of Palestine was the main issue deserving priority consideration in the actual complex situation. Indifference to that fundamental aspect had kept the Middle East in turmoil for many decades but it had now reached the forefront of international concern.

22. History demonstrated that controversial international problems could not be solved by force. Israel's belligerent policy of illegal occupation of lands, its attacks on refugee camps, its many-faceted usurpation of the rights of the Palestinian people, its inflexible attempts to intimidate Palestinian resistance, to suppress development of Palestinian indigenous economic and cultural resources and its blatant attempts to consolidate and perpetuate its occupation by establishing illegal settlements and imposing its legislation on the occupied territories in a manner designed to change the sociological and demographic nature of the territories were therefore doomed to prolong conflict and insecurity in a sensitive region.

23. The role of the United Nations was irreplaceable in the search for a solution to that problem. The success of the Organization depended on its Member States. If they did not respect their commitments and did not act in conformity with the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations, the effectiveness of the Organization would necessarily be limited.

24. The United Nations had inherited the problem of Palestine as soon as it was established. It now provided a forum in which all parties to the Arab-Israeli conflict could participate in negotiations. Over the years, the United Nations had drawn up the basic and widely supported principles on which a comprehensive, just and lasting solution should be based. Peace and security for all peoples and States in the region could be ensured only if those basic principles were unanimously and unreservedly observed in practice.

25. The United Nations had also established the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, which had drawn up, by consensus, a set of recommendations solidly based on international law, United Nations resolutions and on the principles of justice, morality and equity. Their impartiality and objectivity could not be questioned. The fact that they provided

a solid basis for the solution of the problem was confirmed by the inclusion of the main features of those recommendations in all the most acceptable proposals put forward in recent years.

26. Those recommendations, therefore, repeatedly endorsed by ever increasing majorities in the General Assembly, undoubtedly retained their validity. It was unfortunate that lack of unanimity still prevented the Security Council from taking the necessary action to implement them. It was emphasized that that obstacle should be overcome.

27. Israel's continued illegal occupation of Arab territories, its total disregard for the rights of the Palestinian people, as well as its refusal to recognize the PLO as the representative of the Palestinian people, were major obstacles to a peaceful solution to the problem.

28. At the widely attended International Conference on the Question of Palestine, held in August and September 1983, in which for the first time in history over 100 non-governmental organizations had also participated, a proposal had been adopted that an international peace conference on the Middle East should be convened, under the auspices of the United Nations, in which all parties to the conflict, including the PLO, as well as the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, would participate. That proposal had subsequently been endorsed by the General Assembly and consultations had been undertaken by the Secretary-General with a view to implementing it.

29. The majority of the international community regarded the convening of such an international peace conference on the Middle East as an urgent necessity. That had been reflected not only in the United Nations but in the decisions of many other intergovernmental organizations such as the League of Arab States and the Non-Aligned Movement. However, the opposition of Israel and the United States of America to the convening of the conference, and their consistent attempts to hold separate talks outside the framework of the United Nations, had so far proved an impediment to the holding of the conference. Israel preferred to seek "negotiating partners" who would not act in the interests of the Palestinian people but would enable Israel to maintain and to consolidate its hold on territories it had already occupied illegally by the use of force.

30. Among the many proposals advanced to eliminate the stalemate, the most recent was the new initiative of the Soviet Union which, it was pointed out, had the support of the community of Eastern European countries. The Soviet objective in putting forward proposals for a Middle East settlement was aimed at ending the deadlock, while conforming with the views of the United Nations and taking into account the fundamental interests of all the parties involved in the conflict.

31. The Seminar recognized that the proposed international conference, as envisaged by the United Nations, would be an important step forward and that Western Europe's special ties with the United States of America placed it in a specially favourable position to exert persuasive efforts to that end, both at the governmental level and through the creation of public opinion everywhere and, particularly, in the United States of America and Israel. Encouraging signs in this direction could already be detected.

32. Some avenues for further action were identified. In particular, stress was laid on the evident evolution in the attitude of Western European countries towards

positive recognition of the inalienable legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, including the right to self-determination with all that it entails.

33. The importance was pointed out of noting the increasing interest and concern shown in Western European political evolution on the question of Palestine over the last decade, particularly as reflected in the Socialist International, the Council of Europe, the European Assembly, the Western European Union, as well as in the Inter-Parliamentary Union and in the British Commonwealth of Nations.

34. That positive evolution was certainly due to a better perception in Western European circles of the consequences of the Middle East conflict on the security of Europe, giving rise to the necessity of a concrete development in Euro-Arab dialogue. This dialogue remained, however, prejudiced by the absence of a policy for a just and durable peace in the Middle East.

35. A community of interests, particularly on reciprocal security, prejudiced by the Middle East conflict, demanded the practical application of planned Euro-African co-operation, notably through inter-parliamentary efforts.

36. Mediterranean non-aligned countries were increasingly aware of the repercussions on their security posed by the unresolved Palestine question within the Middle East conflict. For the first time, they were due to meet at ministerial level in order to concert views and identify common efforts to bring out a lessening of tension and wider co-operation in attempting to resolve regional problems, of which the Palestine question was among the most important.

37. All those convergent efforts required persistence, factual information and mutual support. The United Nations Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People kept track of all those efforts, and was able to provide all necessary information and co-ordination. It was suggested that the legal, economic and political implications of the agreement between the European Economic Community and Israel in relation to products from the occupied territories could be investigated.

38. The overall objectives of the proposed international conference should be to achieve a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the conflict: comprehensive, in terms of recognizing the question of Palestine as the core of the Middle East conflict; just, by ensuring respect for the rights and security of all parties to the conflict as prescribed by international law, and lasting, by eliminating the main causes of tension.

39. The view was expressed that the conference should culminate in the signing of a treaty or number of treaties embracing the following organically interrelated components: the withdrawal of the Israeli troops from all Arab territories, including Jerusalem, occupied since 1967; implementation of a programme for the exercise by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights, including its right to the creation of its own State; establishing a state of peace and ensuring the security and independent development of all States in the region. Simultaneously, international guarantees for the observance of the terms of such a settlement should be drawn up and adopted.

40. It was logical that the conference should be held within the framework of the United Nations, or under its auspices, since that Organization was entrusted with ensuring collective security and promoting international co-operation, and because its Charter provided the guidelines for the rule of law in international relations.

41. Moreover, it had a specific responsibility vis-à-vis the Middle East conflict and the question of Palestine, since the emergence of the State of Israel, as well as the legitimacy of the Palestinian people's demands for the establishment of its own independent State, could be traced back to General Assembly resolution 181 (II) of 29 November 1947. In addition, the United Nations had defined and reaffirmed the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and accorded the PLO observer status.

42. In order to introduce peace and stability in the region and to resolve the question of Palestine and thereby end the Arab-Israeli conflict, all States Members of the United Nations and leaders of world public opinion should intensify their efforts to promote the convening of an international peace conference on the Middle East. The positive attitude towards peace efforts shown by the PLO was considered by the Seminar to be a timely and encouraging sign.

43. In so far as the African States were concerned, they had consistently supported the cause of the Palestinian people and the Arab resistance to Israel's aggression. There was a close similarity with the situation in southern Africa. Like South Africa, Israel constituted a danger to Africa as much as to the Arab world in view of its close economic and military ties with South Africa. An inter-parliamentary commission could also be established to investigate the collaboration between Israel and South Africa.

44. The Seminar regarded the question of Jerusalem as an important aspect on the agenda of the United Nations. Al-Quds al-Sharif was a unique city sacred to three monotheistic religions, and its status was specifically provided for in United Nations resolutions.

45. Since 1967, Israel had not only proceeded with the transformation of the city's demographic composition, physical features, institutional structure and historic character by establishing settlements, by annexation and enlargement of the municipal boundaries of the city, but also by taking other measures in violation of the city's legal status. In addition to excavation around the Haram al Sharif of the Al-Aqsa Mosque and the Dome of the Rock, Israel had perpetrated various acts of desecration and sacrilege against those and other holy places. Those unfortunate developments had provoked universal indignation.

46. Israel's adoption of the Basic Law which declared Jerusalem as its eternal capital in July 1980 had caused great abhorrence and revulsion throughout the world and resulted in international condemnation of Israeli policies. That was reflected in the decision of the Security Council, which censured Israel in the strongest terms and affirmed that the enactment of the Basic Law constituted a violation of international law and was null and void and must be rescinded forthwith.

47. Unfortunately, in further defiance of international law and United Nations resolutions, Israel still persisted in pursuing its policy of occupation, aggression, expansion and the establishment of illegal settlements in Jerusalem. Furthermore, it was a matter of concern that, in spite of Security Council resolution 478 (1980), two countries had transferred their embassies from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. Such action condoned Israel's annexation and seriously eroded the international community's commitment to the special status of Jerusalem. It was stressed that the matter should be considered within the general context of the question of Palestine as an international issue in its own right.

48. The Seminar emphasized the need for objective reporting of the facts relating to the question of Palestine and called upon the mass media in all regions of the world to play their part actively and continuously in promoting the exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including the right to self-determination and to its own independent State, as a step towards an early, just and lasting settlement of the Middle East conflict.

49. The Seminar also emphasized the need for greater unity and a consistent effort to reach consensus to promote conviction through dialogue, and for action by individual countries to conform to their public declarations in defending inalienable human rights and in upholding the principle of the self-determination of all peoples, not least the Palestinian people, who had been struggling valiantly for the attainment of their recognized rights for decades.

50. The Seminar heard a summary of the impressive organizational structure and of the activities of the PLO, its role in the economic, social and political life of the Palestinian people and its efforts to defend its rights.

51. The establishment of the PLO had marked the first step towards the recovery by the Palestinian people of their identity through their common resolve to defend their rights. It embodied a Palestinian entity representing the people and constituting a parliament and Government in exile.

52. The PLO instilled in the masses of its people an awareness of their national rights and of the need to recover the rights with a view to the achievement of peace based on justice. The development of democratic modes of conduct in all relations within the PLO constituted a progressive achievement which ensured that an independent Palestinian State would be a true example of democracy, and would have no difficulty in exercising executive functions.

53. The PLO also had to deal with the economic and social problems of the Palestinian people in exile and under occupation. In spite of the dispersion of its people, the restrictions imposed on their economic, social and political activity and other limitations imposed by financial considerations, the PLO provided comprehensive guidance and, as far as possible, the necessary infrastructure for its people. An example of its success in that regard was the fact that the Palestinian people enjoyed the highest educational standards in the third world and indeed rivalled the educational levels of many developed countries.

54. It could be said that the PLO had faced up to the complex situation arising from its obligations towards its people by combining social, economic and political development within the framework of its struggle to recover the national rights of the people of Palestine.

55. The Seminar was of the opinion that the real role and structure of the PLO should be given the widest possible publicity, in order to dispel the misconceptions about the PLO often erroneously propagated by the news media.

56. Having taken note of the difficulties experienced by the PLO in the realization of its economic and social objectives, the Seminar launched an appeal to all the countries of the world to strengthen the bilateral and international co-operation with the PLO so as to ameliorate the economic, social, health, educational and other conditions of Palestinians living in the occupied territories.

57. In addition, the Seminar also launched an appeal to all parliamentarians throughout the world to intensify their national actions so as to enable people to better understand the realities of the question of Palestine.

58. The Seminar took note with appreciation of the statement released to the press by members of the Executive Committee of the Parliamentary Association for Euro-Arab Co-operation who participated in the Seminar as panelists. It agreed unanimously that the text of the statement should be annexed to the report.

59. At the closing session, Mr. Farouq Qaddoumi thanked the participants for the concern shown and solidarity expressed for the plight of the Palestinian people and the valuable contribution they had made to advance further the search for a solution of the problem.

60. The Seminar concluded its work with the expressions of appreciation to the Government of Tunisia for the gracious welcome and hospitality extended to the participants and for the facilities provided, which had contributed to the success of the Seminar.

Appendix

Closing message from Chairman Yasser Arafat

1. On the conclusion of the ninth United Nations Seminar on the Question of Palestine, I have pleasure in conveying to you, on behalf of our Palestinian Arab people and my fellow members of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization, my warmest revolutionary greetings as an expression of our great appreciation for the honourable stand that you have taken and for the diligent endeavours that you have made in preparing the papers, in examining the facts of the question of Palestine and the injustice that has befallen our people, and in the serious discussions which have characterized the meetings of this Seminar.
2. Having closely followed the work of the Seminar, it is with great appreciation that we have observed the profundity of the studies submitted, the manifestly earnest manner in which the meetings have been conducted, and the evident desire of the distinguished participants to ensure the triumph of truth and to dispel the confusion and misrepresentation surrounding the terrible injustice to which our Palestinian Arab people have been subjected through their expulsion from their homeland in 1948, the loss of their national identity, and the denial of their inalienable rights to their national territory. In this connection, we must express our high esteem for the painstaking efforts made by the authors of the papers submitted. We must also emphasize the important role that the European and African parliamentarians participating in this Seminar can play within their national parliaments in support of the established rights of the Palestinian people to its national territory by encouraging their colleagues and Governments to promote the Palestinian cause by explaining the justice of that cause and by clearly advocating the right of the Palestinian people to return to its land, to the exercise of self-determination and to the establishment of its independent national State.
3. We also wish to reiterate in this forum the commitment of the Palestine Liberation Organization to the resolutions of the United Nations and our sincere hope that international legitimacy will play a more effective role in the achievement of a solution to the question of Palestine and in the restoration of peace in the region of the Middle East. We condemn all of the attempts that are being made to obstruct the role of the United Nations and to detract from the prestige and effectiveness of that Organization since we are well aware of the grave dangers that those counter-productive actions entail for peace and security not only within our region but throughout the world as a whole.
4. Our struggling people are still suffering the disastrous consequences of the successive wars that the Zionist enemy has launched against them and in which use has been made of the most modern devices for mass slaughter and destruction produced by the American military arsenal. Our people are also being subjected to the most odious forms of repression and persecution within occupied Palestine whose Islamic and Christian holy places are being desecrated. Attempts are being made to change the demographic and historical character of the city of Jerusalem, and the Government of the enemy is supporting terrorist groups by providing them with funds and weapons, thereby encouraging them to launch attacks against the Palestinian Arab population with a view to driving them from their homes and expropriating their lands and water resources in order to establish Zionist settlements. Furthermore, our people outside occupied Palestine are suffering from the bitter

torment experienced by displaced refugees living in camps and other places of exile and from the anguish of being unable to return to their homeland. Notwithstanding these sufferings, however, and also as a result thereof, our people are yearning for the achievement of peace in Palestine, the land of peace, through the establishment of their independent Palestinian State so that they can contribute to the enhancement of human civilization and use their scientific abilities and creative human capacities to play their natural role in promoting the prosperity and happiness of the human race on this planet.

5. These noble aspirations of our people cannot be realized, nor can peace and stability be achieved in our region, unless the American Administration and the Government of Israel renounce their policy of aggression and recognize our people's inalienable national rights, including their right of return, their right to self-determination, and their right to the establishment of their independent national State. Consequently, we believe that the convening of an international peace conference on the Middle East, under the auspices of the United Nations, is the only way to secure the triumph of international legitimacy, to safeguard the established rights of our people, and to ensure security, peace and stability in our region.

6. We now call upon you, my dear friends, to use your high standing and influence with the peoples and Governments of your countries to give increased momentum to the peaceful endeavours and initiatives that are being made in favour of the established national rights of our people.

7. In conclusion, I reiterate my gratitude and appreciation for your noble endeavours in support of the just Palestinian cause and wish you every success.

Revolution until Victory

ANNEX IV

North American Non-governmental Organization Symposium
on the Question of Palestine

(United Nations Headquarters, New York, 25-27 June 1984)

The North American Declaration

1. We wish to thank the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and the Division for Palestinian Rights for making this meeting possible.
2. As non-governmental organizations (NGOs), we are particularly grateful to the United Nations for the creation of an NGO liaison staff function and for the provision of annual NGO meetings.
3. We, the representatives of 60 NGOs represented at the North American NGO Symposium on the Question of Palestine, held from 25 to 27 June 1984 at the United Nations Headquarters in New York, call upon the peoples and Governments of the United States and Canada to take definitive steps to secure a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Arab-Israeli conflict, the core of which is the question of Palestine.
4. We wish to voice our support for the United Nations, especially its work to achieve a just and lasting solution to the question of Palestine through the implementation of relevant resolutions.
5. We are of the opinion that there exists an international consensus on the elements of such a peace which is reflected in the relevant resolutions and documents of the United Nations and the positions of the majority of the States Members of the United Nations as expressed in the 1983 Geneva Declaration on Palestine (see annex II above).
6. Recent polls have shown that this international consensus is paralleled by an emerging consensus among the peoples of Canada and the United States of America for such a just peace. The peoples of our two nations are increasingly recognizing that Palestinians, like Israelis, constitute a nation and are endowed with an inalienable right to national self-determination and statehood within historic Palestine. This right means the right to return to Palestine, the right to be represented by their chosen representatives, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), and the right to live securely in peace with all the neighbouring States, including Israel.
7. We believe that it is imperative that steps towards peace be taken immediately, since the de facto annexation of the West Bank (including Jerusalem) and Gaza by the Government of Israel is proceeding rapidly and threatens to destroy the possibility of a peace based on the mutual recognition of the rights of Palestinians, as well as Israelis, to national self-determination. We call upon the Government of the United States to declare unequivocally that the 1949 Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War a/ applies to all territories occupied by Israel in and after 1967 and to secure Israeli compliance with the Convention, as the United States is required to do by the terms

of the Convention. We are aware that the United States Government and, consequently, the American taxpayer, give more United States aid to Israel than to any other country. Much of it is in the form of grants which do not need to be repaid. This money permits Israel illegally to build and expand existing settlements.

8. It is our belief that all the parties to the conflict should come together in an international peace conference on the Middle East, as called for by the International Conference on the Question of Palestine of August 1983 and as endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 38/58 C. It is essential that the conference be inclusive and be attended by representatives of Israel and the Palestinians, the PLO, those Arab States parties to the conflict, the United States and the Soviet Union. Just as General Assembly resolution 181 (II) of November 1947 recognized the right of both peoples to self-determination and statehood, so now should the States Members of the General Assembly reiterate these principles as the basis for a negotiated peace under the auspices of the United Nations.

9. With the intent to further this goal of a just and lasting peace, we, representatives of non-governmental organizations, will work towards the following, and urge our respective Governments of Canada and the United States to take similar action:

(a) Call upon the Governments of Canada and the United States for the recognition of the right and just struggle of the Palestinian people under their sole and legitimate representative, the PLO;

(b) Promote the Palestinian right of self-determination and the convening of an international peace conference under the auspices of the United Nations;

(c) Work towards an immediate freeze on the construction and expansion of Jewish settlements in the occupied territories;

(d) Promote the reduction of militarization of this highly volatile region, by refraining from supplying weapons and other means of war. The threat of a third world war and the possibility of a nuclear disaster cause great concern;

(e) Take concrete steps to preserve and protect the human rights of all persons living in Israel and in all territories occupied by Israel;

(f) Provide protection and assistance to Palestinians who are victims of dispossession and oppression, particularly women and children;

(g) Ensure academic freedom and freedom of cultural expression in the occupied Palestinian and other Arab territories, including Jerusalem, with particular attention to the function of universities in these areas;

(h) Urge meetings between religious groups, women's organizations, labour unions, peace groups, human rights groups and other NGOs with their Israeli and Palestinian counterparts;

(i) Facilitate dialogue among North American Muslims, Christians and Jews concerning the moral and theological basis for a lasting peace in the Middle East;

(j) Encourage meetings between Palestinians and progressive Jewish peace forces within and outside Israel in the hopes of furthering peace and mutual understanding;

(k) Work towards the elimination of discriminatory restrictions on visas for Palestinian leaders to visit the United States and Canada, since such communications among Palestinians, progressive Israelis and the public of the United States and Canada are ingredients in a peaceful resolution of the conflict;

(l) Urge that all American and Canadian NGOs working for peace with justice in the Middle East be accorded the full protection of their rights to freedom of expression and association without fear of surveillance, interception of mail, surreptitious entry, or harassment by the Governments of the United States or Canada, in the light of the deplorable Security Bill recently passed by the House of Commons in Canada and the various proposed "anti-terrorist" bills presently posing serious threats to the civil liberties and rights of Canadians and Americans working in support of various human rights struggles;

(m) Work to initiate, particularly among North American women's organizations, a co-ordinated campaign of support on behalf of Palestinian women at present imprisoned and under town and house arrest because of their social and political activities;

(n) Urge NGOs to raise the issue of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people in the course of the upcoming electoral campaigns in the United States and Canada;

(o) Urge that the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) continue to provide its services to the Palestinians without any decrease or diminution. Cognizant of its mandate, we urge the United Nations to re-evaluate and update the UNRWA regulations as to which families and women receive aid. Further, we urge that Governments increase their financial support of UNRWA;

(p) Promote the dissemination of the speech made by Chairman Yasser Arafat at the International Conference on the Question of Palestine in September 1983.

10. We urge the United Nations to:

(a) Include, in the mandate of the NGO liaison function of the Division for Palestinian Rights, work on the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women, to be held at Nairobi, 1985. This should facilitate inclusion and full participation of Palestinian women in that Conference;

(b) Assist the North American NGO community in the establishment of a clearinghouse for information on the question of Palestine;

(c) Continue the development of a bimonthly North American calendar of NGO activities and facilitate its wide dissemination;

(d) Produce a comprehensive directory of all NGO organizations working on this issue, including those that have not participated in any United Nations activities;

(e) Co-ordinate the development of a guide to resources, "how to" expertise and action-oriented networking, including the development of a telephone tree for the communication of urgent information.

11. We in turn will create ways for better communication among ourselves and for dissemination of our collective resources, hoping that the formation of North American public opinion can be a joint NGO/United Nations venture.

12. We urge the publication of the proceedings of this Symposium, including the North American Declaration and the statements of the panelists, by the United Nations.

13. We urge the Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People to convey this resolution to the General Assembly at its thirty-ninth session as part of the Committee's report.

Notes

a/ United Nations, Treaty Series, vol. 75, No. 973, p. 287.

International Meeting of Non-governmental Organizations
on the Question of Palestine

(Geneva, 20-22 August 1984)

Resolution of non-governmental organizations

1. We wish to thank the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and the Division for Palestinian Rights for making this meeting possible and without whose invaluable assistance our success would have been impaired.
2. As non-governmental organizations (NGOs) we are particularly grateful to the United Nations for the creation of an NGO liaison staff function and for the provision of annual NGO meetings and symposia on the question of Palestine.
3. We consider that the meeting of so many non-governmental organizations as a consequence of United Nations resolution 38/58 C of 13 December 1983 is essential to the increase of international awareness of the question of Palestine.
4. We, the representatives of 98 NGOs represented at the International NGO Meeting on the Question of Palestine, held from 20 to 22 August 1984 at the United Nations Office at Geneva, call upon all the peoples and all the Governments to take definitive steps to secure a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Arab-Israeli conflict, the core of which is the question of Palestine.
5. We wish to voice our support for the United Nations, especially its work to achieve a just and lasting solution to the question of Palestine through the implementation of all relevant United Nations resolutions.
6. We express our concern for the lack of protection of the Palestinian refugees through a United Nations agency, and urge the General Assembly to extend the mandate to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to include Palestinian refugees.
7. We reaffirm our support and our commitment to work for the implementation of the 1983 Geneva Declaration on Palestine and the Programme of Action for the Achievement of Palestinian Rights.
8. We decide to establish an interim Co-ordinating Committee on Palestine for NGOs as a positive development to further liaison between NGOs and the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People through the Division for Palestinian Rights. The names of the organizations on the interim Co-ordinating Committee are attached. a/ We request the Committee to ensure that at next year's conference a session shall be devoted to enabling the NGOs to decide on the future structures for their co-operation with the Committee and the Division.
9. Since the United Nations has set aside 29 November each year as the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, we call upon all NGOs to express on that day, by all means available to them, solidarity with the Palestinian people in their struggle for self-determination and statehood.

10. We call on the Committee through the Division to disseminate the publicity material, posters and information to all NGOs well in advance of 29 November to ensure that the preparation of our activities can be concluded by September each year.

11. Non-governmental organizations have decided to launch a campaign to collect signatures from the peoples of the world in support of an international peace conference on the Middle East, as called for by the International Conference on the Question of Palestine of August and September 1983 and as endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 38/58 C. It is essential that the conference be inclusive and be attended by the representatives of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization, those Arab States parties to the conflict, the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. Just as General Assembly resolutions recognize the right of both peoples to self-determination and statehood, so now should the States Members of the General Assembly reiterate these principles as the basis for a negotiated peace under the auspices of the United Nations.

12. Non-governmental organizations accept responsibility to promote within their own countries support for this international conference and agree to raise this with their own Governments.

13. We call upon the Committee, through the Division, to assist the non-governmental organizations in this most important endeavour by providing administrative facilities and support in order to ensure the success of this petition, which will be launched on 29 November 1984 culminating on 29 November 1985 and then will be presented to all the parties involved.

14. We call upon the Committee through the Division to campaign actively in order to bring new organizations, especially from those areas of the world that were not represented at Geneva into the work of solidarity in support of the Palestinian people and into the family of NGOs.

15. We call upon the Committee, through the Division, further to strengthen the network of women working for a just, comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East. We call for a wide exchange of information, including with the representatives of the Palestine Liberation Organization (General Union of Palestinian Women), with special focus on the situation of Palestinian women in preparation for the NGO forum in Nairobi in 1985.

16. We call upon the Committee, through the Division, to facilitate co-operation and co-ordination of NGOs on a regional basis. NGOs from the EEC region have envisaged during this conference an organization in the near future.

17. Non-governmental organizations regard as a priority the publication and early distribution of a comprehensive report including all the recommendations for action made by the panelists and the participants at the International NGO Meeting on the Question of Palestine, held at Geneva from 20 to 22 August 1984, and we call upon the Committee, through the Division, to accept this responsibility. Such a report should be made available no later than 30 October 1984.

18. We call upon the Committee, through the Division, to provide the international NGO community with a clearinghouse for information on the question of Palestine.

19. We call upon the Committee, through the Division, to provide a comprehensive resource guide and directory of all NGOs working on this issue, including those that have not participated in any United Nations activities.

20. We call upon the Committee, through the Division, to expand the bulletin of the United Nations Division for Palestinian Rights to include a regular section on NGO activity and information.

21. We call upon the Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People to convey the resolution and report of the International NGO Meeting on the Question of Palestine, held at Geneva from 20 to 22 August 1984, to the General Assembly at its thirty-ninth session as part of the Committee's report.

Notes

a/ The following organizations are members of the interim Co-ordinating Committee: Israeli Council for Israeli-Palestinian Peace (Israel); Democratic Front for Peace and Equality (Israel); Law in the Service of Man (West Bank); Palestine Human Rights Campaign (United States of America); National Council of Churches of Christ (United States of America); Trade Union Friends of Palestine (United Kingdom); French NGO Committee (France); Soviet Afro-Asian Solidarity Committee in Association with Soviet Committee of Friendship and Solidarity with the Arab People of Palestine (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics); International Jewish Peace Union; Parliamentary Association for Euro-Arab Co-operation; Arab Lawyers Union; Middle East Council of Churches in Collaboration with the World Council of Churches; World YWCA; International Commission of Jurists; World Peace Council.

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**REPORT
OF THE
COMMITTEE ON THE EXERCISE OF
THE INALIENABLE RIGHTS
OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE**

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

OFFICIAL RECORDS: FORTIETH SESSION

SUPPLEMENT No. 35 (A/40/35)



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UNITED NATIONS

New York, 1985

NOTE

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[1 October 1985]

CONTENTS

	<u>Paragraphs</u>	<u>Page</u>
LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL		v
I. INTRODUCTION	1 - 6	1
II. MANDATE OF THE COMMITTEE	7 - 8	2
III. ORGANIZATION OF WORK	9 - 15	3
A. Election of officers	9 - 10	3
B. Participation in the work of the Committee	11 - 13	3
C. Re-establishment of the Working Group	14 - 15	3
IV. ACTION TAKEN BY THE COMMITTEE	16 - 150	4
A. Action taken in accordance with General Assembly resolution 39/49 A	16 - 134	4
1. Review of the situation relating to the question of Palestine and efforts to implement the recommendations of the Committee	16 - 32	4
2. Reaction to developments affecting the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people	33 - 66	6
(a) Communications to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council	33 - 57	6
(b) Action taken within the Security Council ...	58 - 66	9
3. Action taken by the Committee to promote the convening of the proposed International Peace Conference on the Middle East	67 - 85	11
4. Attendance at international conferences and meetings	86	13
5. Action taken by United Nations bodies, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and intergovernmental organizations	87 - 134	14
B. Action taken by the Committee in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 38/58 B and 39/49 B	135 - 150	21
1. Co-operation with non-governmental organizations .	135 - 143	21

CONTENTS (continued)

	<u>Paragraphs</u>	<u>Page</u>
2. Seminars	144 - 148	22
3. Studies	149 - 150	23
V. ACTION TAKEN BY THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INFORMATION IN ACCORDANCE WITH GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 39/49 C	151 - 162	24
VI. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COMMITTEE	163 - 172	26

Annexes

I. Recommendations of the Committee endorsed by the General Assembly at its thirty-first session		28
II. Geneva Declaration on Palestine and Programme of Action for the Achievement of Palestinian Rights		31
III. United Nations Symposium for Non-Governmental Organizations on the Question of Palestine, Geneva, 3-4 November 1984: NGO appeal for an International Peace Conference on the Middle East		41
IV. Report of the Tenth United Nations Seminar on the Question of Palestine, Beijing, 22-26 April 1985		43
V. United Nations Asian Regional Non-Governmental Organizations Symposium on the Question of Palestine, New Delhi, 1-3 May 1985: Declaration ..		48
VI. Report of the Eleventh United Nations Seminar on the Question of Palestine, Georgetown, 17-20 June 1985		52
VII. Report of the Twelfth United Nations Seminar on the Question of Palestine, New York, 8-9 July 1985		63
VIII. United Nations North American Regional Non-Governmental Organizations Symposium on the Question of Palestine, New York, 10-12 July 1985: Declaration		70
IX. United Nations African Regional Non-Governmental Organizations Symposium on the Question of Palestine, Dakar, 5-7 August 1985: Declaration		73
X. International Meeting of Non-Governmental Organizations on the Question of Palestine, Geneva, 9-12 September 1985: Declaration		78

LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

23 September 1985

Sir,

I have the honour to enclose herewith the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for submission to the General Assembly in accordance with paragraph 4 of resolution 39/49 A.

Accept, Sir, the assurances of my highest consideration.

(Signed) Massamba SARRE
Chairman of the Committee
on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights
of the Palestinian People

His Excellency
Mr. Javier Pérez de Cuéllar
Secretary-General of the United Nations

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, established by General Assembly resolution 3376 (XXX) of 10 November 1975, is currently composed of 23 Member States. 1/
2. The first report of the Committee 2/ contained specific recommendations designed to enable the Palestinian people to exercise its inalienable rights, as previously recognized and defined by the General Assembly. Those recommendations were first endorsed by the Assembly at its thirty-first session as a basis for the solution of the question of Palestine.
3. In its subsequent reports to the General Assembly, 3/ the Committee retained its original recommendations unchanged. On each occasion and with stronger emphasis, they were again endorsed by the Assembly which each year has also renewed its mandate of the Committee.
4. Despite repeated urgings by the Committee, however, the Security Council has not yet been able to act on or implement the recommendations of the Committee. Meanwhile, arising from a continuation of Israeli policies and practices, tension and violence persist in the Palestinian and other Arab territories, including Jerusalem, illegally occupied by Israel.
5. Israel has not yet begun to implement the Security Council resolutions requesting its complete and unconditional withdrawal from the occupied Palestinian and other Arab territories. Lebanon has also been caught in the turmoil. Israel has prevented UNIFIL from deploying along the internationally recognized boundaries of Lebanon. The Committee has therefore continued to stress that this situation will prevail in the area as long as the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people remain unattained. The United Nations has a clear responsibility to ensure the achievement of the rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination, national independence and sovereignty and to return to their homes and property, as well as to their physical protection and welfare in the refugee camps.
6. To secure United Nations objectives on the question of Palestine, during the year under review, the Committee gave priority to the early convening of the proposed International Peace Conference on the Middle East, under United Nations auspices and in accordance with the provisions of General Assembly resolution 38/58 C, and continued to urge the understanding and co-operation of all concerned for the resolution of a problem which is fundamental to international peace and security. The Committee regrets it has not so far sensed any change in the negative attitude of Israel and the United States of America concerning the convening of the Conference, and expresses the sincere hope that a positive change will urgently be forthcoming.

II. MANDATE OF THE COMMITTEE

7. The Committee's mandate for the year 1985 is contained in General Assembly resolutions 39/49 A and B, the relevant parts of which are paragraphs 3, 4 and 5 of resolution 39/49 A and paragraph 2 of resolution 39/49 B, through which the Committee was required:

(a) To continue to keep under review the situation relating to the question of Palestine as well as the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Achievement of Palestinian Rights adopted by the International Conference on the Question of Palestine and to report and make suggestions to the General Assembly or the Security Council, as appropriate;

(b) To continue to exert all efforts to promote the implementation of its recommendations, to send delegations or representatives to international conferences where such representation would be considered by it to be appropriate and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its fortieth session and thereafter;

(c) To continue to extend its co-operation to non-governmental organizations in their contribution towards heightening international awareness of the facts relating to the question of Palestine.

8. The General Assembly also requested the Secretary-General to ensure that the Division for Palestinian Rights continue to discharge the tasks detailed in previous resolutions, in consultation with the Committee and under its guidance.

III. ORGANIZATION OF WORK

A. Election of officers

9. The Committee, at its 111th meeting, on 8 January 1985, decided to re-elect the following officers:

Chairman: Mr. Massamba Sarré (Senegal)
Vice-Chairmen: Mr. Oscar Oramas-Oliva (Cuba)
Mr. Mohammed Farid Zarif (Afghanistan)
Rapporteur: Mr. Victor J. Gauci (Malta)

10. At its 112th meeting, on 24 January 1985, the Committee adopted its programme of work for 1985 (A/AC.183/L.39) in implementation of its mandate.

B. Participation in the work of the Committee

11. As in previous years, the Committee reconfirmed, at its very first meeting, that all States Members of the United Nations and Permanent Observers to the United Nations desiring to participate in the work of the Committee as observers were welcome to do so. The Committee also decided to invite the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) to participate in its work as an observer, to attend all its meetings and to make observations and proposals for the consideration of the Committee.

12. During 1985 the Committee again welcomed as observers all the States and organizations that had participated in the preceding year. ^{4/} The Committee also welcomed the additional participation of China and Sri Lanka as observers from 14 May 1985.

13. The Committee stressed its priority objective in seeking to promote the convening of the proposed International Peace Conference on the Middle East, as endorsed by the General Assembly in resolution 38/58 C. Accordingly, a letter to that effect was addressed on 5 February 1985 by the Chairman to the Secretary-General who subsequently transmitted it, on 20 February 1985, to States Members of the United Nations and of the specialized agencies, as well as to intergovernmental regional organizations.

C. Re-establishment of the Working Group

14. The Committee, at its 111th meeting, re-established its Working Group to assist in the preparation and expedition of the work of the Committee. The Working Group was constituted as before, on the understanding that any Committee member or observer could participate in its proceedings. ^{5/}

15. At its first meeting, on 18 January 1985, the Working Group unanimously re-elected Mr. Victor J. Gauci (Malta) as its Chairman and Ms. Savitri Kunadi (India) as its Vice-Chairman.

IV. ACTION TAKEN BY THE COMMITTEE

A. Action taken in accordance with General Assembly resolution 39/49 A

1. Review of the situation relating to the question of Palestine and efforts to implement the recommendations of the Committee

16. In accordance with its mandate, the Committee continued to keep the situation relating to the question of Palestine under review, and to exert all efforts to promote the implementation of its recommendations as endorsed by General Assembly resolutions.

17. In reaction to events in the region affecting the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, whenever urgent action was required, the Chairman of the Committee repeatedly drew the attention of the Secretary-General and of the President of the Security Council to such developments, and called for appropriate measures in accordance with United Nations resolutions (see below, section (2) (a)). Those communications were sent against a backdrop of continued military occupation by Israel of the Palestinian and Arab territories, and of resulting growing conflict and tension in the region.

18. The Committee noted with mounting concern that the situation relating to the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people had continued to deteriorate in the year under review, as described in various studies and documents prepared by United Nations and other intergovernmental bodies, and by experts, as well as in press reports.

19. The information reviewed by the Committee made it clear that the Israeli policies of illegally maintaining and establishing new Jewish settlements, and confiscating Arab-owned land, in the occupied Palestinian territories, had continued. Data submitted to the International Symposium on Israeli Settlements in the occupied Arab territories, organized by the League of Arab States, in Washington D.C., in April 1985, showed that Israel had seized 51.2 per cent of the total area of the West Bank as of May 1984. By that date, Israel had about 179 settlements in the West Bank, of which 31 were in and around Jerusalem, involving an estimated total of approximately 146,000 settlers. Instances of the creation of new settlements and confiscation of additional Arab land continued to be reported in letters by the Chairman of the Committee and by the Permanent Representative of Jordan addressed to the Secretary-General during 1985.

20. The Committee noted that the continuing momentum towards settlement of the occupied Palestinian and other Arab territories was accompanied by measures designed to stifle all forms of political, cultural, social and economic expression of the Palestinian people, as well as violence, harassment and provocation of Palestinians by armed Israeli settlers, in an apparent effort to drive the Palestinians out of their land and facilitate its eventual annexation by Israel.

21. The Committee noted that according to a report published by Law in the Service of Man, a West Bank-based affiliate of the International Commission of Jurists, indiscriminate detention, accompanied by torture and various forms of ill-treatment, was used for the purpose of political intimidation of Palestinians. Further evidence of detention without charges, torture and ill-treatment of Palestinians in Israeli prisons and detention centres, including arbitrary

beatings, overcrowding, lack of food, of water and health care, denial of educational materials, and discrimination, was provided by witnesses in hearings held in the area by the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Population in the Occupied Territories (Press Releases HR/2792-2864).

22. In their effort to repress Palestinian opposition to occupation, the Israeli military authorities repeatedly broke up demonstrations, raided houses in villages and refugee camps, declared selected areas "military zones" and closed them, and engaged in forms of collective punishment such as bulldozing houses, closing shops, and imposing curfews.

23. In response to growing resistance against the occupying Power by Palestinians in the occupied West Bank, the Israeli Government in August 1985 decided to reinstate its policies of administrative detention without charges for up to six months and deportation of persons considered security risks, and it engaged in a massive campaign in implementation of those policies.

24. At the same time, the Israeli occupation authorities continued to resort to measures designed to restrict the right to freedom of movement of the Palestinian people. The Committee deplored in particular that two women from the West Bank, Ms. Sameeha Khalil and Ms. Siham Barghouty, invited by the Committee to participate in the International NGO Meeting held at Geneva from 9 to 12 September 1985, had been refused a travel permit by the Israeli authorities. It was also brought to the attention of the Committee that a number of members of Law in the Service of Man were also detained on the eve of the meeting.

25. The Committee further noted that the Israeli occupation authorities had continued to deny trade union rights to Arab workers and to engage in repressive measures against the trade union movement and its leaders, as described in the 1985 report on the situation of workers of the occupied Arab territories prepared by the Director-General of the International Labour Organisation.

26. Academic and cultural freedom continued to be violated in the occupied Palestinian territories, as shown by the repeated closing of educational institutions, the confiscation of cultural materials, the banning of cultural exhibits and the armed repression and detention of student activists, as detailed in the reports submitted by the Director-General of UNESCO on educational and cultural institutions in the occupied Arab territories.

27. These repressive policies and practices, aimed at stifling Palestinian national expression and resistance to the military occupation, have been accompanied by continuing measures to strengthen control over most aspects of life, with the objective of obstructing self-generating development of the occupied territories and to turn them into a dependent entity aiming at its final absorption and annexation. Industry, trade, agriculture, water resources, health, services, education, employment and economic life in general continue to be under strict control to ensure that the population of the occupied territories remain dependent on Israel for their well-being while Israel benefits from exploiting the area's natural and human resources.

28. The Committee noted, in this connection, that, in their respective reports on the labour, health, and educational situation in the occupied territories, ILO, the World Health Organization and UNESCO had found little or no improvement in the conditions of the Palestinian and Arab population. The specialized agencies

pointed out that the continued occupation and the policies and practices of Israel in the occupied territories conflicted with the objectives of development in their respective fields.

29. The Committee further noted the corroborating information contained in the reports of the Secretary-General on living conditions of the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territories (A/40/373-E/1985/99), on permanent sovereignty over national resources in the occupied Palestinian and other territories (A/40/381-E/1985/105), and on the situation of women and children in the occupied Arab territories and other occupied territories (A/CONF.116/6).

30. A report on the Israeli road plan for the West Bank, also prepared by Law in the Service of Man and submitted to the General Assembly by the Chairman of the Committee (A/40/119-S/16943) provided further evidence of Israel's policy of de facto annexation of the area through its economic integration as a dependent entity.

31. The Committee wishes to express its utmost concern at these policies and practices and to bring them forcefully to the attention of the General Assembly and the Security Council as they clearly violate the Fourth Geneva Convention and have serious repercussions not only on the enjoyment by the Palestinians of their inalienable rights, but also on peace and security in the region, and on international efforts to achieve a just and lasting solution of the question of Palestine, the core of the Middle East conflict.

32. The Committee further reviewed with grave preoccupation the deteriorating situation of Palestinian refugees in South Lebanon, which had reached increasingly dramatic proportions in the wake of Israel's invasion. The Committee followed closely the Security Council debates in the matter (see section 2 (b)) and repeated their warning that conflict and violence in the region would continue as long as the Palestinian people were prevented from exercising their inalienable rights in their own State.

2. Reaction to developments affecting the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people

(a) Communications to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

33. In response to developments affecting the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, whenever urgent action was required, the Chairman of the Committee repeatedly drew the attention of the Secretary-General and of the Security Council to such developments and called for appropriate measures in accordance with United Nations resolutions.

34. In addition to the situation in the occupied Palestinian territories, the Committee also had to express concern over developments in the Palestinian refugee camps in southern Lebanon. The invasion and occupation by Israeli armed forces had left in its wake an ever-growing spiral of violence and bloodshed aimed in particular at the Palestinians. On that account, in a press release issued on 24 May 1985 (GA/PAL/266), the Chairman called upon the United Nations and, in particular, the Security Council, to exercise their responsibility to ensure the physical safety of the Palestinians and to bring about the exercise of their inalienable rights.

35. In his letters, the Chairman detailed violations of the fundamental rights of Palestinians by the Israeli authorities in contravention of international law and United Nations resolutions. He pointed out that such measures aggravated tensions in the region and posed a constant threat to international peace and security. He reiterated the urgent necessity for a concentrated international effort to find a just solution to the question of Palestine, and reaffirmed that the Committee attached the utmost importance to the early convening of the proposed International Peace Conference on the Middle East.
36. On 26 November 1984, the Chairman expressed by letter the Committee's grave concern at reports of renewed acts of repression against Palestinians, including the shooting of unarmed demonstrators, by the Israeli forces in the occupied Palestinian territories (A/39/692-S/16841). The shootings, which had taken place in Bir Zeit and Ramallah, had resulted in the deaths of two students and the wounding of several others.
37. On 15 January 1985, the Chairman again drew attention to further action taken by the Government of Israel in its continuing policy of annexing the occupied Palestinian territories (A/40/84-S/16896). Sites for six new settlements had been approved on 10 January 1985; in addition, the establishment of another 20 new settlements had been requested by the Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Israel.
38. On 5 February 1985, the Chairman sought the publication, as a document of the General Assembly, of a study prepared by Law in the Service of Man concerning an Israeli proposed road plan for the west Bank (A/40/119-S/16943). According to the study, the project, which had recently been promulgated by the occupying authorities, would greatly increase integration of the West Bank road system into that of Israel, and entail the seizure of 78,000 dunums of private Palestinian land and the destruction of refugee camps, buildings and facilities.
39. The study had concluded that the plan must therefore be seen as the most significant step of recent times towards Israel's eventual annexation of the West Bank, as well as a direct physical threat to the lands, communities and livelihood of the Palestinian population, thus serving the purpose of encouraging their emigration.
40. On 12 February 1985, the Chairman drew urgent attention to the grave situation and growing tension in and around the Palestinian refugee camps in South Lebanon and the occupied West Bank (A/40/128-S/16954).
41. Acts of repression had been carried out by the Israeli troops against residents of Burj Al-Shamali refugee camp in the Tyre area and Dheisheh refugee camp near Bethlehem; several residents had been wounded and scores of others arrested. Moreover, Israeli planes had repeatedly attacked Palestinians in South Lebanon, with resulting loss of life among the civilian population.
42. In a letter dated 19 March 1985 (A/40/183-S/17043), the Chairman expressed the Committee's concern at press reports regarding raids carried out by the Israeli authorities at Bir Zeit University, the arrest of several students and other persons and the subsequent closing of the university.
43. The Chairman further referred to the detention of residents of the Dheisheh refugee camp and reports of their torture in an Israeli prison.

44. Grave concern was also caused by the fact that the Israeli Housing Ministry had begun construction of three permanent settlements in the West Bank and Gaza, which showed that the Israeli Government was continuing its policy of establishing settlements in the occupied territories.

45. On 29 March 1985, the Chairman drew attention to recent policy statements made by Israeli government officials concerning the occupied territories of the West Bank and Gaza (A/40/215-S/17069). Jewish settlers in the Katif region of Gaza had reportedly been assured by the Israeli Defence Minister that the region would in any event remain an inseparable part of the State of Israel. Similar assurances had been given to the Jewish settlers in the Jordan Valley by the Prime Minister of Israel.

46. The Chairman expressed the Committee's grave concern at such statements which were yet a further confirmation of the policy of annexation of the occupied territories by the Government of Israel.

47. In a letter dated 2 May 1985 (A/40/281-S/17146), the Acting Chairman referred to a number of reports concerning serious incidents that had taken place in the occupied territories. The Israeli authorities had taken repressive measures against demonstrations and strikes in celebration of Land Day at various locations in the West Bank and Gaza. Subsequently, the authorities had also carried out raids at al-Ibrahimiyyah College in East Jerusalem and Bethlehem University. A number of persons had been injured in these and other incidents, and there had been several arrests.

48. On 23 May 1985, the Chairman once more expressed the profound concern of the Committee at the tragic developments in and around the Palestinian refugee camps at Sabra, Shatila and Burj al Brajneh, which were again the object of armed attack (A/40/339-S/17219).

49. The Committee had repeatedly pointed out that conflict and violence in the region would continue as long as the Palestinian people were prevented from exercising their inalienable rights in their own State. He wished to assert once again that the United Nations and particularly the Security Council had a clear responsibility towards the Palestinians, and called on the Security Council to act positively on the recommendations made by the Committee and the General Assembly.

50. In his letter of 12 July 1985 (A/40/480-S/17340), the Acting Chairman of the Committee reported still further repressive measures on the part of the Israeli authorities that could not but increase tensions and aggravate threats to peace and security in the region. He cited reports that the occupying military forces had demolished seven villages in the area of Hebron on 18 June 1985, thereby displacing some 200 families in order to convert their land into a military training zone.

51. In the same letter, the Acting Chairman said it had been reported that the Israeli Defence Ministry was proposing drafting new laws that would allow for rapid deportation of Palestinian residents of the occupied territories who take part in "anti-Israel activity", since existing laws were considered insufficient. It was proposed further that formerly applied methods of punishment be revived, that is to say, imprisonment without trial or charges for an unlimited period.

52. On 18 July 1985, the Acting Chairman of the Committee reported action taken by the Israeli authorities that would lead to the closing of the Hospice Hospital in occupied East Jerusalem - the only government hospital in the Arab part of

Jerusalem caring for the poor (A/40/494-S/17346). It was the considered view of the Committee that this action represented still further evidence of the way the Government of Israel is failing to abide by international agreements regarding the status of citizens under occupation.

53. In a letter dated 31 July 1985 (A/40/523-S/17375), the Chairman referred to newspaper reports of the delivery of armoured tanks, which may adversely affect the rights and lives of the Palestinian refugees living in Lebanon. In this connection, the representative of Lebanon drew attention to a letter dated 9 August 1985 (A/40/537-S/17389) and, concerning paragraphs 59 to 60, to the statement before the Security Council made on 31 May 1985 (S/PV.2582).

54. On 8 August 1985, the Acting Chairman reported that the Israeli authorities had adopted a number of decisions adversely affecting the rights of the Palestinian people (A/40/540-S/17392). These included the reinstatement of administrative detention without trial and deportation, the closing of newspapers and the expansion of prisons in the occupied territories. Several repressive and discriminatory measures against Palestinians had also been taken recently.

55. The Acting Chairman expressed the view that such policies and practices, which had been accompanied by escalating violence, were designed to stifle all forms of political, economic and cultural activity by the Palestinian people and thus to pressure them into emigrating from their land, with a view to facilitating its eventual annexation by Israel.

56. In a letter dated 11 September 1985 (A/40/628-S/17455), the Chairman of the Committee provided information on recent measures taken by the Israeli military authorities in implementation of those policies. Among other repressive measures, the authorities had engaged in a massive campaign of detention of Palestinians and were holding upwards of 50 persons in the West Bank; curfews had been imposed in several towns and refugee camps; at least three persons were threatened with deportation; and four Arab youths, including a 12-year old boy, had been shot and wounded by Israeli soldiers.

57. The Chairman further stated that the measures described were taking place in an atmosphere of growing provocation by the Jewish settlers in the occupied Palestinian territories, and reiterated the Committee's concern at those developments and at the continuing denial by Israel of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.

(b) Action taken within the Security Council

58. In addition to transmitting urgent letters to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council, the Committee followed closely activities of the Council regarding matters relating to its mandate as periodically defined by the various General Assembly resolutions since the establishment of the Committee.

59. The Committee took note of the statement (S/17215) issued by the President of the Security Council on 24 May 1985 expressing the serious concern of the Council members at the heightened violence in certain parts of Lebanon, and voicing support for the appeal of the Secretary-General dated 22 May 1985, which also referred to the situation in and around the Palestinian refugee camps, for an end to violence involving the civilian population.

60. The Committee noted that, at its 2582nd meeting, on 31 May 1985, the Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 564 (1985). In the resolution, the Council inter alia called on all concerned to end acts of violence against the civilian population in and around Palestinian refugee camps and reaffirmed its intention to continue to follow the situation closely.

61. On 12 and 13 September 1985, at the request of the Arab Group contained in a letter dated 11 September 1985 from the Permanent Representative of Qatar to the United Nations (S/17456), the Council met to consider "Israeli practices against the civilian population in the occupied Palestinian territories".

62. The Chairman of the Committee intervened in the debate (S/PV.2605) and stated that the Committee had expressed its deep concern at Israel's decision to renew its policy of "administrative detention" as well as the deportation of persons considered a "threat to security" and the strengthening of censorship and other measures against the Palestinian population. Such measures had been taken in an atmosphere of growing provocation on the part of Jewish settlers living in the occupied territories - provocation that was designed to drive the Palestinians away from their homes.

63. He further stated that the situation of the Palestinians continued to deteriorate. The Israeli authorities were defying international law and United Nations resolutions. Tension and violence would only increase in the Palestinian and other occupied territories until the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people were fully recognized. The United Nations had a responsibility to assure the realization of those rights as well as the physical protection of the Palestinian people in the occupied territories.

64. He said that the Palestinian question had reached a critical stage and urged the Council to give effect to the recommendations of the Committee and the recommendations of the International Conference on the Question of Palestine, particularly with regard to the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East. The Conference would offer the interested parties great possibilities to participate in negotiations and lead to a just and lasting settlement in the region. He appealed to the Council to take appropriate measures to revive, on the basis of the principles and objectives of the Charter and United Nations resolutions, the policy of dialogue among all parties interested in putting an end to the present tragic situation.

65. The Security Council had before it a draft resolution sponsored by Burkina Faso, Egypt, India, Madagascar, Peru and Trinidad and Tobago (S/17459) by which the Council, inter alia, would deplore the repressive measures taken by Israel since 4 August 1985 against the civilian Palestinian population in the occupied territories; would call on Israel to immediately stop such measures, release the detainees and refrain from further deportations; and would call on Israel to abide scrupulously by the provisions of the Geneva Convention of 12 August 1949.

66. Because of the negative vote of the United States of America, the Security Council did not adopt the draft resolution.

3. Action taken by the Committee to promote the convening of the proposed International Peace Conference on the Middle East

67. In resolution 39/49 D, the General Assembly inter alia reaffirmed its endorsement of the call for convening the International Peace Conference on the Middle East; expressed its regret at the negative response of two Governments and called upon them to reconsider their position towards the Conference; urged all Governments to make additional constructive efforts and to strengthen their political will in order to convene the Conference without delay and for the achievement of its peaceful objectives; requested the Secretary-General, in consultation with the Security Council, to continue his efforts with a view to convening the Conference and to report thereon to the General Assembly not later than 15 March 1985; and decided to consider the report of the Secretary-General at its fortieth session.

68. Accordingly, in its programme of work for 1985 (A/AC.183/L.39) the Committee decided that it would continue, as a matter of priority, to exert all efforts to promote the early convening of the proposed Peace Conference, in accordance with resolutions 38/58 C and 39/49 D.

69. For this purpose, the Committee decided to send delegations to selected capitals to discuss how best to promote progress on its recommendations for a peaceful solution. In view of its busy schedule, the Committee this year limited its contacts to members of the Security Council.

70. During 1985, delegations of the Committee were received by a number of Governments, as indicated below.

71. On 25 April 1985, a delegation of the Committee composed of Mr. Massamba Sarré (Senegal), Chairman; Mr. Victor J. Gauci (Malta), Rapporteur; Mr. Azraai Zain (Malaysia); Mr. Mohamed Lessir (Tunisia); and Mr. Zehdi L. Terzi (Palestine Liberation Organization) was received by Mr. Zhao Ziyang, Prime Minister of China, as well as by Mr. Geng Piao, Vice-Chairman of the National People's Congress and Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee of the National People's Congress; Mr. Ho Ying, Member of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress; Mr. Qian Qichen, Deputy Foreign Minister; and Mr. Zhen Jua, Assistant Foreign Minister.

72. The delegation subsequently travelled to Bangkok where, on 29 April 1985, it met with Mr. Siddhi Savetsila, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Thailand.

73. On 3 May 1985, a Committee delegation composed of Mr. Massamba Sarré (Chairman); Mr. Mohammed F. Zarif (Vice-Chairman); Mr. Victor J. Gauci (Rapporteur) and Mr. Zehdi L. Terzi (Palestine Liberation Organization) was received by Mr. Khurshid Alam Khan, Minister of State for External Affairs of India.

74. A delegation composed of Mr. Massamba Sarré (Chairman); Mr. Alberto Velazco-San José (Vice-Chairman); and Mr. Zehdi L. Terzi (PLO) visited Peru and Trinidad and Tobago from 6 to 11 June 1985. In Peru, the delegation was received by Mr. Luis Percovich Roca, Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, on 6 June 1985. On 10 June, the delegation met with Mr. Rabindranath Permanand, Acting Permanent Secretary for External Affairs of Trinidad and Tobago. Subsequently, the Chairman and the Observer of the Palestine Liberation Organization were received by Mr. Errol Mahabir, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Trinidad and Tobago, on 14 June 1985 in New York.

75. A delegation composed of Mr. Massamba Sarré (Chairman); Mr. Victor J. Gauci (Rapporteur); Mr. Ilter Türkmen (Turkey); and Mr. Zehdi L. Terzi (PLO) visited Egypt from 23 to 26 July 1985. The delegation was received by Mr. Kamal Hassan Ali, Prime Minister; Mr. Ahmed Esmat Abdel-Meguid, Foreign Minister; Mr. Boutros Ghali, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs; and it held in-depth discussions with senior officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The delegation also participated in a national journalists' encounter organized by the United Nations Department of Public Information.

76. Subsequently, a delegation composed of Mr. Victor J. Gauci (Rapporteur); Mr. Alberto Velazco-San José (Cuba); and Mr. Zehdi L. Terzi (PLO) visited Madagascar from 28 to 30 July and Burkina Faso from 1 to 3 August 1985. In Madagascar, the delegation was received by Mr. Jean Bemananjara, Minister of Foreign Affairs; and by Mr. Albert Zakariasy and Mr. Amido, Vice-Presidents of the National Assembly. It also participated in a national journalists' encounter organized by the United Nations Department of Public Information.

77. In Burkina Faso, the delegation was received by the President, Mr. Thomas Sankara; Mr. Basile L. Guissou, Minister of Foreign Affairs; and Mr. Wattamou Lamien, Minister of Information and Culture.

78. A delegation composed of Mr. Mohammed F. Zarif (Vice-Chairman) and Mr. Zehdi L. Terzi (PLO) visited the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics from 11 to 14 August and the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic on 15 and 16 August 1985.

79. In the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the delegation was received by Mr. A. E. Voss, Chairman, Chamber of Nationalities, Supreme Soviet of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and it held in-depth discussions with high-ranking officials in the Foreign Ministry and participated in a press conference and other activities organized by the Soviet Afro-Asian Solidarity Committee. The visit was extensively covered by the media.

80. In the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, the delegation was received by Mr. Vladimir A. Kravets, Minister for Foreign Affairs. It also met with representatives of non-governmental organizations at the Ukrainian Society of Friendship and Cultural Relations and with the media.

81. In its exchanges of views with the above-mentioned Governments, the Committee delegation emphasized the imperative necessity of the early convening of the proposed International Peace Conference on the Middle East and stressed the paramount role to be played by the Security Council in this respect.

82. The Committee was greatly encouraged by the positive response of the Governments concerned and by their understanding of the need for urgent concrete action, as well as by their determination to contribute positively to the efforts to bring about a just and comprehensive solution of the Palestinian question under United Nations auspices, and on the basis of the relevant United Nations resolutions.

83. The Committee further noted that, in pursuance of his mandate under General Assembly resolution 39/49 D, the Secretary-General had reported having been informed by the President of the Security Council, following consultations, that almost all its members were in favour of the principle of holding the proposed conference (see A/40/168-S/17014). Many of the members of the Security Council believe that the conference should be convened as early as possible; some others consider that the conditions that would make it possible to convene such a conference have not as yet been met.

84. The Committee noted with appreciation that the Secretary-General intended to pursue consultations on the subject and to inform the General Assembly and the Security Council of any new developments.

85. In this connection, it should be mentioned that in seminars and symposia of non-governmental organizations on the question of Palestine held under the aegis of the United Nations, it was strongly held that the convening of such a conference was a priority which offered the best and most comprehensive approach to a just and lasting solution to the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

4. Attendance at international conferences and meetings

86. In accordance with its mandate, since its preceding report to the General Assembly, the Committee was represented at the following international conferences and meetings:

Twentieth Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity, Addis Ababa, 12-15 November 1984

Fifteenth Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers, Sanaa, 18-22 December 1984

Regional Seminar on the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, Port Moresby, 4-7 March 1985

International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, New York, 21 March 1985

Regional Seminar on Activities of Foreign Economic and Other Interests which are Impeding the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, Havana, 8-10 April 1985

Extraordinary Ministerial Meeting of the Co-ordinating Bureau of the Non-Aligned Countries, New Delhi, 19-21 April 1985

Extraordinary session of the Special Committee on the Situation with Regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, Tunis, 13-17 May 1985

International Day of Solidarity with the Struggling People of South Africa - Soweto Day, New York, 14 June 1985

Special meeting convened by the Special Committee against Apartheid, in co-operation with the African National Congress of South Africa in observance of the thirtieth anniversary of the adoption of the Freedom Charter, New York, 26 June 1985

The forty-second session of the Council of Ministers and the twenty-first session of the Assembly of Heads of State of the Organization of African Unity, Addis Ababa, 18-20 July 1985

Seminar on the Intransigence of the South African régime with regard to Namibia: Strategies for Hastening the Independence of Namibia, Georgetown, 29 July to 2 August 1985

Conference of Foreign Ministers of Non-Aligned Countries, Luanda,
2-7 September 1985

Solemn meeting of the United Nations Council for Namibia in commemoration of
Namibia Day, 26 August 1985

International Seminar on Racist Ideologies and Organizations Hindering Efforts
for the Elimination of Apartheid in South Africa, Budapest, 9-11 September 1985

Symposium on Zionism and the International Community, Havana,
12-13 September 1985

5. Action taken by United Nations bodies, the Movement
of Non-Aligned Countries and intergovernmental
organizations

87. The Committee continued to follow with great interest and to note action taken by the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, United Nations bodies and other intergovernmental organizations on matters relevant to its mandate since the submission of its report to the General Assembly at its thirty-ninth session.

(a) Meeting of the Mediterranean members of the Non-Aligned Movement held at ministerial level, Valletta, 10-11 September 1984

88. The Final Declaration adopted by the meeting (A/39/526-S/16758 and Corr.1), inter alia, endorsed the Geneva Declaration and the Programme of Action adopted at the International Conference on the Question of Palestine held at Geneva in 1983, including the call for the convening of an International Peace Conference on the Middle East. The Ministers renewed their commitment to strive persistently towards a solution of the problem on the basis of the decisions and principles of the United Nations and the declarations and communiqués of the Non-Aligned Movement.

(b) Meeting of the Non-Aligned Committee of Eight on Palestine at ministerial level, New York, 3 October 1984

89. The Ministers reviewed the situation, particularly with regard to the endeavours of the United Nations Secretary-General concerning the proposed International Peace Conference on the Middle East, and decided to continue actively their collective and individual efforts to mobilize all means available with a view to ensure the convening of such a Peace Conference under the auspices of the United Nations.

(c) Meeting of Ministers and Heads of Delegation of the Non-Aligned Countries to the thirty-ninth session of the General Assembly, New York, 1-5 October 1984

90. In the Final Communiqué (A/39/560-S/16773), the Ministers and Heads of Delegation of the Non-Aligned Countries, inter alia, reaffirmed their total support for the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and their determination to act for early achievement of those rights.

91. They reaffirmed that the question of Palestine is the core of the Middle East problem and the root cause of the Arab-Israeli conflict. They affirmed that the Palestine Liberation Organization is the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people and that it alone has the full right to represent its people.

92. They condemned any agreement or treaty which violates or infringes the rights of the Arab nation and of the Palestinian people as recognized by the Non-Aligned Movement, and in accordance with international law, the United Nations Charter and its relevant resolutions. They reaffirmed their commitment to the resolutions of the New Delhi Summit Conference expressing its support and adoption of the Fez Peace Plan.

93. They supported the Final Declaration and the Geneva Programme of Action adopted by the International Conference on the Question of Palestine in 1983 and stressed anew the necessity for the early convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East in accordance with General Assembly resolution 38/58 C, emphasizing the major responsibility shouldered by the Security Council in this respect. They condemned the negative position of Israel and the United States of America towards the proposed conference.

94. They further reaffirmed their opposition to occupation and rejection of the Israeli practices and policies in the occupied Palestinian and Arab territories, including Jerusalem, and in particular the establishment of settlements. They affirmed that such practices and policies are contrary to international law and relevant resolutions of the United Nations. They reaffirmed their adherence to the resolutions adopted by the New Delhi Conference calling for measures against Israel by the Non-Aligned Countries and the United Nations.

(d) Co-ordinating Meeting of Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, New York, 4 October 1984

95. At the Co-ordinating Meeting of Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, held in New York on 4 October 1984, the participants decided, inter alia, to refer the report of the Committee of Six on Palestine to the Islamic Group in order to exert a greater effort to attain its recommendations during the thirty-ninth session of the General Assembly (A/39/585-S/16783).

(e) Twentieth ordinary session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity, Addis Ababa, 12-15 November 1984

96. In a resolution on the situation in the Middle East, the Assembly inter alia reaffirmed all its previous resolutions and its support for the Palestinian people under the leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organization; recommended that Member States renew their determination not to establish or re-establish diplomatic ties with Israel; and called upon the Security Council to take the necessary measures to compel Israel to put an end to its occupation of Arab and Palestinian territories and to enable the Palestinian people to exercise their national rights in conformity with the recommendations of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People.

97. In a resolution on the question of Palestine, the Assembly commended the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for its efforts and called for the implementation of General Assembly resolution 38/58 C on the holding of an International Peace Conference on the Middle East (A/40/87).

(f) Meeting of the European Council, Dublin, 3-4 December 1984

98. The Heads of State or Government of the 10 members of the European Economic Community, in the conclusions adopted on the situation in the Middle East, reaffirmed, inter alia, their desire to see urgent efforts made to establish peace and security in the area and their willingness to assist such efforts.

99. They reiterated their call for direct negotiations among the parties themselves, including the Palestine Liberation Organization, based on mutual recognition of each others' existence and rights. They further called for full implementation of the provisions of Security Council resolution 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and for an end to the illegal policy of settlements in the occupied territories.

(g) Fifteenth Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers, Sanaa, 18-22 December 1984

100. The Conference adopted a Final Communiqué and a number of resolutions on the question of Palestine and the Middle East conflict (A/40/173-S/17033), stating inter alia that:

"the Conference reaffirmed that the cause of Palestine - the foremost cause of the Muslim Ummah - is the crux of the Middle East problem and the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict; that just peace in the region can only be based on the total and unconditional withdrawal of the Israeli enemy from all the occupied Palestinian and Arab territories, the regaining, by the Palestinian people, of their inalienable rights including their right to return to their homeland, Palestine, their right to self-determination and their right to establish their own national independent State on their national soil with Al-Quds as its capital".

101. The Conference affirmed that the Palestine Liberation Organization is the legitimate and sole representative of the Palestinian people and has, alone, the full right to represent these people; that resolution 242/1967 of the Security Council is not compatible with Arab and Palestinian rights and does not constitute a sound basis for the solution of the problem of Palestine and the Middle East; and that no Arab party shall unilaterally seek a solution to the question of Palestine and the Arab-Israeli conflict. It called for continued resistance against the Camp David approach and Accords, as well as for full and effective support to the Palestinian people.

102. The Conference reaffirmed its support for all international initiatives for a solution of the question in accordance with the seven principles stipulated in the resolutions of the Islamic Conference, including primarily the Fez Peace Plan.

103. The Conference strongly condemned Israel for measures aimed at imposing its legislation on the occupied territories and called for implementation of the Islamic Programme of Action against the Zionist Enemy adopted by the Third Islamic Summit Conference, and of the resolutions and recommendations adopted by the Al-Quds Committee.

104. The Conference condemned the United States of America for its hostile attitude towards the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and called upon the European community to take a more positive stand in this connection. It also called on Member States to review their relations with the United States of America and other States in the light of their policies with regard to the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.

105. The Conference strongly condemned the crimes committed by the Israeli enemy in 1982 in Sabra and Shatila. It also condemned the continued criminal reprisals carried out by the Israeli enemy against Lebanese villages and towns and Palestinian camps in southern Lebanon.

106. The Conference strongly condemned the strategic alliance between the United States of America and the Zionist enemy, and also condemned all treaties concluded under this alliance.

(h) Urgent session of the Co-ordinating Bureau of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries on the situation in the areas occupied by Israel in southern Lebanon, the western Bekaa and the Rashaya district, New York, 6 March 1985

107. In its communiqué (A/40/163-S/17008), the Bureau expressed its grave concern at the deteriorating situation, which threatened peace and security in the area as a result of Israeli practices. It condemned such practices, which were in violation of the rules and principles of international law, and demanded that Israel desist forthwith from them.

108. Recalling the previous declarations and communiqués adopted by the Non-Aligned Movement, the Bureau called on the Security Council urgently to implement Security Council resolutions on Lebanon, particularly resolutions 425 (1978), 508 (1982) and 509 (1982), to ensure Israel's immediate and unconditional withdrawal from the Lebanese territories to the internationally recognized borders.

109. The Bureau expressed its support for the efforts of the Government of Lebanon to extend its authority over all of its territory and for its determination to restore peace and order in the areas to be evacuated by Israel and to ensure the safety and security of the civilian populations in those areas, including the Palestinian refugees in the camps.

110. The Bureau affirmed that the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 applied to the territories occupied by Israel in southern Lebanon, the western Bekaa and the Rashaya district and that the occupying Power is duty bound to respect and uphold the provisions of the said Convention and other norms of international law. It demanded that Israel, the occupying Power, desist forthwith from its illegal and abusive practices against the civilian population in these areas in violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 and other norms of international law and immediately lift all restrictions and obstacles to the restoration of normal conditions in the areas under its occupation.

(i) Commission on Human Rights, forty-first session, Geneva, 4 February-15 March 1985

111. The Commission considered an agenda item entitled "Question of the violation of human rights in the occupied Arab territories, including Palestine" and adopted two resolutions.

112. In resolution 1985/1 A, the Commission inter alia denounced the continued refusal of Israel to allow the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Population of the Occupied Territories access to the occupied territories; reiterated the deep alarm expressed by the Special Committee at Israel's policies towards those territories; confirmed its declaration that Israel's breaches of the Geneva Convention of 12 August 1949 and Additional Protocols were war crimes and an affront to humanity; called upon Israel to refrain from such policies and to implement all pertinent United Nations resolutions; reiterated its call to all States not to recognize any changes carried out by Israel in the occupied territories, and to avoid taking any action or extending any aid which might be used by Israel in pursuit of such policies; and requested the General Assembly to recommend to the Security Council the adoption against Israel of measures under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations.

113. In resolution 1985/1 B, the Commission reaffirmed that the Geneva Convention of 12 August 1949 was applicable to all the Arab territories occupied by Israel since 1967, including Jerusalem; condemned Israel's failure to acknowledge such applicability; and urged once more all States parties to the Convention to make every effort to ensure respect for and compliance with the provisions thereof in the occupied territories.

114. The Commission further considered the item entitled "The right of peoples to self-determination and its application to peoples under colonial or alien dominated or foreign occupation" and adopted resolution 1985/4 by which it reaffirmed the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination, to the establishment of an independent and sovereign State, to return to their homes and property and to regain their rights by all means in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter.

115. The Commission further reaffirmed its support for the Geneva Declaration on Palestine adopted by the International Conference on the Question of Palestine and welcomed the call to convene an International Peace Conference on the Middle East under the auspices of the United Nations.

(j) Economic Commission for western Asia,* Twelfth Ministerial Session, 20-25 April 1985

116. By resolution 139 (XII) entitled "Economic and social conditions of the Palestinian Arab people under occupation", the Economic Commission for Western Asia (ECWA) decided to include in the programme of work and priorities for the period 1986-1987 such studies on economic and social conditions in the occupied Palestinian territories as might serve to strengthen the resistance of the Palestinian people in those areas. It also requested the preparation of studies on the population situation, Israeli settlement policies and on the industrial sector with a view to solving the problems from which it suffers. It also requested that information and data on the occupied Palestinian territories be included in all regional studies and statistical abstracts.

117. By resolution 141 (XII), entitled "General study of the economic and social situation and potential of the Palestinian Arab people", ECWA called for the completion of the study in question and its adoption at a special session of the Commission to be convened no later than the end of October 1985.

(k) Commemorative Meeting in Observance of the Thirtieth Anniversary of the Asian-African Conference, Bandung, 24-25 April 1985

118. In the Declaration adopted by the Commemorative Meeting (A/40/276-S/17138, annex, appendix, para. 11), participating States expressed their full solidarity with and support for the struggle of the Palestinian people, under the leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organization, its sole and legitimate representative. They condemned Israeli practices against the population of the Palestinian and Arab occupied territories and reaffirmed their conviction that there could be no just and lasting solution to the Middle East conflict until Israel totally and unconditionally withdrew from all territories occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem.

* As of September 1985: Economic and Social Commission for western Asia (ECSWA).

(l) Fifty-seventh Meeting of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Ten States Members of the European Economic Community, Luxembourg, 29 April 1985

119. The Ministers adopted a Declaration on the Arab-Israeli conflict (A/40/291-S/17162, annex) in which they welcomed recent moves towards a reactivation of the process of negotiations in the search for a solution to that conflict, notably the Jordan/Palestinian agreement reached on 11 February at the initiative of King Hussein, which contained a commitment to negotiation for peace in accordance with United Nations resolutions, including the resolutions of the Security Council. In the view of the Ten, this represented a constructive step forward. They also welcomed the ideas put forward by the President of Egypt. They considered that these important initiatives reflect a desire for movement towards a peaceful solution. This deserved encouragement and a positive response.

120. The Ten reaffirmed their conviction that the achievement of a just and lasting peace calls for the participation and active support of all the parties concerned, and reconfirmed their willingness to contribute to such a process on the basis of the principles stated by them on previous occasions.

(m) Economic and Social Council, Second regular session, Geneva, 3-26 July 1985

121. The Economic and Social Council adopted three resolutions of relevance to the question of Palestine. Resolution 1985/57, on "Assistance to the Palestinian people", requests the Secretary-General to finalize the programme of economic and social assistance to the Palestinian people and to convene in 1986 a meeting of the relevant bodies of the United Nations system to consider such assistance, with the participation of the Palestine Liberation Organization, the Arab host countries and relevant intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations. The resolution further invites all concerned to intensify such assistance.

122. In resolution 1985/58, on "Economic development projects in the occupied Palestinian territories", the Council called for the urgent lifting of the Israeli restrictions imposed on the economy of the occupied territories; and called upon all concerned to facilitate the establishment of a seaport and a citrus plant in the occupied Gaza strip and of a cement plant in the occupied West Bank.

123. In resolution 1985/177, on "Israeli economic practices in the occupied Palestinian and other Arab territories", the Council requested the Secretary-General to prepare a report on the financial and trade practices of the Israeli occupation authorities in the occupied Palestinian and other Arab territories.

(n) Twenty-first ordinary session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity, Addis Ababa, 18-21 July 1985

124. The Assembly adopted two resolutions regarding the question of Palestine and the Middle East conflict. It reaffirmed, *inter alia*, all previous resolutions on the question and reiterated its unwavering support for the people of Palestine led by the Palestine Liberation Organization, their sole legitimate representative. It strongly condemned any initiatives, measures or agreements which do not take into account the aspirations of the people of Palestine and of the Palestine Liberation Organization, and considered null and void any agreement on the Palestine question which excludes the Palestine Liberation Organization.

125. The Assembly further condemned strongly the policies and practices of Israel in the occupied Palestinian and other Arab territories, and called upon the international community to increase pressure on Israel in all fields so as to compel it to conform to the United Nations Charter and the relevant resolutions.

126. The Assembly emphasized the efforts deployed by the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and called on the Security Council to implement the Committee's recommendations. It further called for the convening of the proposed International Peace Conference on the Middle East, and requested Member States to ensure the application of General Assembly resolution 39/49 D to this end.

(o) World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, Nairobi, 15-26 July 1985

127. The Forward-Looking Strategies adopted by the Conference contain paragraph 259 relating to Palestinian women and children, in which it is stated that for more than three decades, Palestinian women have faced difficult living conditions in camps and outside, struggling for the survival of their families and the survival of the Palestinian people who were deprived of their ancestral lands and denied the inalienable rights to return to their homes and their property, their right to self-determination, national independence and sovereignty. Palestinian women are vulnerable to imprisonment, torture, reprisals and other oppressive practices by Israel in the occupied Arab territories. The confiscation of land and the creation of further settlements has affected the lives of Palestinian women and children. Such Israeli measures and practices are a violation of the Geneva Convention. The Palestinian woman as part of her nation suffers from discrimination in employment, health care and education.

128. It was recommended that the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Achievement of Palestinian Rights should be kept under review and co-ordinated between the United Nations units and agencies concerned, with emphasis on the role of Palestinian women in preserving their national identity, traditions and heritage and in the struggle for sovereignty. Palestinian people must recover their rights to self-determination and the right to establish an independent State in accordance with all relevant United Nations resolutions. The special and immediate needs of Palestinian women and children should be identified and appropriate provision made. United Nations projects should be initiated to help Palestinian women in the fields of health, education, and vocational training. Their living conditions inside and outside the occupied territories should be studied by the appropriate United Nations units and agencies assisted, as appropriate, by specialized research institutes from various regions. The results of these studies should be given broad publicity to promote actions at all levels. The international community should exert all efforts to stop the establishment of new Israeli settlements in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Palestinian women should be allowed to enjoy security in a liberated homeland also in accordance with United Nations resolutions.

(p) Extraordinary Summit Conference of Arab States, Casablanca, 7-9 August 1985

129. The Committee noted with appreciation that the Extraordinary Summit Conference of Arab States reaffirmed the need for continued Arab support for the resolutions of the Fez Summit. The Conference also reiterated its previous resolutions regarding the Palestinian question and its support for the Palestine Liberation Organization as the sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. The Conference also considered that the convening of an international conference

under the auspices of the United Nations, with the participation of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the United States of America and the other permanent members of the Security Council, as well as the Palestine Liberation Organization, along with the other concerned parties, would contribute to the promotion of peace in the region (A/40/564).

(a) Conference of Foreign Ministers of Non-Aligned Countries, Luanda, 2-7 September 1985

130. The Ministers reaffirmed that the question of Palestine is the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, and emphasized that a comprehensive, just and durable solution cannot be achieved without the total and unconditional withdrawal of Israel from all Palestinian and other Arab territories occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, and the exercise by the Palestinian people of their inalienable rights.

131. The Ministers reaffirmed their firm support for the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), the sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, and that the PLO alone has the full right to represent the Palestinian people. They affirmed the right of the PLO to participate on an independent and equal footing in all endeavours, international conferences and activities aimed at ensuring the exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. They further reaffirmed their strict adherence to the principles of non-interference and non-intervention in the internal and external affairs of the Palestinian people and the right of the PLO to free and independent decision-making.

132. The Ministers stressed anew the necessity for the early convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 38/58 C. They expressed the hope that the United States of America and Israel would reconsider their negative attitude in this respect. They further stressed that every encouragement and support should be extended to the United Nations Secretary-General to pursue his consultations to this end, and expressed their appreciation of the endeavours of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People.

133. Condemning Israeli policies and practices in the occupied Palestinian and other Arab territories, the Ministers reaffirmed their adherence to previous decisions of the Non-Aligned Countries urging action against Israel by the Non-Aligned Countries, the Security Council and the international community.

134. Finally, the Ministers reaffirmed that the Arab Peace Plan proclaimed at Fez in 1982, and reaffirmed by participants at the Extraordinary Summit Meeting held in Casablanca in August 1985, constitutes an important contribution to the establishment of a comprehensive, just and durable peace in the Middle East.

B. Action taken by the Committee in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 38/58 B and 39/49 B

1. Co-operation with non-governmental organizations

135. A number of activities were undertaken by the Committee and by the Division for Palestinian Rights, under the Committee's guidance, in implementation of the objective of further increasing co-operation with non-governmental organizations active on the question of Palestine.

136. A Symposium for Non-Governmental Organizations on the Question of Palestine was held in Geneva from 3 to 4 November 1984, to discuss inter alia future co-operation between the Committee and the NGO community, and NGO participation in the observance of the International Day of Solidarity on 29 November.

137. The Symposium was attended by 15 experts, members of the Interim Co-ordinating Committee of NGOs, and made a number of recommendations for future action. In particular, it elaborated the text of an international petition in support of the proposed International Peace Conference on the Middle East, which was subsequently launched by NGO representatives on 29 November at United Nations observances held in New York, Geneva and Vienna (see annex III).

138. Following the adoption of resolution 39/49 B, the Committee included in its programme of work for 1985, the holding of regional symposia for NGOs in North America, Asia and Africa, and of an international NGO meeting, to be preceded by a preparatory meeting.

139. The Committee further decided to emphasize the proposed International Peace Conference on the Middle East in all its activities relating to NGOs.

140. The preparatory meeting for the International NGO Meeting took the form of a seminar for 15 experts, members of the Interim Co-ordinating Committee of NGOs, and was held at Geneva on 4 and 5 March 1985. The seminar reviewed actions undertaken by the Committee and NGOs, with special reference to the progress achieved in the signature campaign. It also discussed plans for the international NGO meeting and adopted its provisional agenda.

141. The United Nations Asian Regional NGO Symposium on the Question of Palestine was held at New Delhi from 1 to 3 May 1985; the North American Regional NGO Symposium at New York from 10 to 12 July 1985 and the African Regional NGO Symposium at Dakar from 5 to 7 August 1985.

142. The Committee noted with appreciation that the symposia adopted declarations endorsing the global signature campaign in support of the proposed International Peace Conference on the Middle East and expressing the determination of NGOs to work for a greater understanding of, and support for, the question of Palestine in their region (see annexes V, VIII and IX).

143. The International NGO Meeting was held at Geneva from 9 to 12 September 1985. The Committee noted with appreciation that the Meeting concluded its work by the adoption of a declaration which is annexed to the present report (see annex X).

2. Seminars

144. In its programme of work for 1985, the Committee decided that regional seminars would be held in Asia and Latin America. In addition, the Committee decided to hold a regional seminar in North America in accordance with General Assembly resolution 36/120 B, and to combine that seminar with a symposium for North American NGOs.

145. The Committee further decided that all seminars held in 1985 would give priority attention to the convening of the proposed International Peace Conference on the Middle East.

146. The Committee appreciated the decision of the Government of China, a permanent member of the Security Council, to provide the venue for the Tenth United Nations Seminar on the Question of Palestine, which was held in Beijing from 22 to 26 April 1985. The report of that Seminar is annexed to the present report (see annex IV).

147. The Committee also appreciated the decision of the Government of Guyana, a member of the Committee, to provide the venue for the Eleventh United Nations Seminar on the Question of Palestine, which was held at Georgetown from 17 to 20 June 1985. The report of that Seminar is annexed to the present report (see annex VI).

148. The Twelfth United Nations Seminar on the Question of Palestine was held at United Nations Headquarters in New York on 8 and 9 July 1985. The report of that Seminar is annexed to the present report (see annex VII).

3. Studies

149. The Committee noted with appreciation that, in pursuance of the programme of work for 1985, the Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat had published the following additional studies:

NGO activities on the question of Palestine at the United Nations;

Living conditions of the Palestinian people.

150. The International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People was duly observed by the United Nations on 29 November 1984 at its Headquarters in New York and at the United Nations Offices at Geneva and Vienna. The Committee noted with appreciation that the day had been equally commemorated in many other cities throughout the world in 1984.

V. ACTION TAKEN BY THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INFORMATION IN
ACCORDANCE WITH GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 39/49 C

151. By resolution 39/49 C of 11 December 1984, the General Assembly requested the Department of Public Information (DPI), in full co-operation with the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, to:

- (a) continue the implementation of all parts of General Assembly resolution 38/58 E;
- (b) disseminate all information on the activities of the United Nations system relating to Palestine;
- (c) expand and update publications and audio-visual material on the facts and developments pertaining to the question of Palestine;
- (d) publish newsletters and articles in its respective publications on Israeli violations of the human rights of the Arab inhabitants of the occupied territories;
- (e) organize fact-finding missions to the area for journalists;
- (f) organize regional and national encounters for journalists.

152. The Committee noted with appreciation that during the past year, DPI continued its information programme on the question of Palestine in accordance with resolutions 38/58 E of 1983 and 39/49 C of 1984 with a view to furthering the world-wide dissemination of accurate and comprehensive information on the question. The information programme included publications, audio-visual coverage, a fact-finding mission for journalists and a series of national and regional journalists' encounters.

153. In publication activity, the Department continued to disseminate information on the question of Palestine through articles, press releases and special publications. In particular, it published a pamphlet entitled The Work of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Population of the Occupied Territories. After a brief introduction on the Committee's establishment in 1968 and its mandate, the pamphlet focuses on the 1984 report of the Committee to the General Assembly. The provisions of the eight resolutions adopted by the General Assembly in 1984 on the Committee's report are also summarized. The 12-page pamphlet is to be made available in Arabic, English, French, German and Spanish.

154. The UN Chronicle reported on the consideration given to the question of Palestine by the General Assembly at its thirty-ninth session. Its first issue of 1985 contained an article detailing the work of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), and an accompanying interview with the Agency's Commissioner-General. An article on United Nations assistance to the Palestinian people appeared in the September 1984 issue of Development Forum.

155. DPI coverage of the question of Palestine included radio news programmes broadcast in all the official languages of the United Nations, as well as in many other languages. The subject was also addressed by special feature programmes. In its work of expanding and updating its audio and visual coverage of the question of Palestine, DPI is making preparations for the production of a short film on the subject.

156. Activities which focused on acquainting the media with the facts and developments pertaining to the question of Palestine included a fact-finding mission to the Middle East. A team of prominent media persons from around the world visited Tunisia, Egypt, Jordan and the Syrian Arab Republic from 1 to 18 April 1985. The participants met leading personalities and visited refugee camps.

157. The purpose of the mission was to provide an opportunity for members of the team to acquaint themselves with first-hand and in-depth information regarding the various aspects of the Palestinian question. The mission received extensive media coverage in all the countries it visited and participants published numerous articles on their return to their home countries.

158. In 1985, as in 1984, DPI organized two regional journalists' encounters, bringing high-level journalists together with experts on the question of Palestine. An encounter for the North American-Caribbean region was held at Bridgetown in February 1985, and another for Asian journalists was held in Jakarta in May 1985.

159. The objective of these encounters was to promote a better understanding of the question among leaders of the media by bringing them together with experts on the subject for brief, informal discussions. Accordingly, around 15 high-level journalists from the press, radio and television media participated in each encounter. The journalists were impressed by the high calibre of the panelists and by the informal and candid character of the presentations made. It was their belief that the encounter, which they found useful, informative and interesting, had greatly increased their knowledge of the subject.

160. As requested by resolution 39/49 C, DPI in 1985 began organizing national encounters in which a team of expert panelists held meetings, in the form of in-depth press conferences, with national journalists in various countries. Three African journalists' encounters were held between 24 July and 7 August, in Egypt, Madagascar and Senegal. European national encounters were held in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, France, and Czechoslovakia, between 21 and 29 August.

161. United Nations information centres throughout the world continued to carry out information activities in connection with the question of Palestine and made available to the public United Nations publications on the subject. The centres also organized the world-wide observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People on 29 November 1984.

162. At Headquarters and in the information centres, the Department continued to screen the films "Palestinian People do have Rights" and "Palestinians of 1983". More than 100 copies of the films have been distributed in four languages among the information centres and the offices of the United Nations Development Programme.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COMMITTEE

163. The Committee contends that action is now required by the Security Council to take positively into account the recommendations of the Committee, and those adopted by consensus at the International Conference on the Question of Palestine, held at Geneva in September 1983 and endorsed by General Assembly resolution 38/58 C. It once again recalls that those recommendations are solidly founded on fundamental and internationally recognized principles relating to the problem of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

164. The Committee therefore annexes its recommendations and those of the Geneva International Conference to the present report (see annexes I and II).

165. The Committee stresses that its original recommendations were specifically designed to enable the Palestinian people to attain its inalienable rights, as affirmed in General Assembly resolution 3236 (XXIX).

166. The Committee also stresses that the International Conference on the Question of Palestine held at Geneva in 1983 contained specific guidelines for the achievement of a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict, of which an essential element would be the establishment of an independent Palestinian State in Palestine. Those guidelines were endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 38/58 C, and reaffirmed in resolution 39/49 D, which, inter alia, urged all Governments to make additional constructive efforts and to strengthen their political will in order to convene the Conference without delay and for the achievement of its peaceful objectives.

167. The Committee strongly points out that the question of Palestine has reached a critical phase and urges a renewed, concentrated and collective effort to find a just solution under United Nations auspices and on the basis of relevant United Nations resolutions to end the unacceptable plight of the Palestinian people.

168. To this end, the Committee is convinced that the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, as endorsed in General Assembly resolution 38/58 C, and generating quasi-unanimous support, provides a comprehensive opportunity for all the parties concerned to participate in negotiations which should lead to a just and lasting solution of the question.

169. The Committee expresses appreciation and is encouraged by the responses it has received so far in the course of its official visits to the capitals of a number of States members of the Security Council. The Committee intends to complete the process of sending delegations to the capitals of the other members of the Council in the year ahead.

170. The Committee recommends that the General Assembly should renew the mandate of the Secretary-General, with a sense of urgency, asking him to continue his contacts on the preparations in consultation with the Security Council for the convening of the proposed Conference, and appeals to all countries to exert their best efforts for its successful and peaceful outcome.

171. The Committee also believes it should continue to consolidate its efforts to increase awareness and understanding of the question of Palestine, and of the Committee's recommendations, and those of the International Conference on the Question of Palestine, specifically designed to enable the Palestinian people to

attain its inalienable rights, as well as to achieve peace in the Middle East, with due regard for the legitimate concerns of all the parties to the conflict in the region.

172. The Committee is pleased and greatly encouraged by the widespread understanding it has already secured, and the favourable reaction of non-governmental organizations and other organizations through which public opinion is manifested. The Committee intends to review its programme for the future in the light of experience gained and progress achieved.

Notes

1/ The Committee is composed of the following members: Afghanistan, Cuba, Cyprus, German Democratic Republic, Guinea, Guyana, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mali, Malta, Nigeria, Pakistan, Romania, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic and Yugoslavia.

2/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-first Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/31/35).

3/ Ibid., Thirty-second Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/32/35); ibid., Thirty-third Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/33/35 and Corr.1); ibid., Thirty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/34/35 and Corr.1); ibid., Thirty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/35/35 and Corr.1); ibid., Thirty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/36/35); ibid., Thirty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/37/35 and Corr.1); ibid., Thirty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/38/35); and ibid., Thirty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/39/35).

4/ The observers of the Committee are as follows: Algeria, China, Czechoslovakia, Ecuador, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Mauritania, Morocco, Nicaragua, Niger, Sri Lanka, Syrian Arab Republic, United Arab Emirates, Viet Nam, League of Arab States and Organization of the Islamic Conference. The Palestine Liberation Organization, as the representative of the Palestinian people, the principal party to the question of Palestine, is also an observer.

5/ Current membership of the Working Group is as follows: Afghanistan, Cuba, German Democratic Republic, Guinea, Guyana, India, Malta, Pakistan, Senegal, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic and, as representative of the people directly concerned, the Palestine Liberation Organization.

ANNEX I

Recommendations of the Committee endorsed by the General Assembly at its thirty-first session a/

I. Basic considerations and guidelines

59. The question of Palestine is at the heart of the Middle East problem, and consequently, the Committee stressed its belief that no solution in the Middle East can be envisaged which does not fully take into account the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people.
60. The legitimate and inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to return to their homes and property and to achieve self-determination, national independence and sovereignty are endorsed by the Committee in the conviction that the full implementation of these rights will contribute decisively to a comprehensive and final settlement of the Middle East crisis.
61. The participation of the Palestine Liberation Organization, the representative of the Palestinian people, on an equal footing with other parties, on the basis of General Assembly resolutions 3236 (XXIX) and 3375 (XXX) is indispensable in all efforts, deliberations and conferences in the Middle East which are held under the auspices of the United Nations.
62. The Committee recalls the fundamental principle of the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force and stresses the consequent obligation for complete and speedy evacuation of any territory so occupied.
63. The Committee considers that it is the duty and responsibility of all concerned to enable the Palestinians to exercise their inalienable rights.
64. The Committee recommends an expanded and more influential role by the United Nations in its organs in promoting a just solution to the question of Palestine and in the implementation of such a solution. The Security Council, in particular, should take appropriate action to facilitate the exercise by the Palestinians of their right to return to their homes, lands and property. The Committee, furthermore, urges the Security Council to promote action towards a just solution, taking into account all the powers conferred on it by the Charter of the United Nations.
65. It is with this perspective in view and on the basis of the numerous resolutions of the United Nations, after due consideration of all the facts, proposals and suggestions advanced in the course of its deliberations, that the Committee submits its recommendations on the modalities for the implementation of the exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.

II. The right of return

66. The natural and inalienable right of Palestinians to return to their homes is recognized by resolution 194 (III), which the General Assembly has reaffirmed almost every year since its adoption. This right was also unanimously recognized by the Security Council in its resolution 237 (1967); the time for the urgent implementation of these resolutions is long overdue.

67. Without prejudice to the right of all Palestinians to return to their homes, lands and property, the Committee considers that the programme of implementation of the exercise of this right may be carried out in two phases:

Phase one

68. The first phase involves the return to their homes of the Palestinians displaced as a result of the war of June 1967. The Committee recommends that:

- (i) The Security Council should request the immediate implementation of its resolution 237 (1967) and that such implementation should not be related to any other condition;
- (ii) The resources of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and/or of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, suitably financed and mandated, may be employed to assist in the solution of any logistical problems involved in the resettlement of those returning to their homes. These agencies could also assist, in co-operation with the host countries and the Palestine Liberation Organization, in the identification of the displaced Palestinians.

Phase two

69. The second phase deals with the return to their homes of the Palestinians displaced between 1948 and 1967. The Committee recommends that:

- (i) While the first phase is being implemented, the United Nations in co-operation with the States directly involved, and the Palestine Liberation Organization as the interim representative of the Palestinian entity, should proceed to make the necessary arrangements to enable Palestinians displaced between 1948 and 1967 to exercise their right to return to their homes and property, in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions, particularly General Assembly resolution 194 (III);
- (ii) Palestinians not choosing to return to their homes should be paid just and equitable compensation as provided for in Assembly resolution 194 (III).

III. The right to self-determination, national independence and sovereignty

70. The Palestinian people has the inherent right to self-determination, national independence and sovereignty in Palestine. The Committee considers that the evacuation of the territories occupied by force and in violation of the principles of the Charter and relevant resolutions of the United Nations is a conditio sine qua non for the exercise by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights of Palestinians to their homes and property and with the establishment of an independent Palestinian entity, the Palestinian people will be able to exercise its rights to self-determination and to decide its form of government without external interference.

71. The Committee also feels that the United Nations has an historical duty and responsibility to render all assistance necessary to promote the economic development and prosperity of the Palestinian entity.

72. To these ends, the Committee recommends that:

(a) A timetable should be established by the Security Council for the complete withdrawal by Israeli occupation forces from those areas occupied in 1967; such withdrawal should be completed no later than 1 June 1977;

(b) The Security Council may need to provide temporary peace-keeping forces in order to facilitate the process of withdrawal;

(c) Israel should be requested by the Security Council to desist from the establishment of new settlements and to withdraw during this period from settlements established since 1967 in the occupied territories. Arab property and all essential services in these areas should be maintained intact;

(d) Israel should also be requested to abide scrupulously by the provisions of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949 and to declare, pending its speedy withdrawal from these territories, its recognition of the applicability of that Convention;

(e) The evacuated territories, with all property and services intact, should be taken over by the United Nations, which with the co-operation of the League of Arab States, will subsequently hand over these evacuated areas to the Palestine Liberation Organization as the representative of the Palestinian people;

(f) The United Nations should, if necessary, assist in establishing communications between Gaza and the West Bank;

(g) As soon as the independent Palestinian entity has been established, the United Nations, in co-operation with the States directly involved and the Palestinian entity, should, taking into account General Assembly resolution 3375 (XXX), make further arrangements for the full implementation of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, the resolution of outstanding problems and the establishment of a just and lasting peace in the region, in accordance with all relevant United Nations resolutions;

(h) The United Nations should provide the economic and technical assistance necessary for the consolidation of the Palestinian entity.

Notes

a/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-second Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/32/35).

ANNEX II

A. Geneva Declaration on Palestine a/

In pursuance of General Assembly resolutions 36/120 C of 10 December 1981, ES-7/7 of 19 August 1982 and 37/86 C of 10 December 1982, an International Conference on the Question of Palestine was convened at the United Nations Office at Geneva from 29 August to 7 September 1983 to seek effective ways and means to enable the Palestinian people to attain and to exercise their inalienable rights. The Conference was opened by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, and presided over by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Senegal, Moustapha Niassé.

* * *

1. The Conference, having thoroughly considered the question of Palestine in all its aspects, expresses the grave concern of all nations and peoples regarding the international tension that has persisted for several decades in the Middle East, the principal cause of which is the denial by Israel, and those supporting its expansionist policies, of the inalienable legitimate rights of the Palestinian people. The Conference reaffirms and stresses that a just solution of the question of Palestine, the core of the problem, is the crucial element in a comprehensive, just and lasting political settlement in the Middle East.

2. The Conference recognizes that, as one of the most acute and complex problems of our time, the question of Palestine - inherited by the United Nations at the time of its establishment - requires a comprehensive, just and lasting political settlement. This settlement must be based on the implementation of the relevant United Nations resolutions concerning the question of Palestine and the attainment of the legitimate, inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including the right to self-determination and the right to the establishment of its own independent State in Palestine and should also be based on the provision by the Security Council of guarantees for peace and security among all States in the region, including the independent Palestinian State, within secure and internationally recognized boundaries. The Conference is convinced that the attainment by the Palestinian people of their inalienable rights, as defined by General Assembly resolution 3236 (XXIX) of 22 November 1974, will contribute substantially to the achievement of peace and stability in the Middle East.

3. The Conference considers the role of the United Nations in the achievement of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East to be essential and paramount. It emphasizes the need for respect for, and application of, the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations, the resolutions of the United Nations relevant to the question of Palestine and the observance of the principles of international law.

4. The Conference considers that the various proposals, consistent with the principles of international law, which have been presented on this question, such as the Arab peace plan adopted unanimously at the Twelfth Arab Summit Conference (see A/37/696-S/15510, annex), held at Fez, Morocco, in September 1982, should serve as guidelines for concerted international effort to resolve the question of Palestine. These guidelines include the following:

(a) The attainment by the Palestinian people of its legitimate inalienable rights, including the right to return, the right to self-determination and the right to establish its own independent State in Palestine;

(b) The right of the Palestine Liberation Organization, the representative of the Palestinian people, to participate on an equal footing with other parties in all efforts, deliberations and conferences on the Middle East;

(c) The need to put an end to Israel's occupation of the Arab territories, in accordance with the principle of the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force, and, consequently, the need to secure Israeli withdrawal from the territories occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem;

(d) The need to oppose and reject such Israeli policies and practices in the occupied territories, including Jerusalem, and any de facto situation created by Israel as are contrary to international law and relevant United Nations resolutions, particularly the establishment of settlements, as these policies and practices constitute major obstacles to the achievement of peace in the Middle East;

(e) The need to reaffirm as null and void all legislative and administrative measures and actions taken by Israel, the occupying Power, which have altered or purported to alter the character and status of the Holy City of Jerusalem, including the expropriation of land and property situated thereon, and in particular the so-called "Basic Law" on Jerusalem and the proclamation of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel;

(f) The right of all States in the region to existence within secure and internationally recognized boundaries, with justice and security for all the people, the sine qua non of which is the recognition and attainment of the legitimate, inalienable rights of the Palestinian people as stated in subparagraph (a) above.

5. In order to give effect to these guidelines, the Conference considers it essential that an international peace conference on the Middle East be convened on the basis of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the relevant resolutions of the United Nations, with the aim of achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict, an essential element of which would be the establishment of an independent Palestinian State in Palestine. This peace conference should be convened under the auspices of the United Nations, with the participation of all parties to the Arab-Israeli conflict, including the Palestine Liberation Organization, as well as the United States of America, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, and other concerned States, on an equal footing. In this context the Security Council has a primary responsibility to create appropriate institutional arrangements on the basis of relevant United Nations resolutions in order to guarantee and to carry out the accords of the international peace conference.

6. The International Conference on the Question of Palestine emphasizes the importance of the time factor in achieving a just solution to the problem of Palestine. The Conference is convinced that partial solutions are inadequate and delays in seeking a comprehensive solution do not eliminate tensions in the region.

**B. Programme of Action for the Achievement of
Palestinian Rights**

The International Conference on the Question of Palestine agreed that no effort should be spared to seek effective ways and means to enable the Palestinian people to attain and exercise their rights in Palestine in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights b/ and the principles of international law. The Conference, taking into consideration the Geneva Declaration on Palestine (see sect. A above), recommended the following Programme of Action.

"I

The International Conference on the Question of Palestine recommends that all States, individually or collectively, consistent with their respective constitutions and their obligations under the Charter of the United Nations and in conformity with the principles of international law, should:

(1) Recognize the great importance of the time factor in solving the question of Palestine;

(2) Intensify efforts for the establishment of an independent Palestinian State within the framework of a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement to the Arab-Israeli conflict in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, the relevant United Nations resolutions and the guidelines of the Geneva Declaration on Palestine;

(3) Consider the continued presence of Israel in the occupied Palestinian and other Arab territories, including Jerusalem, as exacerbating instability in the region and endangering international peace and security;

(4) Oppose and reject, as a serious and continuing obstacle to peace, the expansionist policies pursued by Israel in the Palestinian and other Arab territories occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, and in particular the alteration of the geographic nature and demographic composition, and the Israeli attempt to alter, through domestic legislation, the legal status of those territories, and all the measures taken in violation of the Geneva Convention relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War, c/ and the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, d/ both of 12 August 1949, and of the Hague Regulations of 1907, e/ such as the establishment and expansion of settlements, the transfer of Israeli civilians into those territories and the individual and mass transfers therefrom of the Arab Palestinian population;

(5) Refrain from providing Israel with assistance of such a nature as to encourage it militarily, economically and financially to continue its aggression, occupation and disregard of its obligations under the Charter and the relevant resolutions of the United Nations;

(6) Not encourage migration to the occupied Arab territories until Israel has put a definitive end to the implementation of its illegal policy of establishing settlements in the Palestinian and other Arab territories occupied since 1967;

(7) Fully comply with the relevant resolutions of the United Nations and its specialized agencies on the Holy City of Jerusalem, including those which reject Israel's annexation of Jerusalem and its declaration of that city as its capital;

(8) Undertake universal efforts to protect the Holy Places and urge Israel to take measures to prevent their desecration;

(9) Consider ways and means of meeting the threat that Israel poses to regional security in Africa in view of Israel's disregard of United Nations resolutions, and its close collaboration with the apartheid régime in the economic, military and nuclear fields, thereby contributing to the continued illegal occupation of Namibia and enhancing the régime's repressive and aggressive capacity;

(10) Encourage, through bilateral and multilateral contacts, all States, including Western European and North American States which have not done so, to welcome all peace initiatives based on the recognition of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, which were also welcomed by Chairman Yasser Arafat in his address to the International Conference on the Question of Palestine;

(11) Seek and develop ways and means to enable the Palestinian people to exercise sovereignty over their national resources;

(12) Express concern that Israel debars Palestinians from economic activity and access to national resources on Palestinian territory, in consistent violation of General Assembly resolutions on the right of the Palestinians to permanent sovereignty over their national resources;

(13) Declare null and void and counter such measures and practices applied by Israel in the occupied Palestinian and other Arab territories, including Jerusalem, as the annexation and the expropriation of land, water resources, and property and the alteration of the demographic, geographic, historical and cultural features thereof;

(14) Undertake measures to alleviate the economic and social burdens borne by the Palestinian people as a result of the continued Israeli occupation of their territories since 1967;

(15) Consider contributing or increasing special contributions to the proposed budgets, programmes and projects of the relevant organs, funds and agencies of the United Nations system that have been requested to provide humanitarian, economic and social assistance to the Palestinian people, with particular reference to:

(a) General Assembly resolution 33/147 of 20 December 1978 and the appeal of the Governing Council of the United Nations Development Programme at its thirtieth session for additional special contributions amounting to at least \$8 million during the third programming cycle (1982-1986) aimed at helping to meet the economic and social needs of the Palestinian people; f/

(b) The proposed programme budget of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development for the biennium 1984/85 regarding the establishment within the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development of a special economic unit, g/ as requested by that Conference at its sixth session at Belgrade; h/

(c) Establishing a special legal aid fund to assist Palestinians in securing their rights under conditions of occupation, i/ in accordance with the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War;

(16) Ensure that the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East can meet the essential needs of the Palestinians without interruption or any diminution in the effectiveness of its services;

(17) Review the situation of Palestinian women in the occupied Palestinian and other Arab territories and, in view of their special hardships, urge the Preparatory Committee of the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women, to be held at Nairobi in 1985, to include this item on the agenda of the Conference;

(18) Review, if they have not yet done so, in conformity with their national legislation, their economic, cultural, technical and other relations with Israel, and the agreements governing them with the aim of ensuring that these regulations and agreements will not be interpreted or construed as implying in any way recognition of any modification of the legal status of Jerusalem and of the Palestinian and other Arab territories occupied by Israel since 1967, or an acceptance of Israel's illegal presence in those territories;

(19) Recognize that the process of enabling the Palestinian people to exercise its inalienable rights in Palestine is a significant contribution to the restoration of the rule of law in international relations;

(20) Assure the observance of the stipulations provided in General Assembly resolution 181 (II) guaranteeing to all persons equal and non-discriminatory rights in civil, political, economic and religious matters and the enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms, including freedom of religion, speech, publication, education, assembly and association;

(21) Express concern that the laws applicable in the occupied Arab territories have been totally eclipsed by a plethora of military orders that have been designed to establish a new 'legal régime' in violation of the Hague Regulations of 1907, and the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War;

(22) Act in accordance with their obligations under existing international law, in particular with regard to the Geneva Conventions of 1949 which require States Parties to respect and to ensure respect for those Conventions in all circumstances, and in particular ensure the respect by Israel for the Geneva Conventions of 1949 in the occupied Palestinian and other Arab territories;

(23) Express concern that the Palestinians and other Arabs in the occupied territories are deprived of juridical and other kinds of protection, that they are victims of repressive legislation, involving mass arrests, acts of torture, destruction of houses, and the expulsion of people from their homes, acts which constitute flagrant violations of human rights;

(24) Recognize the necessity that Palestinian and Lebanese prisoners detained by Israel be accorded the status of prisoners of war in accordance with the Geneva Convention relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War of 1949, c/ if combatants, or in accordance with the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War of 1949, d/ if civilians;

(25) Strive for the adoption of international measures so that Israel will implement in the West Bank and Gaza the provisions of the Hague Regulations of 1907 and the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons, in the light of Security Council resolution 465 (1980);

(26) Recognize, if they have not yet done so, the Palestine Liberation Organization as the representative of the Palestinian people and establish with it appropriate relations;

(27) Encourage, in conformity with their national legislations, the formation of national committees in support of the Palestinian people;

(28) Encourage the observance of 29 November as the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, in a most effective and meaningful way;

(29) Request the General Assembly at its thirty-eighth session to designate a Year of Palestine, to be observed at the earliest possible time, taking into consideration the factors necessary to ensure its effective preparation for the purpose of galvanizing world-wide public opinion and support for further implementation of the Geneva Declaration on Palestine and the Programme of Action.

"II

The International Conference on the Question of Palestine stresses the obligation of all Member States, under the Charter of the United Nations, to enable the United Nations through an expanded and more effective role to fulfil its responsibility for achieving a solution to the question of Palestine. To this end:

"A

States participating in the Conference invite the Security Council, as the organ with primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security:

(1) To suppress continuing and growing acts of aggression and other breaches of the peace in the Middle East which endanger peace and security in the region and the world as a whole;

(2) To take prompt, firm and effective steps and actions to establish an independent sovereign Palestinian State in Palestine through the implementation of the relevant United Nations resolutions, by facilitating the organization of the international peace conference on the Middle East, as called for in paragraph 5 of the Geneva Declaration on Palestine (see sect. A above), and by creating in this context the appropriate institutional arrangements on the basis of relevant United Nations resolutions in order to guarantee and carry out the accords of the international peace conference, including the following:

(a) Taking measures consistent with the principle of the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force to ensure Israel's withdrawal from the Palestinian and other Arab territories occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, with a specific timetable;

(b) Undertaking effective measures to guarantee the safety and security and legal and human rights of the Palestinians in the occupied territories pending the withdrawal of the Israeli forces from the Palestinian and other Arab territories occupied by Israel since 1967, including Jerusalem;

(c) Subjecting those territories, following the withdrawal of Israel, to a short transitional period, under the supervision of the United Nations, during which period the Palestinian people would exercise its right to self-determination;

(d) Facilitating the implementation of the right to return of the Palestinians to their homes and property;

(e) Supervising elections to the constituent assembly of the independent Palestinian State in which all Palestinians shall participate, in exercise of their right to self-determination;

(f) Providing, if necessary, temporary peace-keeping forces in order to facilitate the implementation of subparagraphs (a) to (e) above.

"B

Meanwhile the Security Council is also invited to:

(1) Take urgent action to bring about an immediate and complete cessation of such Israeli policies in the occupied territories and, in particular, the establishment of settlements as have been determined by the Security Council to have no legal validity and as a serious obstruction to achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East;

(2) Consider urgently the reports of the Commission established under its resolution 446 (1979) of 22 March 1979, which examined the situation concerning settlements in the Arab territories occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, and to reactivate the above-mentioned Commission;

(3) Initiate action to terminate Israel's exploitative policies which go against the indigenous economic development of the occupied territories, and to compel Israel to lift its restrictions on water use and well-drilling by Palestinian farmers as well as its diversion of West Bank water resources into the Israeli water grid system;

(4) Keep under its constant attention the actions committed by Israel against the Palestinian people in violation of the stipulations provided for in relevant General Assembly resolutions, in particular the stipulations of resolution 181 (II) of 29 November 1947 guaranteeing to all persons equal and non-discriminatory rights and freedoms;

(5) Consider, in the event of Israel's persistent non-compliance with the relevant United Nations resolutions which embody the will of the international community, appropriate measures in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, to ensure Israel's compliance with these resolutions.

"C

(1) Taking into account the recommendations of the five regional preparatory meetings of the International Conference on the Question of Palestine j/ and United Nations resolutions concerning economic and social assistance to the Palestinian people, the Secretary-General of the United Nations is requested to convene a meeting of the specialized agencies and other organizations associated with the United Nations, as well as representatives of the Palestine Liberation Organization and of those countries which are hosts to Palestinian refugees and other potential sources of assistance to develop a co-ordinated programme of economic and social assistance to the Palestinian people and to ensure its implementation;

(2) The meeting should also look into the most effective inter-agency machinery to co-ordinate and sustain and intensify United Nations assistance to the Palestinian people.

"D

The dissemination of accurate and comprehensive information world wide and the role of non-governmental organizations and institutions remain of vital importance in heightening awareness of and support for the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination and to the establishment of an independent sovereign Palestinian State. To these ends:

(1) The United Nations Department for Public Information, in full co-operation and constant consultations with the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, should:

(a) Co-ordinate all information activities of the United Nations system on Palestine through the Joint United Nations Information Committee;

(b) Expand publications and audio and visual coverage of the facts and of developments pertaining to the question of Palestine;

(c) Publish newsletters and articles in its respective publications on Israeli violations of human rights of the Arab inhabitants in the occupied territories and organize fact-finding missions for journalists to the area;

(d) Organize regional encounters for journalists;

(e) Disseminate appropriate information on the results of the International Conference on the Question of Palestine;

(2) The relevant organizations of the United Nations system should organize meetings, symposia and seminars on topics within their terms of reference and relating to specific problems of the Palestinian people by establishing closer liaison with non-governmental organizations, the media and other groups interested in the question of Palestine.

"III

The International Conference on the Question of Palestine, convinced of the important role of world-wide public opinion in resolving the question of Palestine, and in the implementation of the Declaration and Programme of Action, urges and encourages:

(1) Intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations to increase awareness by the international community of the economic and social burdens borne by the Palestinian people as a result of the continued Israeli occupation and its negative effects on the economic development of the West Asian region as a whole;

(2) Non-governmental organizations and professional and popular associations to intensify their efforts to support the rights of the Palestinian people in every possible way;

(3) Organizations such as those of women, teachers, workers, youths and students to undertake exchanges and other programmes of joint action with their Palestinian counterparts;

(4) Women's associations, in particular, to investigate the conditions of Palestinian women and children in all occupied territories;

(5) The media and other institutions to disseminate relevant information to increase public awareness and understanding of the question of Palestine;

(6) Institutions of higher education to promote the study of the question of Palestine in all its aspects;

(7) Various jurists' associations to establish special investigative commissions to determine the violations by Israel of the Palestinians' legal rights and to disseminate their findings accordingly;

(8) Jurists to initiate with their Palestinian counterparts consultations, research and investigations on the juridical aspects of problems affecting the southern African and Palestinian struggles, in particular the detention of political prisoners and the denial of prisoner-of-war status to detained members of the national liberation movements of southern Africa and Palestine;

(9) Parliamentarians, political parties, trade unions, organizations for solidarity and intellectuals, particularly in Western Europe and North America, to join their counterparts in other parts of the world in giving their support, where it has not been done, to an initiative which would express the desire of the international community to see the Palestinian people at last living in their own independent homeland in peace, freedom and dignity."

Notes

a/ See Report of the International Conference on the Question of Palestine, Geneva, 29 August-7 September 1983 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.83.I.21), chap. I.

b/ See General Assembly resolution 217 A (III).

c/ United Nations, Treaty Series, vol. 75, No. 972, p. 135.

d/ Ibid., No. 973, p. 287.

Notes (continued)

e/ Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, The Hague Conventions and Declarations of 1899 and 1907 (New York, Oxford University Press, 1915), p. 100.

f/ See Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1983, Supplement No. 9 (E/1983/20).

g/ A/C.5/38/4, para. 8 (c).

h/ Recommendation 146 (VI) of 2 July 1983 of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development.

i/ Recommendation 19 of the Latin American Regional Preparatory Meeting, Managua, Nicaragua, 12-15 April 1983 (A/CONF.114/2).

j/ African region, A/CONF.114/1; Latin American region, A/CONF.114/2; Western Asian region, A/CONF.114/3; Asian region, A/CONF.114/4; European region, A/CONF.114/5.

ANNEX III

United Nations Symposium for Non-Governmental Organizations
on the Question of Palestine

(Geneva, 3-4 November 1984)

NGO Appeal for an International Peace Conference
on the Middle East

(Statement read by the representative of the Interim Co-ordinating
Committee on 29 November 1984, International Day of Solidarity
with the Palestinian People)

1. In August 1984, representatives of 98 non-governmental organizations participating in the International NGO meeting on the Question of Palestine in Geneva called upon all peoples and Governments to take definitive steps to secure peace in the Arab-Israeli conflict, at the core of which is the question of Palestine. Since that momentous meeting, these organizations have recommitted themselves to this important quest.
2. As the representative of the Interim Co-ordinating Committee of Non-Governmental Organizations on the Question of Palestine for the non-governmental organizations that attended that meeting, I am here today to offer a global challenge. We believe that it is in the interest of all the world's peoples to secure genuine peace in the Middle East. All our lives have been punctuated by war and the prospect of war emanating from that historic region. But these wars have brought neither peace nor security to the antagonists in the region. We must search for an alternative, sane path to peace with justice.
3. On this day, 29 November, the United Nations rightly calls for us to stand in solidarity with the Palestinian people and their struggle for self-determination and statehood. Today, in New York, Geneva and Vienna, and many other places in the world, a global campaign is being launched to gather the signatures of the world's peoples in support of an International Peace Conference on the Middle East. We, the non-governmental organizations committed to the attainment of the rights of the Palestinian people and especially a just and lasting peace for all peoples in the Middle East, offer the following world petition:

An Appeal for an International Peace Conference
on the Middle East

"The unresolved Arab/Israeli conflict, the core of which is the question of Palestine, and other Middle East conflicts pose a threat to world peace.

"The Middle East is a nuclear-weapons zone.

"The Middle East is one area in the world where a chain of events could lead to a Third World War.

"Without contact among all parties concerned there can be no negotiation. Without negotiation, there can be no peace.

"We, the undersigned, recognize the right of the Israeli and Palestinian peoples to statehood and self-determination. We recognize the right of all States in the region to existence within secure and internationally recognized boundaries with justice and security for all the peoples of the region. We call for the convening of an international peace conference on the Middle East attended by all parties to the conflict, including the representatives of Israel, the Palestine Liberation Organization, those Arab States party to the conflict, the United States of America and the Soviet Union, under the auspices of the United Nations as called for by the United Nations General Assembly resolution 38/58 C."

4. Through this petition we are declaring that there is an alternative to successive wars in the Middle East and the continued deprivation of the Palestinian people. We firmly believe that the process initiated by such a conference may begin to counter the misperception and mistrust that plague the region. We do believe that it is the first step in a sane process towards resolving them.

5. All the world's peoples are jeopardized by the threat of war. All the world's peoples are affected by the plight of the Palestinian people. All the world's peoples concerned with peace must also be concerned with justice.

6. Over the coming 12 months, non-governmental organizations around the world will be offering the people of their respective countries a chance to be peace-makers, to help restore the rights of suffering peoples by asking them to sign this petition.

7. On 29 November 1985, the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, the results of this massive campaign will be presented to the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

8. We are well aware of the magnitude of our project, but we are also painfully aware of the consequences of not acting. We ask all of you to join us in this quest to make peace in the Middle East a possibility through the promotion of genuine dialogue. That process could be set in motion by the convening of an International Conference on Peace in the Middle East.

ANNEX IV

Report of the Tenth United Nations Seminar
on the Question of Palestine

(Beijing, 22-26 April 1985)

1. The Tenth United Nations Seminar on the Question of Palestine with the title "The Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People" was held at the Fragrant Hill Hotel, West Beijing, People's Republic of China from 22 to 26 April 1985 in accordance with the terms of General Assembly resolution 38/58 B. Seven meetings were held and sixteen panelists presented papers on selected aspects of the question of Palestine.
2. The United Nations Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People was represented by a delegation consisting of Mr. Massamba Sarré (Senegal), Chairman of the Committee; Mr. Victor J. Gauci (Malta), Rapporteur of the Committee; Mr. Zain Azraai (Malaysia); Mr. Mohamed Lessir (Tunisia); Mr. Zehdi L. Terzi (Palestine Liberation Organization). Mr. Sarré was Chairman and Mr. Gauci Rapporteur of the Seminar.

Opening statements

3. The opening session of the Tenth United Nations Seminar on the Question of Palestine was addressed by His Excellency Mr. Gang Biao, Vice-Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress and Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee of the National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China, who had earlier received the representatives of the Committee and the Palestine Liberation Organization at a private meeting.
4. He stated that the purpose of the Seminar was to mobilize public opinion in the world, to support the just cause of the Palestinian people, and to explore ways and means for a just settlement of the Palestine question. Recognizing that this was an arduous task, he stressed that China remained prepared to work towards the achievement of this objective, and appealed to all peace-loving States and peoples to strive for positive results at an early date.
5. In tracing the course of events in the Middle East, he contrasted Israel's policy of aggression and expansion with the heroic resistance of the Palestinian people and the efforts made by the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Arab States to seek a just and reasonable solution to the question of Palestine.
6. The Fez Peace Plan, adopted in September 1982, had been welcomed and supported by the international community. The Palestine Liberation Organization and the Arab countries were sincere in their efforts to seek peace in the Middle East. Unfortunately, Israel and its supporters have so far refused to recognize the national rights of the Palestinian people; this constituted the basic obstacle to peace in the Middle East.
7. The Chinese Government firmly supported the just struggle of the Palestinians and other Arab people and the basic principles affirmed by the relevant United Nations resolutions. Any effort which was conducive to the restoration of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and the recovery of the occupied Arab territories and was in conformity with an equitable solution to the Middle East question, would receive the backing of the Chinese Government and its people.

8. At the same opening session, Mr. Massamba Sarré, Chairman of the Committee, gave a brief account of the Committee's work to date. He stressed the particular importance that the Committee attached to the seminars in the various regions. He indicated the Committee's conviction that objective information on the question of Palestine would help to ensure more comprehensive coverage of developments in the region, and promote public support in favour of an equitable and peaceful solution. Once all the facts surrounding the question of Palestine were known, the resultant better understanding of the question would help to convince even those who so far have been somewhat indifferent to the just cause of the Palestinian people.

9. The widely attended International Conference on the Question of Palestine held in 1983 in Geneva had formulated a number of basic principles necessary for a solution, including the right of all States in the region to existence within secure and recognized boundaries and justice and security for all the people, including a future Palestinian State. That Conference had also recommended the convening of an International Peace Conference on the Middle East, under the auspices of the United Nations, with the participation on an equal footing of all the parties to the Arab-Israeli conflict, including the Palestine Liberation Organization - as the representative of the people directly concerned - together with the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

10. Strongly supported by the majority of the Member States of the United Nations, the Committee fully endorsed the importance of such a peace conference and had decided that this should be the main focus of its work programme in 1985. It had therefore decided that in all the seminars and symposia that it organized this year, there would be at least one panel which would deal exclusively with the question of the peace conference.

11. The Committee placed special emphasis on the development of public opinion on the question of Palestine. The views of several influential policy-makers who participated in the Seminar on the role of Asian public opinion, and wide dissemination of their views would assist the Committee and the entire membership of the United Nations in assessing what still needed to be done in this field.

12. Mr. Shafiq Al-Hout, member of the Palestine National Council and head of the delegation of the Palestine Liberation Organization, conveyed a message from Mr. Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization and Commander-in-Chief of the Forces of the Palestine Revolution.

13. In his message, Chairman Arafat stated that the Palestinian cause had entered an even more dangerous phase as a result of the intensification of Israel's aggressive policies, supported by successive United States Administrations. These policies had as their sole aim the expulsion of the Palestinian people from their lands and homes. It was a part of Israel's declared policy not to withdraw from the occupied territories, not to return Jerusalem to Palestinian sovereignty, not to permit the establishment of a Palestinian State and not to recognize the Palestine Liberation Organization.

14. The economic, financial and military aid provided by the United States to Israel's aggression hindered the observance of international law and denied the Palestinian people the exercise of its inalienable rights.

15. Despite these enormous challenges, the Palestinian people continued their heroic struggle and resistance to the hostile Israeli policies abetted by the United States. The hardships they endured would not impair their resolve to maintain their struggle which was gathering overwhelming support from all democratic and peace-loving forces.

16. The Palestine Liberation Organization had availed itself of every opportunity to search for peace, and continued its efforts to achieve a joint Arab political plan aimed at the attainment of a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the Middle East conflict.
17. Chairman Arafat expressed his profound gratitude for the valuable efforts of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, which had contributed to the clarification of the facts surrounding the cause of the Palestinian people. He also expressed his gratitude to Mr. Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, Secretary-General of the United Nations, and to all those who had worked for justice for the Palestinian people.
18. In conclusion, he reiterated the Palestine National Council's gratitude to the People's Republic of China, its leadership, its Party and its people, who were the very first nation to extend diplomatic recognition to the PLO and have unfailingly extended full support to the Palestinian cause.
19. At the same meeting, a statement was made by Mr. Abdul G. Koroma, Chairman of the United Nations Special Committee with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples. He opined that the decision of the General Assembly to hold this Seminar was not only a measure of the international community's deep concern for the Palestinian people, but also a reflection of its recognition that a just solution of the Palestinian problem was of overriding importance in the search for a lasting settlement of the Middle East question. In this decision, the General Assembly thus had reaffirmed its commitment to the Palestinian people for the realization of their inalienable rights, and sought to enlighten and mobilize international public opinion towards the attainment of the objectives of the United Nations on the question of Palestine.
20. The Special Committee attaches particular significance to the mobilization of international opinion towards the attainment of self-determination for all people under alien and colonial domination. The General Assembly had repeatedly called for the full and speedy exercise by the Palestinian people of their right to self-determination without external interference and to national independence and sovereignty as well as their right to return to their homes and property from which they have been displaced and uprooted.
21. It was all the more important therefore for the international community to rededicate itself to the promotion of a genuine and lasting settlement of the Middle East conflict. Concerted action was necessary to persuade the supporters of Israel to induce it to respond to relevant United Nations resolutions and to the will of the international community on the question of Palestine. Recent events in the Middle East underline the heavy responsibility incumbent upon the international community to do everything in its power to preserve peace and security in the region.
22. Mr. Nihat Akyol, speaking on behalf of the United Nations Council for Namibia, stated that the question of Palestine could be compared to the problem of Namibia which had been controlled by South Africa in defiance of General Assembly and Security Council resolutions. In both instances, great suffering had been caused to many innocent people. The Palestinian people continued to be denied the fundamental and inalienable rights to live in liberty, peace and dignity in their own country. The international community could not remain indifferent while Israel persisted in its acts of aggression against the Palestinian people and annexed the territories of its neighbouring States.

23. The United Nations Council for Namibia reaffirmed its adherence to the resolutions of the General Assembly relating to the rights of the Palestinian people. The Council for Namibia was also convinced that the persistent denial by Israel of the right of the Palestinian people to return to their homeland was in violation of the fundamental principles of the United Nations Charter as well as United Nations resolutions on the question of the rights of people under colonial domination.

24. The Council for Namibia affirmed its solidarity with the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and condemned Israeli policies and plans aimed at driving the Palestinian people from its homeland.

25. The twin questions of Palestine and of Namibia haunted the conscience of the international community. Both questions had been on the agenda of the General Assembly of the United Nations for many years, and a solution had not yet been found.

26. This Seminar was an occasion to reaffirm the Council's solemn commitment and determination to be associated with the defence of a noble cause. South Africa and Israel should be compelled to conform to universally accepted norms and should be condemned for their defiance of world opinion.

27. Mr. Nabil Maarouf, Director of Holy Jerusalem and Palestine Department of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, speaking on behalf of Mr. Sayed Sharifuddin Pirzada, Secretary-General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, stated that the organization had made it a point to participate in the series of regional seminars on the question of a Palestine organized by the United Nations, since these seminars were a valuable contribution towards making the cause of the Palestinian people better known to the world public.

28. The Organization of the Islamic Conference remained fully committed to all proposals and solutions that would ensure for the Palestinian people its inalienable historical rights, including its right to return, its right to self-determination and its right to establish its own independent State on its national soil with its capital of Al-Quds Al Sharif, and under the leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organization, its sole legitimate representative.

29. In spite of world public opinion, the Palestinian people had not regained its rights. Israel's intransigence was due to continued political, economic and military support by the United States of America. It was this support that enabled Israel to violate international law and to defy world public opinion.

30. The Palestine Liberation Organization had displayed its desire for peace by accepting the Fez Peace Plan and publicly expressed support for the proposed Middle East Peace Conference which had however been rejected by Israel, whose negative attitude was encouraged by the United States. Ways and means should be found by which effective pressure could be brought to bear upon the United States Administration to recognize the rights of the Palestinian people. All States that supported the Palestinian people should join in this effort. It was very important that the European Community should be persuaded to exert its influence on the United States.

31. At the second meeting, Mr. Hans Teller, representative of UNESCO in China, outlined the assistance given to the Palestinian people by UNESCO, in accordance with resolutions adopted by its General Conference. UNESCO had renewed its

agreement with the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East for the period 1984-1985 whereby UNESCO assumed technical responsibilities for the educational programme for Palestinian refugees. UNESCO also continued its efforts to maintain the functioning of the cultural and educational institutions in the occupied Arab territories, including their projects concerning the Palestine Open University on which a study had already been approved.

32. With regard to the preservation of cultural properties in the Holy City of Jerusalem, the Director-General of UNESCO had entrusted a personal representative to visit Jerusalem on many occasions for the protection of the cultural heritage of the Holy City.

33. Some 50 fellowships had been granted to Palestinian students and a consultant had been hired to advise the Palestine Literacy Council. A special account had been opened to finance scholarships for Palestinian students and contributions had already been received from some Arab States. Another special account had been opened for assistance to the Palestine Liberation Organization with the financial contributions from the Government of Iraq.

34. At the 7th meeting, Ms. Savitri Kunadi, speaking on behalf of the Special Committee against Apartheid, reaffirmed the Special Committee's support for the General Assembly resolutions relating to the question of Palestine and stressed its solidarity with the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People in the task of securing the practical attainment of those rights. The Special Committee against Apartheid attached great significance to the mobilization of international public opinion for the attainment and realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and viewed the early convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East as a contribution to the just solution of the Middle East problem, the core of which is the question of Palestine.

35. On the occasion of the commemoration of the thirtieth anniversary of the Asian-African Conference in Bandung, Indonesia, in April 1955, the Seminar decided at its 3rd meeting on 23 April 1985, to send a message to His Excellency Dr. Mochtar Kusumaatmadja, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Indonesia extending felicitations, and recalled that the Bandung Declaration had affirmed its full support for the cause of the Palestinian people.

36. The delegation of the Committee on Palestinian rights was officially received by His Excellency Mr. Zhao Ziyang, the Prime Minister of China, on Thursday, 25 April 1985.

37. The closing session on Friday, 26 April 1985, was attended by His Excellency Mr. Qian Qichen, Deputy Foreign Minister of China. The meeting was addressed by the Deputy Foreign Minister, the Chairman of the Seminar and Mr. Shafiq al-Hout, the representative of Chairman Arafat of the Palestine Liberation Organization.

United Nations Asian Regional Non-Governmental Organizations
Symposium on the Question of Palestine

(New Delhi, 1-3 May 1985)

Declaration

1. We, the group of non-governmental organizations participating in the United Nations Asian Regional NGO Symposium on the Question of Palestine, wish to thank the United Nations Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for convening this meeting. We are indeed honoured by the presence of the Chairman, Members and Observers of the distinguished United Nations body.
2. We also wish to thank the Chief of the Division for Palestinian Rights, the NGO liaison officer, the staff of the Division, the Department of Conference Services including the services of the interpreters for their valuable assistance in the preparation and execution of this Symposium. We believe this meeting marks a pivotal point in the constructive interaction between the United Nations and the Asian NGO community concerned with the question of Palestine and we look forward to increasing levels of understanding, appreciation and co-operation.
3. Special thanks are extended to the Government of India for hosting this Symposium and for the generosity and co-operation extended to the participants. We were honoured by the presence and statement of His Excellency, Mr. Khurshid Alam Khan, Minister of State for External Affairs, at the official opening of the Symposium. We recognize and genuinely appreciate the long-standing and unfailing support that the Government of India has given to the just cause of the Palestinian people.
4. We also wish to sincerely voice our appreciation to the distinguished experts who spoke here and offered valuable historical, political as well as practical insights into the question of Palestine and the potential central role to be played by NGOs. The practical suggestions assisted us in formulating future plans for effective collaboration in Asia and the Pacific and in linking our efforts to a broader, global network.
5. We resolutely reaffirm the international consensus that the Palestine Liberation Organization is the sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. We affirm the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination without external interference, to return, and to the creation of an Independent Palestinian State on its own national territory under the leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organization, in conformity with relevant United Nations resolutions.
6. We further strongly support the convening of the United Nations-sponsored International Conference on Peace in the Middle East as specified in United Nations resolution 38/58 C. The Palestine Liberation Organization strongly supported this resolution but it was opposed by both Israel and the United States of America. As the positions of these two Governments constitute a serious obstacle to world peace, we urge that more pressure be exerted on both States to join in the global consensus on the issue. We urge those undecided States, especially members of the

Security Council, to lend their support to this resolution. In this manner, we also uniformly support the declaration on this issue adopted by the International NGO Meeting on the Question of Palestine held in August 1984 in Geneva.

7. We express our grave concern over the protracted Arab-Israeli conflict. We recognize that the basic cause of that conflict is the denial by Israel and its supporters of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. In particular, we regret the record of successive Administration of the United States of America which have supported Israeli State terrorism.

8. The convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, as endorsed by General Assembly resolution 38/58 C, offers the only realistic and practical way towards a solution to the problem of Palestine and the establishment of a Palestinian State.

9. We further reaffirm our belief that only a full and comprehensive solution involving the Palestine Liberation Organization and all concerned countries of the region and with the participation of the United States of America and the USSR can create the basis for a just and lasting peace. We reject partial and piecemeal agreements as such agreements have proved to be counterproductive and not conducive to a comprehensive peaceful solution and have totally ignored the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

10. This Symposium further asserts the close connection between the struggle of the Palestinian people and every struggle in each part of the world of peoples fighting for their independence, defending their freedom and building their life on the basis of their sovereignty. The cause of the Palestinian people is interconnected with the struggle of all peoples for world peace and against colonialism.

11. This Symposium of the NGOs of Asia and the Pacific positively points to the growing support in the United Nations for Palestinians and the Palestine Liberation Organization. It stresses the very significant role played by the Movement of the Non-Aligned Countries representing over two thirds of the world's Governments in awakening global public opinion to the urgent need to resolve this issue and in exposing the parts played by the Governments of the United States of America and Israel.

12. We further endorse the global signature campaign to increase popular support for the proposed international peace conference on the Middle East and will endeavour to co-ordinate our efforts with the Interim Co-ordinating Committee for NGOs throughout Asia and the Pacific, culminating in the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People on 29 November 1985.

13. We concur that influencing world public opinion is a key factor in the just resolution of the question of Palestine. As NGOs, we have access to local populations, "the grass roots", in many societies and are determined to work to increase their understanding of the question of Palestine and to effectively mobilize their potential political, social and spiritual power.

14. Beyond these principles, we firmly believe that non-governmental organizations are a unique asset in securing the rights of the Palestinian people, for we can present the issue in its vital human dimension to individuals and other non-governmental organizations.

15. We are aware of the forces opposed to our efforts. But the inherent justice of our cause and the sound construction of a genuine regional and global NGO network will be mutually reinforcing and demonstrably advance our endeavours.

16. We have reviewed and considered the initial activities of the Interim Co-ordinating Committee for NGOs (ICC) established at the International Meeting on the Question of Palestine, convened at Geneva in August 1984 and regard it as a suitable transitional mechanism for the initial co-ordination of the world-wide NGO effort on the question of Palestine. We look favourably upon its transformation from an "interim" to an "international" Co-ordinating Committee after the scheduled consideration of its future structure and composition at the International Meeting on the Question of Palestine to be convened from 9-12 September 1985 in Geneva.

17. We strongly urge the United Nations through the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People to assist the ICC in every possible way in its worthwhile efforts to build a viable, global network of NGOs active on the question of Palestine. This assistance should include further serious efforts to secure an NGO liaison in Geneva in addition to the current New York-based liaison activities and to aid in the establishment of a properly resourced ICC secretariat. The central co-ordination of all common NGO activities on this issue is a necessary condition for influencing domestic and global public opinion.

18. We Asian NGOs present here for this Symposium see ourselves as a nucleus of a broader, regional effort. We must reach out, identify and involve many other NGO committees to a just resolution of the question of Palestine. To accomplish these worthy goals, we are requesting United Nations assistance, including financial help, to establish an Asian Regional Interim Co-ordinating Committee of NGOs to serve as a initial focus for our regional efforts. We visualize such a Co-ordinating Committee establishing close links with the work of ICC and its successor.

19. The Asian and Pacific Region is an area of increasing geopolitical importance. As a result, forces opposed to the Palestinian cause are attempting to neutralize the traditional commitment of the peoples of this region to the Palestinian cause. Such attempts, notably by the State of Israel and its alter ego, the World Zionist Organization, and as well as by imperialism, must be resisted as they constitute impediments to achieving a just, comprehensive and enduring resolution of the question of Palestine. We distinguish between Judaism as a religion and political zionism as manifested by Israel, an unjust, undemocratic, racist, and dangerous ideology. In combating such opposition, Asia and Pacific NGOs could be expected to play a key role as moulders of public opinion in the region.

20. To ensure proper representation of this region at the forthcoming International Meeting on the Question of Palestine, we strongly urge the United Nations through the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, to fund the participation of a representative number of NGO delegates from the region. To be effective such aid should include transportation to Geneva and accommodation during the conference.

21. In co-operation with the stated objectives of the ICC, we Asian NGOs call for the compilation of a regional data base of information on NGOs in Asia and the Pacific, active on the issue as a potent addition to global networking efforts. NGOs in Melbourne, Australia, have offered to commence the effort and to assist in the production of regional materials.

22. We are determined to cultivate an expanding regional NGO constituency linked to a world-wide NGO network that will emerge as a significant complementary force in the campaign for the just resolution of the question of Palestine. We firmly believe that we can most effectively express our solidarity with the Palestinian people in this way. We call upon the United Nations, through the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, to offer every assistance including financial support, to achieve these ends.

23. We look with great interest to the forthcoming United Nations-sponsored World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women in Nairobi, Kenya, as a prime opportunity to call attention to the question of Palestine with special focus on the plight of Palestinian women under occupation. We call upon the Committee to assist us in further strengthening the network of women working for a just, comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East.

24. We urge the election of the Asian Regional Interim Co-ordinating Committee to be composed of representatives of organizations present at this Symposium.

25. We applaud the convening of this Regional Symposium and strongly request the United Nations, through the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, to plan a follow-up symposium in Asia and Pacific as soon as possible but hopefully within the coming year.

ANNEX VI

Report of the Eleventh United Nations Seminar on the Question of Palestine

(Georgetown, 17-20 June 1985)

1. The Eleventh United Nations Seminar on the Question of Palestine was held at the Pegasus Hotel, Georgetown, Guyana, from 17 to 20 June 1985 in accordance with the terms of General Assembly resolution 38/58 B. Five meetings were held at which eight panelists presented papers on different aspects of the question of Palestine.

2. The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People was represented by Mr. Massamba Sarré (Senegal), Chairman, Mr. Alberto Velazco-San José (Cuba), Mr. David Karran (Guyana), Mr. Miklós Endreffy (Hungary) and Mr. Zehdi L. Terzi (Palestine Liberation Organization). Mr. Massamba Sarré was Chairman and Mr. David Karran Rapporteur of the Seminar.

Opening statements

3. The Seminar was opened by H.E. Mr. Rashleigh Jackson, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Guyana and was attended by many distinguished personages, including H.E. Mr. Ptolemy Reid, Deputy Leader of the People's National Congress, Vice-Presidents and cabinet ministers as well as heads of diplomatic missions.

4. Mr. Jackson, in his opening remarks, warmly congratulated Ambassador Massamba Sarré of Senegal, Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, and stated that the Committee had played a valuable supportive role in the Palestinian struggle by drawing up a structured programme of action for the achievement of the objectives which had inspired its creation. The Seminar, which was part of that programme of action, had provided an opportunity for the Latin American region to have attention focused on the Committee's perspectives and thereby assist in the overall co-ordination of the strategies of the supporters of the Palestinian cause in all regions of the world.

5. In a sense, the Seminar was not restricted to the question of Palestine alone, because a number of principles were at stake which were of a universal nature and which were cardinal to the national policies of many States, including Guyana. Amongst them were the right of peoples to self-determination and independence, respect for independence, sovereignty and non-acquisition of territory by force.

6. The situation of the Palestinian people was one of the more sordid tragedies of recorded history. Like many people of Africa and Asia, the Palestinians were in the diaspora and had suffered the indignities of living in refugee camps and of being the objects of global compassion. However, dispersion and degradation, occupation and repression had served only to reinforce the determination of the Palestinian people to intensify their struggle under the leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organization. Guyana congratulated the Palestine Liberation Organization for the effectiveness of its policies and its activities in the political and diplomatic fronts which had earned the Palestine Liberation Organization international respect and support.

7. The question of Palestine was the crux of the Middle East situation and lasting peace in the region would remain elusive until the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people were fully respected. The struggle of the Palestinian people was also an integral part of the world-wide struggle against foreign domination. The Government and people of Guyana had always been firm in their support for the rights of the Palestinian people. Guyana's participation in the work of the Committee was testimony of its commitment to that cause. The Committee could count on Guyana's abiding support.
8. Much needed to be done. Such issues had suffered much from media neglect or deliberate distortion and disinformation. The world's people needed to be educated about the question of Palestine. At the same time, every effort should be made to convene an International Peace Conference on the Middle East, a proposal which had great merit and enjoyed widespread international support. Israel should be made to realize that its best interests would be served by participating in such a Conference.
9. Mr. Massamba Sarré, welcoming participants, recalled that His Excellency the Foreign Minister had, as the distinguished representative of Guyana to the United Nations, been one of the earliest members of the Committee and participated actively in its work at a time when the Committee was charting its course. Guyana had always been an active member of the Committee and the fact that it had so kindly provided the venue for the Seminar as well as the presence of His Excellency the Foreign Minister and other distinguished guests at the opening were a reflection of the importance that Guyana attached to the question of Palestine and its commitment to finding a just and lasting solution to the problem.
10. The Committee laid great stress on the value of world public opinion on the Palestine question and was convinced that a knowledge of all the facts of the case would lead to a better understanding of the issues and promote a lasting solution. The Seminar was intended to alert public opinion in the Latin American and Caribbean region to the various aspects to the question of Palestine since public opinion could make a valuable contribution towards making the voice of reason heard in the formation of policies. In the course of the Seminar, the views of several influential policy-makers would be heard on the role of Latin American and Caribbean public opinion. Their views and the discussions that would take place would be of the greatest value in assessing what still needed to be done in that field.
11. The Committee also, along with a majority of States, fully endorsed the convening of an International Peace Conference on the Middle East as a valuable step forward in the search for peace in the region. Consequently, it had made it the focus of its work in 1985. It was for that reason that one of the panels of the Seminar was devoted exclusively to the International Peace Conference. It was the Committee's hope that the views expressed at the Seminar would help to promote the convening of such an important Conference.
12. At the opening meeting, the Seminar also heard a message from Mr. Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization, conveyed by Mr. Zehdi L. Terzi, Permanent Observer of the Palestine Liberation Organization to the United Nations. In his message Mr. Arafat expressed his deep gratitude for the tremendous efforts being made to promote the legitimate struggle of the Palestinian people and in defence of their inalienable rights.

13. The Palestinian cause was presently witnessing a dangerous phase since Israel was intensifying its repression of the Palestinian people both inside and outside the occupied territories. Those acts were perpetrated with the sole aim of expelling and forcibly deporting the Palestinian people from their land and homes. At the same time, the United States Administration was intensifying its hostile policies against the Palestinian people and increasing its support of Israel militarily and financially. In addition, it denied the Palestinian people their inalienable rights. In spite of such enormous challenges, the Palestinian people continued their struggle and resistance to the hostile policies of Israel and the United States.

14. The Palestine Liberation Organization had availed itself of every opportunity in the search for peace in the firm belief that justice, peace and stability in the area as well as international peace and security should be achieved. It would continue its efforts to achieve a joint Arab political plan aimed at the attainment of a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the Middle East conflict.

15. Chairman Arafat expressed his gratitude to the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and its Chairman, Mr. Massamba Sarré, and to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Javier Pérez de Cuéllar. In conclusion, he thanked the people and Government of Guyana for hosting the Seminar and for Guyana's consistent and militant support.

16. Mr. Gajanan Wakankar, High Commissioner of India to Guyana, speaking on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, stated that the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, had always felt a particular bond of kinship with the Palestinian people. The issue of Palestine had been in the forefront of the deliberations and activities of the Movement from the time of the first Non-Aligned Summit in 1961. The Non-Aligned countries had been particularly active in mobilizing international support in favour of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and against Israel's action in the occupied territories.

17. The Non-Aligned Summit held at New Delhi, in March 1983 had affirmed that a just and durable peace in the Middle East could not be established without a just solution of the problem of Palestine on the basis of the attainment and exercise in Palestine of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.

18. The Meeting of Ministers and Heads of Delegation of the Non-Aligned Countries to the thirty-ninth session of the United Nations General Assembly had, in October 1984, stressed the necessity for the early convening of the International Peace Conference in the Middle East. More recently, the Committee of Eight at the Level of Ministers had, on 20 April 1985, endorsed the proposal for the convening of the Conference. They had also decided to continue actively their collective and individual efforts to mobilize all means available with a view to realizing implementation of United Nations General Assembly resolutions and to ensure the convening of the Peace Conference.

19. The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People had made a significant contribution in its search for a just solution to the question of Palestine. The efforts of the Committee towards an early convening of the Peace Conference and to mobilize public support for the Palestinian cause had been untiring.

20. India had consistently supported the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and that was one of the hallmarks of India's foreign policy. India's support was rooted in tradition and history and was matched by concrete action.

21. Mr. Miklós Endreffy, speaking on behalf of the Special Committee against Apartheid, stated that the international community had recently witnessed developments culminating in further suffering for the people of Palestine. Such events reaffirmed the view of peace-loving peoples all over the world that it was impossible to ensure a comprehensive settlement of the Middle East conflict without resolving its core - the question of Palestine.

22. That could not be achieved while the Israeli occupation of Palestinian and other Arab territories continued. The Government of Israel persisted in its attempts to subdue the desire of the Palestinian people to free themselves. It carried out policies with cruelty and without respect for the human rights of the Palestinian people. However, in spite of Israel's denial of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and its policy of oppression and intimidation in the occupied territories, the desire of the Palestinian people for freedom could not be conquered.

23. Each year, the Special Committee against Apartheid submitted a special report to the General Assembly and the Security Council on recent developments concerning relations between Israel and South Africa. That report pointed out very clearly the seriousness of the alliance between those two régimes. Their collaboration constituted an alliance detrimental to the interests of the African and Arab peoples.

24. The Special Committee, in co-operation with the League of Arab States had convened in Tunis in August 1984, a Conference of Arab Solidarity with the Struggle for Liberation in Southern Africa. That Conference had considered the threat facing the Arab and the African peoples as a result of the alliance between Israel and South Africa and adopted several pertinent resolutions.

25. Mr. Engin Ansay, Deputy Permanent Observer of the Organization of the Islamic Conference to the United Nations, in an address to the Seminar, on behalf of H.E. Mr. Syed Sharifuddin Pirzada, Secretary-General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, stated that the organization considered the cause of Palestine and Al-Quds al-Sharif the foremost cause of the Muslim Ummah because of its justness and because of the existence of Islamic holy shrines under occupation. Accordingly, the member States of the Organization of the Islamic Conference had given their unreserved support to the cause of the Palestinian people.

26. In spite of Israel's aggressive policies, the Arab States had made clear their serious desire to bring about a lasting, comprehensive and just peace in the Middle East. For its part, the Palestine Liberation Organization had demonstrated total flexibility with regard to the peace process. The United States and Israel, however, had rejected every proposal and initiative and would no doubt reject any proposal that recognized the Palestinians' right to self-determination and statehood. The question of Palestine was first and foremost a problem of colonialism; secondly it was an issue brought about by the aggressiveness of one entity at the expense of another; thirdly it was an issue based on the dangerous doctrine of aggression against a neighbouring country.

27. The Organization of the Islamic Conference believed that as long as the question of Palestine was not settled on the basis of United Nations approved resolutions, there would be no peace or stability in the Middle East and world peace would continue to be threatened.

28. In defiance of all United Nations resolutions, Israel had announced in 1980, the annexation of Al-Quds and almost every day committed flagrant sacrilegious acts against Islam. Moreover, Israel's policy of settlements in the occupied Arab territories created one of the greatest threats to peace in the region. Its settlements policy was intended to pre-empt any achievement by the Palestinian people towards the affirmation of their inalienable rights.

29. The Organization of the Islamic Conference maintained that peace was essential to the Middle East but the minimum condition for its realization was the recognition of the Palestinian people's right to their own territory and homeland. Hence, the convening of an International Peace Conference on the Middle East constituted the ideal solution since it ensured the participation of all parties concerned.

30. At the 4th meeting, H.E. Mr. Alberto Velazco-San José, speaking on behalf of the United Nations Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, stated that the tenets that governed the work of the Special Committee - the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples - proclaimed that the subjection of peoples to alien subjugation, domination and exploitation constituted a denial of fundamental human rights, was contrary to the Charter and was an impediment to the promotion of world peace and co-operation.

31. Within that context, the Special Committee viewed with deep concern the plight of the people of Palestine who had been denied their fundamental and inalienable right to determine their destiny and had been subjected to cruel, repressive measures at the hands of their oppressor.

32. Although the Palestinian question continued to be one of the most complex, difficult and dangerous issues facing the United Nations, that should not discourage the international community in its search for a just solution to the problem. On the contrary, it should reinforce with a grave sense of urgency, the international community's commitment to the goal as set forth in a number of resolutions of the United Nations. It became all the more important therefore that the international community should firmly rededicate itself to the promotion of a genuine and lasting settlement of the Middle East conflict. The attainment of that objective would continue to be elusive unless the core of the Middle East conflict, namely the Palestine question, was resolved in its totality. Concerted action was long overdue to persuade the supporters of Israel to compel it to respond to relevant United Nations resolutions and to the will of the international community on the question of Palestine.

33. He acknowledged with appreciation the very important work carried out by the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, under the outstanding and dedicated leadership of Ambassador Massamba Sarré of Senegal. It was his confident hope that the holding of the present Seminar would take everyone a step closer to the fulfilment by the United Nations of its obligations to the Palestinian people.

34. The closing meeting on 20 June 1985, was attended by Mr. Rudy Collins, Head of Department II in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Guyana. The meeting was addressed by Mr. Rudy Collins and the Chairman of the Seminar.

Panel discussion

35. Three panels were established at the Seminar. These, and the panelists who presented papers on these aspects of the question, were as follows:

- (a) The role of the Palestine Liberation Organization: Prof. Juan Abugattás (Peru); Mr. Chas Mijnaals (Suriname);
- (b) The question of Palestine and Latin American public opinion: Prof. César Arias Quincot (Peru); Prof. T. O. Gittens (Guyana); Dr. Arturo Muñoz Ledo (Mexico);
- (c) The International Peace Conference on the Middle East, the need for such a conference; efforts and prospects to promote a successful outcome and benefits thereof: Mr. Joshua Chowritmootoo (Guyana); Mr. Ernesto Vera Méndez (Cuba); Mr. José Luis Villavicencio (Nicaragua).

36. It was decided that in accordance with established practice, the report of the Seminar would reflect only the main points that emerged during the discussions and that the full texts of the papers presented would be published in due course.

The role of the Palestine Liberation Organization

37. The first discussion panel in the Seminar dealt with the role of the Palestine Liberation Organization.

38. It was stated that the Palestine Liberation Organization had served the purpose of reconstructing Palestinian social existence. It was experiencing difficulty in this task because of the spiritual and socio-political complexities of the Middle East region.

39. There was no basis to the claim that the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Palestinian people were two distinct entities and that therefore it would be possible to deal with the Palestinian people without dealing with the Palestine Liberation Organization. The development of the Palestine Liberation Organization was nothing but the result of the development of the social, economic and political institutions of the Palestinian people and, particularly, their social and political conscience.

40. Moreover, the expulsion of the Palestinian people from their homeland and their fragmentation into several communities of refugees living in several Arab countries were the consequence of both the Zionist denial of the existence of the Palestinian people and of British policies in mandated Palestine. Consequently, the Palestinian people had to struggle first and foremost not only to have their existence recognized but their existence as a people as well.

41. This struggle had started mainly in the refugee camps, where, unfortunately, traditional social solidarity had been broken and, consequently, new types of social relations based on social co-operation and mutual aid were the basis of the Palestine Liberation Organization's social and economic institutions as well as its educational and cultural efforts.

42. Reconstruction of social life had started with the displaced Palestinians and later extended to those living under occupation resulting in an open and democratic process which was now a basic character of all the institutions that constituted the Palestine Liberation Organization. In order to be effective, however, the

Palestine Liberation Organization had had to propose an alternate concept of "nationalism" in order to avoid both the dangers of sectarianism and of racism. The alternative proposed was the notion of the secular and non-sectarian State, a formula by which the Palestine Liberation Organization had been able to avoid the problems which divide and weaken States in the Middle East. It had placed itself in a position of antagonism, both in relation to Israel and zionism as well as to United States interests. It had also become a kind of vanguard of the anti-imperialist struggle in the Arab world. Moreover, its structure had proved that it was capable not only of withstanding political pressure, but also, and most importantly, military aggression.

43. Furthermore, by insisting on reminding the Arab States of their responsibility to continue to help in the task of liberating Palestine and by insisting that they should use their resources for the promotion of their common interests, the Palestine Liberation Organization had placed them in a position in which they were opposed to a power that some of them considered their ally. The Arab States had reaffirmed their support to the Palestine Liberation Organization at the summit meeting held in Fez in 1982, when they adopted a series of principles, including the reaffirmation of the recognition of the Palestine Liberation Organization as the sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.

Latin American public opinion and the question of Palestine

44. During the discussion on the question of Latin American public opinion and the question of Palestine it was stated that the development of informed public opinion on any issue or set of issues was rarely an easy or automatic process. It was indisputably, however, a necessary task in the context of the question of Palestine where the rights of a people were being infringed.

45. It was also difficult to discuss Latin American public opinion in general as a region, as its tradition of full participation of its peoples in decision-making varied and at varying junctures of history was interrupted and sometimes seriously disrupted. There were a number of reasons for this, among them low literacy rates, limited media coverage and access to media source, and a tendency for public debate and expression to be restricted to the middle and upper classes.

46. All this was accentuated by the fact that the main sources of information were the Western news agencies whose reporting of issues was not necessarily impartial or disinterested. In fact, there seemed often to be a deliberate effort at misinformation or disinformation. Furthermore, the extent of coverage was often circumscribed by the importance of the issue to the regional or national public.

47. There had been little interest in the question of Palestine in the Latin American region until the mid-1970s when the aggravation of the situation in the Middle East resulted in more media coverage and, in turn, more interest in the issues, particularly, the question of Palestine. Despite the fact that events in the Middle East in the 1980s tended to eclipse the real issue, which is the plight of the Palestinian people, it was essential that the international community should always remember that the crucial issue remained the question of Palestine.

48. It was important that the public media should play a more responsive role in providing a more balanced reporting on the Middle East and, in particular, on the plight of the Palestinians as a dispossessed and harassed people. It was also essential that greater efforts be made to reach the public at large with information that is presently confined to limited sections of the people.

Institutions such as universities, colleges, research institutes, churches and other religious establishments as well as national and international non-governmental organizations have a crucial role to play in the formation of public opinion. These institutions should be urged to give wider coverage and more balanced treatment to the question of Palestine through special features and articles, through the organization of lectures and seminars and through every other possible means of playing an educative role in the formation of informed public opinion. Furthermore, elementary school textbooks should take a new approach to third world history which breaks with the colonialist pattern found in encyclopaedias and with religious texts which, within a biased value system, stated the existence of "chosen people" and "master races" as fact.

49. Symposia organized by the United Nations or other organizations were a pressing necessity for the Latin American non-governmental organizations. Through these means, the powerful Latin American churches, labour unions, women's groups and service clubs could be sensitized. Special consideration should also be given to wider observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, which has been established by United Nations General Assembly resolution 34/65 D to be 29 November each year, and the occasion should be taken to give maximum coverage to the question of Palestine. United Nations offices in the region should make greater efforts to disseminate information on the issue.

50. The suggestion was also made that the Palestine Liberation Organization should be given facilities to establish information centres throughout the Latin American and Caribbean region and that its representatives should be invited periodically to tour the region, and be given the opportunity to present their case since this would dramatize the extent of the suffering endured by the Palestinian people and prove to be of inestimable value in the formation of public opinion.

The International Peace Conference on the Middle East

51. The Seminar discussed in depth the question of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East. It was agreed that the international community needed peace now more than ever so that it could devote itself wholeheartedly to solving the present economic and developmental problems facing it and to halting the arms race to avoid the danger of another world conflagration which would have catastrophic effects on the human race. To achieve peace it was necessary to extinguish the hotbeds of tension that could reach dangerous proportions and bring mankind to the brink of war. The Middle East was undoubtedly one of the principal hotbeds of international tension today. Only by finding a just and lasting solution to that conflict could the international community move forward towards the elimination of the dangers of another holocaust.

52. An analysis of the ramifications of the Middle East conflict led to the conclusion that the only way to establish a just and lasting peace in the region was by convening a peace conference on the Middle East under the auspices of the United Nations and with the participation of all parties concerned, particularly the Palestine Liberation Organization, the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.

53. The question of Palestine is at the core of the Middle East problem and there could be no peace in the region until a just and lasting solution was found for this issue. Such a solution had to be founded on the recognition of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including the rights to self-determination and to a homeland in Palestine.

54. The International Conference on the Question of Palestine held at Geneva in August 1983 had recognized the essential linkage between the question of Palestine and peace in the Middle East and the call for the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East was motivated by a sense of urgency and concern that no just solution to the problem of Palestine had been achieved over the years. A solution to the question of Palestine had to focus on the wider issues to make up a comprehensive settlement which would meet the guidelines endorsed by the overwhelming majority of the international community.

55. The Geneva Declaration adopted by the International Conference on the Question of Palestine envisioned that the Peace Conference would be convened under the auspices of the United Nations. The United Nations, in addition to its sacred trust and responsibility to the Palestinian people, was eminently suited for providing an umbrella and a forum for negotiation and to facilitate the meeting of all the parties to the conflict. In spite of its shortcomings, the United Nations provided a forum where all parties could sit around the same table and express their views.

56. The Geneva Declaration had also called for the participation of all parties to the conflict, including the Palestine Liberation Organization, as well as the United States of America, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and other concerned States on an equal footing and would take as its guidelines the various proposals consistent with the principles of international law.

57. The guidelines adopted by acclamation by the Conference and endorsed by the United Nations General Assembly were:

(a) The attainment by the Palestinian people of its legitimate inalienable rights, including the right to return, the right to self-determination and the right to establish its own independent State in Palestine;

(b) The right of the Palestine Liberation Organization, the representative of the Palestinian people, to participate on an equal footing with other parties in all efforts, deliberations and conferences on the Middle East;

(c) The need to put an end to Israel's occupation of the Arab territories, in accordance with the principle of the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force and, consequently, the need to secure Israeli withdrawal from the territories occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem;

(d) The need to oppose and reject such Israeli policies and practices in the occupied territories, including Jerusalem, and any de facto situations created by Israel as are contrary to international law and relevant United Nations resolutions, particularly the establishment of settlements, as these policies and practices constitute major obstacles to the achievement of peace in the Middle East;

(e) The need to reaffirm as null and void all legislative and administrative measures and decisions taken by Israel, the occupying Power, which have altered or purported to alter the character and status of the Holy City of Jerusalem, including the appropriation of land and property situated thereon, and in particular the so-called "Basic Law" on Jerusalem and the proclamation of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel;

(f) The right of all States in the region to existence within secure and internationally recognized boundaries, with justice and security for all the people, the sine qua non of which is the recognition and attainment of the legitimate, inalienable rights of the Palestinian people as stated in subparagraph (a) above.

58. These guidelines were important and relevant for the focus on the central issues while fully acknowledging that the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people remained fundamental to any solution.

59. The Seminar regarded the fact that the majority of States in the international community as well as several major intergovernmental organizations had expressed their strong support for the holding of the Conference to be a significant factor and testimony to the vital importance of such a conference. It hoped that all those in support of the Conference, and this was the overwhelming majority of the international community, would unite to overcome the obstacles posed by the refusal of Israel and the United States of America to agree to participate in such a conference. It was the refusal of these two States alone that obstructed the progress desired by the international community.

60. The time was ripe to move forward in a peace process. Genuine peace was attainable through negotiations provided that all the parties to the problem participated actively and there existed the necessary political will. The proposal for the International Peace Conference provided such an opportunity and was the most viable mechanism to establish the process for ensuring a lasting peace in the Middle East.

61. The aims of the International Peace Conference should be to work out legally binding agreements which would combine in an organically interrelated fashion the various components of a settlement, ensuring the realization by the Palestinian people of their legitimate national rights, including that of self-determination, return to their homeland and the right to an independent State of their own and the establishment of peace between all States in the region. These elements could be combined with effective guarantees of compliance by the parties involved and the international community could perform its role as a guarantor for the agreement that emanated from the deliberations.

62. The Seminar conveyed to Chairman Arafat of the Palestine Liberation Organization its thanks for his message to the Seminar and expressed its support for the just cause of the Palestinian people. It also conveyed its strong support for the early convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East with the participation of the permanent members of the Security Council, as well as of the parties most directly involved in the conflict, particularly the Palestine Liberation Organization, the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, as a positive and constructive step in the search for a solution to the question of Palestine.

63. The Seminar also adopted by consensus a motion proposed by the panelists, which reads as follows:

"The Eleventh United Nations Seminar on the Question of Palestine, meeting in Georgetown, the Co-operative Republic of Guyana, from 17 to 20 June 1985, wishes to convey its profound thanks to the people and Government of Guyana for hosting the Seminar and for the excellent arrangements it made, which greatly contributed to the success of the Seminar. It also expresses its sincere thanks for the generous hospitality extended to the participants.

"The Seminar wishes to express its particular appreciation to His Excellency Mr. Rashleigh Jackson, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Guyana, for his personal concern and guidance.

"The Seminar also expresses its appreciation to the people and the Government of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana for their consistent support of the struggle of the Palestinian people under the leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organization, its sole legitimate representative, for the exercise of its inalienable rights in Palestine."

ANNEX VII

Report of the Twelfth United Nations Seminar on the Question of Palestine

(United Nations Headquarters, New York, 8-9 July 1985)

1. The Twelfth United Nations Seminar on the Question of Palestine, with its central theme "The inalienable rights of the Palestinian people", was held at United Nations Headquarters, New York, on 8 and 9 July 1985 in accordance with the terms of General Assembly resolution 38/58 B. Four meetings were held at which five panelists presented papers on different aspects of the question of Palestine.

2. Mr. Oscar Oramas-Oliva (Cuba), Vice-Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, was Chairman of the Seminar and Mr. Boris Tarasyuk (Ukrainian SSR) Rapporteur of the Seminar. In the absence of the Chairman, Mr. Farid Zarif (Afghanistan), Vice-Chairman of the Committee, acted as Chairman of the Seminar.

Opening statements

3. The opening session of the Seminar on 8 July 1985 was addressed by Mr. William B. Buffum, Under-Secretary-General for Political and General Assembly Affairs of the United Nations. In welcoming the participants on behalf of the Secretary-General, Mr. Buffum stated that the convening of the Seminar underscored the importance that the international community attached to solving the question of Palestine, which was at the very heart of the Middle East conflict. It was moreover a reflection of the realization that to permit a situation to remain critical to the point of endangering international peace and security had adverse effects not only on the States and peoples of the region but also on the entire international community.

4. The persistent efforts of the United Nations had over the years produced at least a consensus on the fundamental elements required for a comprehensive settlement of the Middle East problem. The call for an international peace conference on the Middle East and the continued efforts for its convening could not but be viewed as a recognition of the fact that a comprehensive settlement would have to be reached through a process of negotiations with the participation of the parties concerned under the auspices of the United Nations. Any solution would have to take into consideration the interests and concerns of all States and peoples in the region, including those of the Palestinian people.

5. Mr. Oscar Oramas-Oliva, welcoming the participants, recalled the importance the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People attached to the question of Palestine and its commitment to finding a solution to the problem. He gave a brief account of the Committee's work and highlighted the significance of ensuring that all facts surrounding the question of Palestine reached the public so that a proper understanding of the issues could be achieved.

6. The Committee also, along with the majority of States, fully endorsed the convening of an international peace conference on the Middle East as a valuable step forward in the search for peace, security and stability in the region. Consequently, it had made this the focus of its work in 1985. It was for this

reason that one of the panels of the Seminar was devoted exclusively to the International Peace Conference. It was the Committee's hope that the views expressed at the Seminar would help to promote the convening of such an important conference.

7. Mr. Zehdi L. Terzi, Permanent Observer of the Palestine Liberation Organization to the United Nations, conveyed a message from Mr. Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization and Commander-in-Chief of the Forces of the Palestine Revolution. In his message, Chairman Arafat thanked the participants in the Seminar for their continued efforts in defence of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.

8. Israel's aggressive policies, supported by successive American Administrations, had resulted in the Palestinian cause entering a dangerous phase. However, in spite of enormous challenges, the Palestinians continued their struggle and resistance. The ordeals and hardships they had to undergo did not impair their resolve to continue this struggle, which met with the support of the peoples of the world.

9. The Palestine Liberation Organization had availed itself of every opportunity in the search for peace and would continue its efforts to achieve a joint Arab political plan which aimed to contribute to the attainment of a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the Middle East conflict.

10. It was significant that the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People was organizing two distinct activities - the Seminar and a symposium. The message carried by the non-governmental organizations (NGOs) of Canada and the United States of America would focus on the negative attitude of those two States to the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, with the hope that it would result in a positive response in those States.

11. Chairman Arafat extended to the representatives of NGOs his great appreciation for their unrelenting efforts to mobilize public opinion in support of the peace process as particularly manifested in their signature campaign launched internationally on 29 November 1984.

12. The opening session was also addressed by Mr. Natarajan Krishnan on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement; Mr. Jonathan Mataa Sibitwa Lichilana on behalf of the United Nations Council for Namibia; Mr. Gennady Oudovenko on behalf of the United Nations Special Committee against Apartheid; Mr. Ahmad Farouk Arnouss on behalf of the United Nations Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples; Dr. Clovis Maksoud on behalf of the League of Arab States; Mr. Mamoudou Kane on behalf of the Organization of African Unity and Mr. Youssouf Sylla on behalf of the Organization of the Islamic Conference. At the 4th meeting, the Seminar was addressed by Mr. Ben Mokwena on behalf of the African National Congress of South Africa.

13. Two panels were established at the Seminar. These, and the panelists who presented papers on these aspects on the question of Palestine, were as follows:

(a) The role of the Palestine Liberation Organization;
Prof. Ibrahim Abu-Lughod (Palestinian);

(b) The International Peace Conference on the Middle East, the need for such a conference; efforts and prospects to promote a successful outcome and benefits thereof; Prof. Naseer Aruri, Mr. Victor J. Gauci, Prof. W. Thomas Mallison, Dr. Igor Petrovich Belyaev.

14. In view of the well researched and in-depth analysis contained in the papers presented at the Seminar and in accordance with established practice, the papers will be published in full, together with the report of the Seminar, as a contribution to a wider understanding of the question of Palestine. The report of the Seminar should reflect only the main points that emerged during the discussions.

The role of the Palestine Liberation Organization

15. The Seminar heard an analysis of the role of the Palestine Liberation Organization. It was noted that the Palestinians today neither enjoyed nor exercised political rights as Palestinians anywhere in the world. Nevertheless, their determination, despite many adversities, to normalize their political status was reflected in their struggle to retrieve their national rights, including their right to independence and sovereignty in Palestine, to recovery of their national identity and representation by their own chosen representatives, namely, the Palestine Liberation Organization.

16. The Palestine Liberation Organization and the Palestinian people were not two distinct entities, nor was it possible to deal with the Palestinian people without dealing with the Palestine Liberation Organization. The development of the Palestine Liberation Organization was nothing but the result of the development of the social, economic and political institutions of the Palestinian people and, particularly, their social and political conscience. Consequently, the Palestine Liberation Organization had assumed the responsibility for the cultural, economic, social and political development of the Palestinian people.

17. The Palestine Liberation Organization viewed the struggle of the Palestinian people as a struggle of a colonial population against a form of colonialism described as settler colonialism. In that sense, Israel was viewed as a colonial settler State that was implanted on part of an Arab national homeland with the active support and sustenance of the European/American system of power. To attain justice, the Palestinians would have to obtain the support of States that reject colonialism ideologically, structurally and culturally.

18. The Palestine Liberation Organization had defined the nature of Palestinian rights. It had articulated these national rights in the broad terms of self-determination. It was this articulation of Palestinian national rights that was essentially affirmed by the United Nations when it supported the Palestinian rights to independence and of return.

19. The Palestine Liberation Organization had struggled since 1968 for a democratic non-sectarian State. While conceiving of coexistence with the Jewish people in peace within the framework of a unitary State, the Organization recognized the difficulties in the way of the acceptance of such a solution, not only by Israel but by other States as well. The Palestine Liberation Organization had therefore elaborated its provisional solution, which conceived of the possibility of a de facto coexistence of two States in Palestine, one principally Jewish-Israeli and the other Palestinian Arab. By this it had placed itself in a position of antagonism, both in relation to Israel and zionism as well as to United States interests. It had also become a kind of vanguard of the anti-imperialist

struggle in the Arab world. Moreover, its structure had proved that it was capable of not only resisting political pressure, but also, and most importantly, military aggression.

20. In the 21 years since the establishment of the Palestine Liberation Organization, it had experienced various tests and hardships and become overwhelmingly recognized as the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people and as an active force to be reckoned with in the Middle Eastern political arena. In that regard, it had had a decisive influence in the search for a solution of the Palestine question, as well as the problem of the Middle East as a whole.

The International Peace Conference on the Middle East

21. The Seminar concluded its deliberations by discussing in depth the question of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East. It was noted that, although almost 40 years had passed since the United Nations General Assembly had adopted resolution 181 (II), which recommended the creation of two States - an Arab State and a Jewish State - so far it had been implemented only to the extent of the creation of the State of Israel. One of the foremost commitments of the international community was to ensure the restoration of the rights of the Palestinian people, including its right to self-determination and creation of its own independent State in Palestine. It was felt that the principles enunciated by the United Nations commanded universal adherence and should be supported accordingly, within the framework of a comprehensive solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict. The question of Palestine represented a continuing responsibility of the United Nations and of all its Members who cherished the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and who respected the very decisions taken in the United Nations to which they had subscribed.

22. In that connection, it was strongly reaffirmed that the question of Palestine was at the core of that conflict, which itself was a multi-faceted problem. Over the years, a broad international consensus had been achieved on the necessity of a comprehensive, just and durable solution. This consensus was defined in the Geneva Declaration adopted by the International Conference on the Question of Palestine in 1983, and also stressed in United Nations General Assembly resolution 38/58 C, which called for the convening of an International Peace Conference on the Middle East. It was noted that the International Conference on the Question of Palestine, held at Geneva from 29 August to 7 September 1983, which adopted the Geneva Declaration, was the first occasion at which so broad an international forum had met to consider the Palestinian question. No less than 117 States had participated fully in the Conference while 20 others had taken part as observers; in addition, for the first time ever, approximately 100 non-governmental organizations and several eminent personalities had been invited for that occasion. Amongst the NGOs, several came from Israel, thus demonstrating by their presence that there existed within Israel a group of peace-loving persons who also strove for a just and lasting peace in the Middle East.

23. The Geneva Declaration adopted by the International Conference on the Question of Palestine envisioned that the Peace Conference would be convened under the auspices of the United Nations. The United Nations, in addition to bearing a sacred trust and responsibility to the Palestinian people, constituted the only forum for negotiation to facilitate the meeting of all the parties to the

conflict. The existing procedures at the United Nations made possible the participation of all parties concerned.

24. The Geneva Declaration had also called for the participation of all parties to the conflict, including the Palestine Liberation Organization as well as the United States of America, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and other concerned States on an equal footing and would take as its guidelines the various proposals consistent with the principles of international law.

25. The guidelines adopted by acclamation by the Conference and endorsed by the United Nations General Assembly were:

(a) The attainment by the Palestinian people of its legitimate inalienable rights, including the right to return, the right to self-determination and the right to establish its own independent State in Palestine;

(b) The right of the Palestine Liberation Organization, the representative of the Palestinian people, to participate on an equal footing with other parties in all efforts, deliberations and conferences on the Middle East;

(c) The need to put an end to Israel's occupation of the Arab territories, in accordance with the principle of the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force and, consequently, the need to secure Israeli withdrawal from the territories occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem;

(d) The need to oppose and reject such Israeli policies and practices in occupied territories, including Jerusalem, and any de facto situations created by Israel as are contrary to international law and relevant United Nations resolutions, particularly the establishment of settlements, as these policies and practices constitute major obstacles to the achievement of peace in the Middle East;

(e) The need to reaffirm as null and void all legislative and administrative measures and decisions taken by Israel, the occupying Power, which have altered or purported to alter the character and status of the Holy City of Jerusalem, including the appropriation of land and property situated thereon, and in particular the so-called "Basic Law" on Jerusalem and the proclamation of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel;

(f) The right of all States in the region to existence within secure and internationally recognized boundaries, with justice and security for all the people, the sine qua non of which is the recognition and attainment of the legitimate, inalienable rights of the Palestinian people as stated in subparagraph (a) above.

26. These guidelines were important and relevant for the focus on the central issues while fully acknowledging that the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people remained fundamental to any solution. They were based on a recognition of the indispensable role of law in achieving the greatest possible measure of justice and security for both Israelis and Palestinians. Law was not only the basis of a just solution, but provided the only practical solution. It was maintained that justice and coercion were required in peace settlements and where justice was used less, coercion needed to be used more.

27. An international peace conference on the Middle East could lead to the establishment of a just and lasting peace in the region and to the attainment of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and guarantee the existence and

the security of all States in the region, including Israel; lead to the development of economic ties between all nations of the world with the Arab States and with Israel; and lead to agreements which would satisfy all the parties concerned, put an end to the recurring Israeli-Arab wars and thus remove a constant threat to international peace and security. It would furthermore restore the authority of the United Nations and make it once more a potent force in the maintenance of peace.

28. The Seminar regarded the fact that the majority of States in the international community as well as several major intergovernmental organizations had expressed their strong support for the holding of the Conference to be a significant factor and testimony to the vital importance of such a conference. Its central task would be to implement the existing legal right of Palestinian self-determination. The Seminar urged the Governments of the United States of America and Israel to reconsider their negative attitude to the ongoing peace process within the United Nations system.

29. It also hoped that all those in support of the Conference, and this was the overwhelming majority of the international community, would unite to overcome the obstacles posed by the refusal of Israel and the United States of America to agree to participate in such a Conference. It was the refusal of those two States alone that obstructed the progress desired by the international community. When the other States Members of the United Nations acted without hesitancy to assert leadership in achieving a peaceful settlement under law, that would have a significant effect upon the United States of America and bring it back to its principled advocacy and practical support for the self-determination of the Palestinian people, which it had recognized at the time of the adoption of the Partition resolution (General Assembly resolution 181 (II)).

30. In that same connection, the Seminar appreciated the consistency and continuity of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics' policy towards the Middle East settlement, as reiterated in its latest proposals of 29 July 1984, entitled "The proposals of the Soviet Union on the Middle East settlement", which took into account the basic interests of all sides involved in the conflict, including PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, and suggested the convocation of an international conference on the Middle East as an instrument for such a settlement.

31. In confirmation of its efforts to bring about progress and to maintain the momentum of hope, the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People had decided to exert every effort towards the early convening of the proposed Conference. The Committee therefore had made this aspect the main focus of its work programme in 1985. Consequently, in all the seminars and symposia organized this year, one panel would exclusively deal with the International Peace Conference on the Middle East. Furthermore, the Committee had decided to send a delegation of its members to a selected number of countries and, in particular, those who were members of the Security Council, with a view to promoting the early convening of the International Peace Conference.

32. The Seminar therefore considered that it was of paramount importance that the international community should intensify and unite its efforts to ensure the convening without delay of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, as an instrument to ensure the establishment of a just and comprehensive peace and of security and stability in the Middle East, while at the same time ensuring the attainment and exercise, long overdue, of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.

33. The Seminar conveyed to Chairman Arafat of the Palestine Liberation Organization its thanks for his message to the Seminar and expressed its support for the just cause of the Palestinian people. It also conveyed its strong support for the early convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East with the participation of the permanent members of the Security Council, as well as of the parties most directly involved in the conflict, particularly the Palestine Liberation Organization, the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, as a positive and constructive step in the search for a solution to the question of Palestine.

ANNEX VIII

United Nations North American Regional Non-Governmental
Organizations Symposium on the Question of Palestine

(United Nations Headquarters, New York, 10-12 July 1985)

Declaration

1. We wish to thank the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and the Division for Palestinian Rights for making this Symposium possible.
2. We also wish to sincerely voice our appreciation to the distinguished expert panelists, workshop organizers and resource persons who spoke here and offered valuable insights into the question of Palestine as well as the potential central role to be played by non-governmental organizations. These practical suggestions assisted us in formulating future plans for effective collaboration in North America and in linking our efforts to a broader, global network.
3. We, the representatives of non-governmental organizations present at the North American NGO Symposium on the Question of Palestine, 10-12 July 1985, at United Nations Headquarters in New York, call upon the peoples and Governments of the United States and Canada to take all possible steps to secure a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Arab-Israeli conflict, the core of which is the question of Palestine.
4. We resolutely reaffirm the international consensus that the Palestine Liberation Organization is the sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. We affirm the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination without external interference, and to establish an independent Palestinian State on its own national territory under the leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organization, in conformity with relevant United Nations resolutions.
5. It is our belief that all the parties to the conflict should come together in an international peace conference on the Middle East as called for at the International Conference on the Question of Palestine, August 1983, and as adopted by the General Assembly in resolution 38/58 C. It is essential that the conference be inclusive of and be attended by representatives of both Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization, those Arab States party to the conflict, the United States and the Soviet Union.
6. We strongly encourage all regional NGOs to work diligently with the general public to develop public awareness and support for the Conference. We applaud the United Nations for this recommendation and request the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and the Division for Palestinian Rights to assist North American NGOs by producing a concise publication in mass quantity that clearly explains the objectives and advantages of such a Conference.
7. We strongly support the global signature campaign launched on 29 November 1984 by the Interim Co-ordinating Committee (ICC) for NGOs on the Question of Palestine on behalf of convening the International Conference. We are committed to develop creative ways of enlisting organizational support during the coming months. We will co-ordinate our efforts with ICC on this important project.

8. This Symposium has reminded us of the powerful and decisive role played by the media, especially television, in shaping North American public opinion on the question of Palestine. We are determined to seek more effective ways and means of utilizing this media potential in order to accurately inform the public of the actual facts pertaining to this issue with the expressed intention of positively impacting on United States and Canadian Middle East policies.

9. We hereby establish a North American Interim Co-ordinating Committee (NAICC) a/ on the question of Palestine as a mechanism to enhance our collective effectiveness and to organize our relationship with the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and the Division for Palestinian Rights.

10. We define the initial responsibilities of NAICC to include:

(a) Co-operating closely with the United Nations in the planning of the 1986 North American Symposium;

(b) Recruiting other NGOs for participation in the 1986 Symposium;

(c) Serving as a channel of information among NGOs in North America;

(d) Circulating the minutes of the Co-ordinating Committee meetings;

(e) Building a vibrant, broadly based coalition of groups in North America in order to better inform the public and to influence public policy on the question of Palestine;

(f) Co-ordinating relations with the International Co-ordinating Committee and other international NGOs.

11. NAICC members should attend Committee meetings when possible and build a close working relationship with the Committee. The Division for Palestinian Rights could assist NAICC in contacting ICC and NGOs both in North America and other regions for the purpose of strengthening the global network supporting the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.

12. We urge the Committee to fund the participation of four North American delegates present for this Symposium in the NGO international meeting to be convened at Geneva in September 1985. We believe that such an initiative by the United Nations will ensure balanced, effective representation at the international meeting.

13. We believe that the effectiveness of United Nations NGO meetings will be significantly enhanced by the participation, as resource persons, of representatives of Israeli peace groups and of Palestinian groups inside Israel and the occupied territories (West Bank and Gaza). We note with satisfaction that some such groups did actively participate in the International Conference on the Question of Palestine (1983) and the International NGO Meeting on the Question of Palestine (1984), and we call for invitations to be extended to them for regional symposia as well, in order that the discussions may focus on solutions to the question of Palestine that include relevant perspectives. NAICC should make a special effort to expand contacts with Palestinian organizations in North America, as well as North American Jewish and Arab organizations, to explain North American NGO work and to involve them in co-operative activities.

14. We NGOs intend to develop additional effective educational resource materials on the question of Palestine, including teaching aids and relevant bibliographies. We hereby ask the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and the Division for Palestinian Rights to provide technical and financial assistance in the final production of these materials.
15. We are distressed by the decline in international financial support for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency as noted in the workshop report on religious institutions. We call on all NGOs to encourage both the United States and Canadian Governments to give top priority to funding UNRWA at its full budgeted level.
16. We gratefully note the emphasis by the many resource centres of the Presbyterian Church (USA) on the question of Palestine. We request that the Division provide copies of its publications and other relevant United Nations documents in quantity for their effective utilization by the resource centres.
17. We urge the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and the Division to continue to emphasize and work on the integral issue of women under Israeli occupation. While clearly not separate from the whole situation, women's lives are beset with particular problems that must be addressed by all North American NGOs. The full report of the women's workshop outlines our recommendations for co-ordinating activities in the coming years.
18. We urge the Committee and the Division to extend their outreach into the region in every possible way. We specifically request that the Division's NGO liaison and information officers, as well as Department of Public Information officers, be encouraged to attend the conferences and activities of NGOs, trade unions, ethnic and other minority groups, peace and disarmament groups and others to demonstrate the linkage between their various areas of concern and the question of Palestine and to recruit their active participation in future NGO symposia, conferences and meetings sponsored by the United Nations. The process of achieving peaceful coexistence and justice in the region is essential to the success of the global struggle for disarmament, peaceful coexistence and justice.
19. We urge the Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People to convey this Declaration to the General Assembly at its fortieth session as part of the Committee's report.

Notes

a/ The 1985/1986 membership of the NAICC is the following: American Friends Service Committee; America-Israel Council for Israeli-Palestinian Peace; Board of Global Ministries, United Methodist Church; Canadian Arab Federation; NAJDA (Women Concerned about the Middle East); Near East Cultural and Educational Foundation of Canada (NECEF); Palestine Human Rights Campaign.

ANNEX IX

United Nations African Regional Non-Governmental Organizations
Symposium on the Question of Palestine

(Dakar, 5-7 August 1985)

Declaration

1. We, the group of non-governmental organizations which participated from 5 to 7 August 1985, at the Centre International d'Echanges, Dakar, in the United Nations African Regional Non-Governmental Organization Symposium on the Question of Palestine held in implementation of paragraph 3 (b) of resolution 38/58 B on the Question of Palestine, adopted by the General Assembly on 13 December 1983, wish to thank the United Nations Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for convening this meeting. We are indeed honoured by the presence of the Chairman, members and observers of the distinguished United Nations body.
2. We also wish to thank the Chief of the Division for Palestinian Rights, the NGO liaison officer, the staff of the Division, the Department of Conference Services, for their valuable assistance in the preparation and execution of this Symposium. We believe this meeting marks a pivotal point in the constructive interaction between the United Nations and the African NGO community concerned with the question of Palestine and we look forward to increasing levels of understanding, appreciation and co-operation.
3. Special thanks are extended to the Government and people of Senegal for hosting this Symposium and for the "Teranga", generosity and co-operation extended to the participants. We were honoured by the presence and perceptive statement of His Excellency Mr. Ibrahima Fall, Minister for Foreign Affairs, at the official opening of the Symposium, representing His Excellency President Abdou Diouf, current Chairman of the Organization of African Unity. We record with pride and genuinely appreciate the long-standing and unfailing militant and effective support that the Government and people of Senegal, as tireless pioneers, have given to the just cause of the Palestinian people.
4. We also wish to sincerely voice our appreciation to the distinguished experts who spoke here and offered valuable historical, political as well as practical insights into the question of Palestine and the potential central role to be played by NGOs. The practical suggestions assisted us in formulating future plans for effective collaboration in Africa and in linking our efforts to a broader, global network.
5. We emphasize the richness and depth of the exchanges of information, views and experience which ensued, and which all converged on support for the Palestinian cause.
6. We resolutely reaffirm the international consensus that the Palestine Liberation Organization is the sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. We affirm the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination without external interference, to return and to the creation of an independent Palestinian State on its own national territory under the Palestine Liberation Organization, in conformity with relevant United Nations resolutions. We call especially upon the United States of America to recognize the right of the

Palestinian people to self-determination, because the right to self-determination is a sacred right of all peoples. We condemn Israeli rejection of all peace initiatives adopted by the international community to put an end to the Middle East conflict. This militaristic policy of Israel increases tension in the world and is leading the Middle East to a cycle of perpetual war.

7. We strongly approve and support the convening of the United Nations-sponsored International Conference on Peace in the Middle East as specified in the United Nations resolution 38/58 C. The Palestine Liberation Organization strongly supported this resolution. We condemn the unjustified opposition to this initiative by Israel and the United States of America, which constitutes a serious obstacle to world peace. We urge that more pressure be exerted on both States to join in the global consensus on the issue. We urge those undecided States, especially members of the Security Council, to lend their support to this resolution. In this manner, we also uniformly support the declaration on this issue adopted by the International NGO Meeting on the Question of Palestine held in August 1984 in Geneva.

8. We express our grave concern over the protracted Arab-Israeli conflict. We recognize that the basic cause of that conflict is the denial by Israel and its allies of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and their refusal to recognize the PLO as the sole and authentic representative of that people. In particular, we regret the record of successive Administrations of the United States of America which have encouraged and supported Israeli State terrorism.

9. The convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, as endorsed by General Assembly resolution 38/58 C, offers the only realistic and practical way towards a solution to the problem of Palestine and the establishment of a Palestinian State and of a global, just and lasting solution for all the parties to the conflict.

10. We further reaffirm our belief that only a full and comprehensive solution involving the Palestine Liberation Organization and all concerned countries, in particular the United States of America and the USSR, can create the basis for a just and lasting peace. We reject partial and piecemeal agreements as such agreements have proved to be counterproductive and not conducive to a comprehensive peaceful solution and have totally ignored the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

11. This Symposium further asserts the close connection between the struggle of the Palestinian people and every struggle in each part of the world of peoples fighting for their independence, defending their freedom and building their life on the basis of their sovereignty. The cause of the Palestinian people is interconnected with the struggle of all peoples for world peace and against colonialism, in particular, the struggle of the peoples of southern Africa. In this connection, we condemn with all the force at our command all the injustices and violations of human rights perpetrated in South Africa, Namibia and the front-line countries by the illegal colonial and racist apartheid régime.

12. We affirm the close solidarity in their struggle of the African and Arab peoples in the face of the military and political collusion and nuclear collaboration between the Zionist State of Israel and the racist State of South Africa. We strongly condemn the imposition of the state of emergency in South Africa, and demand the immediate and unconditional release of all political detainees.

13. This Symposium of the NGOs of Africa positively points to the growing support in the United Nations for Palestinians and the Palestine Liberation Organization. It stresses the very significant role played by the Organization of African Unity and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries representing over two thirds of the world's Governments in awakening global public opinion to the urgent need to resolve this issue and in exposing the parts played by the Governments of the United States of America and Israel.
14. We call on African Governments to implement all the resolutions of the Organization of African Unity on the question of Palestine, particularly that relating to the diplomatic isolation of Israel. We note with satisfaction that the majority of African States have broken off diplomatic relations with the Zionist State, and urge them to remain faithful to that position.
15. We further endorse the global signature campaign to increase popular support for the international peace conference on the Middle East and will endeavour to co-ordinate our efforts with the Interim Co-ordinating Committee for NGOs throughout Africa, culminating in the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People on 29 November 1985.
16. We concur that influencing world public opinion is a key factor in the just and lasting resolution of the question of Palestine. As NGOs, we have access to local populations, the grass roots, in our societies and are determined to work to increase their understanding of the question of Palestine and to effectively mobilize their potential political, social and spiritual power.
17. Beyond these principles, we firmly believe that non-governmental organizations are a unique asset in securing the rights of the Palestinian people, for we can present the issue in its vital human dimension to all people and to non-governmental organizations.
18. We are aware of the forces opposed to our efforts. But the inherent justice of our cause and the sound construction of a genuine regional and global NGO network will be mutually reinforcing and demonstrably advance our endeavours.
19. We have reviewed and considered the initial activities of the Interim Co-ordinating Committee for NGOs (ICC) established at the International Meeting on the Question of Palestine convened in Geneva in August 1984 and regard it as a suitable transitional mechanism for the initial co-ordination of the world-wide NGO effort on the question of Palestine. We look favourably upon its transformation from an interim to an international co-ordinating committee after the scheduled consideration of its future structure and composition at the International Meeting on the Question of Palestine to be convened from 9-12 September 1985 in Geneva.
20. We strongly urge the United Nations, through the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, to assist the ICC in every possible way in its worthwhile efforts to build a viable, global network of NGOs active on the question of Palestine. The central co-ordination of all common NGO activities on this issue is a necessary condition for influencing domestic and global public opinion.
21. We, African NGOs present here for this Symposium see ourselves as a nucleus of a broader, regional effort. We must reach out, identify and involve many other NGO committees in the search for a just and lasting solution of the question of Palestine. To accomplish these worthy goals, we are requesting United Nations

assistance, including financial help, to establish a regional interim co-ordinating committee of NGOs to serve as an initial focus for our regional efforts. We visualize such an African co-ordinating committee establishing close links with the work of ICC and its successor.

22. The African region is an area of increasing political importance. As a result, forces opposed to the Palestinian cause are attempting to neutralize the traditional commitment of the peoples of this region to the Palestinian cause. Such attempts, notably by the State of Israel, the United States of America and the world Zionist movement, as well as by imperialism, must be resisted as they constitute impediments to achieving a just, comprehensive and enduring resolution of the question of Palestine. We distinguish between Judaism as a religion and political zionism as manifested by Israel, an unjust, undemocratic, racist and dangerous ideology. In combating the forces opposed to the Palestinian cause, African NGOs must play a key role as moulders of public opinion in the region.

23. To ensure proper representation of this region at the forthcoming International Meeting on the Question of Palestine, we strongly urge the United Nations, through the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, to fund the participation of a representative number of NGO delegates from the region. To be effective, such aid should include transportation to Geneva and accommodation during the conference.

24. In co-operation with the stated objectives of the ICC, we African NGOs call for the compilation of a regional data base of information on NGOs in the region active on the issue as a potent addition to global networking efforts.

25. We are determined to cultivate an expanding regional NGO constituency linked to a world-wide NGO network that will emerge as a significant complementary force in the campaign for the just resolution of the question of Palestine. We firmly believe that we can most effectively express our solidarity with the Palestinian people in this way. We call upon the United Nations, through the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, to offer all necessary assistance, including financial support, to achieve these ends.

26. We note with satisfaction the results of the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, held at Nairobi (Kenya) from 15 to 26 July 1985. The Conference particularly emphasized the situation of the Palestinian people, and increased awareness of the question of Palestine on the part of the international community.

27. We note with interest the activities in solidarity with the Palestinian people conducted in the context of the International Youth Year, particularly on the occasion of the Twelfth World Youth and Students Festival held at Moscow from 27 July to 4 August 1985, and earnestly invite the young people of the world in general, and of Africa in particular, to increase their support for the Palestinian cause.

28. We express the wish that the Arab Summit which opens on 7 August 1985 at Casablanca, Morocco, will contribute to the strengthening of Arab unity and solidarity with the cause of the Palestinian people. We also hope that the Arab Summit will adopt appropriate means of putting into effect the principles of Fez and of the International Conference on Peace in the Middle East, under the auspices of the United Nations and in accordance with relevant United Nations resolutions.

29. We decide to establish the Interim Co-ordinating Committee for Africa, composed of representatives of organizations which participated in this Symposium, in order to expand and strengthen the activities of solidarity with the Palestinian cause undertaken by African NGOs.

30. We applaud the convening of this Regional Symposium and strongly request the United Nations, through the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, to plan at least two follow-up symposiums in the region as soon as possible, but hopefully within the coming year.

ANNEX X

International Meeting of Non-Governmental Organizations
on the Question of Palestine

(Geneva, 9-12 September 1985)

Declaration

1. We, the non-governmental organizations participating in the second United Nations International NGO Meeting on the Question of Palestine, wish to thank the United Nations Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for convening this meeting. We are indeed honoured by the presence of the members and Observers of the distinguished United Nations body.
2. We also wish to thank the Chief of the Division for Palestinian Rights, the NGO liaison officers, the staff of the Division, the Department of Conference Services, including the services of the interpreters, for their valuable assistance in the preparation and execution of this meeting. We believe this meeting strengthens the constructive interaction between the United Nations and the international NGO community concerned with the absence of a just and durable solution to the question of Palestine and we look forward to increasing levels of understanding, appreciation and co-operation.
3. We also wish to voice our appreciation to the distinguished experts and resource persons who spoke here and offered valuable historical, political, as well as practical insights into the question of Palestine as well as a perspective on the important role to be played by NGOs. The practical suggestions emanating from the workshops assisted us in formulating future plans for effective collaboration in linking our efforts to a broader, global network. The workshop reports are available separately.
4. In particular, we want to draw attention to the important presentations made here. We consider the panel "Ways and Means to Implement United Nations Resolution 38/58 C. The International Peace Conference on the Middle East is the means for a just, durable and comprehensive solution to the question of Palestine and the Middle East conflict", to be of great significance and urge the United Nations to reproduce those statements and widely circulate them. We also urge the United Nations to convene this same panel in other locations (USA/Europe) so that its perspective can be communicated to wider audiences.
5. We resolutely reaffirm the international consensus that the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) is the sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. We affirm the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination without external interference, to return, and to the establishment of an independent Palestinian State on its own national territory under the leadership of the PLO, in conformity with all relevant United Nations resolutions.
6. We further strongly support the convening of the International Conference on Peace in the Middle East under the auspices of the United Nations as specified in United Nations resolution 38/58 C. We note that the PLO and other Arab parties and the Government of the USSR have supported the resolution and that the Government of Israel and the United States of America have opposed the convening of such a

conference. We consider that the stand taken by these two Governments on the issue militates against the search for peace in the Middle East. We therefore urge that all Governments and all groups that can, should exert all possible pressure on these two Governments to reconsider their position and join the rest of the world, Governments and peoples in the movement for peace.

7. In this manner, we uniformly support the declaration on this issue adopted by the International NGO Meeting on the Question of Palestine held in August 1984 in Geneva.

8. The convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, as endorsed by General Assembly resolution 38/58 C offers a realistic and practical way towards a solution to the problem of Palestine and the establishment of a Palestinian State. We further reaffirm our belief that only a full and comprehensive solution involving, in particular, the United States of America and the USSR, as permanent members of the Security Council and co-chairmen of the Geneva Peace Conference, can create the basis for a just and lasting peace.

9. We concur that influencing world public opinion is a key factor in the just and durable resolution of the question of Palestine. As NGOs we have access to local populations, the grass roots in our societies, and are determined to work to increase their understanding of the question of Palestine and the just cause of the Arab people of Palestine, and to effectively mobilize their potential political, social and spiritual power. Beyond these principles, we firmly believe that NGOs are a unique asset in securing the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, for we can present the issue also from a vital, human perspective.

10. We confirm our support for the global signature campaign to increase popular and organizational support for the International Peace Conference on the Middle East and will redouble and co-ordinate our efforts with the International Co-ordinating Committee for NGOs throughout the world, culminating in the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People on 29 November 1987. Our emphasis will be to attract the support of popular organizations with large memberships, parliamentarians, peace forces in Israel, North America and Europe, and others.

11. We NGOs present here for this international meeting see ourselves as a nucleus of a broader, world-wide effort. We undertake to reach out, identify and involve many other NGOs in the just resolution of the question of Palestine.

12. We express our grave concern over the protracted Arab-Israeli conflict. We recognize that the basic cause of that conflict is the denial by Israel and its supporters of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. We deplore the vigorous assaults upon Palestinian human rights by Israel and urge all NGOs to activate their networks to protest this repression in every effective way. In particular, we condemn the record of successive administrations of the United States of America which have encouraged and supported Israel's expansionist policies.

13. We urge all NGOs to inform their Governments of the deteriorating economic, social, cultural and health situation of the Palestinian people in the occupied territories and abroad. We reject the campaign for a so-called "Improvement of the quality of life" under Israeli control as a ruse devised to pre-empt independent Palestinian development in the occupied territories.

14. Recognizing that more attention needs to be paid to the specific situation of Palestinian Arabs within Israel, we intend to continue to address this subject at future international NGO meetings and urge all NGOs to create heightened awareness of this subject. We call upon the Government of Israel to establish and guarantee full equal rights to the Palestinian Arabs inside Israel, who are an integral part of the Palestinian people.

15. We express our strongest opposition to the Israeli Government policy of "Iron Fist" rule in the occupied territories: the closure of An-Najah University and other institutions of higher education and the closure of the Arab Hospital in the Austrian Hospice in Jerusalem which have deprived the people of their vital services; the arbitrary administrative detention and expulsion of leaders of student organizations, trade unions, voluntary organizations and youth movements. These actions and attitudes are flagrant violations of human rights and basic human decency. In particular, we demand the abolition of the expulsion orders against the following persons:

Amin Darwish Maqbul of Nablus

Walid Ahmad Nazzal of Qabatiyya

Bahjat Mustafa Jayyusi of Jayyus,

as well as the abolition of the orders of administrative detention against Zalu Jaradat and Ghazi Shashtari, who are both Law in the Service of Man field workers, all of which contravene international law. All NGOs must take immediate action to draw attention to these glaring abuses of power and violations of human rights. All of our networks should be mobilized to protest to the detaining authorities, and to the United States Government, and to the United Nations, and to demand an end to the Israeli occupation.

16. We are deeply concerned over the persistent policy of Israel to confiscate Arab land in the occupied Palestinian territory and to establish Jewish colonial settlements thereon. This constitutes a flagrant violation of the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention. We call upon the Security Council to apply means and measures to ensure respect and implementation of its relevant resolutions, particularly 465 (1978).

17. We consider that the proposed law by the Israeli Knesset prohibiting contacts between Israelis and members of the PLO constitutes a further obstacle in the search for peace. In the light of this proposed law, it is of the utmost importance that NGOs take the initiative to convene meetings between Israeli citizens and Palestinians representing the PLO with the aim to implement the relevant United Nations resolutions, in particular, United Nations General Assembly resolution 38/58 C.

18. We voice grave concern over the fate of the Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon, and recall the historical responsibility of the United Nations for the fate of the Palestinian people. We call upon the United Nations to shoulder this responsibility.

19. We note the fundamental importance of the forthcoming summit meeting between the United States and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and call on them to have the question of Palestine and peace in the Middle East included in the agenda and to consider, during the summit, the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East.

20. We are aware that 1986 will be globally designated as the Year of Peace, and that there will be no peace without peace in the Middle East. We must take all action to make it a year of peace with justice for the Palestinian people by selflessly collaborating with one another in order to influence public opinion and governmental policy. We strongly condemn the military and political collusion and nuclear collaboration between the Government of Israel and the Government of South Africa.
21. We have reviewed and considered the initial activities of the Interim Co-ordinating Committee for NGOs (ICC) established at the International Meeting on the Question of Palestine convened at Geneva in August 1984. We hereby establish a successor organization, the NGO International Co-ordinating Committee on the Question of Palestine in order to expand and strengthen the NGO global network. The ICC will work diligently to develop even closer links with the United Nations Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and the Division for Palestinian Rights. The names of the member organizations on the 1985/1986 ICC are given in footnote a/.
22. We sincerely thank the United Nations Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for inviting a representative of the ICC to speak as a panelist at each of the regional NGO symposia convened since May 1985. We believe that these symposia increased NGO contact and created circumstances for the establishment of regional NGO co-ordinating committees in Asia, North America and Africa.
23. We urge the United Nations Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and the Division for Palestinian Rights to continue such regional and other NGO symposia in the coming year in order to involve under-represented regions and to reinforce the networking already under way in other areas. Upcoming regional NGO symposia should include Latin America, East Asia and Pacific, and Europe. Follow-up symposia in other regions are needed to maintain continuity and expansion of the global NGO network on Palestine. We further urge the United Nations Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and the Division for Palestinian Rights to facilitate the convening of meetings of the ICC in the coming year so that the ICC can co-ordinate its efforts on behalf of the NGO community it represents.
24. Based on our experience over this past year the NGOs participating in this meeting propose that the new ICC consider the establishment of an administrative secretariat and also consider ways and means of funding the activities of the ICC and proposed secretariat.
25. We are determined to cultivate an expanding global NGO constituency linked to a world-wide NGO network that will emerge as a significant force in the campaign for the just resolution of the question of Palestine. The establishment of the NGO International Co-ordinating Committee symbolizes this commitment and the growth of the global movement. We firmly believe that we can most effectively express our solidarity with the Palestinian people and work for peace in this way. We call upon the United Nations, through the United Nations Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, to offer every assistance, including financial support, to achieve these ends.
26. We call upon the United Nations Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People to convey this report of the International NGO Meeting on the Question of Palestine held in Geneva, 9-12 September 1985, to the General Assembly at its fortieth session as part of the Committee's report.

Notes

a/ All-India Indo-Arab Friendship Association; American Friends Service Committee; Arab Lawyers Union; Association des Juristes Démocrates du Sénégal; Council for the Advancement of Arab/British Understanding; Democratic Front for Peace and Equality; French NGOs Committee; International Jewish Peace Union; Israel Council for Israeli/Palestinian Peace; Near East Cultural and Educational Foundation of Canada; Palestinian Committee for NGOs; Palestine Human Rights Campaign of Australia; Palestinian Human Rights Campaign; Parliamentary Association for Euro-Arab Co-operation; Soviet Afro-Asian Solidarity Committee; Union Inter-Africaine des Avocats; Women's International Democratic Federation; World Council of Churches/Middle East Council of Churches; World Peace Council; World Young Women's Christian Association.

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**REPORT
OF THE
COMMITTEE ON THE EXERCISE OF
THE INALIENABLE RIGHTS
OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE**

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

OFFICIAL RECORDS: FORTY-FIRST SESSION

SUPPLEMENT No. 35 (A/41/35)



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UNITED NATIONS

New York, 1986

NOTE

Symbols of United Nations documents are composed of capital letters combined with figures. Mention of such a symbol indicates a reference to a United Nations document.

[17 September 1986]

CONTENTS

	<u>Paragraphs</u>	<u>Page</u>
LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL		1
I. INTRODUCTION	1 - 6	2
II. MANDATE OF THE COMMITTEE	7 - 9	3
III. ORGANIZATION OF WORK	10 - 15	4
A. Election of officers	10 - 12	4
B. Participation in the work of the Committee	13 - 14	4
C. Re-establishment of the Working Group	15	4
IV. ACTION TAKEN BY THE COMMITTEE	16 - 101	5
A. Action taken in accordance with General Assembly resolution 40/96 A of 12 December 1985	16 - 72	5
1. Review of the situation relating to the question of Palestine and efforts to implement the recommendations of the Committee	16 29	5
2. Reactions to developments affecting the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people	30 - 63	7
3. Action taken by the Committee to promote the convening of the proposed International Peace Conference on the Middle East in accordance with General Assembly resolution 38/58 C of 13 December 1983	64 - 70	12
4. Attendance at international conferences and meetings	71	14
5. Action taken by United Nations bodies, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and intergovernmental organizations	72	14
B. Action taken by the Committee in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 40/96 A and B of 12 December 1985	73 - 99	16
1. Co-operation with non-governmental organizations ..	73 - 88	16
2. Seminars	89 - 99	18
3. Other activities	100 - 101	20

CONTENTS (continued)

	<u>Paragraphs</u>	<u>Page</u>
V. ACTION TAKEN BY THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INFORMATION IN ACCORDANCE WITH GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 40/96 C	102 - 111	21
VI. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COMMITTEE	112 - 120	23

Annexes

I. Recommendations of the Committee endorsed by the General Assembly at its thirty-first session		25
II. Geneva Declaration on Palestine and the Programme of Action for the Achievement of Palestinian Rights		28
III. List of documents issued by the Committee		38

LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

8 September 1986

Sir,

I have the honour to enclose herewith the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for submission to the General Assembly in accordance with paragraph 4 of resolution 40/96 A of 12 December 1985.

Accept, Sir, the assurances of my highest consideration.

(Signed) Massamba SARRE
Chairman of the Committee on the
Exercise of the Inalienable Rights
of the Palestinian People

His Excellency
Mr. Javier Pérez de Cuéllar
Secretary-General of the United Nations

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, established by General Assembly resolution 3376 (XXX) of 10 November 1975, is currently composed of 23 Member States. 1/
2. The first report of the Committee 2/ contained specific recommendations designed to enable the Palestinian people to exercise their inalienable rights as previously recognized and defined by the General Assembly. Those recommendations were first endorsed by the Assembly in its resolution 31/20 of 24 November 1976 as a basis for the solution of the question of Palestine.
3. In its subsequent reports to the General Assembly, 3/ the Committee retained its original recommendations unchanged. On each occasion they have been more firmly endorsed by the Assembly, which has also continued to renew and, as necessary, expand the mandate of the Committee.
4. Despite repeated appeals by the Committee, however, the Security Council has still not acted on or implemented the recommendations of the Committee owing to the attitude of a permanent member. The Committee remains convinced that, if the Security Council were to adopt positive measures to implement those recommendations, the possibility of the establishment of a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East would be increased.
5. Meanwhile, Israel has continued to occupy Palestinian and other Arab territories, including Jerusalem, in violation of Security Council and General Assembly resolutions, and to take measures to strengthen its control, including growing repression of the local population and the expansion of settlers' activities. Israel has also continued to prevent the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) from deploying forces along the internationally recognized boundaries of Lebanon, in violation of Security Council resolutions. As a consequence of the policies and practices of Israel and of the resulting lack of progress towards a peaceful, just, durable and comprehensive solution, tension and violence have continued to grow in the area, further endangering international peace and security. The Committee has therefore continued to stress that this situation will prevail as long as the Palestinian people is prevented from exercising its inalienable rights to self-determination, national independence and sovereignty and to return to its homes and property, and as long as the Palestinian and other Arab territories remain occupied.
6. In order to secure United Nations objectives on the question of Palestine, during the period under review, the Committee continued to give priority to the early convening of the proposed International Peace Conference on the Middle East, under United Nations auspices and in accordance with the provisions of General Assembly resolution 38/58 C of 13 December 1983. The Committee is convinced that the conference would undoubtedly facilitate the search for a just and lasting peace in the Middle East and has called on all parties concerned to co-operate in order to ensure its success in the common interest. The Committee regrets it has not so far sensed any change in the negative attitude of Israel and the United States of America concerning the convening of the conference, and expresses the sincere hope that a positive change will urgently be forthcoming.

II. MANDATE OF THE COMMITTEE

7. The Committee's mandate for the year 1986 is contained in paragraphs 3 to 5 General Assembly resolution 40/96 A of 12 December 1985 by which the Assembly:

(a) Requested the Committee to continue to keep under review the situation relating to the question of Palestine as well as the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Achievement of Palestinian Rights 4/ adopted by the International Conference on the Question of Palestine, and to report and make suggestions to the General Assembly or the Security Council, as appropriate;

(b) Authorized the Committee to continue to exert all efforts to promote the implementation of its recommendations, including representation at conferences and meetings and the sending of delegations where such activities would be considered by it to be appropriate, and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its forty-first session and thereafter;

(c) Requested the Committee to continue to extend its co-operation to non-governmental organizations in their contribution towards heightening international awareness of the facts relating to the question of Palestine and in creating a more favourable atmosphere for the full implementation of the Committee's recommendations, and to take the necessary steps to expand its contacts with those organizations.

8. By its resolution 40/96 B of 12 December 1985, the General Assembly also requested the Secretary-General, inter alia, to ensure that the Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat continued to discharge the tasks detailed in previous resolutions, in consultation with the Committee and under its guidance, and to provide that Division with the necessary resources to accomplish its tasks and to expand its work programme, particularly through additional meetings for non-governmental organizations.

9. By resolution 40/96 C of 12 December 1985, the General Assembly requested the Department of Public Information, in full co-operation and co-ordination with the Committee, to continue its special information programme on the question of Palestine.

III. ORGANIZATION OF WORK

A. Election of officers

10. At its 120th meeting, on 29 October 1985, the Committee elected by acclamation Mr. George Agius (Malta) as its Rapporteur, replacing Mr. Victor J. Gauci (Malta), who had taken up another assignment for his country.

11. At its 126th meeting, on 16 January 1986, the Committee decided to re-elect the following officers:

Chairman: Mr. Massamba Sarré (Senegal)

Vice-Chairmen: Mr. Oscar Gramas-Oliva (Cuba)
Mr. Mohammad Farid Zarif (Afghanistan)

Rapporteur: Mr. George Agius (Malta)

12. At its 127th meeting, on 29 January 1986, the Committee adopted its programme of work for 1986 (A/AC.183/1986/CRP.1/Rev.2) in implementation of its mandate.

B. Participation in the work of the Committee

13. As in previous years, the Committee reconfirmed that all States Members of the United Nations and Permanent Observers to the United Nations desiring to participate in the work of the Committee as observers were welcome to do so. Accordingly, in a letter dated 3 February 1986, the Chairman of the Committee so informed the Secretary-General, who subsequently transmitted the letter, on 20 February 1986, to States Members of the United Nations and members of the specialized agencies, and to intergovernmental regional organizations. The Committee also decided to invite the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) to participate in the work of the Committee as an observer, to attend all its meetings and to make observations and proposals for the consideration of the Committee.

14. During 1985 the Committee again welcomed as observers all the States and organizations that had participated in the preceding year. 5/ The Committee also welcomed the additional participation of Bulgaria from 16 July 1986.

C. Re-establishment of the Working Group

15. At its 126th meeting, the Committee re-established its Working Group to assist in the preparation and expedition of the work of the Committee. The Working Group was constituted as before under the chairmanship of Mr. George Agius (Malta) and the vice-chairmanship of Ms. Savitri Kunadi (India), on the understanding that any Committee member or observer could participate in its proceedings. 6/

IV. ACTION TAKEN BY THE COMMITTEE

A. Action taken in accordance with General Assembly resolution 40/96 A of 12 December 1985

1. Review of the situation relating to the question of Palestine and efforts to implement the recommendations of the Committee

16. In accordance with its mandate, in the year under review the Committee continued to follow developments relating to the question of Palestine and to exert all efforts to promote the implementation of its recommendations as repeatedly endorsed by the General Assembly.

17. In response to events in the region affecting the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, the Chairman of the Committee on several occasions, whenever urgent action was required, brought such developments to the attention of the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council, and called for appropriate measures in accordance with United Nations resolutions (see sect. 2 (a) below). Those letters were sent against a backdrop of continued military occupation and gradual annexation by Israel of the Palestinian and Arab territories, which resulted in a growing spiral of conflict, tension and violence in the region.

18. The Committee was increasingly concerned that the situation in the occupied Palestinian territories had continued to deteriorate, according to reports issued by a variety of sources, such as Governments, United Nations agencies, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, individual experts and the media. The Committee also reviewed with grave preoccupation the worsening situation of Palestinian refugees in south Lebanon, as a result of Israeli expansionist policies and practices.

19. The information reviewed by the Committee left no doubt that Israel had persisted in its policy of confiscating Arab-owned land in the occupied Palestinian territories and of increasing the size and number of its settlements, despite the fact that such policy is in violation of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civil Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, 7/ and contrary to United Nations resolutions. At the same time, Israel had continued in its policy of Judaization of the occupied Palestinian territories through their gradual economic and administrative incorporation into the Israeli national system and the creation of conditions aimed at forcing the Palestinian population to emigrate from their land.

20. As in previous years, this creeping annexation of the occupied Palestinian territories was accompanied by measures designed to suppress all forms of resistance and of political, social, cultural and economic expression of the Palestinian people, as well as by acts of violence and provocation by Israeli troops and by armed Jewish settlers against Palestinians.

21. The Committee continued to be gravely concerned at the reinstatement in August 1985 of the emergency regulations of 1945, introduced during the British Mandate, which provide, inter alia, for deportation of persons, administrative detention without charges or trial for renewable six-month periods, and the closing-down of newspapers. This measure was reported to have become the corner-stone of a new repressive policy aimed at curbing activities in opposition

to the occupation of the occupied Palestinian territories, and had been directed primarily at university students, trade unionists and journalists. It had resulted in the deportation of some 29 Palestinian activists from the occupied Palestinian territories during the period from August 1985 to April 1986 and the detention of more than 130 Palestinians in the same period. Restrictions on freedom of movement continued to be applied, such as denial of travel permits to attend meetings abroad and the refusal to allow re-entry to Palestinians who had been abroad. Measures had been taken to curtail trade-union activities, such as the banning of meetings, searching of trade-union premises, confiscation of documents and refusal to register new Arab unions.

22. The Committee also received reports indicating that arbitrary arrests and short-term detention without charge or trial continued in the occupied Palestinian territories. It was also alleged that instances of torture had continued and that the conditions of detention and imprisonment of Palestinians continued to be inhumane, and included overcrowding, poor food, lack of adequate medical care, physical violence and verbal abuse by security guards. Palestinian political prisoners at several prisons had engaged in hunger-strikes at various times in protest against such conditions.

23. Reports in the Israeli and Arab press in the period under review also indicated that acts of collective punishment and other forms of repression against the Palestinian population by the Israeli occupying forces had become an almost routine occurrence. There were numerous reports of the use of tear-gas and the shooting of demonstrators, the storming of schools and refugee camps, the destruction of homes of residents accused of involvement in security incidents, house-to-house searches, beatings, the closing of schools and destruction of school property and various other forms of intimidation and harassment directed at the local population. Newspapers had been closed down on repeated occasions and censorship measures against the Arab press and individual journalists, writers, publishers and bookshop owners had continued unabated.

24. The Committee was also seriously concerned at reports of continued provocative activity by Jewish settlers, particularly their acts of vandalism and profanation directed at the Muslim holy sites in Hebron and Jerusalem, particularly the Haram al-Sharif and the Al-Aqsa Mosque, and their increasing encroachment on Arab lands and Arab towns, such as in Hebron, which was often accompanied by violence and destruction of property.

25. The Committee was gravely concerned at reports that the occupying authorities had continued in their policy of establishing complete economic control over the occupied Palestinian territories and of transforming them into a dependent entity whose socio-economic development would be geared to the benefit of Israel and not of the Palestinians, and to preventing the Palestinian people from exercising its right to self-determination and to establish its own independent State.

26. According to the annual report prepared by the International Labour Office, the economy of the occupied territories had continued to stagnate; there had been a decline in private investment and a slow-down in public investment, while increased taxes had been criticized as unfair in view of the few services the territories were offered in return. Unemployment, particularly among college graduates, had continued to grow. A large percentage of the revenue of the territories continued to come from the employment of residents in Israel, in most cases under conditions of inequality. The situation therefore was not conducive to autonomous development of the occupied Palestinian territories.

27. Reports reaching the Committee showed that the health situation of the Palestinian population remained unfavourable, with high infant mortality rates, nutritional problems and deficiencies in sanitation and water supply. There were continuing problems of lack of access by Palestinians to adequate medical facilities, owing to the insufficiency of facilities in the occupied territories, particularly after the closing of the Hospice hospital in the old city of Jerusalem, and to the high cost of medical care in Israel. In this respect, the Committee deplored the fact that the Special Committee of Experts of the World Health Organization (WHO) had been refused access to the occupied territories by the Israeli authorities, and noted that that Committee had expressed its great concern at the health situation in those territories.

28. The Committee wishes once again to express its utmost concern at these policies and practices of the Israeli authorities and to bring them forcefully to the attention of the General Assembly and the Security Council as they clearly violate the Fourth Geneva Convention of 12 August 1949 7/ and have serious repercussions not only on the attainment by the Palestinians of their inalienable rights, but also on peace and security in the region, and on international efforts to achieve a just, lasting and comprehensive solution to the question of Palestine, the core of the Middle East conflict.

29. At the same time, the Committee noted with appreciation that, in his report on assistance to the Palestinian people (A/41/319-E/1986/72 and Corr.1 and Add.1 and 2), the Secretary-General indicated that agencies, organs and programmes of the United Nations system were continuing to provide assistance in accordance with their respective mandates and that the programme was viewed in the area as an increasingly important factor in the efforts to achieve development and self-sufficiency in the occupied territories.

2. Reactions to developments affecting the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people

(a) Communications to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

30. In response to developments affecting the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, the Chairman of the Committee on several occasions, whenever urgent action was required, drew the attention of the Secretary-General and of the President of the Security Council to such developments and urged them to take appropriate measures in accordance with United Nations resolutions.

31. In his letters, the Chairman reiterated that the policies and practices of the Israeli authorities in the occupied territories were in violation of the fourth Geneva Convention, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and United Nations resolutions, and posed a serious obstacle to international efforts to achieve a just and lasting solution to the Palestine question, the core of the Middle East conflict. The letters also stressed the urgent necessity for a concentrated international effort towards a just solution to the Palestinian question and called for an early convening of the proposed International Peace Conference on the Middle East, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 38/58 C.

32. In a letter dated 13 November 1985, addressed to the Secretary-General (A/40/889-S/17630), the Chairman drew attention to action taken against Palestinians in the occupied territories as a result of the decision by the Israeli

authorities to reinstate policies of administrative detention for up to six months without trial, deportation of persons who were considered "security risks", increased censorship and other measures.

33. In the same letter, the Chairman drew attention to reports that deportation orders had been issued on 28 October 1985 against four well-known Palestinian activists from the West Bank. The intended deportations had been protested by numerous groups and individuals within Israel and abroad.

34. Finally, the Chairman cited reports that arrests without charge had continued, and that 104 people had been so detained. He detailed other measures taken against Palestinians, such as curfews, searches, destruction of houses and censorship measures against the Arab press.

35. In a letter dated 5 February 1986, addressed to the Secretary-General (A/41/140-S/17800), the Chairman again took up the matter of deportation orders issued by the Israeli military authorities against Palestinians in the occupied West Bank. He referred to news dispatches reporting that three of the persons mentioned in his letter of 13 November 1985 (see para. 33 above) had withdrawn their High Court Appeals against their deportation orders stating that they could not expect to get a fair trial in Israel. The Chairman noted that, under Israeli law, defence lawyers were not allowed to view evidence against their clients which judges believed would harm Israeli intelligence networks in the occupied territories. The High Court had, moreover, decided to disallow defence arguments based on the applicability of the fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 to the occupied Palestinian territories. The deportation orders had been carried out despite the obvious injustice of a measure against which there had been numerous protests, in Israel as well as abroad.

36. In the same letter, the Chairman said that the Israeli military governor had served deportation orders on four other West Bank Palestinians. If these were to take place, the number of Palestinians expelled from the occupied territories since the summer of 1985 would reach 29. The Chairman recalled that the Security Council had reaffirmed on several occasions the applicability of the fourth Geneva Convention of 12 August 1949 ^{7/} to the occupied territories and that the General Assembly had adopted resolution 40/161 E of 16 December 1985, calling specifically for cancellation of the deportation orders against the four Palestinians mentioned above, and for an end to all deportations from the occupied territories.

37. In a letter dated 24 March 1986, addressed to the Secretary-General (A/41/229-S/17935), the Acting Chairman expressed the Committee's grave concern that the Israeli authorities had again refused travel permits to Palestinians living in the occupied territories who had been invited to attend a meeting sponsored by the Committee, namely, the meeting held at Geneva from 6 to 7 March to prepare for the Non-Governmental Organizations International Meeting. He recalled that the Committee had had occasion in the past to deplore measures taken by the Israeli authorities against participation by Palestinians in United Nations meetings on the question of Palestine.

38. The Acting Chairman added that, in the opinion of the Committee, those measures were not based on security considerations, but rather, had been aimed at barring international exposure of conditions in the occupied territories and at preventing a meaningful dialogue among the various forces devoted to a peaceful solution, including the Palestinian people themselves. The Acting Chairman appealed to the Secretary-General to do all in his power to ensure that in future

the Israeli authorities would not prevent Palestinians from participating in meetings organized by the Committee.

39. In a letter dated 5 June 1986, addressed to the Secretary-General (A/41/399-S/18133 and Corr.1), the Chairman expressed the Committee's grave concern at recent reports from the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and in the media regarding renewed attacks against Palestinians in the refugee camps of Sabra, Shatila and Burj el-Barajneh in Beirut. The Committee was particularly distressed to learn that neither UNRWA nor the International Committee of the Red Cross had been permitted to enter the camps to evacuate the wounded and provide medical help.

40. The Chairman reasserted that the United Nations, and in particular the Security Council, had a clear responsibility to ensure the physical safety of the Palestinians and to bring about the exercise of their inalienable rights, and urged the Secretary-General to continue to do all in his power to put an end to the senseless violence against the Palestinian refugee camps and to promote progress towards the attainment of a just and lasting solution in accordance with United Nations resolutions.

41. The Chairman reverted to the same issue in his letter of 13 June 1986 (A/41/413-S/18159), stating that despite the appeal of the Security Council, the attacks against the refugee camps had continued and intensified, with tragic consequences for the civilian population, which had no adequate protection. He reaffirmed the responsibility of the United Nations, particularly the Security Council, to guarantee the physical safety of the Palestinian refugees, and earnestly requested the Secretary-General to take urgently all the necessary measures to put an end to the attacks and to provide emergency relief to the refugees.

(b) Action taken within the Security Council

42. In addition to transmitting letters to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council, the Committee followed closely the activities of the Council on matters relating to the Committee's mandate, and participated in Council debates as necessary.

43. In a letter dated 1 October 1985, addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/17509), the Permanent Representative of Tunisia requested an immediate meeting of the Council to consider the grave situation resulting from the violation of Tunisian airspace and the blatant act of aggression perpetrated by Israel against the territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence of Tunisia, which caused great loss of human life and considerable material damage. The Council considered the item at four meetings held between 2 and 4 October 1985.

44. At its 2615th meeting, on 4 October 1985, the Security Council adopted resolution 573 (1985), by which it vigorously condemned the act of armed aggression perpetrated by Israel against Tunisian territory, demanded that Israel refrain from perpetrating such acts of aggression or from the threat to do so, and considered that Tunisia had the right to appropriate reparations. The resolution was adopted by 14 votes to none, with 1 abstention.

45. In a letter dated 30 September 1985, addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/17507), the Permanent Representative of India, referring to the decision of the Conference of Foreign Ministers of Non-Aligned Countries, held at

Luanda from 4 to 8 September 1985, requested, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, the urgent convening of the Security Council under the item "The Middle East problem including the Palestinian question".

46. The Security Council resumed its consideration of the item at five meetings, held between 9 and 11 October 1985.

47. At the 2620th meeting of the Council, on 10 October 1985, the Chairman of the Committee participated in the debate, stating that the fundamental reason for the cycles of violence in the Middle East was the fact that the question of Palestine had not been resolved. That question was at the heart of the Arab-Israeli conflict and deserved constant and continuing attention, with a view to arriving at a just and lasting solution.

48. Continuing, the Chairman stated that the United Nations, through the Security Council, unquestionably had the responsibility for ensuring recognition of the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, to independence, to national sovereignty, to return, to recovery of its property, and to physical protection and decent living conditions in the refugee camps.

49. He recalled that the recommendations made by the Committee, although ever more firmly endorsed by the General Assembly, had neither been followed nor implemented by the Security Council. Those recommendations were solidly based on internationally recognized fundamental principles and the Committee remained convinced that positive measures by the Council to implement them would increase the possibility of the establishment of a just and lasting peace in the Middle East.

50. He further recalled that the General Assembly, in its resolution 38/58 C, had invited the Council to facilitate the organization of the proposed International Peace Conference on the Middle East. Stressing the primary role that should be played by the Council in such a conference, he stated that only the United Nations and the Council itself could ensure that agreements reached would be universally valid and could be guaranteed and applied equitably by all the parties concerned. He urged the Council members not to miss this historic opportunity, and in particular he invited those who still had doubts or reservations or who had rejected the idea to reconsider their position and to work more constructively for the convening and the success of the conference.

51. At the end of the 2622nd meeting of the Council, on 11 October 1985, the President announced that the date of the next meeting of the Security Council to continue consideration of the item would be fixed in consultation with the members of the Council.

52. In a letter dated 16 January 1986, addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/17740), the Permanent Representative of Morocco, in his capacity as current Chairman of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, called attention to the serious threat to international peace and security resulting from Israeli acts of profanation committed recently against the sanctuary of Haram al-Sharif in Al-Quds (Jerusalem) and requested the convening of an urgent meeting of the Council to consider the situation. In a letter of the same date addressed to the President of the Council (S/17741), the Permanent Representative of the United Arab Emirates, in his capacity as Chairman of the Arab Group at the United Nations for the month of January 1986, called attention to the grave situation created in Jerusalem by Israeli actions violating the sanctity of the Haram al-Sharif, and requested that an urgent meeting of the Council be convened to consider that situation.

53. On the basis of the above requests, the Council resumed its consideration of the situation in the occupied Arab territories at eight meetings held between 21 and 30 January 1986.

54. At the 2645th meeting of the Council, on 22 January 1986, the Chairman of the Committee participated in the debate. Referring to the emotional significance of Jerusalem for three world religions and to the patient and determined efforts made over the years to arrive at a just and lasting peace in the region, he deplored the fact that an extremely serious denominational element had now been added to the conflict.

55. Reviewing events that had led to the convening of the Council, the Chairman said that a group of Israeli parliamentarians, some of whom were known for their advocacy of the expulsion of Arabs from Jerusalem and the West Bank, had visited the sanctuary on two occasions, with the permission of the Muslim authorities, for the declared purpose of inspecting construction work in progress. They had, however, used the visits as a pretext to engage in acts of provocation, such as reciting Jewish prayers and taking photographs. This had led to protest demonstrations by Arabs, which had been violently dispersed by the police, who had fired shots and used tear-gas, wounding five Arabs. Nineteen Arabs were also arrested. The reported behaviour on the part of Israeli parliamentarians was undoubtedly a profanation of one of the most sacred places of Islam and had aroused anger not only in the occupied Arab territories but also in the Muslim world at large. In the already highly charged atmosphere of the region, the religious provocation had compounded the political conflict, with unforeseeable and perhaps disastrous consequences for international peace and security.

56. He could not but conclude that the actions he had related were aimed at establishing permanent Israeli domination over all of Jerusalem and the occupied territories and creating a fait accompli by encouraging Arabs to emigrate permanently from the country. He referred to previous acts of aggression against the Muslim and Christian Holy Places and particularly cited excavation work conducted at the Al-Aqsa Mosque, as well as criminal acts of arson and armed attack committed against the Mosque in August 1969 and in April 1982. In March 1983 and January 1984, attempts had even been made to blow up the structure.

57. The Chairman recalled many resolutions of the Council concerning the status of Jerusalem with which the Israeli authorities had failed to comply. In particular he cited resolutions 252 (1968) of 21 May 1968, 267 (1969) of 3 July 1969 and 271 (1969) of 15 September 1969, by which the Council had reaffirmed the principle of the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by military conquest and had confirmed in the most explicit terms that all legislative and administrative measures taken by Israel to change the status of Jerusalem, in particular the "fundamental law", were in violation of the fourth Geneva Convention of 12 August 1949, 7/ and as such, were completely null and void and must be rescinded immediately.

58. The Chairman went on to say that the Committee had unceasingly stressed that tension and violence would continue to grow in the occupied territories as long as the question of Palestine remained unresolved. It was therefore more urgent than ever to initiate the negotiation process under the auspices of the United Nations.

59. At its 2650th meeting, on 30 January 1986, the Security Council had before it a draft resolution sponsored by the Congo, Ghana, Madagascar, Trinidad and Tobago and the United Arab Emirates (S/17769/Rev.1) by which the Council would have

expressed its deep concern at "the provocative acts by Israelis, including members of the Knesset, which have violated the sanctity of the sanctuary of the Haram al-Sharif in Jerusalem" and would have strongly deplored them, affirming that "such acts constitute a serious obstruction to achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East, the failure of which could also endanger international peace and security".

60. By adopting the draft resolution, the Council would have determined once more that all measures taken by Israel to change the physical character, demographic composition, institutional structure or status of the Palestinian and other Arab territories occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem or any part thereof, had no legal validity, and that the settlement policy and practices were in flagrant violation of the fourth Geneva Convention; that all legislative and administrative measures taken by Israel, the occupying Power, which had altered or purported to alter the character and status of the Holy City of Jerusalem were null and void and had to be rescinded forthwith.

61. The draft resolution also called upon Israel, the occupying Power, to observe scrupulously the norms of international law governing military occupation, to prevent any hindrance to the discharge of the established functions of the Supreme Islamic Council in Jerusalem and to implement forthwith the provisions of the resolution and of relevant Security Council resolutions. It would further have requested the Secretary-General to report to the Security Council on the implementation of the resolution by 1 May 1986.

62. The draft resolution received 13 votes to 1, with 1 abstention, and was not adopted, owing to the negative vote of a permanent member of the Security Council.

63. The Committee further noted that, on 6 June 1986, following consultations, the President of the Security Council issued a statement on behalf of the members of the Council (S/18138), expressing grave concern at the continuing intensification of the fighting in Beirut, especially in and around the Palestinian refugee camps. The Council appealed to all concerned to use their influence in bringing about the cessation of the fighting in order to enable UNRWA as well as other humanitarian organizations to mount emergency operations for the benefit of the populations concerned, including the Palestinian refugees towards whom the international community had a particular responsibility.

3. Action taken by the Committee to promote the convening of the proposed International Peace Conference on the Middle East in accordance with General Assembly resolution 38/58 C of 13 December 1983

64. In resolution 40/96 D, the General Assembly, *inter alia*, reaffirmed again its endorsement of the call for convening the International Peace Conference on the Middle East in conformity with the provisions of its resolution 38/58 C; stressed the urgent need for additional constructive efforts by all Governments in order to convene the conference without further delay and for the achievement of its peaceful objectives; determined that the question of Palestine was the root cause of the Arab-Israeli conflict in the Middle East; called upon the Governments of Israel and the United States of America to reconsider their positions towards the attainment of peace in the Middle East through the convening of the conference; requested the Secretary-General, in consultation with the Security Council, to continue his efforts with a view to convening the conference and to report thereon

to the General Assembly not later than 15 March 1986) and, decided to consider at its forty-first session the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the resolution.

65. Accordingly, in its programme of work for 1986 (A/AC.183/1986/CRP.1/Rev.2) the Committee decided that, in its activities during 1986, it would continue, as a matter of priority, to exert all efforts to promote the early convening of the proposed conference, while urging the understanding and further co-operation of all concerned for the resolution of a problem of such fundamental importance to the maintenance of international peace and security. This goal was also stressed by the Chairman in his letter to the Secretary-General, of 3 February 1986, inviting the participation of all States and intergovernmental organizations in the work of the Committee (see para. 13 above).

66. The Committee was greatly encouraged that, in seminars and in symposia and meetings of non-governmental organizations on the question of Palestine held under the aegis of the United Nations, participants strongly held that the convening of such a conference should be a priority matter since it offered the best and most comprehensive approach to a just and lasting solution to the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict (see paras. 82, 85, 88 and 97-99 below).

67. At its 122nd meeting, on 26 November 1985, the Committee had decided that, as stated in its report to the Assembly at its fortieth session, 8/ it intended to complete the process of sending delegations to the capitals of the members of the Security Council, and that arrangements for these visits would be decided in due course.

68. The Committee noted that, in his letter to the President of the Security Council in pursuance of resolution 40/96 D, included in his report on the matter (A/41/215-S/17916), the Secretary-General had stated that, in the light of the debate of the General Assembly on the above resolution and other available information, he believed that the obstacles that had so far prevented the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East as called for by the General Assembly still existed. However, he also believed that the observations contained in his report of 22 October 1985 (A/40/779-S/17581) remained valid.

69. The Committee further noted that, in his reply to the Secretary-General of 28 February 1986, the President of the Security Council said that he had undertaken the necessary consultations with regard to the proposed conference. It was clear from those consultations that almost all members were in favour of the principle of holding such a conference. The majority of those members felt that it should be convened as early as possible. Others considered that the conditions for the success of the conference did not yet exist and felt that new efforts should be made in that respect. The President said that, in that context, members of the Council invited the Secretary-General to continue his efforts and consultations on the subject in the light of General Assembly resolution 40/96 D.

70. The Committee noted with appreciation that the Secretary-General intended to pursue his efforts in the light of General Assembly resolution 40/96 D and the views expressed by members of the Security Council and that he would keep the General Assembly and the Security Council informed of any new developments in this regard.

4. Attendance at international conferences and meetings

71. In accordance with its mandate, since its previous report to the General Assembly, the Committee was represented at the following international conferences and meetings:

- (a) Meeting in observance of the Day of Solidarity with South African Political Prisoners, held in New York on 11 October 1985;
- (b) Meeting of the United Nations Council for Namibia to mark the commemoration of the Week of Solidarity with the People of Namibia and Their Liberation Movement, SWAPO, held in New York on 28 October 1985;
- (c) Sixteenth Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers, held at Fes from 4 to 10 January 1986;
- (d) Meeting in observance of the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, held in New York on 21 March 1986;
- (e) Ministerial Meeting of the Co-ordinating Bureau of Non-Aligned Countries, held at New Delhi, from 16 to 19 April 1986;
- (f) Fourteenth Council Session of the Afro-Asian People's Solidarity Organization, held in Moscow from 14 to 17 May 1986;
- (g) Seminar on "World Action for the Immediate Independence of Namibia", held at Valletta, Malta, from 19 to 23 May 1986;
- (h) World Conference on Sanctions against Racist South Africa, held in Paris from 16 to 20 June 1986;
- (i) International Conference for the Immediate Independence of Namibia, held at Vienna from 7 to 11 July 1986;
- (j) Forty-fourth ordinary session of the Council of Ministers and twenty-second session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity, held at Addis Ababa, from 21 to 30 July 1986;
- (k) Solemn meeting in commemoration of Namibia Day, held in New York on 26 August 1986;
- (l) Eighth summit Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries, held at Harare, from 26 August to 7 September 1986.

5. Action taken by United Nations bodies, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and intergovernmental organizations

72. The Committee continued to follow with great interest and to note the actions taken by the Movement of the Non-Aligned Countries, United Nations bodies and intergovernmental organizations on matters relevant to its mandate since the submission of its report to the General Assembly at its fortieth session. The Committee was greatly encouraged that, in various decisions and resolutions adopted by those bodies, as listed hereunder, all previous decisions regarding a comprehensive and peaceful settlement of the Palestine question were once again reaffirmed, and strengthened support was expressed for the Committee's

recommendations, in particular for the early convening of the proposed International Peace Conference on the Middle East, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 38/58 C:

- (a) Communiqué of the Co-ordination Meeting of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, held in New York on 9 October 1985 (A/40/758-S/17570, annex);
- (b) Communiqué adopted by Heads of Government of Commonwealth States at their summit, held at Nassau from 16 to 22 October 1985 (A/40/817, annex);
- (c) Paragraph on the Middle East problem in the Declaration of the member States of the Warsaw Treaty Organization, issued at Sofia on 23 October 1985 (A/C.1/40/7, annex, sect. IV);
- (d) Conference of African Ministers of Information at its first extraordinary session, held at Cairo from 23 to 25 November 1985 (A/40/980, annex, resolution ECIM/RES.3 (I));
- (e) Sixteenth Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers, held at Fez from 6 to 10 January 1986 (A/41/326-S/18049, annex III, resolutions 1/16-P, 2/16-P and 8/16-P);
- (f) Final communiqué of the tenth session of the Al-Quda Committee of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, held at Marrakesh on 21 and 22 January 1986 (A/41/113-S/17760, annex);
- (g) Forty-second session of the Commission on Human Rights, held at Geneva from 3 February to 14 March 1986 (resolutions 1986/1 A and B); 9/
- (h) 75th Inter-Parliamentary Conference of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, held at Mexico City from 7 to 12 April 1986 (A/41/435, annex);
- (i) Ministerial Meeting of the Co-ordinating Bureau of Non-Aligned Countries, held at New Delhi from 16 to 19 April 1986 (A/41/341 and Corr.1, resolutions XVII and XIX);
- (j) Thirty-ninth World Health Assembly, Geneva (resolution WHA 39.10 of 15 May 1986);
- (k) Economic and Social Council, first and second regular sessions of 1986 (resolutions 1986/21 of 23 May 1986 (E/1986/INF/4) and 1986/49 of 22 July 1986 (E/1986/INF/7));
- (l) Declaration on the situation in Lebanon adopted by the Foreign Ministers of the 12 States members of the European Community at The Hague on 27 June 1986 (A/41/441-S/18197);
- (m) Forty-fourth ordinary session of the Council of Ministers and twenty-second session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity, held at Addis Ababa from 21 to 30 July 1986 (resolution CM/RES.1061 (XLIV));
- (n) Declaration adopted at the eighth summit Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries, held at Harare from 26 August to 7 September 1986 (chaps. XVII and XIX).

B. Action taken by the Committee in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 40/96 A and B of 12 December 1985

1. Co-operation with non-governmental organizations

73. A number of activities were undertaken by the Committee and by the Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat, under the Committee's guidance, with the objective of further expanding co-operation with non-governmental organizations active on the question of Palestine, particularly through additional meetings for such organizations, in order to heighten awareness of the facts relating to the question of Palestine and to create a more favourable atmosphere for the full implementation of the recommendations of the Committee.

74. In accordance with its mandate from the General Assembly, the Committee had decided to hold, in 1986, regional symposia for non-governmental organizations in Latin America, North America and Europe; an international meeting of non-governmental organizations; and two preparatory meetings for the North American symposium and the international meeting respectively.

75. In view of the financial crisis of the United Nations, and in response to the proposals for cost-saving measures formulated by the Secretary-General in his report to the General Assembly at its resumed fortieth session (A/40/1102 and Corr.1), the Committee decided to adjust its calendar of meetings for 1986 by deferring to 1987 the Latin American symposium and by combining the European regional symposium and the international meeting in a single event. It also decided to keep travel costs and other expenses to a minimum in carrying out its programme of work.

76. The Committee had earlier decided, in accordance with past practice, to combine the North American symposium and the North American seminar in a single event.

77. In deciding on those measures, the Committee expressed a desire to respond to the Secretary-General's efforts to generate immediate savings, in a way, however, that would not be detrimental to the future programme of work of the Committee, and stressed that the achievement of its goals, as mandated by the General Assembly, remained of primary importance for the international community.

78. In accordance with its decision to continue to give utmost priority to efforts to promote the early convening of the proposed International Peace Conference on the Middle East, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 38/58 C, the Committee decided that the non-governmental symposia and meetings should continue to emphasize the importance of convening the conference and structured the programmes for those activities accordingly.

79. The preparatory meeting for the North American regional symposium for non-governmental organizations was held at United Nations Headquarters on 24 and 25 February 1986 and was attended by the members of the North American Interim Co-ordinating Committee of Non-governmental Organizations, elected by the participants at the North American regional symposium for non-governmental organizations held in July 1985. The meeting worked out the various aspects of the programme for the symposium and the modalities for expanding the network of non-governmental organizations active on the question of Palestine in North America.

80. The preparatory meeting for the International Meeting of Non-Governmental Organizations was held at the United Nations Office at Geneva on 6 and 7 March 1986 and was attended by members of the International Co-ordinating Committee of Non-Governmental Organizations elected by the participants at the International Meeting of Non-Governmental Organizations held in September 1985. In that connection, the Committee deplored that the Israeli authorities had again prevented two representatives from the occupied territories from attending the meeting (see para. 37 above). In accordance with its mandate, the preparatory meeting worked out the details of the programme for the International Meeting of Non-Governmental Organizations.

81. The North American regional non-governmental organization symposium for non-governmental organizations was held at United Nations Headquarters from 11 to 13 June 1986, immediately following the North American regional seminar (see para. 94 below). The symposium was attended by 44 participants and 6 observers from non-governmental organizations in the United States and Canada, by a delegation of the Committee, and by a number of observers from governmental and intergovernmental organizations and liberation movements. It considered the following topics:

(a) Urgency of creating the conditions for the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East in accordance with General Assembly resolution 38/58 C;

(b) Ways and means of building popular North American support for a just and lasting peace in the Middle East.

82. The Committee noted with appreciation that the symposium adopted a declaration strongly supporting the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East in accordance with General Assembly resolution 38/58 C and calling upon the peoples and Governments of the United States and Canada to take all possible steps to secure the implementation of that resolution in order to achieve a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Arab-Israeli conflict, the core of which was the question of Palestine. The Committee was also pleased that the symposium participants agreed on common objectives and strategies to be implemented by North American non-governmental organizations to promote a just and lasting peace in the Middle East, and established a North American Co-ordinating Committee to co-ordinate their work. The full text of the declaration was issued as a Committee document (A/AC.183/1986/3), and the report of the symposium was issued as a special bulletin of the Division for Palestinian Rights.

83. The European regional symposium for non-governmental organizations was held at the United Nations Office at Vienna on 30 June and 1 July 1986, immediately followed by the International Meeting of Non-Governmental Organizations, from 2 to 4 July 1986.

84. The symposium was attended by 33 participants and 13 observers from non-governmental organizations in various European countries, by a delegation of the Committee, and by observers from Governments and intergovernmental organizations.

85. The main topic of the symposium was "Europe confronting its responsibilities for a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East: efforts by the United Nations". The Committee noted with appreciation that the symposium had adopted a declaration upholding the proposed International Peace Conference on the

Middle East in accordance with General Assembly resolution 38/58 C, with the participation of all parties concerned, including the PLO as the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, and calling upon all European Governments to support the convening of the International Peace Conference and to work for its realization as a top priority. The Committee was also pleased that the symposium participants had agreed on common objectives and activities for European non-governmental organizations with a view to encouraging their Governments to pursue those policies, and had established a European Co-ordinating Committee to harmonize their future work. The full text of the declaration was issued as document A/AC.183/1986/4, and the report of the symposium was published as a special bulletin of the Division for Palestinian rights.

86. The International Meeting of Non-Governmental Organizations was attended by 66 participants and 16 observers from non-governmental organizations in the international community, by a delegation of the Committee and by observers from Governments and intergovernmental organizations.

87. It considered the following topics:

(a) The need for and urgency of convening the International Peace Conference on the Middle East in accordance with General Assembly resolution 38/58 C:

- (i) The situation of Palestinians in the territories occupied by Israel in 1967;
 - (ii) The costs and dangers of not implementing resolution 38/58 C;
 - (iii) Ways and means of promoting the early implementation of resolution 38/58 C;
 - (iv) United Nations endeavours and key United Nations resolutions bearing upon the convening of the International Peace Conference;
- (b) Mobilization of public opinion and the question of Palestine.

88. The Committee noted with appreciation that, in the declaration adopted at the end of the meeting, the participating non-governmental organizations had once again expressed their support for the proposed International Peace Conference on the Middle East in accordance with General Assembly resolution 38/58 C, with the participation of all parties concerned on an equal footing. The Committee further noted with appreciation that the non-governmental organizations had agreed on common objectives and strategies and had expressed their determination to strengthen their efforts for the achievement of a peaceful solution to the question of Palestine, in particular in the fields of human rights, development and mobilization of international public opinion. The full text of the declaration was issued as document A/AC.183/1986/5, and the report on the meeting was published as a special bulletin of the Division for Palestinian Rights.

2. Seminars

89. In its programme of work for 1986, the Committee decided that regional seminars would be held in Europe, Africa and North America. In addition, as mentioned above, it was decided that the North American seminar and symposium would be combined.

90. The Committee further decided that the regional seminars would address the following topics:

(a) The International Peace Conference on the Middle East, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 38/58 C, the need for such a conference and efforts and prospects to promote a successful outcome and benefits thereof;

(b) The role of the Palestine Liberation Organization;

(c) The question of Palestine and public opinion [in the region concerned];

(d) The United Nations and the question of Palestine.

91. It was also decided that other topics of particular relevance to the region concerned might be added.

92. The Committee appreciated the decision of the Government of Turkey to provide the venue for the European regional seminar (the thirteenth United Nations Seminar on the Question of Palestine), which took place at Istanbul from 7 to 11 April 1986.

93. The conclusions and recommendations of the seminar have been issued as Committee document A/AC.183/1986/1. The full text of the report of the seminar has been published as a special bulletin of the Division for Palestinian Rights.

94. The fourteenth United Nations Seminar on the Question of Palestine was held at United Nations Headquarters from 9 to 10 June 1986. The seminar concentrated on the topic relating to "The International Conference on the Middle East in accordance with General Assembly resolution 38/58 C, the need for such a conference and efforts and prospects to promote a successful outcome and benefits thereof". The conclusions and recommendations adopted by the seminar have been issued as Committee document A/AC.183/1986/2. The full text of the report of the seminar has been published as a special bulletin of the Division for Palestinian Rights.

95. The Committee appreciated the decision of the Government of Kenya to agree to the holding of the fifteenth United Nations Seminar on the Question of Palestine at the United Nations Office at Nairobi, where it took place from 18 to 22 August 1986.

96. In addition to the topics mentioned above (para. 90), the seminar also considered the relations between Israel and South Africa. The conclusions and recommendations of the seminar have been issued as Committee document A/AC.183/1986/6. The full text of the report of the seminar has been published as a special bulletin of the Division for Palestinian Rights.

97. The Committee noted that, in their conclusions and recommendations, the participants in the three regional seminars had reaffirmed that the problem of the exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people remained the core of the Middle East conflict and that no comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the region could be achieved without the realization of those rights in accordance with United Nations resolutions.

98. The Committee was encouraged that the seminar participants had also reaffirmed the need for convening the International Peace Conference on the Middle East under the auspices of the United Nations in accordance with General Assembly resolution 38/58 C, and that they had appealed to those States Members of the United Nations which did not support the attainment of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian

people, especially the United States and Israel, to reconsider their position towards the solution of the problem.

99. The Committee further noted that the seminar participants had recommended the intensification of political and diplomatic efforts by all concerned for realizing a comprehensive, just and durable settlement of the conflict in the Middle East, and that they had called for additional efforts by the United Nations and by all concerned to influence public opinion in that direction through wider dissemination of accurate information on the question of Palestine.

3. Other activities

100. The Committee noted with appreciation that the Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat had pursued its programme of research and publications relating to various aspects of the question of Palestine in the year under review.

101. The International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People was observed on 29 November 1985 at the Headquarters of the United Nations in New York and at the United Nations Offices at Geneva and Vienna. The Committee noted with appreciation that the International Day had been equally commemorated in many other cities throughout the world in 1985.

V. ACTION TAKEN BY THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INFORMATION IN ACCORDANCE WITH GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 40/96 C

102. The Committee noted with appreciation that, during the past year, the Department of Public Information had continued its information programme on the question of Palestine, in accordance with previous relevant General Assembly resolutions, with a view to furthering the world-wide dissemination of accurate and comprehensive information on the question. However, the financial situation of the United Nations has led to the curtailment of several activities in this regard. The information programme included publications, radio-visual coverage, a fact-finding mission for journalists to the Middle East and a series of national and regional encounters for journalists.

103. In publication activity, the Department continued to disseminate information on the question of Palestine through articles, press releases and booklets. In particular, the Department published a 37-page booklet entitled The United Nations and the Question of Palestine, which deals comprehensively with the relevant activities of the Organization from the first special session of the General Assembly in 1947 to programmes carried out in 1985. 10/

104. The UN Chronicle also reported on the consideration given to the question of Palestine and other relevant items by the General Assembly at its fortieth session, the Security Council and other United Nations bodies. The Department also disseminated, as widely as possible, information regarding the seminars and symposia held by the Committee.

105. The Department's coverage of the question of Palestine included radio news programme broadcasts in all the official languages of the United Nations. The occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, 29 November 1986, will be highlighted in feature programmes and news dispatches. In addition, an exclusive series of radio programmes will be produced, four each in Arabic, English, French and Spanish.

106. As part of its ongoing visual coverage of events at Headquarters, the Department produced a substantial number of television news items on the question of Palestine and related Middle East events. A Spanish language magazine on the Middle East was produced and disseminated to six countries in Latin America.

107. The News Production Section of the Department will cover the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, on 29 November 1986, and the deliberations on the question of Palestine and other relevant items during the forty-first session of the General Assembly. It is also anticipated that Chinese and French television magazines will each produce at least one programme on the question of Palestine during 1986. Due to the financial situation of the United Nations, the production of a new short film on the question of Palestine was deferred to 1987.

108. Activities that focused on acquainting the media with the facts and developments pertaining to the question of Palestine included a fact-finding mission to the Middle East. A team of seven prominent journalists and media representatives from various parts of the world visited Egypt, Jordan and the Syrian Arab Republic from 27 April to 15 May 1986. Visits to Israel and the West Bank were not possible since no response was received from Israel to an official request for such visits. The purpose of the mission was to provide an opportunity

for the participants to learn at first hand and in depth about the various aspects of the question through discussions with senior officials and prominent personalities and also visits to Palestinian refugee camps. The mission met with high-level officials and Palestinian leaders and received extensive media coverage during the visit. Participants published numerous articles upon their return to their home countries.

109. In 1986, as in 1985, the Department organized two regional encounters for journalists on the question of Palestine, bringing high-level journalists together with experts on the question of Palestine. The first encounter was held at Vienna, Austria, for the European region, from 25 to 28 February 1986. The second at Lusaka, Zambia, from 12 to 15 August 1986. The objective of both encounters was to promote a better understanding of the question among leaders of the media by bringing them together with experts on the subject for brief, informal discussions. Accordingly, 15 high-level journalists from the press, radio and television media participated in each encounter. The journalists were impressed by the high calibre of the panelists and by the informal and candid character of the presentations made. It was their belief that the encounter, which they found useful, informative and interesting, had greatly increased their knowledge of the subject.

110. The Department also organized a series of national encounters in which a team of expert panelists held meetings, in the form of in-depth press conferences, with national journalists and foreign correspondents in various countries. European national encounters were held in Denmark, Hungary and Greece between 24 February and March 1986. Another national encounter for Africa was held at Nairobi, Kenya, on 18 August 1986.

111. United Nations information centres throughout the world continued to carry out information activities in connection with the question of Palestine and made available to the public United Nations publications on the subject. The centres will also organize a world-wide observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People on 29 November 1986.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COMMITTEE

112. The Committee contends that action by the Security Council is now required to take positively into account the recommendations of the Committee and those adopted by consensus at the International Conference on the Question of Palestine, held at Geneva from 29 August to 7 September 1983, and endorsed by General Assembly resolution 38/58 C. It once again recalls that those recommendations are solidly founded on fundamental and internationally recognized principles relating to the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

113. The Committee wishes to stress once again that it considers the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East in accordance with General Assembly resolution 38/58 C, to be an essential element in the progress towards a solution of the question of Palestine. It also notes that there is overwhelming support for that conference. The Committee intends to continue to make the convening of the conference the focal point of its work programme and to do everything possible to increase awareness of the importance of that conference through contacts with Governments as well as with non-governmental organizations.

114. The Committee therefore annexes its recommendations and those of the International Conference on the Question of Palestine, held at Geneva in 1983, to the present report (see annexes I and II).

115. The Committee stresses that its original recommendations were specifically designed to enable the Palestinian people to attain its inalienable rights, as affirmed in General Assembly resolution 3236 (XXIX).

116. The Committee also stresses that the Geneva Declaration on Palestine, adopted by the International Conference on the Question of Palestine, contained specific guidelines for the achievement of a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict, of which an essential element would be the establishment of an independent Palestinian State in Palestine. Those guidelines were endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 38/58 C, and reaffirmed in resolutions 39/49 D and 40/96 D which, inter alia, stressed the urgent need for additional constructive efforts by all Governments in order to convene the conference without further delay and for the achievement of its peaceful objectives.

117. The Committee strongly points out that the question of Palestine has reached a critical phase and urges a renewed, concentrated and collective effort to find a just solution under United Nations auspices, on the basis of relevant United Nations resolutions and end the unacceptable plight of the Palestinian people.

118. To this end, the Committee is convinced that the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, as endorsed in General Assembly resolution 38/58 C, and generating quasi-unanimous support, provides a comprehensive opportunity for all the parties concerned to participate in negotiations that should lead to a just and lasting solution of the question.

119. The Committee recommends that the General Assembly should call once again upon Israel and the United States to reconsider their positions towards the attainment of peace through the convening of the conference, appeal to all countries to exert their best efforts to achieve the convening of that conference, and renew the mandate of the Secretary-General to continue his contacts, in consultation with the Security Council, on the preparations for the convening of the conference.

120. The Committee is pleased and greatly encouraged by the widespread understanding it has already secured, and the favourable reaction of non-governmental organisations and international public opinion in general to its recommendations. The Committee will continue to engage in the process of evaluating the progress achieved and the experience gained in its various activities, with the goal of achieving optimum effectiveness and impact in carrying out its mandate.

Notes

1/ The Committee is composed of the following members: Afghanistan, Cuba, Cyprus, German Democratic Republic, Guinea, Guyana, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mali, Malta, Nigeria, Pakistan, Romania, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic and Yugoslavia.

2/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-first Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/31/35).

3/ Ibid., Thirty-second Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/32/35); *ibid.*, Thirty-third Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/33/35 and Corr.1); *ibid.*, Thirty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/34/35 and Corr.1); *ibid.*, Thirty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/35/35 and Corr.1); *ibid.*, Thirty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/36/35); *ibid.*, Thirty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/37/35 and Corr.1); *ibid.*, Thirty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/38/35); *ibid.*, Thirty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/39/35); and *ibid.*, Fortieth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/40/35).

4/ Report of the International Conference on the Question of Palestine, Geneva, 29 August-7 September 1983 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.83.I.21), chap. I, sect. B.

5/ The observers at the Committee meetings were as follows: Algeria, Bulgaria, China, Czechoslovakia, Ecuador, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Mauritania, Morocco, Nicaragua, Niger, Sri Lanka, Syrian Arab Republic, United Arab Emirates, Viet Nam, the League of Arab States and the Organization of the Islamic Conference. The Palestine Liberation Organization, as the representative of the Palestinian people, the principal party to the question of Palestine, was also an observer.

6/ The current membership of the Working Group is as follows: Afghanistan, Cuba, German Democratic Republic, Guinea, Guyana, India, Malta, Pakistan, Senegal, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic and, as the representative of the people directly concerned, the Palestine Liberation Organization.

7/ United Nations, Treaty Series, vol. 75, No. 973, p. 287.

8/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Fortieth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/40/35), para. 169.

9/ Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1986, Supplement No. 2 (E/1986/22), chap. II.

10/ The booklet (DPI/861) is currently available in English; the Arabic, French, German and Spanish versions are in production.

Recommendations of the Committee endorsed by the General Assembly
at its thirty-first session*

I. Basic considerations and guidelines

59. The question of Palestine is at the heart of the Middle East problem, and consequently, the Committee stresses its belief that no solution in the Middle East can be envisaged which does not fully take into account the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people.

60. The legitimate and inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to return to their homes and property and to achieve self-determination, national independence and sovereignty are endorsed by the Committee in the conviction that the full implementation of these rights will contribute decisively to a comprehensive and final settlement of the Middle East crisis.

61. The participation of the Palestine Liberation Organization, the representative of the Palestinian people, on an equal footing with other parties, on the basis of General Assembly resolutions 3236 (XXIX) and 3375 (XXX) is indispensable in all efforts, deliberations and conferences on the Middle East which are held under the auspices of the United Nations.

62. The Committee recalls the fundamental principle of the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force and stresses the consequent obligation for complete and speedy evacuation of any territory so occupied.

63. The Committee considers that it is the duty and responsibility of all concerned to enable the Palestinians to exercise their inalienable rights.

64. The Committee recommends an expanded and more influential role by the United Nations and its organs in promoting a just solution to the question of Palestine and in the implementation of such a solution. The Security Council, in particular, should take appropriate action to facilitate the exercise by the Palestinians of their right to return to their homes, lands and property. The Committee, furthermore, urges the Security Council to promote action towards a just solution, taking into account all the powers conferred on it by the Charter of the United Nations.

65. It is with this perspective in view and on the basis of the numerous resolutions of the United Nations, after due consideration of all the facts, proposals and suggestions advanced in the course of its deliberations, that the Committee submits its recommendations on the modalities for the implementation of the exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.

* Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-first Session, Supplement No. 3 (A/31/35), paras. 59-72.

II. The right of return

66. The natural and inalienable right of Palestinians to return to their homes is recognized by resolution 194 (III), which the General Assembly has reaffirmed almost every year since its adoption. This right was also unanimously recognized by the Security Council in its resolution 237 (1967); the time for the urgent implementation of these resolutions is long overdue.

67. Without prejudice to the right of all Palestinians to return to their homes, lands and property, the Committee considers that the programme of implementation of the exercise of this right may be carried out in two phases:

Phase one

68. The first phase involves the return to their homes of the Palestinians displaced as a result of the war of June 1967. The Committee recommends that:

- (i) The Security Council should request the immediate implementation of its resolution 237 (1967) and that such implementation should not be related to any other condition;
- (ii) The resources of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and/or of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, suitably financed and mandated, may be employed to assist in the solution of any logistical problems involved in the resettlement of those returning to their homes. These agencies could also assist, in co-operation with the host countries and the Palestine Liberation Organization, in the identification of the displaced Palestinians.

Phase two

69. The second phase deals with the return to their homes of the Palestinians displaced between 1948 and 1967. The Committee recommends that:

- (i) While the first phase is being implemented, the United Nations in co-operation with the States directly involved, and the Palestine Liberation Organization as the interim representative of the Palestinian entity, should proceed to make the necessary arrangements to enable Palestinians displaced between 1948 and 1967 to exercise their right to return to their homes and property, in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions, particularly General Assembly resolution 194 (III);
- (ii) Palestinians not choosing to return to their homes should be paid just and equitable compensation as provided for in resolution 194 (III).

III. The right to self-determination, national independence and sovereignty

70. The Palestinian people has the inherent right to self-determination, national independence and sovereignty in Palestine. The Committee considers that the evacuation of the territories occupied by force and in violation of the principles of the Charter and relevant resolutions of the United Nations is a conditio sine qua non for the exercise by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights in Palestine. The Committee considers furthermore, that upon the return of the Palestinians to their homes and property and with the establishment of an independent Palestinian entity, the Palestinian people will be able to exercise its rights to self-determination and to decide its form of government without external interference.

71. The Committee also feels that the United Nations has an historical duty and responsibility to render all assistance necessary to promote the economic development and prosperity of the Palestinian entity.

72. To these ends, the Committee recommends that:

(a) A timetable should be established by the Security Council for the complete withdrawal by Israeli occupation forces from those areas occupied in 1967; such withdrawal should be completed no later than 1 June 1977;

The Security Council may need to provide temporary peace-keeping forces in order to facilitate the process of withdrawal;

(c) Israel should be requested by the Security Council to desist from the establishment of new settlements and to withdraw during this period from settlements established since 1967 in the occupied territories. Arab property and all essential services in these areas should be maintained intact;

(d) Israel should also be requested to abide scrupulously by the provisions of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949 and to declare, pending its speedy withdrawal from these territories, its recognition of the applicability of that Convention;

(e) The evacuated territories, with all property and services intact, should be taken over by the United Nations, which with the co-operation of the League of Arab States, will subsequently hand over these evacuated areas to the Palestine Liberation Organization as the representative of the Palestinian people;

(f) The United Nations should, if necessary, assist in establishing communications between Gaza and the West Bank;

(g) As soon as the independent Palestinian entity has been established, the United Nations, in co-operation with the States directly involved and the Palestinian entity, should, taking into account General Assembly resolution 3375 (XXX), make further arrangements for the full implementation of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, the resolution of outstanding problems and the establishment of a just and lasting peace in the region, in accordance with all relevant United Nations resolutions;

(h) The United Nations should provide the economic and technical assistance necessary for the consolidation of the Palestinian entity.

Geneva Declaration on Palestine and the Programme of Action
for the Achievement of Palestinian Rights a/

A. Geneva Declaration on Palestine

In pursuance of General Assembly resolutions 36/120 C of 10 December 1981, ES-7/7 of 19 August 1982 and 37/86 C of 10 December 1982, an International Conference on the Question of Palestine was convened at the United Nations Office at Geneva from 29 August to 7 September 1983 to seek effective ways and means to enable the Palestinian people to attain and to exercise their inalienable rights. The Conference was opened by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, and presided over by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Senegal, Moustapha Niassé.

* * *

1. The Conference, having thoroughly considered the question of Palestine in all its aspects, expresses the grave concern of all nations and peoples regarding the international tension that has persisted for several decades in the Middle East, the principal cause of which is the denial by Israel, and those supporting its expansionist policies, of the inalienable legitimate rights of the Palestinian people. The Conference reaffirms and stresses that a just solution of the question of Palestine, the core of the problem, is the crucial element in a comprehensive, just and lasting political settlement in the Middle East.

2. The Conference recognizes that, as one of the most acute and complex problems of our time, the question of Palestine - inherited by the United Nations at the time of its establishment - requires a comprehensive, just and lasting political settlement. This settlement must be based on the implementation of the relevant United Nations resolutions concerning the question of Palestine and the attainment of the legitimate, inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including the right to self-determination and the right to the establishment of its own independent State in Palestine and should also be based on the provision by the Security Council of guarantees for peace and security among all States in the region, including the independent Palestinian State, within secure and internationally recognized boundaries. The Conference is convinced that the attainment by the Palestinian people of their inalienable rights, as defined by General Assembly resolution 3236 (XXIX) of 22 November 1974, will contribute substantially to the achievement of peace and stability in the Middle East.

3. The Conference considers the role of the United Nations in the achievement of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East to be essential and paramount. It emphasizes the need for respect for, and application of, the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations, the resolutions of the United Nations relevant to the question of Palestine and the observance of the principles of international law.

4. The Conference considers that the various proposals consistent with the principles of international law, which have been presented on this question, such as the Arab peace plan adopted unanimously at the Twelfth Arab Summit Conference (see A/37/696-S/15510, annex), held at Fez, Morocco, in September 1982, should serve as guidelines for concerted international effort to resolve the question of Palestine. These guidelines include the following:

(a) The attainment by the Palestinian people of its legitimate inalienable rights, including the right to return, the right to self-determination and the right to establish its own independent State in Palestine;

(b) The right of the Palestine Liberation Organization, the representative of the Palestinian people, to participate on an equal footing with other parties in all efforts, deliberations and conferences on the Middle East;

(c) The need to put an end to Israel's occupation of the Arab territories, in accordance with the principle of the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force, and, consequently, the need to secure Israeli withdrawal from the territories occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem;

(d) The need to oppose and reject such Israeli policies and practices in the occupied territories, including Jerusalem, and any de facto situation created by Israel as are contrary to international law and relevant United Nations resolutions, particularly the establishment of settlements, as these policies and practices constitute major obstacles to the achievement of peace in the Middle East;

(e) The need to reaffirm as null and void all legislative and administrative measures and actions taken by Israel, the occupying Power, which have altered or purported to alter the character and status of the Holy City of Jerusalem, including the expropriation of land and property situated thereon, and in particular the so-called "Basic Law" on Jerusalem and the proclamation of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel;

(f) The right of all States in the region to existence within secure and internationally recognized boundaries, with justice and security for all the people, the sine qua non of which is the recognition and attainment of the legitimate, inalienable rights of the Palestinian people as stated in subparagraph (a) above.

5. In order to give effect to these guidelines, the Conference considers it essential that an international peace conference on the Middle East be convened on the basis of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the relevant resolutions of the United Nations, with the aim of achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict, an essential element of which would be the establishment of an independent Palestinian State in Palestine. This peace conference should be convened under the auspices of the United Nations, with the participation of all parties to the Arab-Israeli conflict, including the Palestine Liberation Organization, as well as the United States of America, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, and other concerned States, on an equal footing. In this context the Security Council has a primary responsibility to create appropriate institutional arrangements on the basis of relevant United Nations resolutions in order to guarantee and to carry out the accords of the international peace conference.

6. The International Conference on the Question of Palestine emphasizes the importance of the time factor in achieving a just solution to the problem of Palestine. The Conference is convinced that partial solutions are inadequate and delays in seeking a comprehensive solution do not eliminate tensions in the region.

B. Programme of Action for the Achievement of
Palestinian Rights

The International Conference on the Question of Palestine agreed that no effort should be spared to seek effective ways and means to enable the Palestinian people to attain and exercise their rights in Palestine in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights b/ and the principles of international law. The Conference, taking into consideration the Geneva Declaration on Palestine (sect. A above), recommended the following Programme of Action.

I

The International Conference on the Question of Palestine recommends that all States, individually or collectively, consistent with their respective constitutions and their obligations under the Charter of the United Nations and in conformity with the principles of international law, should:

(1) Recognize the great importance of the time factor in solving the question of Palestine;

(2) Intensify efforts for the establishment of an independent Palestinian State within the framework of a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement to the Arab-Israeli conflict in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, the relevant United Nations resolutions and the guidelines of the Geneva Declaration on Palestine;

(3) Consider the continued presence of Israel in the occupied Palestinian and other Arab territories, including Jerusalem, as exacerbating instability in the region and endangering international peace and security;

(4) Oppose and reject, as a serious and continuing obstacle to peace, the expansionist policies pursued by Israel in the Palestinian and other Arab territories occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, and in particular the alteration of the geographic nature and demographic composition, and the Israeli attempt to alter, through domestic legislation, the legal status of those territories, and all the measures taken in violation of the Geneva Convention relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War, c/ and the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, d/ both of 12 August 1949, and of The Hague Regulations of 1907, e/ such as the establishment and expansion of settlements, the transfer of Israeli civilians into those territories and the individual and mass transfers therefrom of the Arab Palestinian population;

(5) Refrain from providing Israel with assistance of such a nature as to encourage it militarily, economically and financially to continue its aggression, occupation and disregard of its obligations under the Charter and the relevant resolutions of the United Nations;

(6) Not encourage migration to the occupied Arab territories until Israel has put a definitive end to the implementation of its illegal policy of establishing settlements in the Palestinian and other Arab territories occupied since 1967;

(7) Fully comply with the relevant resolutions of the United Nations and its specialized agencies on the Holy City of Jerusalem, including those which reject Israel's annexation of Jerusalem and its declaration of that city as its capital;

(8) Undertake universal efforts to protect the Holy Places and urge Israel to take measures to prevent their desecration;

(9) Consider ways and means of meeting the threat that Israel poses to regional security in Africa in view of Israel's disregard of United Nations resolutions, and its close collaboration with the apartheid régime in the economic, military and nuclear fields, thereby contributing to the continued illegal occupation of Namibia and enhancing the régime's repressive and aggressive capacity;

(10) Encourage, through bilateral and multilateral contacts, all States, including Western European and North American States which have not done so, to welcome all peace initiatives based on the recognition of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, which were also welcomed by Chairman Yasser Arafat in his address to the International Conference on the Question of Palestine;

(11) Seek and develop ways and means to enable the Palestinian people to exercise sovereignty over their national resources;

(12) Express concern that Israel debars Palestinians from economic activity and access to national resources on Palestinian territory, in consistent violation of General Assembly resolutions on the right of the Palestinians to permanent sovereignty over their national resources;

(13) Declare null and void and counter such measures and practices applied by Israel in the occupied Palestinian and other Arab territories, including Jerusalem, as the annexation and the expropriation of land, water resources, and property and the alteration of the demographic, geographic, historical and cultural features thereof;

(14) Undertake measures to alleviate the economic and social burdens borne by the Palestinian people as a result of the continued Israeli occupation of their territories since 1967;

(15) Consider contributing or increasing special contributions to the proposed budgets, programmes and projects of the relevant organs, funds and agencies of the United Nations system that have been requested to provide humanitarian, economic and social assistance to the Palestinian people, with particular reference to:

(a) General Assembly resolution 33/147 of 20 December 1978 and the appeal of the Governing Council of the United Nations Development Programme at its thirtieth session for additional special contributions amounting to at least \$8 million during the third programming cycle (1982-1986) aimed at helping to meet the economic and social needs of the Palestinian people; f/

(b) The proposed programme budget of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development for the biennium 1984/85 regarding the establishment

within the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development of a special economic unit, g/ as requested by that Conference at its sixth session at Belgrade; h/

(c) Establishing a special legal aid fund to assist Palestinians in securing their rights under conditions of occupation, i/ in accordance with the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War;

(16) Ensure that the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East can meet the essential needs of the Palestinians without interruption or any diminution in the effectiveness of its services;

(17) Review the situation of Palestinian women in the occupied Palestinian and other Arab territories and, in view of their special hardships, urge the Preparatory Committee of the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women, to be held at Nairobi in 1985, to include this item on the agenda of the Conference;

(18) Review, if they have not yet done so, in conformity with their national legislation, their economic, cultural, technical and other relations with Israel, and the agreements governing them with the aim of ensuring that these regulations and agreements will not be interpreted or construed as implying in any way recognition of any modification of the legal status of Jerusalem and of the Palestinian and other Arab territories occupied by Israel since 1967, or an acceptance of Israel's illegal presence in those territories;

(19) Recognize that the process of enabling the Palestinian people to exercise its inalienable rights in Palestine is a significant contribution to the restoration of the rule of law in international relations;

(20) Assure the observance of the stipulations provided in General Assembly resolution 181 (II) guaranteeing to all persons equal and non-discriminatory rights in civil, political, economic and religious matters and the enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms, including freedom of religion, speech, publication, education, assembly and association;

(21) Express concern that the laws applicable in the occupied Arab territories have been totally eclipsed by a plethora of military orders that have been designed to establish a new "legal régime" in violation of The Hague Regulations of 1907, and the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War;

(22) Act in accordance with their obligations under existing international law, in particular with regard to the Geneva Conventions of 1949 which require States Parties to respect and to ensure respect for those Conventions in all circumstances, and in particular ensure the respect by Israel for the Geneva Conventions of 1949 in the occupied Palestinian and other Arab territories;

(23) Express concern that the Palestinians and other Arabs in the occupied territories are deprived of juridical and other kinds of protection, that they are victims of repressive legislation, involving mass arrests, acts of torture, destruction of houses, and the expulsion of people from their homes, acts which constitute flagrant violations of human rights;

(24) Recognize the necessity that Palestinian and Lebanese prisoners detained by Israel be accorded the status of prisoners of war in accordance with the Geneva Convention relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War of 1949, c/ if combatants, or in accordance with the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War of 1949, d/ if civilians;

(25) Strive for the adoption of international measures so that Israel will implement in the West Bank and Gaza the provisions of The Hague Regulations of 1907 and the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons, in the light of Security Council resolution 465 (1980);

(26) Recognize, if they have not yet done so, the Palestine Liberation Organization as the representative of the Palestinian people and establish with it appropriate relations;

(27) Encourage, in conformity with their national legislations, the formation of national committees in support of the Palestinian people;

(28) Encourage the observance of 29 November as the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, in a most effective and meaningful way;

(29) Request the General Assembly at its thirty-eighth session to designate a Year of Palestine, to be observed at the earliest possible time, taking into consideration the factors necessary to ensure its effective preparation for the purpose of galvanizing world-wide public opinion and support for further implementation of the Geneva Declaration on Palestine and the Programme of Action.

II

The International Conference on the Question of Palestine stresses the obligation of all Member States, under the Charter of the United Nations, to enable the United Nations through an expanded and more effective role to fulfil its responsibility for achieving a solution to the question of Palestine. To this end:

A

States participating in the Conference invite the Security Council, as the organ with primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security:

(1) To suppress continuing and growing acts of aggression and other breaches of the peace in the Middle East which endanger peace and security in the region and the world as a whole;

(2) To take prompt, firm and effective steps and actions to establish an independent sovereign Palestinian State in Palestine through the implementation of the relevant United Nations resolutions, by facilitating the organization of the international peace conference on the Middle East, as called for in paragraph 5 of the Geneva Declaration on Palestine (see sect. A above), and by creating in this context the appropriate institutional

arrangements on the basis of relevant United Nations resolutions in order to guarantee and carry out the accords of the international peace conference, including the following:

(a) Taking measures consistent with the principle of the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force to ensure Israel's withdrawal from the Palestinian and other Arab territories occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, with a specific timetable;

(b) Undertaking effective measures to guarantee the safety and security and legal and human rights of the Palestinians in the occupied territories pending the withdrawal of the Israeli forces from the Palestinian and other Arab territories occupied by Israel since 1967, including Jerusalem;

(c) Subjecting those territories, following the withdrawal of Israel, to a short transitional period, under the supervision of the United Nations, during which period the Palestinian people would exercise its right to self-determination;

(d) Facilitating the implementation of the right to return of the Palestinians to their homes and property;

(e) Supervising elections to the constituent assembly of the independent Palestinian State in which all Palestinians shall participate, in exercise of their right to self-determination;

(f) Providing, if necessary, temporary peace-keeping forces in order to facilitate the implementation of subparagraphs (a) to (e) above.

B

Meanwhile the Security Council is also invited to:

(1) Take urgent action to bring about an immediate and complete cessation of such Israeli policies in the occupied territories and, in particular, the establishment of settlements as have been determined by the Security Council to have no legal validity and as a serious obstruction to achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East;

(2) Consider urgently the reports of the Commission established under its resolution 446 (1979) of 22 March 1979, which examined the situation concerning settlements in the Arab territories occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, and to reactivate the above-mentioned Commission;

(3) Initiate action to terminate Israel's exploitative policies which go against the indigenous economic development of the occupied territories, and to compel Israel to lift its restrictions on water use and well-drilling by Palestinian farmers as well as its diversion of West Bank water resources into the Israeli water grid system;

(4) Keep under its constant attention the actions committed by Israel against the Palestinian people in violation of the stipulations provided for in relevant General Assembly resolutions, in particular the stipulations of resolution 181 (II) of 29 November 1947 guaranteeing to all persons equal and non-discriminatory rights and freedoms;

(5) Consider, in the event of Israel's persistent non-compliance with the relevant United Nations resolutions which embody the will of the international community, appropriate measures in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, to ensure Israel's compliance with these resolutions.

C

(1) Taking into account the recommendations of the five regional preparatory meetings of the International Conference on the Question of Palestine j/ and United Nations resolutions concerning economic and social assistance to the Palestinian people, the Secretary-General of the United Nations is requested to convene a meeting of the specialized agencies and other organizations associated with the United Nations, as well as representatives of the Palestine Liberation Organization and of those countries which are hosts to Palestinian refugees and other potential sources of assistance to develop a co-ordinated programme of economic and social assistance to the Palestinian people and to ensure its implementation;

(2) The meeting should also look into the most effective inter-agency machinery to co-ordinate and sustain and intensify United Nations assistance to the Palestinian people.

D

The dissemination of accurate and comprehensive information world wide and the role of non-governmental organizations and institutions remain of vital importance in heightening awareness of and support for the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination and to the establishment of an independent sovereign Palestinian State. To these ends:

(1) The United Nations Department for Public Information, in full co-operation and constant consultations with the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, should:

(a) Co-ordinate all information activities of the United Nations system on Palestine through the Joint United Nations Information Committee;

(b) Expand publications and audio and visual coverage of the facts and of developments pertaining to the question of Palestine;

(c) Publish newsletters and articles in its respective publications on Israeli violations of human rights of the Arab inhabitants in the occupied territories and organize fact-finding missions for journalists to the area;

(d) Organize regional encounters for journalists;

(e) Disseminate appropriate information on the results of the International Conference on the Question of Palestine;

(2) The relevant organizations of the United Nations system should organize meetings, symposia and seminars on topics within their terms of reference and relating to specific problems of the Palestinian people by establishing closer liaison with non-governmental organizations, the media and other groups interested in the question of Palestine.

The International Conference on the Question of Palestine, convinced of the important role of world-wide public opinion in resolving the question of Palestine, and in the implementation of the Declaration and Programme of Action, urges and encourages:

- (1) Intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations to increase awareness by the international community of the economic and social burdens borne by the Palestinian people as a result of the continued Israeli occupation and its negative effects on the economic development of the West Asian region as a whole;
- (2) Non-governmental organizations and professional and popular associations to intensify their efforts to support the rights of the Palestinian people in every possible way;
- (3) Organizations such as those of women, teachers, workers, youths and students to undertake exchanges and other programmes of joint action with their Palestinian counterparts;
- (4) Women's associations, in particular, to investigate the conditions of Palestinian women and children in all occupied territories;
- (5) The media and other institutions to disseminate relevant information to increase public awareness and understanding of the question of Palestine;
- (6) Institutions of higher education to promote the study of the question of Palestine in all its aspects;
- (7) Various jurists' associations to establish special investigative commissions to determine the violations by Israel of the Palestinians' legal rights and to disseminate their findings accordingly;
- (8) Jurists to initiate with their Palestinian counterparts consultations, research and investigations on the juridical aspects of problems affecting the southern African and Palestinian struggles, in particular the detention of political prisoners and the denial of prisoner-of-war status to detained members of the national liberation movements of southern Africa and Palestine;
- (9) Parliamentarians, political parties, trade unions, organizations for solidarity and intellectuals, particularly in Western Europe and North America, to join their counterparts in other parts of the world in giving their support, where it has not been done, to an initiative which would express the desire of the international community to see the Palestinian people at last living in their own independent homeland in peace, freedom and dignity.

Notes

- a/ See Report of the International Conference on the Question of Palestine, Geneva, 29 August-7 September 1983 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.83.I.21), chap. I, sects. A and B.
- b/ See General Assembly resolution 217 A (III).
- c/ United Nations, Treaty Series, vol. 75, No. 972, p. 135.
- d/ Ibid., No. 973, p. 287.
- e/ Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, The Hague Conventions and Declarations of 1899 and 1907 (New York, Oxford University Press, 1915), p. 100.
- f/ See Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1983, Supplement No. 9 (E/1983/20).
- g/ A/C.5/38/4, para. 8 (c).
- h/ Recommendation 146 (VI) of 2 July 1983 of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development.
- i/ Recommendation 19 of the Latin American Regional Preparatory Meeting, Managua, Nicaragua, 12-15 April 1983 (A/CONF.114/2).
- j/ African region, A/CONF.114/1; Latin American region, A/CONF.114/2; Western Asian region, A/CONF.114/3; Asian region, A/CONF.114/4; European region, A/CONF.114/5.

ANNEX III

List of documents issued by the Committee

- A/AC.183/1986/1 Conclusions and recommendations adopted by the thirteenth United Nations Seminar on the Question of Palestine, held at Istanbul from 7 to 11 April 1986
- A/AC.183/1986/2 and Corr.1 Conclusions and recommendations adopted by the fourteenth United Nations Seminar on the Question of Palestine, held at United Nations Headquarters on 9 and 10 June 1986
- A/AC.183/1986/3 Declaration adopted by the North American Regional Symposium for non-governmental organizations on the Question of Palestine, held at United Nations Headquarters from 11 to 13 June 1986
- A/AC.183/1986/4 Declaration adopted by the European Symposium for non-governmental organizations on the Question of Palestine, held at Vienna on 30 June and 1 July 1986
- A/AC.183/1986/5 Declaration adopted by the International Meeting of non-governmental organizations on the Question of Palestine, held at Vienna from 2 to 4 July 1986
- A/AC.183/1986/6 Conclusions and recommendations adopted by the fifteenth United Nations Seminar on the Question of Palestine, held at the United Nations Office at Nairobi from 18 to 22 August 1986

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**REPORT
OF THE
COMMITTEE ON THE EXERCISE OF
THE INALIENABLE RIGHTS
OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE**

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

OFFICIAL RECORDS: FORTY-SECOND SESSION

SUPPLEMENT No. 35 (A/42/35)



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78p.

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UNITED NATIONS

New York, 1987

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[16 October 1987]

CONTENTS

	<u>Paragraphs</u>	<u>Page</u>
LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL		v
I. INTRODUCTION	1 - 6	1
II. MANDATE OF THE COMMITTEE	7 - 9	3
III. ORGANIZATION OF WORK	10 - 17	4
A. Election of officers	10 - 13	4
B. Participation in the work of the Committee	14 - 15	4
C. Re-establishment of the Working Group	16 - 17	4
IV. ACTION TAKEN BY THE COMMITTEE	18 - 80	6
A. Action taken in accordance with General Assembly resolution 41/43 A of 2 December 1986	18 - 55	6
1. Review of the situation relating to the question of Palestine and efforts to implement the recommendations of the Committee	18 - 28	6
2. Reactions to developments affecting the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people	29 - 46	8
3. Action taken by the Committee to promote the convening of the proposed International Peace Conference on the Middle East in accordance with General Assembly resolution 38/58 C of 13 December 1983	47 - 53	11
4. Attendance at international conferences and meetings	54	13
5. Action taken by United Nations bodies, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and intergovernmental organizations	55	14
B. Action taken by the Committee in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 41/43 A and B of 2 December 1986	56 - 80	15
1. Co-operation with non-governmental organizations ..	56 - 69	15
2. Seminars	70 - 78	18
3. Other activities	79 - 80	20

CONTENTS (continued)

	<u>Paragraphs</u>	<u>Page</u>
V. ACTION TAKEN BY THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INFORMATION IN ACCORDANCE WITH GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 41/43 C	81 - 91	21
VI. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COMMITTEE	92 - 96	23
ANNEXES		
I. Recommendations of the Committee endorsed by the General Assembly at its thirty-first session		25
II. Geneva Declaration on Palestine and the Programme of Action for the Achievement of Palestinian Rights		28
III. Conclusions and recommendations adopted by the Sixteenth United Nations Seminar on the Question of Palestine, New Delhi, 8-12 June 1987		38
IV. Declaration adopted by the United Nations Asian Regional Non-Governmental Organizations Symposium on the Question of Palestine, New Delhi, 8-10 June 1987		43
V. Conclusions and recommendations adopted by the Seventeenth United Nations Seminar on the Question of Palestine, New York, 22-23 June 1987		46
VI. Declaration adopted by the United Nations North American Regional Non-Governmental Organizations Symposium on the Question of Palestine, New York, 24-26 June 1987		53
VII. Declaration adopted by the International Meeting of Non-Governmental Organizations on the Question of Palestine, Geneva, 7-9 September 1987		63

LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

7 October 1987

Sir,

I have the honour to enclose herewith the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for submission to the General Assembly in accordance with paragraph 4 of resolution 41/43 A of 2 December 1986.

Accept, Sir, the assurances of my highest consideration.

(Signed) Massamba SARRE
Chairman of the Committee on the
Exercise of the Inalienable Rights
of the Palestinian People

His Excellency
Mr. Javier Pérez de Cuéllar
Secretary-General of the United Nations

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, established by General Assembly resolution 3376 (XXX) of 10 November 1975, is currently composed of 23 Member States. 1/
2. The first report of the Committee 2/ contained specific recommendations designed to enable the Palestinian people to exercise its inalienable rights as previously recognized and defined by the General Assembly. Those recommendations were first endorsed by the Assembly in its resolution 31/20 of 24 November 1976 as a basis for the solution of the question of Palestine.
3. In its subsequent reports to the General Assembly, 3/ the Committee retained its original recommendations unchanged. On each occasion they have been firmly endorsed by the Assembly, which has also continued to renew and, as necessary, expand the mandate of the Committee.
4. Despite repeated and urgent appeals by the Committee, however, the Security Council has not yet been able to act on or implement the recommendations of the Committee. The Committee remains convinced that positive consideration and action by the Security Council on its recommendations would advance prospects for the attainment of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East.
5. Meanwhile, the occupation by Israel of Palestinian and other Arab territories, including Jerusalem, in violation of Security Council and General Assembly resolutions, has continued and is now in its twentieth year. Israel still occupies parts of Lebanon. As a result, the situation relating to the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people has continued to deteriorate. The Committee has repeatedly expressed its grave concern at the policies and practices of Israel in the occupied territories, which are in violation of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, 4/ and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (General Assembly resolution 217 A (III)). Such policies and practices have continued to pose obstacles to the efforts towards a comprehensive, just and lasting solution, and to exacerbate tension and conflict in the area, further endangering international peace and security. The Committee has therefore repeatedly warned that this situation will continue to prevail as long as the Palestinian people is denied its inalienable rights in Palestine, including those to self-determination without external interference to national independence and sovereignty, to return to its homes and property, and to establish its own independent sovereign State, and as long as the Palestinian and other Arab territories remain occupied. In this connection, the Committee has also been gravely concerned by the violence and destruction directed against Palestinians in refugee camps, for whom the international community has a special responsibility.
6. In order to secure United Nations objectives on the question of Palestine, during the period under review, the Committee continued to give priority to the early convening of the proposed International Peace Conference on the Middle East, under United Nations auspices and in accordance with the provisions of General Assembly resolution 38/58 C of 13 December 1983. The Committee is convinced that the conference would make a practical and positive contribution to efforts to promote a just and lasting peace in the Middle East and has continued to stress the

urgent need for additional concrete and constructive efforts by all Governments in order to convene the Conference without delay. As a practical step towards that objective, a preparatory committee should be established immediately, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 41/43 D of 2 December 1986, with the participation of the five permanent members of the Security Council and also of all parties involved, including the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO).

II. MANDATE OF THE COMMITTEE

7. The Committee's mandate for the year 1987 is contained in paragraphs 3 to 5 of General Assembly resolution 41/43 A of 2 December 1986 by which the Assembly:

(a) Requested the Committee to continue to keep under review the situation relating to the question of Palestine as well as the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Achievement of Palestinian Rights 5/ and to report and make suggestions to the General Assembly or the Security Council, as appropriate;

(b) Authorized the Committee to continue to exert all efforts to promote the implementation of its recommendations, including representation at conferences and meetings and the sending of delegations where such activities would be considered by it to be appropriate, and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its forty-second session and thereafter;

(c) Requested the Committee to continue to extend its co-operation to non-governmental organizations in their contribution towards heightening international awareness of the facts relating to the question of Palestine and in creating a more favourable atmosphere for the full implementation of the Committee's recommendations, and to take the necessary steps to expand its contacts with those organizations.

8. By its resolution 41/43 B of 2 December 1986, the General Assembly also requested the Secretary-General, inter alia, to provide the Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat with the necessary resources and to ensure that the Division continued to discharge the tasks detailed in paragraphs 2 and 3 of General Assembly resolution 40/96 B, in consultation with the Committee and under its guidance.

9. By resolution 41/43 C of 2 December 1986, the General Assembly requested the Department of Public Information, in full co-operation and co-ordination with the Committee, to continue its special information programme on the question of Palestine.

III. ORGANIZATION OF WORK

A. Election of officers

10. At its 137th meeting, on 12 January 1987, the Committee decided to re-elect the following officers:

Chairman: Mr. Massamba Sarré (Senegal)

Vice-Chairman: Mr. Oscar Cramas-Oliva (Cuba)

Rapporteur: Mr. George Agius (Malta)

11. At its 139th meeting, on 12 March 1987, the Committee elected by acclamation Mr. Shah Mohammad Dost (Afghanistan) as Vice-Chairman.

12. At its 141st meeting, on 7 July 1987, the Committee designated Mr. Saviour Borg (Malta) as Rapporteur a.i., in lieu of Mr. George Agius, who had returned to his country. At its 142nd meeting, on 14 September 1987, the Committee elected by acclamation as Rapporteur, Mr. Alexander Borg Olivier, who had recently been appointed Permanent Representative of Malta.

13. At its 138th meeting, on 12 February 1987, the Committee adopted its programme of work for 1987 (A/AC.183/1987/CRP.1/Rev.1) in implementation of its mandate.

B. Participation in the work of the Committee

14. As in previous years, the Committee reconfirmed that all States Members of the United Nations and Permanent Observers to the United Nations desiring to participate in the work of the Committee as observers were welcome to do so. Accordingly, in a letter dated 18 February 1987, the Chairman of the Committee so informed the Secretary-General, who subsequently transmitted the letter, on 26 February 1987, to States Members of the United Nations and members of the specialized agencies, and to intergovernmental regional organizations. The Committee also decided to invite the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) to participate in the work of the Committee as an observer, to attend all its meetings and to make observations and proposals for the consideration of the Committee.

15. During 1987 the Committee again welcomed as observers all the States and organizations that had participated in its work the preceding year. 6/ The Committee also welcomed the additional participation of Kuwait as of 28 April and of Bangladesh as of 7 July 1987.

C. Re-establishment of the Working Group

16. At its 137th meeting, the Committee re-established its Working Group to assist in the preparation and expedition of the work of the Committee. The Working Group was constituted as before under the chairmanship of Mr. George Agius (Malta), on the understanding that any Committee member or observer could participate in its proceedings. 7/ At its 141st meeting, the Committee designated Mr. Saviour Borg (Malta) to serve as Chairman a.i. of the Working Group. At its 142nd meeting, the

Committee appointed Mr. Alexander Borg-Olivier (Malta) as Chairman of the Working Group.

17. At its 1st meeting, on 4 February 1987, the Working Group elected by acclamation Mr. Pramathesh Rath (India) as its Vice-Chairman.

IV. ACTION TAKEN BY THE COMMITTEE

- A. Action taken in accordance with General Assembly resolution 41/43 A of 2 December 1986
 1. Review of the situation relating to the question of Palestine and efforts to implement the recommendations of the Committee

18. In accordance with its mandate, in the year under review, the Committee continued to follow developments relating to the question of Palestine and to exert all efforts to promote the implementation of its recommendations as repeatedly endorsed by the General Assembly.

19. In response to events in the region affecting the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, the Chairman of the Committee, on several occasions, whenever urgent action was required, brought such developments to the attention of the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council, and called for appropriate measures in accordance with United Nations resolutions (see sect. 2 (a) below). Those letters were sent against a backdrop of continued military occupation and gradual annexation by Israel of the Palestinian and Arab territories, which resulted in a growing spiral of conflict, tension and violence in the region.

20. The Committee was increasingly concerned at the fact that the situation in the occupied Palestinian territories had continued to deteriorate, according to reports reaching the Committee from a variety of sources, such as Governments, United Nations bodies and agencies, non-governmental organizations, individual experts and the media. The Committee was also alarmed at the continuing grave situation of Palestinian refugees in the camps in south Lebanon.

21. According to the information received by the Committee, Israel had persisted in its policy of confiscating Arab-owned land in the occupied Palestinian territories and of expanding its settlements, in violation of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, 4/ and United Nations resolutions.

22. The Committee remained gravely concerned at the continued imposition of the "iron-fist" policy by Israel, the occupying Power, in the occupied territories, in an effort to curb popular sentiment and activities in opposition to the occupation and in support of PLO. Demonstrations and protests which spread throughout the territories during the period under review were met with armed force by Israeli troops on repeated occasions, resulting in the killing and wounding of unarmed civilians, including children. The Israeli authorities continued to impose a range of measures against suspected activists, particularly trade unionists, community and student leaders, journalists, and academics. Such measures included arrest, administrative detention for up to six months without charges or trial, town or house arrest, denial of permission to travel abroad, and deportation. The Committee was gravely concerned at repeated reports of torture, beatings and ill-treatment of Palestinian prisoners by Israeli security forces, despite appeals by human rights organizations and hunger strikes by thousands of prisoners.

23. The Israeli authorities had also continued to engage in acts of collective punishment and other measures against the Palestinian population in the occupied territories, such as the destruction or sealing of homes of families of persons charged with security offences, the imposition of curfews, raids on refugee camps, schools and trade union premises, and various other forms of intimidation and harassment. Schools, universities and newspapers were closed down on repeated occasions, trade union activities were prohibited, and measures were taken against student unions, community organizations, women's groups, and others.

24. These repressive actions by the Israeli authorities were accompanied by a growing trend towards settler vigilantism, encroachment and provocation, which resulted in numerous violent incidents and further exacerbated tension in the area.

25. The Committee was gravely concerned at the fact that the Israeli authorities had continued to take administrative, economic and other measures to further entrench their control over the occupied territories, thereby impeding their autonomous development. In particular, the Committee noted reports relating to the growing confiscation of agricultural lands and water resources, to the arbitrary taxation and restrictions imposed on the commercial and industrial sectors, and to the continuing destruction of the economic, demographic, social and cultural structure of the occupied territories. The Palestinian people was thereby prevented from making use of, and developing, its own resources, and had to depend increasingly on the Israeli market for its products and on the Israeli labour market for employment, or even to emigrate. The Committee further noted with concern reports that living standards had continued to deteriorate, and that in particular the health situation had worsened; labour conditions remained discriminatory; and the educational system continued to be inadequate.

26. The Committee wished once again to express its utmost concern at these policies and practices of Israel, the occupying Power, and to bring them forcefully to the attention of the General Assembly and the Security Council as they clearly violated the fourth Geneva Convention of 12 August 1949 ^{4/} and had serious repercussions not only on the attainment by the Palestinians of their inalienable rights, but also on peace and security in the region, and on international efforts to achieve a just, lasting and comprehensive solution to the question of Palestine, the core of the Middle East conflict.

27. At the same time, the Committee noted with appreciation that the Secretary-General's report on assistance to the Palestinian people (A/42/289-E/1987/86 and Add.1) had provided evidence of the continuing commitment of the agencies and programmes of the United Nations system to provide economic and social assistance to the Palestinian people. The Committee was pleased that consensus had been reached on the proposed programme of assistance and that efforts would now turn to its implementation and to the mobilization of the necessary resources.

28. The Committee also noted with appreciation the report of the Seminar on the Living Conditions of the Palestinian People in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (A/42/183-E/1987/53), held at the Vienna International Centre from 2 to 6 March 1987 pursuant to General Assembly resolution 40/201 of 17 December 1985 and fully supported its goals of labour absorption and the entrenchment of the Palestinian people in their homes and on their land.

2. Reactions to developments affecting the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people

(a) Communications to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

29. In response to events affecting the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, the Chairman of the Committee, whenever urgent action was required, drew the attention of the Secretary-General and of the President of the Security Council to such events, urging the adoption of appropriate measures in accordance with United Nations resolutions. The Chairman continued to call, in particular, for renewed efforts to promote a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the question of Palestine, the root cause of the conflict in the Middle East, and to stress the urgent need for the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East in accordance with General Assembly resolution 38/58 C.

30. In a letter to the Secretary-General dated 10 November 1986 (A/41/811-S/18452), the Chairman expressed the Committee's grave concern at the persistence and intensification of fighting in and around Palestinian refugee camps at Beirut and near Tyre and Sidon. In particular, the Committee was greatly concerned that the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) had been unable to deliver supplies to several of the camps, which were surrounded and remained inaccessible. In his letter, the Chairman called for urgent measures to be taken to end the suffering and to provide the necessary emergency relief, as well as to ensure the security and safety of the Palestinians in the refugee camps.

31. On 16 December 1986, the Chairman drew attention in a letter (A/41/970-S/18525) to the grave incidents which had continued to occur in the occupied Palestinian territories since the adoption by the Security Council of resolution 592 (1986). The Chairman detailed the most significant developments, which included several instances of shootings of Palestinian demonstrators by Israeli troops, hundreds of arrests, the closing of schools and universities and the imposition of curfews in several areas. He stressed that the actions by the Israeli authorities in the occupied territories were totally in violation of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War of 1949, and that, in resolution 592 (1986), the Security Council had called upon Israel to abide immediately and scrupulously by the Convention and to release any person or persons detained as a result of the recent events.

32. In a letter dated 11 February 1987 (A/42/122-S/18682), the Chairman again expressed the Committee's grave concern at the persistence and intensification of attacks on the Palestinian refugee camps at Beirut and near Tyre. Since his previous letter (see para. 30 above), the violence and destruction had escalated, causing thousands of casualties. The Committee wished to express its utmost concern at the fact that UNRWA had been unable to deliver food or medicines to the camps and that thousands of persons were trapped and close to starvation. In view of the seriousness of the situation, the Committee wished to make an urgent appeal to all interested parties to use their influence to enable UNRWA and other humanitarian organizations to provide essential emergency relief.

33. In a further letter on the same issue, dated 20 February 1987 (A/42/135-S/18713), the Acting Chairman expressed the Committee's utmost concern at the fact that UNRWA had once again been prevented from delivering food and

medicines to the Palestinian refugee camps at Beirut and near Tyre. In view of the desperate situation of the Palestinian civilians who had been trapped in the camps for months and who were on the verge of starvation, the Committee wished to reiterate its earlier urgent appeal to all the parties concerned.

34. On 12 March 1987 (A/42/176-S/18751), the Chairman stated that the situation in the Palestinian refugee camps at Beirut and near Tyre continued to arouse the most serious concern. After being allowed to deliver some supplies, UNRWA had again been barred from the camps; the situation remained extremely grave and was bound to deteriorate further unless urgent measures were taken. He accordingly reiterated the Committee's pressing appeal to all parties concerned to do everything possible to enable UNRWA and other humanitarian organizations to provide emergency relief.

35. On 7 May 1987 (A/42/278-S/18850), the Chairman drew urgent attention to recent air raids carried out by the Israeli Air Force against Palestinian refugee camps near Sidon. Two attacks in the space of about a week had resulted in a toll of 22 dead and 65 wounded persons, primarily among the civilian population, and in the destruction of several houses. He expressed the view that the attacks had to be seen in the context of the intensification of measures taken by the Israeli authorities against the Palestinian people in the occupied territories, as well as the general military escalation in south Lebanon. He warned that the situation that was being created was a most explosive one, and expressed the Committee's deep concern at the actions of the Israeli authorities, which continued to heighten tension in the region and posed a serious obstacle to international efforts to achieve a solution to the question of Palestine.

36. In a letter dated 20 May 1987 (A/42/297-S/18874), the Chairman expressed once again the grave concern of the Committee at the continuing deterioration of the situation in the occupied Palestinian territories. Since his earlier letter on the issue (see para. 35 above), demonstrations by Palestinians against the occupation had intensified and the Israeli authorities had again resorted to a variety of measures, including the use of armed force, the detention of leaders for six-month periods, arrests, the closing down of universities, and expulsions. Three youth leaders had recently been deported: Marwan Barghouti, Chairman of the Student Council at Bir Zeit University, Khalil Ashour, Chairman of the Student Council at An-Najah University (both in the West Bank) and Ahmed Abdulfatah Nasser, President of the Arab Youth Federation at Khan Yunis in Gaza. The Chairman recalled that Security Council resolution 592 (1986) had reaffirmed the applicability of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War of 12 August 1949 to the occupied territories, and had called on Israel to abide immediately and scrupulously by that Convention.

37. In a letter dated 3 June 1987 (A/42/318-S/18893), the Chairman called urgent attention to the serious incidents that had continued to occur in the occupied Palestinian territories. The Israeli authorities had launched a massive campaign of detention of Palestinians following protest demonstrations in the refugee camps in the West Bank; one camp had been raided by Israeli troops, which had opened fire on demonstrators; 50 persons had been arrested, and 10 had been ordered detained for a period of six months. The Committee wished to emphasize that such actions were absolutely contrary to the Geneva Convention and to recall the provisions of Security Council resolution 592 (1986).

38. In a letter dated 9 September 1987 (A/42/550-S/19122), the Chairman drew urgent attention to the recent air raids carried out by the Israeli Air Force on

the Ein el-Hilweh Palestinian refugee camp near Sidon. He stated that, according to information from various press agencies, as a result of the bombings many Palestinians, including women and children, had lost their lives and scores had been injured. He stressed that the situation being created in the area was a most explosive one, which could not but arouse the greatest concern. In conclusion, the Chairman reiterated the Committee's conviction that positive action by the Security Council on its recommendations and on the proposed International Peace Conference on the Middle East would advance prospects for a just and lasting peace in the region, and called for continued efforts towards this objective.

39. In a letter dated 22 September 1987 (A/42/575-S/19150), the Chairman urgently drew attention to the steady deterioration of the human rights situation in the occupied Palestinian territories. In particular, suspected opponents of the occupation continued to be subjected to measures of administrative detention for up to six months without charges or trial. The latest such case was that of Faisal Husseini, the well-known director of the Arab Studies Society, recently detained for the third time in less than a year, apparently because of statements made in connection with his activities in the Committee Confronting the Iron-Fist Policy, a Jewish-Arab group opposed to Israeli policies in the occupied territories. Mr. Husseini had also been under town-arrest for five years. Stressing that such policies only exacerbated tension and created new obstacles to a negotiated and peaceful settlement of the Palestinian question, the Chairman called for intensified efforts by the international community to convene the International Peace Conference on the Middle East in accordance with General Assembly resolution 38/58 C.

(b) Action taken within the Security Council

40. In addition to transmitting letters to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council, the Committee followed closely the activities of the Council on matters relating to the Committee's mandate, and participated in Council debates as necessary.

41. In a letter dated 4 December 1986, addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/18501), the Permanent Representative of Zimbabwe to the United Nations and Chairman of the Co-ordinating Bureau of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries requested an immediate meeting of the Council to consider the situation in the Israeli-occupied Palestinian and other Arab territories, including Jerusalem. The Council considered the item at four meetings held on 5 and 8 December 1986.

42. At the 2725th meeting of the Council, on 8 December 1986, the Chairman of the Committee intervened in the debate and stated that the Committee observed with ever-growing concern the deterioration of the situation in the Palestinian and other Arab territories occupied by Israel, including Jerusalem. The incidents that the Council was considering, which involved the shooting of Palestinian student demonstrators by Israeli troops, were but the latest manifestations of the "iron fist" policy of repression adopted by the Israeli authorities. Such measures were in violation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Fourth Geneva Convention and the relevant resolutions of the United Nations in the matter. They caused growing tensions and violence in the region, which would continue so long as the Palestinian people was prevented from exercising its inalienable rights.

43. It was therefore essential to take steps to initiate the process that could lead to a peaceful solution, in accordance with the guidelines established by the

General Assembly. The Committee invited those who had so far opposed the holding of the proposed International Peace Conference on the Middle East to work in a more constructive fashion for its convening and successful outcome, and appealed to the Security Council to take appropriate measures to ensure resumption of the policy of dialogue among all the parties concerned.

44. At its 2727th meeting, on 8 December 1986, the Council adopted resolution 592 (1986), by which it reaffirmed the applicability of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, to the Palestinian and other Arab territories occupied by Israel since 1967, including Jerusalem, and called upon Israel to abide immediately and scrupulously by it; strongly deplored the opening of fire by the Israeli army resulting in the death and the wounding of defenceless students; called for the release of all persons detained as a result of the recent events; called upon all concerned parties to exercise maximum restraint, to avoid violent acts, and to contribute towards the establishment of peace; and requested the Secretary-General to report to the Council on the implementation of the resolution not later than 20 December 1986.

45. The Committee subsequently took note of the report of the Secretary-General (S/18532), prepared in pursuance of resolution 592 (1986).

46. The Committee noted the statement made by the President of the Security Council on behalf of the members of the Council on 13 February 1987 (S/18691), by which the members of the Council, mindful of the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Lebanon, expressed their profound concern at the continued escalation of violence in certain parts of Lebanon, affecting the civilian population, particularly in and around Palestinian refugee camps. The members called upon the parties concerned to observe an immediate cease-fire and to permit access to the camps for humanitarian purposes. They also urgently appealed to all concerned to facilitate the efforts of various Governments and United Nations agencies, including UNRWA, as well as non-governmental organizations, to provide critically needed humanitarian assistance.

3. Action taken by the Committee to promote the convening of the proposed International Peace Conference on the Middle East in accordance with General Assembly resolution 38/58 C of 13 December 1983

47. General Assembly resolution 41/43 D of 2 December 1986, inter alia, determined that the question of Palestine is the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict in the Middle East; reaffirmed once again its endorsement of the call for convening the International Peace Conference on the Middle East in conformity with the provisions of resolution 38/58 C; stressed the urgent need for additional concrete and constructive efforts by all Governments in order to convene the Conference without further delay; endorsed the call for setting up a preparatory committee, within the framework of the Security Council, to take the necessary action to convene the Conference; requested the Secretary-General, in consultation with the Security Council, to continue his efforts with a view to convening the Conference and to report thereon to the General Assembly not later than 15 May 1987; and decided to consider at its forty-second session the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the resolution.

48. In the light of that resolution the Committee, in adopting its programme of work (A/AC.183/1987/CRP.1/Rev.1), once again decided that, in its activities during 1987, it would continue as a matter of priority to exert all efforts to promote the early convening of the proposed International Peace Conference on the Middle East, while urging the understanding and further co-operation of all concerned for the resolution of a problem of such fundamental importance to the maintenance of international peace and security. This goal was also stressed by the Chairman of the Committee in his letter to the Secretary-General of 18 February 1987, inviting the participation of all States and intergovernmental organizations in the work of the Committee (see para. 14 above). The Committee was further strengthened in its resolve by the positive replies it received from several Member States, which showed firm support for the Committee's objectives and reaffirmed that the Committee had an important role to play in international efforts towards the convening of the Conference. The Committee intends to take into consideration in its future activities the suggestions made by Member States.

49. The Committee was also greatly encouraged by the strong consensus in favour of the urgent convening of the Conference as the most practical and comprehensive approach to a solution of the question, that had emerged from the regional seminars and from symposia and meetings of non-governmental organizations on the question of Palestine organized under the Committee's auspices. The Committee also found support for the establishment of the preparatory Committee in accordance with Assembly resolution 41/43 D (see sect. B below).

50. The Committee was pleased to note that the Secretary-General had continued his efforts with a view to convening the Conference in accordance with the above-mentioned resolution. In his report (A/42/277-S/18849), the Secretary-General had stated that, in contrast with the experience of recent years, none of the members of the Security Council opposed in principle the idea of an international conference under United Nations auspices. He further stated that wide differences still existed regarding the form that a conference should take and that the positions of the parties themselves remained far apart on a number of issues of procedure and of substance, but that in recent months there had been indications of greater flexibility in attitudes towards the negotiating process and that this should be encouraged.

51. The Committee noted with appreciation that the Secretary-General intended to intensify his contacts with the parties in order to try to find ways of bridging the gaps between them, and that he would keep the General Assembly and the Security Council fully informed of his continuing efforts to make progress towards a just and lasting peace in the Middle East. The Committee also noted with appreciation the statement made on 7 September by the representative of the Secretary-General, at the fourth United Nations International Meeting of Non-Governmental Organizations held at Geneva, that since May, the Secretary-General had continued his consultations with the parties and the members of the Security Council. In June he had sent a mission to the area to explore further the positions of all the parties concerned, including PLO. The mission had had a most constructive discussion with Chairman Arafat in Tunis. Similarly, the talks held with the other parties had also been useful, providing the Secretary-General with clear indications of their positions. While a number of obstacles still needed to be overcome, the Secretary-General was determined to continue his efforts.

52. The Committee was encouraged by the positive elements contained in the Secretary-General's report as well as by the growing international consensus and

efforts in favour of the proposal (see para. 55 below). The Committee continued to stress the urgent need for the Security Council and the parties concerned to take positive action towards the convening of the Conference, particularly in the light of the worsening situation in the occupied territories and in the refugee camps. The Committee's view was reiterated in a meeting of its bureau with the President of the Security Council on 20 May 1987.

53. On 5 June 1987, the Chairman of the Committee issued a press statement (GA/PAL/348) commemorating the twentieth anniversary of the 1967 war in the Middle East, which had resulted in the occupation by Israeli forces of the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the Gaza strip, and in the denial of the right to self-determination of the Palestinian people. He launched an appeal to the international community to redouble its efforts to bring about a just and lasting solution to the Palestinian question, the root cause of the conflict in the Middle East. The Committee believed that the International Peace Conference should be convened as soon as possible and it requested the co-operation of all concerned and interested parties in order to ensure its success in the common interest.

4. Attendance at international conferences and meetings

54. In accordance with its mandate, since its previous report to the General Assembly, the Committee was represented at the following international conferences and meetings:

(a) Meeting of the Special Committee against Apartheid in observance of the Day of Solidarity with South African Political Prisoners, held in New York on 10 October 1986;

(b) Special meeting of the United Nations Council for Namibia to commemorate the Week of Solidarity with the People of Namibia and their Liberation Movement, held in New York on 27 October 1986;

(c) Meeting of the Special Committee against Apartheid in commemoration of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the African National Congress of South Africa (ANC), held in New York on 8 January 1987;

(d) Fifth Islamic Summit Conference, held in Kuwait from 21 to 28 January 1987;

(e) Solemn meeting of the Special Committee against Apartheid in observance of the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, held in New York on 20 March 1987;

(f) Meeting of the Committee of Nine Non-Aligned Countries on Palestine, held at Harare on 14 and 15 April 1987;

(g) Eighteenth session of the Palestine National Council, held at Algiers from 20 to 26 April 1987;

(h) Extraordinary plenary meetings of the United Nations Council for Namibia, held at Luanda from 18 to 22 May 1987;

(i) Meeting of the Solidarity Committee of the German Democratic Republic in solidarity with the Palestinian people, held at Berlin on 5 June 1987;

(j) Solemn meeting of the Special Committee against Apartheid in observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Struggling People of South Africa - Soweto Day, held in New York on 16 June 1987;

(k) Forty-sixth ordinary session of the Council of Ministers and twenty-third session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity, held at Addis Ababa on 20 to 29 July 1987;

(l) Solemn meeting of the United Nations Council for Namibia in commemoration of Namibia Day, held on 26 August 1987;

(m) European Meeting of Non-Governmental Organizations organized by the European Co-ordinating Committee for Non-Governmental Organizations on the Question of Palestine, held at Geneva on 3 and 4 September 1987.

5. Action taken by United Nations bodies, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and intergovernmental organizations

55. The Committee continued to follow with great interest the activities relating to the question of Palestine of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, United Nations bodies and intergovernmental organizations. The Committee especially noted the grave concern at all levels of the international community over the continuing lack of progress towards a negotiated solution of the Palestine question and over the steady deterioration of the situation of the Palestinian people in the occupied territories and the refugee camps. It welcomed the growing sentiment and momentum in favour of the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East. The Committee noted in particular the following documents:

(a) Final communiqué of the Meeting of Ministers and Heads of Delegation of the Non-Aligned Countries to the forty-first session of the United Nations General Assembly, held in New York on 2 October 1986 (A/41/703-S/18395);

(b) Final communiqué adopted at the Co-ordination Meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, held in New York on 2 October 1986 (A/41/740-S/18418);

(c) Communiqué issued by the plenary meeting of Non-Aligned Countries held in New York on 8 December 1986 (A/42/79-S/18569);

(d) Final communiqué and resolutions adopted by the Fifth Islamic Summit Conference, held at Kuwait from 26 to 29 January 1987 (resolutions 1/5-P(IS), 2/5-P(IS) and 8/5-P(IS)) (A/42/178-S/18753);

(e) Resolutions adopted by the forty-third session of the Commission on Human Rights, held at Geneva from 2 February to 13 March 1987 (resolutions 1987/2 A and B, 1987/4 and 1987/49) (E/1987/18-E/CN.4/1987/60);

(f) Declaration of the Foreign Ministers of the Twelve Member States of the European Community on the Middle East, made at Brussels on 23 February 1987 (A/42/151-S/18718);

(g) Resolutions adopted by the Council of Ministers of the Organization of African Unity at its forty-fifth ordinary session, held at Addis Ababa from 23 to 28 February 1987 (A/42/292);

(h) Statement on the Middle East issued by the Nordic Foreign Ministers at their meeting held at Reykjavik from 25 to 26 March 1987;

(i) Final document adopted at the Meeting of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Committee of Nine Non-Aligned Countries on Palestine (Harare Declaration) held at Harare on 14 and 15 April 1987 (A/42/284-S/18856);

(j) Communiqué issued by the Session of the Political Consultative Committee of the States Parties to the Warsaw Treaty on Friendship, Co-operation and Mutual Assistance held at Berlin on 28 and 29 May 1987 (A/42/313-S/18888);

(k) Communiqué of the Meeting of Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Mediterranean members of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, held at Brioni, Yugoslavia, from 3 to 4 June 1987 (A/42/409);

(l) Communiqué of the Committee of Nine Non-Aligned Countries on Palestine meeting at the ministerial level at Pyongyang, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, on 10 June 1987;

(m) Joint communiqué of the Twentieth ASEAN Ministerial Meeting, held in Singapore on 15 and 16 June 1987 (A/42/477-S/19048);

(n) Resolutions adopted by the Economic and Social Council at its second regular session of 1987, held at Geneva from 23 June to 9 July 1987 (resolutions 1987/77 and 1987/87) (E/1987/INF/7);

(o) Declaration concerning the Middle East adopted by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the twelve States members of the European Community at Copenhagen on 13 July 1987 (A/42/401-S/18978);

(p) Resolutions adopted by the Council of Ministers of the Organization of African Unity at its forty-sixth ordinary session, held at Addis Ababa from 20 to 25 July 1987 (CM/Res. 1093, 1094, 1095 (XLVI));

(q) Declaration by the twelve member States of the European Community concerning Israel's settlement policy, issued at Brussels, on 14 September 1987 (A/42/56-S/19139).

B. Action taken by the Committee in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 41/43 A and B of 2 December 1986

1. Co-operation with non-governmental organizations

56. During the period under review, the Committee and the Division for Palestinian Rights, in consultation with the Committee and under its guidance, organized a number of activities in their continuing efforts to expand their contacts with non-governmental organizations and to co-operate with such organizations in their contribution towards heightening international awareness of the facts relating to the question of Palestine and in creating a more favourable atmosphere for the full implementation of the Committee's recommendations.

57. Accordingly, the Committee during 1987 organized regional symposia for non-governmental organizations in Asia and North America; an international meeting of non-governmental organizations; and two preparatory meetings for the North American symposium and the international meeting, respectively.

58. In accordance with its decision to continue to give utmost priority to efforts to promote the early convening of the proposed International Peace Conference on the Middle East, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 38/58 C, the Committee decided that non-governmental symposia and meetings should continue to emphasize the importance of convening the Conference and structured the programmes for those activities accordingly.

(a) North American Regional Symposium

59. The preparatory meeting for the North American Regional Symposium for Non-Governmental Organizations was held at United Nations Headquarters on 17 and 18 February 1987 and was attended by the members of the North American Co-ordinating Committee for Non-Governmental Organizations on the Question of Palestine, elected by the participants at the North American Regional Symposium for Non-Governmental Organizations held in June 1986. The meeting worked out the various aspects of the programme for the symposium to be held in 1987 and the modalities for expanding the network of non-governmental organizations active on the question of Palestine in North America.

60. The North American Regional Symposium for Non-Governmental Organizations was held at United Nations Headquarters from 24 to 26 June 1987, immediately following the North American Regional Seminar, with which it was combined in the interest of economy and in accordance with the practice followed in previous years (see para. 73 below). The Symposium was attended by representatives of 46 non-governmental organizations as participants, and 24 non-governmental organizations as observers from the United States of America and Canada, by a delegation of the Committee, and by a number of observers from governmental and intergovernmental organizations and liberation movements. The Symposium had one main panel on "The need for convening the International Peace Conference on the Middle East in accordance with General Assembly resolution 38/58 C: the urgency of ending twenty years of occupation", and a number of action-oriented workshops.

61. The Committee noted with appreciation that the Symposium adopted a declaration strongly supporting the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East in accordance with General Assembly resolution 38/58 C and calling upon the peoples and Governments of the United States and Canada to take all possible steps to secure the implementation of that resolution in order to secure a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict, the core of which is the question of Palestine. The Committee was also pleased that the Symposium participants agreed on common objectives and strategies to be implemented by North American non-governmental organizations to promote a just and lasting peace in the Middle East, in particular the proposal to convene a model international peace conference at the non-governmental organization level, and again established a North American Co-ordinating Committee for Non-Governmental Organizations to co-ordinate their work. (For the full text of the declaration, see annex VI to the present document.)

(b) Asian Regional Symposium

62. The Asian Regional Symposium for Non-Governmental Organizations was held at the Vigyan Bhawan Conference Centre at New Delhi from 8 to 10 June 1987. The Committee had decided, in the interest of economy, to integrate this symposium as far as possible with the Asian Regional Seminar, which was held at the same venue from 8 to 12 June 1987 (see para. 72 below). The Committee expressed its appreciation to the Government of India for its willingness to host both events.

63. The Symposium was attended by representatives of 21 non-governmental organizations as participants and 11 non-governmental organizations as observers, as well as by a delegation of the Committee and governmental and intergovernmental observers.

64. The Symposium shared two panels with the Seminar, namely, on "the role of PLO", and on "the International Peace Conference on the Middle East in accordance with General Assembly resolution 38/58 C, the need for such a Conference, and efforts and prospects to promote a successful outcome and benefits thereof". An additional panel on "non-governmental organization collaboration on the question of Palestine and the role of the United Nations" was also organized for the benefit of the Symposium only, as well as a workshop on "non-governmental organization activities to promote the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East and to mobilize Asian public opinion".

65. The Committee noted with appreciation that the Symposium had adopted a declaration upholding the proposed International Peace Conference on the Middle East in accordance with General Assembly resolution 38/58 C, with the participation of all parties concerned, including PLO as the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, and calling for the mobilization of public opinion in the Asian region in support of the convening of the Conference. The Committee was also pleased that the participants in the Symposium had agreed on common objectives and activities for Asian non-governmental organizations with a view to encouraging their Governments to pursue those policies, and had taken steps towards the establishment of a co-ordinating committee of the Asian non-governmental organizations to harmonize their future work. (For the full text of the declaration, see annex IV to the present document.)

(c) International Meeting of Non-Governmental Organizations

66. The preparatory meeting for the International Meeting of Non-Governmental Organizations was held at the United Nations Office at Geneva on 16 and 17 March 1987 and was attended by members of the International Co-ordinating Committee for Non-Governmental Organizations on the Question of Palestine, elected by the participants at the International Meeting of Non-Governmental Organizations held in July 1986. In accordance with its mandate, the preparatory meeting worked out the details of the programme for the International Meeting of Non-Governmental Organizations to be held in 1987 and discussed future co-operation and action at the international level.

67. The International Meeting of Non-Governmental Organizations was held at the United Nations Office at Geneva from 7 to 9 September 1987. The Meeting was attended by representatives from 121 non-governmental organizations as participants and 149 non-governmental organizations as observers from all regions, including several from Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories. The Committee was honoured by the participation in the Meeting of Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the Executive Committee of PLO, who also received the Committee delegation for an

exchange of views. The Committee was also pleased that a number of prominent political personalities had accepted its invitation to attend and address the Meeting.

68. The Meeting established two panels to consider "The need for and the urgency of convening the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 38/58 C", and "Palestinian political and human rights", and four workshops, on mobilization of public opinion; creative arts and the Palestinian struggle for national identity; community development and relief work; and mobilizing the international peace movement for a nuclear-weapon-free Middle East.

69. The Committee noted with appreciation that the Meeting adopted a declaration reaffirming the need for and urgency of convening the International Peace Conference on the Middle East in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 38/58 C and 41/43 D and pledging further efforts by the international non-governmental organization community to promote this objective. In this connection, the Committee noted the commitment of the European non-governmental organizations to work towards increased support for the Conference by their Governments, particularly in the States members of the European Economic Community and that the non-governmental organizations had urged the European Parliament to invite Chairman Arafat to present the views of the Palestinian people. Further, the non-governmental organizations had reaffirmed the international consensus that the PLO is the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people and they called on all Governments to recognize the PLO. The Committee noted that the Meeting had called for the repeal of the Israeli law of 1986 which criminalizes Israeli citizens who engage in peace talks with the PLO. The Committee also noted that the Meeting reaffirmed its support for the recognition and attainment of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including the right of return and the right to self-determination, and expressed grave concern over the deteriorating situation of Palestinians in the occupied territories and in southern Lebanon. The Committee further noted with appreciation that the Meeting had agreed on a number of action-oriented proposals for the future, including efforts for the further expansion of the international network of non-governmental organizations, and had again established an International Co-ordinating Committee for Non-Governmental Organizations to harmonize these activities. (For the full text of the declaration, see annex VII to the present document.)

2. Seminars

70. In accordance with the mandate given by the General Assembly, the Committee and the Division for Palestinian Rights in consultation with the Committee and under its guidance continued to organize seminars in various regions. As in the past, the Committee decided that the seminars would consider the following topics:

(a) The convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 38/58 C, the need for such a conference and efforts and prospects to promote a successful outcome and benefits thereof;

(b) The role of the Palestine Liberation Organization;

(c) The question of Palestine and public opinion (in the region concerned);

(d) The United Nations and the question of Palestine.

71. It was also decided that other topics of particular relevance to the region concerned might be added.

72. The Committee appreciated the decision of the Government of India to provide the venue for the Asian Regional Seminar (the Sixteenth United Nations Seminar on the Question of Palestine), which took place at New Delhi from 8 to 12 June 1987. As already mentioned (see para. 49 above), the Seminar was integrated with the Asian Regional Non-Governmental Organizations Symposium to the extent possible. The conclusions and recommendations of the Seminar are contained in annex III to the present document.

73. The North American Regional Seminar (the Seventeenth United Nations Seminar on the Question of Palestine) was held at United Nations Headquarters on 22 and 23 June 1987. Its conclusions and recommendations are contained in annex V to the present document.

74. The Committee regretted that, owing to circumstances beyond its control, it could not hold the Latin American seminar which it had included in its programme of work for 1987. The Committee has decided to organize this seminar as early as possible in 1988.

75. The Committee was pleased by the participation in the seminars of prominent political personalities, parliamentarians and policy makers, as well as persons from the academic community and other experts, as this showed the growing determination of the international community at all levels to promote progress towards a solution of the Palestine question.

76. The Committee noted that, in their conclusions and recommendations, the participants in the regional seminars had reaffirmed that the question of Palestine was the core of the Middle East conflict and that no comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the region could be achieved without the realization by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights in accordance with United Nations resolutions.

77. The Committee was encouraged that the participants in the seminar had also reaffirmed the need for convening the International Peace Conference on the Middle East under the auspices of the United Nations in accordance with General Assembly resolution 38/58 C, and that they urged the Governments of Israel and the United States of America to reconsider their negative attitude towards the convening of the Conference.

78. The Committee further noted that the participants in the seminar had expressed the view that the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People had an important role to play in promoting the convening of the Conference and recommended the intensification of political and diplomatic efforts by all concerned to reach a comprehensive, just and durable settlement of the conflict in the Middle East, and that they had called for additional efforts by the United Nations and by all concerned to influence public opinion in that direction through wider dissemination of accurate information on the question of Palestine. The Asian Seminar also expressed serious concern with regard to the relations between Israel and South Africa and called upon the Committee and the Division for Palestinian Rights to keep under review the development of such relations.

3. Other activities

79. The Committee noted with appreciation that the Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat had pursued its programme of studies and publications relating to the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people in implementation of its mandate as reaffirmed in General Assembly resolution 41/43 B. In particular, the Division had continued to publish its monthly bulletin reporting on relevant activities and decisions of United Nations bodies and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, as well as special bulletins containing the reports of regional seminars and of symposia and meetings of non-governmental organizations organized under the auspices of the Committee, and the proceedings of the solemn meetings of the Committee in observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. In addition, the Division had continued to update its compilation of United Nations resolutions on the situation in the Middle East and the question of Palestine. The Division had also produced information notes on the International Day of Solidarity and on the various anniversaries of importance to the Palestinian people to be observed in 1987. A study on the need for convening the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 38/58 C, and part IV of the study entitled "The origins and evolution of the Palestine problem" were also in preparation and would be finalized during 1987. The Division had also continued to monitor developments in the area and to prepare information material for the use of the Committee as required.

80. The International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People was observed on 1 December 1986 at United Nations Headquarters in New York and at the United Nations Offices at Geneva and Vienna. The Committee noted with appreciation that the International Day had been equally commemorated in many other cities throughout the world in 1986 (see para. 91 below).

V. ACTION TAKEN BY THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INFORMATION IN
ACCORDANCE WITH GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 41/43 C

81. The Committee noted with appreciation that, during the past year, the Department of Public Information had continued its information programme on the question of Palestine, in accordance with previous relevant General Assembly resolutions, with a view to furthering the world-wide dissemination of accurate and comprehensive information on the question. However, the financial situation of the United Nations had led to the curtailment of several activities in this regard. The information programme included press and publication activities, radio-visual coverage, a fact-finding mission for journalists to the Middle East and a series of national and regional encounters for journalists.

82. In publication activities, the Department had continued to disseminate information on the question of Palestine through articles and press releases. The UN Chronicle had also reported on the consideration given to the question of Palestine and other relevant items by the General Assembly at its forty-first session, the Security Council and other United Nations bodies. The Department had also disseminated, as widely as possible, information regarding the seminars and symposia held by the Committee.

83. Due to the freeze in recruitment, no new publications were issued. However, the Department's publications The United Nations and the Question of Palestine and The Work of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Population of the Occupied Territories were reproduced.

84. The Department's coverage on the question of Palestine included radio news programme broadcasts in all the official languages of the United Nations. The occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, 30 November 1987, would be highlighted in feature programmes and news dispatches. In addition, a special series of radio programmes, four each in Arabic, English, French and Spanish, were produced in 1986 on the following aspects of the question of Palestine: the international dimension; a search for a political solution; the human dimension and the proposed International Peace Conference on the Middle East. Another exclusive series of radio programmes would be produced in 1987 for each in Arabic, English, French and Spanish.

85. Videotape packages included the above-mentioned coverage and were circulated around the world. As part of its ongoing visual coverage of events at Headquarters, the Department produced a substantial number of television news items on the question of Palestine and related Middle East events. The News Production Section of the Department would cover the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, on 30 November 1987, and the deliberations on the question of Palestine and other relevant items during the forty-second session of the General Assembly. Several regional magazines on the question of Palestine were also produced and disseminated.

86. The production of a new short film on the question of Palestine was currently under way and expected to be ready for screening before 30 November 1987.

87. Activities that focused on acquainting the media with the facts and developments pertaining to the question of Palestine included a fact-finding mission to the Middle East. A team of 12 prominent journalists and media representatives from various parts of the world had visited Egypt, Jordan and Iraq

from 2 to 15 June 1987. A visit to Israel was not possible, since no response had been received from the Government of Israel to an official request for such a visit. Also, a visit to the occupied Palestinian territories was not possible since Israel, the occupying Power, had not responded to the same official request. The purpose of the mission was to provide an opportunity for the participants to learn first hand and in depth about the various aspects of the question through discussions with senior officials of the Governments concerned and of the Palestine Liberation Organization, prominent personalities, and visits to the Palestinian refugee camps. The mission received extensive media coverage during the visit. Participants published numerous articles upon their return to their home countries.

88. In 1987, as in 1986, the Department organized two regional encounters for journalists on the question of Palestine, bringing high-level journalists together with experts on the question of Palestine. The first encounter was held at San Carlos de Bariloche, Argentina, for the North and Latin American regions, from 20 to 23 January 1987. The second was held at Singapore, for Asian journalists from 6 to 9 April 1987. The objective of both encounters was to promote a better understanding of the question among leaders of the media by bringing them together with experts on the subject for brief, informal discussions. Accordingly, around 15 high-level journalists from the press, radio and television media participated in each encounter. The journalists were impressed by the high calibre of the panelists and by the informal and candid character of the presentations made. It was their belief that the encounter, which they found useful, informative and interesting, had greatly increased their knowledge of the subject.

89. The Department also organized two series of national encounters in which a team of expert panelists held meetings, in the form of in-depth press conferences, with national journalists and foreign correspondents in various countries. Latin American national encounters were held in Peru and Venezuela on 28 and 30 January, respectively. Asian national encounters were held in India, Thailand and Japan between 31 March and 13 April 1987.

90. Feedback analysis of the above-mentioned activities revealed the great interest of journalists and public opinion makers in the question of Palestine and their appreciation for the United Nations public information programme in this regard.

91. United Nations information centres throughout the world continued to carry out information activities in connection with the question of Palestine and made available to the public United Nations publications on the subject. The centres also continued to organize a world-wide observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People on 29 November 1986. In this regard, the centres widely disseminated, in official and local languages, the statements of the Secretary-General, the President of the General Assembly and the Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. Commemorative meetings were also held in a large number of capitals in which official government representatives, parliamentary groups, non-governmental organizations and representatives of the diplomatic corps participated. Exhibits of posters, photographs, publications and other visual materials were mounted and United Nations and UNRWA films were screened on the premises of several centres and at the site of the commemorative functions. The centres would again observe the Day on 30 November 1987.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COMMITTEE

92. During the year under review, international understanding of the question of Palestine and support for the attainment and exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people have reached new heights, as demonstrated by the many activities, statements and declarations reviewed in the present report. At the same time, the grave deterioration of the situation of Palestinians in the area has aroused the most widespread and serious concern that tension and violence will continue to increase, with possible disastrous consequences for the region, unless progress is finally made towards a negotiated settlement to this long-standing and difficult problem. The Committee therefore considers that a new phase has been reached, which necessitates renewed and intensified collective efforts to achieve a comprehensive, just and lasting solution under United Nations auspices and on the basis of relevant United Nations resolutions particularly General Assembly resolutions 38/58 C and 41/43 D.

93. The Committee considers that, at this critical juncture, urgent positive action by the Security Council is required on the recommendations formulated by the Committee in its first report and those adopted by the International Conference on the Question of Palestine held at Geneva in 1983, which have been repeatedly endorsed by the General Assembly. The Committee reaffirms that those recommendations are solidly founded on fundamental and internationally accepted principles and that the recognition and attainment of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people are indispensable conditions in the solution of the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict in the Middle East.

94. The Committee wishes to reaffirm that the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, in accordance with the guidelines and other provisions contained in General Assembly resolutions 38/58 C and 41/43 D, is the most comprehensive and widely accepted proposal and that its convening would constitute a major contribution by the United Nations towards the realization of such a solution. In the past year, an international consensus has clearly emerged in favour of the convening of the Conference. The Committee therefore intends to further intensify its efforts towards this objective, and to make it the focal point of its work programme in the coming year.

95. Noting that the Secretary-General has reported that it has not yet proved possible to obtain the agreement of all the parties, the Committee recommends that the General Assembly should call once again upon those Member States which do not yet support the convening of the Conference to reconsider their attitude; call for additional concrete and constructive efforts by all Governments in particular the permanent members of the Security Council, for the convening of the Conference and for setting up the preparatory committee for the conference in accordance with General Assembly resolution 41/43 D; and renew the mandate of the Secretary-General, in consultation with the Security Council, to continue his efforts with a view to convening the Conference.

96. The Committee has been impressed and encouraged by the strength and unity of the Palestinian people under the leadership of its representative, the Palestine Liberation Organization in confronting adversity, and by the growing awareness and mobilization of the international community at all levels in support of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and of United Nations recommendations for their attainment. The Committee will continue to engage in the process of

evaluating the progress achieved and the experience gained in its various activities, with the goal of strengthening its efforts and achieving maximum effectiveness in the implementation of its mandate.

Notes

1/ The Committee is composed of the following members: Afghanistan, Cuba, Cyprus, German Democratic Republic, Guinea, Guyana, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mali, Malta, Nigeria, Pakistan, Romania, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic and Yugoslavia.

2/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-first Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/31/35).

3/ Ibid., Thirty-second Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/32/35); ibid., Thirty-third Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/33/35 and Corr.1); ibid., Thirty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/34/35 and Corr.1); ibid., Thirty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/35/35 and Corr.1); ibid., Thirty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/36/35); ibid., Thirty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/37/35); ibid., Thirty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/38/35); ibid., Thirty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/39/35); ibid., Fortieth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/40/35); ibid., Forty-first Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/41/35).

4/ United Nations, Treaty Series, vol. 75, No. 973, p. 287.

5/ Report of the International Conference on the Question of Palestine, Geneva, 29 August-7 September 1983 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.83.I.21), chap. I, sect. B.

6/ The observers at the Committee meetings were as follows: Algeria, Bangladesh, Bulgaria, China, Czechoslovakia, Ecuador, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Mauritania, Morocco, Nicaragua, Niger, Sri Lanka, Syrian Arab Republic, United Arab Emirates, Viet Nam, the League of Arab States and the Organization of the Islamic Conference. The Palestine Liberation Organization, as the representative of the Palestinian people, the principal party to the question of Palestine, was also an observer.

7/ The current membership of the Working Group is as follows: Afghanistan, Cuba, German Democratic Republic, Guinea, Guyana, India, Malta, Pakistan, Senegal, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic and, as the representative of the people directly concerned, the Palestine Liberation Organization.

ANNEX I

Recommendations of the Committee endorsed by the General Assembly
at its thirty-first session*

I. Basic considerations and guidelines

59. The question of Palestine is at the heart of the Middle East problem, and consequently, the Committee stresses its belief that no solution in the Middle East can be envisaged which does not fully take into account the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people.

60. The legitimate and inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to return to their homes and property and to achieve self-determination, national independence and sovereignty are endorsed by the Committee in the conviction that the full implementation of these rights will contribute decisively to a comprehensive and final settlement of the Middle East crisis.

61. The participation of the Palestine Liberation Organization, the representative of the Palestinian people, on an equal footing with other parties, on the basis of General Assembly resolutions 3236 (XXIX) and 3375 (XXX) is indispensable in all efforts, deliberations and conferences on the Middle East which are held under the auspices of the United Nations.

62. The Committee recalls the fundamental principle of the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force and stresses the consequent obligation for complete and speedy evacuation of any territory so occupied.

63. The Committee considers that it is the duty and responsibility of all concerned to enable the Palestinians to exercise their inalienable rights.

64. The Committee recommends an expanded and more influential role by the United Nations and its organs in promoting a just solution to the question of Palestine and in the implementation of such a solution. The Security Council, in particular, should take appropriate action to facilitate the exercise by the Palestinians of their right to return to their homes, lands and property. The Committee, furthermore, urges the Security Council to promote action towards a just solution, taking into account all the powers conferred on it by the Charter of the United Nations.

65. It is with this perspective in view and on the basis of the numerous resolutions of the United Nations, after due consideration of all the facts, proposals and suggestions advanced in the course of its deliberations, that the Committee submits its recommendations on the modalities for the implementation of the exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.

* Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-first Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/31/35), paras. 59-72.

II. The right of return

66. The natural and inalienable right of Palestinians to return to their homes is recognized by resolution 194 (III), which the General Assembly has reaffirmed almost every year since its adoption. This right was also unanimously recognized by the Security Council in its resolution 237 (1967); the time for the urgent implementation of these resolutions is long overdue.

67. Without prejudice to the right of all Palestinians to return to their homes, lands and property, the Committee considers that the programme of implementation of the exercise of this right may be carried out in two phases:

Phase one

68. The first phase involves the return to their homes of the Palestinians displaced as a result of the war of June 1967. The Committee recommends that:

- (i) The Security Council should request the immediate implementation of its resolution 237 (1967) and that such implementation should not be related to any other condition;
- (ii) The resources of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and/or of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, suitably financed and mandated, may be employed to assist in the solution of any logistical problems involved in the resettlement of those returning to their homes. These agencies could also assist, in co-operation with the host countries and the Palestine Liberation Organization, in the identification of the displaced Palestinians.

Phase two

69. The second phase deals with the return to their homes of the Palestinians displaced between 1948 and 1967. The Committee recommends that:

- (i) While the first phase is being implemented, the United Nations in co-operation with the States directly involved, and the Palestine Liberation Organization as the interim representative of the Palestinian entity, should proceed to make the necessary arrangements to enable Palestinians displaced between 1948 and 1967 to exercise their right to return to their homes and property, in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions, particularly General Assembly resolution 194 (III);
- (ii) Palestinians not choosing to return to their homes should be paid just and equitable compensation as provided for in resolution 194 (III).

III. The right to self-determination, national independence and sovereignty

70. The Palestinian people has the inherent right to self-determination, national independence and sovereignty in Palestine. The Committee considers that the

evacuation of the territories occupied by force and in violation of the principles of the Charter and relevant resolutions of the United Nations is a conditio sine qua non for the exercise by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights in Palestine. The Committee considers furthermore, that upon the return of the Palestinians to their homes and property and with the establishment of an independent Palestinian entity, the Palestinian people will be able to exercise its rights to self-determination and to decide its form of government without external interference.

71. The Committee also feels that the United Nations has an historical duty and responsibility to render all assistance necessary to promote the economic development and prosperity of the Palestinian entity.

72. To these ends, the Committee recommends that:

(a) A timetable should be established by the Security Council for the complete withdrawal by Israeli occupation forces from those areas occupied in 1967; such withdrawal should be completed no later than 1 June 1977;

(b) The Security Council may need to provide temporary peace-keeping forces in order to facilitate the process of withdrawal;

(c) Israel should be requested by the Security Council to desist from the establishment of new settlements and to withdraw during this period from settlements established since 1967 in the occupied territories. Arab property and all essential services in these areas should be maintained intact;

(d) Israel should also be requested to abide scrupulously by the provisions of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949 and to declare, pending its speedy withdrawal from these territories, its recognition of the applicability of that Convention;

(e) The evacuated territories, with all property and services intact, should be taken over by the United Nations, which with the co-operation of the League of Arab States, will subsequently hand over these evacuated areas to the Palestine Liberation Organization as the representative of the Palestinian people;

(f) The United Nations should, if necessary, assist in establishing communications between Gaza and the West Bank;

(g) As soon as the independent Palestinian entity has been established, the United Nations, in co-operation with the States directly involved and the Palestinian entity, should, taking into account General Assembly resolution 3375 (XXX), make further arrangements for the full implementation of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, the resolution of outstanding problems and the establishment of a just and lasting peace in the region, in accordance with all relevant United Nations resolutions;

(h) The United Nations should provide the economic and technical assistance necessary for the consolidation of the Palestinian entity.

Geneva Declaration on Palestine and the Programme of Action
for the Achievement of Palestinian Rights a/

A. Geneva Declaration on Palestine

In pursuance of General Assembly resolutions 36/120 C of 10 December 1981, ES-7/7 of 19 August 1982 and 37/86 C of 10 December 1982, an International Conference on the Question of Palestine was convened at the United Nations Office at Geneva from 29 August to 7 September 1983 to seek effective ways and means to enable the Palestinian people to attain and to exercise their inalienable rights. The Conference was opened by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, and presided over by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Senegal, Moustapha Niassé.

* * *

1. The Conference, having thoroughly considered the question of Palestine in all its aspects, expresses the grave concern of all nations and peoples regarding the international tension that has persisted for several decades in the Middle East, the principal cause of which is the denial by Israel, and those supporting its expansionist policies, of the inalienable legitimate rights of the Palestinian people. The Conference reaffirms and stresses that a just solution of the question of Palestine, the core of the problem, is the crucial element in a comprehensive, just and lasting political settlement in the Middle East.

2. The Conference recognizes that, as one of the most acute and complex problems of our time, the question of Palestine - inherited by the United Nations at the time of its establishment - requires a comprehensive, just and lasting political settlement. This settlement must be based on the implementation of the relevant United Nations resolutions concerning the question of Palestine and the attainment of the legitimate, inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including the right to self-determination and the right to the establishment of its own independent State in Palestine and should also be based on the provision by the Security Council of guarantees for peace and security among all States in the region, including the independent Palestinian State, within secure and internationally recognized boundaries. The Conference is convinced that the attainment by the Palestinian people of their inalienable rights, as defined by General Assembly resolution 3236 (XXIX) of 22 November 1974, will contribute substantially to the achievement of peace and stability in the Middle East.

3. The Conference considers the role of the United Nations in the achievement of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East to be essential and paramount. It emphasizes the need for respect for, and application of, the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations, the resolutions of the United Nations relevant to the question of Palestine and the observance of the principles of international law.

4. The Conference considers that the various proposals, consistent with the principles of international law, which have been presented on this question, such as the Arab peace plan adopted unanimously at the Twelfth Arab Summit Conference (see A/37/696-S/15510, annex), held at Fez, Morocco, in September 1982, should

serve as guidelines for concerted international effort to resolve the question of Palestine. These guidelines include the following:

(a) The attainment by the Palestinian people of its legitimate inalienable rights, including the right to return, the right to self-determination and the right to establish its own independent State in Palestine;

(b) The right of the Palestine Liberation Organization, the representative of the Palestinian people, to participate on an equal footing with other parties in all efforts, deliberations and conferences on the Middle East;

(c) The need to put an end to Israel's occupation of the Arab territories, in accordance with the principle of the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force, and, consequently, the need to secure Israeli withdrawal from the territories occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem;

(d) The need to oppose and reject such Israeli policies and practices in the occupied territories, including Jerusalem, and any de facto situation created by Israel as are contrary to international law and relevant United Nations resolutions, particularly the establishment of settlements, as these policies and practices constitute major obstacles to the achievement of peace in the Middle East;

(e) The need to reaffirm as null and void all legislative and administrative measures and actions taken by Israel, the occupying Power, which have altered or purported to alter the character and status of the Holy City of Jerusalem, including the expropriation of land and property situated thereon, and in particular the so-called "Basic Law" on Jerusalem and the proclamation of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel;

(f) The right of all States in the region to existence within secure and internationally recognized boundaries, with justice and security for all the people, the sine qua non of which is the recognition and attainment of the legitimate, inalienable rights of the Palestinian people as stated in subparagraph (a) above.

5. In order to give effect to these guidelines, the Conference considers it essential that an international peace conference on the Middle East be convened on the basis of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the relevant resolutions of the United Nations, with the aim of achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict, an essential element of which would be the establishment of an independent Palestinian State in Palestine. This peace conference should be convened under the auspices of the United Nations, with the participation of all parties to the Arab-Israeli conflict, including the Palestine Liberation Organization, as well as the United States of America, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, and other concerned States, on an equal footing. In this context the Security Council has a primary responsibility to create appropriate institutional arrangements on the basis of relevant United Nations resolutions in order to guarantee and to carry out the accords of the international peace conference.

6. The International Conference on the Question of Palestine emphasizes the importance of the time factor in achieving a just solution to the problem of Palestine. The Conference is convinced that partial solutions are inadequate and delays in seeking a comprehensive solution do not eliminate tensions in the region.

B. Programme of Action for the Achievement of
Palestinian Rights

The International Conference on the Question of Palestine agreed that no effort should be spared to seek effective ways and means to enable the Palestinian people to attain and exercise their rights in Palestine in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights b/ and the principles of international law. The Conference, taking into consideration the Geneva Declaration on Palestine (sect. A above), recommended the following Programme of Action.

I

The International Conference on the Question of Palestine recommends that all States, individually or collectively, consistent with their respective constitutions and their obligations under the Charter of the United Nations and in conformity with the principles of international law, should:

- (1) Recognize the great importance of the time factor in solving the question of Palestine;
- (2) Intensify efforts for the establishment of an independent Palestinian State within the framework of a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement to the Arab-Israeli conflict in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, the relevant United Nations resolutions and the guidelines of the Geneva Declaration on Palestine;
- (3) Consider the continued presence of Israel in the occupied Palestinian and other Arab territories, including Jerusalem, as exacerbating instability in the region and endangering international peace and security;
- (4) Oppose and reject, as a serious and continuing obstacle to peace, the expansionist policies pursued by Israel in the Palestinian and other Arab territories occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, and in particular the alteration of the geographic nature and demographic composition, and the Israeli attempt to alter, through domestic legislation, the legal status of those territories, and all the measures taken in violation of the Geneva Convention relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War, c/ and the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, d/ both of 12 August 1949, and of The Hague Regulations of 1907, e/ such as the establishment and expansion of settlements, the transfer of Israeli civilians into those territories and the individual and mass transfers therefrom of the Arab Palestinian population;
- (5) Refrain from providing Israel with assistance of such a nature as to encourage it militarily, economically and financially to continue its aggression, occupation and disregard of its obligations under the Charter and the relevant resolutions of the United Nations;
- (6) Not encourage migration to the occupied Arab territories until Israel has put a definitive end to the implementation of its illegal policy of establishing settlements in the Palestinian and other Arab territories occupied since 1967;

(7) Fully comply with the relevant resolutions of the United Nations and its specialized agencies on the Holy City of Jerusalem, including those which reject Israel's annexation of Jerusalem and its declaration of that city as its capital;

(8) Undertake universal efforts to protect the Holy Places and urge Israel to take measures to prevent their desecration;

(9) Consider ways and means of meeting the threat that Israel poses to regional security in Africa in view of Israel's disregard of United Nations resolutions, and its close collaboration with the apartheid régime in the economic, military and nuclear fields, thereby contributing to the continued illegal occupation of Namibia and enhancing the régime's repressive and aggressive capacity;

(10) Encourage, through bilateral and multilateral contacts, all States, including Western European and North American States which have not done so, to welcome all peace initiatives based on the recognition of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, which were also welcomed by Chairman Yasser Arafat in his address to the International Conference on the Question of Palestine;

(11) Seek and develop ways and means to enable the Palestinian people to exercise sovereignty over their national resources;

(12) Express concern that Israel debars Palestinians from economic activity and access to national resources on Palestinian territory, in consistent violation of General Assembly resolutions on the right of the Palestinians to permanent sovereignty over their national resources;

(13) Declare null and void and counter such measures and practices applied by Israel in the occupied Palestinian and other Arab territories, including Jerusalem, as the annexation and the expropriation of land, water resources, and property and the alteration of the demographic, geographic, historical and cultural features thereof;

(14) Undertake measures to alleviate the economic and social burdens borne by the Palestinian people as a result of the continued Israeli occupation of their territories since 1967;

(15) Consider contributing or increasing special contributions to the proposed budgets, programmes and projects of the relevant organs, funds and agencies of the United Nations system that have been requested to provide humanitarian, economic and social assistance to the Palestinian people, with particular reference to:

(a) General Assembly resolution 33/147 of 20 December 1978 and the appeal of the Governing Council of the United Nations Development Programme at its thirtieth session for additional special contributions amounting to at least \$8 million during the third programming cycle (1982-1986) aimed at helping to meet the economic and social needs of the Palestinian people; f/

(b) The proposed programme budget of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development for the biennium 1984/85 regarding the establishment

within the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development of a special economic unit, g/ as requested by that Conference at its sixth session at Belgrade; h/

(c) Establishing a special legal aid fund to assist Palestinians in securing their rights under conditions of occupation, i/ in accordance with the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War;

(16) Ensure that the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East can meet the essential needs of the Palestinians without interruption or any diminution in the effectiveness of its services;

(17) Review the situation of Palestinian women in the occupied Palestinian and other Arab territories and, in view of their special hardships, urge the Preparatory Committee of the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women, to be held at Nairobi in 1985, to include this item on the agenda of the Conference;

(18) Review, if they have not yet done so, in conformity with their national legislation, their economic, cultural, technical and other relations with Israel, and the agreements governing them with the aim of ensuring that these regulations and agreements will not be interpreted or construed as implying in any way recognition of any modification of the legal status of Jerusalem and of the Palestinian and other Arab territories occupied by Israel since 1967, or an acceptance of Israel's illegal presence in those territories;

(19) Recognize that the process of enabling the Palestinian people to exercise its inalienable rights in Palestine is a significant contribution to the restoration of the rule of law in international relations;

(20) Assure the observance of the stipulations provided in General Assembly resolution 181 (II) guaranteeing to all persons equal and non-discriminatory rights in civil, political, economic and religious matters and the enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms, including freedom of religion, speech, publication, education, assembly and association;

(21) Express concern that the laws applicable in the occupied Arab territories have been totally eclipsed by a plethora of military orders that have been designed to establish a new "legal régime" in violation of The Hague Regulations of 1907, and the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War;

(22) Act in accordance with their obligations under existing international law, in particular with regard to the Geneva Conventions of 1949 which require States Parties to respect and to ensure respect for those Conventions in all circumstances, and in particular ensure the respect by Israel for the Geneva Conventions of 1949 in the occupied Palestinian and other Arab territories;

(23) Express concern that the Palestinians and other Arabs in the occupied territories are deprived of juridical and other kinds of protection, that they are victims of repressive legislation, involving mass arrests, acts

of torture, destruction of houses, and the expulsion of people from their homes, acts which constitute flagrant violations of human rights;

(24) Recognize the necessity that Palestinian and Lebanese prisoners detained by Israel be accorded the status of prisoners of war in accordance with the Geneva Convention relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War of 1949, c/ if combatants, or in accordance with the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War of 1949, d/ if civilians;

(25) Strive for the adoption of international measures so that Israel will implement in the West Bank and Gaza the provisions of The Hague Regulations of 1907 and the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons, in the light of Security Council resolution 465 (1980);

(26) Recognize, if they have not yet done so, the Palestine Liberation Organization as the representative of the Palestinian people and establish with it appropriate relations;

(27) Encourage, in conformity with their national legislations, the formation of national committees in support of the Palestinian people;

(28) Encourage the observance of 29 November as the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, in a most effective and meaningful way;

(29) Request the General Assembly at its thirty-eighth session to designate a Year of Palestine, to be observed at the earliest possible time, taking into consideration the factors necessary to ensure its effective preparation for the purpose of galvanizing world-wide public opinion and support for further implementation of the Geneva Declaration on Palestine and the Programme of Action.

II

The International Conference on the Question of Palestine stresses the obligation of all Member States, under the Charter of the United Nations, to enable the United Nations through an expanded and more effective role to fulfil its responsibility for achieving a solution to the question of Palestine. To this end:

A

States participating in the Conference invite the Security Council, as the organ with primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security:

(1) To suppress continuing and growing acts of aggression and other breaches of the peace in the Middle East which endanger peace and security in the region and the world as a whole;

(2) To take prompt, firm and effective steps and actions to establish an independent sovereign Palestinian State in Palestine through the implementation of the relevant United Nations resolutions, by facilitating the organization of the international peace conference on the Middle East, as called for in paragraph 5 of the Geneva Declaration on Palestine (see sect. A

above), and by creating in this context the appropriate institutional arrangements on the basis of relevant United Nations resolutions in order to guarantee and carry out the accords of the international peace conference, including the following:

(a) Taking measures consistent with the principle of the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force to ensure Israel's withdrawal from the Palestinian and other Arab territories occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, with a specific timetable;

(b) Undertaking effective measures to guarantee the safety and security and legal and human rights of the Palestinians in the occupied territories pending the withdrawal of the Israeli forces from the Palestinian and other Arab territories occupied by Israel since 1967, including Jerusalem;

(c) Subjecting those territories, following the withdrawal of Israel, to a short transitional period, under the supervision of the United Nations, during which period the Palestinian people would exercise its right to self-determination;

(d) Facilitating the implementation of the right to return of the Palestinians to their homes and property;

(e) Supervising elections to the constituent assembly of the independent Palestinian State in which all Palestinians shall participate, in exercise of their right to self-determination;

(f) Providing, if necessary, temporary peace-keeping forces in order to facilitate the implementation of subparagraphs (a) to (e) above.

B

Meanwhile the Security Council is also invited to:

(1) Take urgent action to bring about an immediate and complete cessation of such Israeli policies in the occupied territories and, in particular, the establishment of settlements as have been determined by the Security Council to have no legal validity and as a serious obstruction to achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East;

(2) Consider urgently the reports of the Commission established under its resolution 446 (1979) of 22 March 1979, which examined the situation concerning settlements in the Arab territories occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, and to reactivate the above-mentioned Commission;

(3) Initiate action to terminate Israel's exploitative policies which go against the indigenous economic development of the occupied territories, and to compel Israel to lift its restrictions on water use and well-drilling by Palestinian farmers as well as its diversion of West Bank water resources into the Israeli water grid system;

(4) Keep under its constant attention the actions committed by Israel against the Palestinian people in violation of the stipulations provided for in relevant General Assembly resolutions, in particular the stipulations of

resolution 181 (II) of 29 November 1947 guaranteeing to all persons equal and non-discriminatory rights and freedoms;

(5) Consider, in the event of Israel's persistent non-compliance with the relevant United Nations resolutions which embody the will of the international community, appropriate measures in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, to ensure Israel's compliance with these resolutions.

C

(1) Taking into account the recommendations of the five regional preparatory meetings of the International Conference on the Question of Palestine and United Nations resolutions concerning economic and social assistance to the Palestinian people, the Secretary-General of the United Nations is requested to convene a meeting of the specialized agencies and other organizations associated with the United Nations, as well as representatives of the Palestine Liberation Organization and of those countries which are hosts to Palestinian refugees and other potential sources of assistance to develop a co-ordinated programme of economic and social assistance to the Palestinian people and to ensure its implementation;

(2) The meeting should also look into the most effective inter-agency machinery to co-ordinate and sustain and intensify United Nations assistance to the Palestinian people.

D

The dissemination of accurate and comprehensive information world wide and the role of non-governmental organizations and institutions remain of vital importance in heightening awareness of and support for the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination and to the establishment of an independent sovereign Palestinian State. To these ends:

(1) The United Nations Department for Public Information, in full co-operation and constant consultations with the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, should:

(a) Co-ordinate all information activities of the United Nations system on Palestine through the Joint United Nations Information Committee;

(b) Expand publications and audio and visual coverage of the facts and of developments pertaining to the question of Palestine;

(c) Publish newsletters and articles in its respective publications on Israeli violations of human rights of the Arab inhabitants in the occupied territories and organize fact-finding missions for journalists to the area;

(d) Organize regional encounters for journalists;

(e) Disseminate appropriate information on the results of the International Conference on the Question of Palestine;

(2) The relevant organizations of the United Nations system should organize meetings, symposia and seminars on topics within their terms of reference and relating to specific problems of the Palestinian people by establishing closer liaison with non-governmental organizations, the media and other groups interested in the question of Palestine.

III

The International Conference on the Question of Palestine, convinced of the important role of world-wide public opinion in resolving the question of Palestine, and in the implementation of the Declaration and Programme of Action, urges and encourages:

(1) Intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations to increase awareness by the international community of the economic and social burdens borne by the Palestinian people as a result of the continued Israeli occupation and its negative effects on the economic development of the West Asian region as a whole;

(2) Non-governmental organizations and professional and popular associations to intensify their efforts to support the rights of the Palestinian people in every possible way;

(3) Organizations such as those of women, teachers, workers, youths and students to undertake exchanges and other programmes of joint action with their Palestinian counterparts;

(4) Women's associations, in particular, to investigate the conditions of Palestinian women and children in all occupied territories;

(5) The media and other institutions to disseminate relevant information to increase public awareness and understanding of the question of Palestine;

(6) Institutions of higher education to promote the study of the question of Palestine in all its aspects;

(7) Various jurists' associations to establish special investigative commissions to determine the violations by Israel of the Palestinians' legal rights and to disseminate their findings accordingly;

(8) Jurists to initiate with their Palestinian counterparts consultations, research and investigations on the juridical aspects of problems affecting the southern African and Palestinian struggles, in particular the detention of political prisoners and the denial of prisoner-of-war status to detained members of the national liberation movements of southern Africa and Palestine;

(9) Parliamentarians, political parties, trade unions, organizations for solidarity and intellectuals, particularly in Western Europe and North America, to join their counterparts in other parts of the world in giving their support, where it has not been done, to an initiative which would express the desire of the international community to see the Palestinian people at last living in their own independent homeland in peace, freedom and dignity.

Notes

a/ See Report of the International Conference on the Question of Palestine, Geneva, 29 August-7 September 1983 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.83.I.21), chap. I, sects. A and B.

b/ See General Assembly resolution 217 A (III).

c/ United Nations, Treaty Series, vol. 75, No. 972, p. 135.

d/ Ibid., No. 973, p. 287.

e/ Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, The Hague Conventions and Declarations of 1899 and 1907 (New York, Oxford University Press, 1915), p. 100.

f/ See Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1983, Supplement No. 9 (E/1983/20).

g/ A/C.5/38/4, para. 8 (c).

h/ Reco. endation 146 (VI) of 2 July 1983 of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development.

i/ Recommendation 19 of the Latin American Regional Preparatory Meeting, Managua, Nicaragua, 12-15 April 1983 (A/CONF.114/2).

j/ African region, A/CONF.114/1; Latin American region, A/CONF.114/2; Western Asian region, A/CONF.114/3; Asian region, A/CONF.114/4; European region, A/CONF.114/5.

Conclusions and recommendations adopted by the Sixteenth United Nations Seminar on the Question of Palestine

(New Delhi, 8-12 June 1987)

Introduction

1. The Sixteenth United Nations Seminar on the Question of Palestine entitled "The inalienable rights of the Palestinian People" was held at the Vigyan Bhawan Conference Centre, New Delhi from 8 to 12 June 1987. The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People had decided to integrate the Seminar with the Asian Regional Non-Governmental Organizations Symposium on the Question of Palestine which was held from Monday, 8 to 10 June 1987, on an experimental basis and in the interest of economy.
2. The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People was represented by a delegation consisting of Mr. Oscar Oramas-Oliva (Cuba), Vice-Chairman of the Committee, head of delegation; Mr. Guennadi I. Oudovenko (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic); Mr. David K. Karran (Guyana); Mr. Saviour F. Borg (Malta); Mr. Pramathesh Rath (India); and Mr. Zehdi L. Terzi (Palestine Liberation Organization). Mr. Oramas-Oliva was Chairman of the Seminar and Mr. Rath Rapporteur.
3. Seven meetings were held and 14 panelists presented papers on selected aspects of the question of Palestine. In addition, representatives of 40 Governments, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), three United Nations organs, two United Nations programmes and specialized agencies, one intergovernmental organization and observers of 30 non-governmental organizations attended the Seminar.
4. The opening session of the Seminar was addressed by Mr. K. Natwar Singh, Minister of State for External Affairs of India; Mr. N. G. Rathore, representative of the Secretary-General; Mr. Oscar Oramas-Oliva, Chairman of the Seminar; Mr. N. N. G. Makura, High Commissioner of Zimbabwe to India who read a message from Mr. Robert Mugabe, Chairman of the Non-Aligned Movement; and Mr. Khalid El-Sheikh, Ambassador of the Palestine Liberation Organization to India who read a message from Mr. Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization. The opening session was also addressed by Mr. Guennadi I. Oudovenko (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic), representing the Special Committee against Apartheid, and Mr. Ammar Amari (Tunisia), representing the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples.
5. Four panels were established to consider different aspects of the question of Palestine. The panels and their panelists were as follows:
 - (a) "The Role of the Palestine Liberation Organization" (combined for the Seminar and the Non-Governmental Organizations Symposium): Mr. Jawad Najji Al-Awad (Palestinian). The paper prepared by Mr. Al-Awad was read by Mr. Khaled El-Sheikh, Ambassador of the PLO to India;

(b) "The International Peace Conference on the Middle East, in accordance with United Nations General Assembly resolution 38/58 C, the need for such a Conference and efforts and prospects to promote a successful outcome and benefits thereof" (combined for the Seminar and the Non-Governmental Organizations Symposium): Mr. P. N. Haksar (India), Mr. Igor M. Khvorostiany (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic), Dr. Jorge Manfugas (Cuba), Mr. Abdullah Salah (Jordan), Mr. Mohammad Aziz Shukri (Syrian Arab Republic), Mr. V. P. Vorobyov (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) and Mr. Wan Guang (China);

(c) "The Question of Palestine and Asian Public Opinion" (combined for the Seminar and the Non-governmental Organizations Symposium): Mr. Mansoor Alam (Pakistan), Professor Mohanmad Rahmet-Ali (India), Professor Yilmaz Altug (Turkey), Mr. Hardi (Indonesia), Mr. Tran Hoan (Viet Nam), and Professor K. R. Misra (India);

(d) "The United Nations and the Question of Palestine": Mr. Guennadi I. Oudovenko (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic).

6. The report of the Seminar, which was adopted unanimously, contains a summary of the presentations made by the panelists and of the discussions of the four panels, as well as conclusions and recommendations emanating from the Seminar's deliberations. The Seminar also adopted messages of support to Mr. Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization, to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and to Mr. Robert Mugabe, Chairman of the Non-Aligned Movement. The Seminar also adopted a motion of thanks to the people and Government of India. The full text of the report will be published in due course as a special bulletin of the United Nations Division for Palestinian Rights.

Conclusions and Recommendations

7. The conclusions and recommendations adopted by the Seminar are as follows:

(a) The Seminar expressed deep concern over the dangerous situation in the Middle East, as it presents a threat to the stability of the region and to international peace and security as a whole. In the nuclear age, it is necessary that international relations be restructured so that confrontation is replaced by co-operation, and conflict situations resolved through peaceful political means, not through military means. The Seminar affirmed the need for a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the Middle East conflict, the core of which is the question of Palestine. The full exercise by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights, including the right of return, the right to self-determination without external interference and the right to create its own independent State in Palestine, as well as the complete withdrawal of Israeli forces from all the Arab territories occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, remain the basis to solve the Palestinian problem.

(b) The situation relating to the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people continues to deteriorate. While strenuous attempts have been made to find a solution to this problem, the situation in the region continues to be further complicated by Israel's actions in the occupied territories. Israel continues with its policies of illegally maintaining and expanding Jewish settlements as well as the confiscation of Arab-owned lands in the occupied Palestinian territories. The

"Iron-fist policies" are accentuated by measures designed to stifle all forms of political, cultural, social and economic expression of the Palestinian people. Furthermore, Israel continues to strengthen its control over most aspects of life, with the objective of obstructing the self-generating development of the occupied territories by turning them into a dependent entity with the aim of its final absorption and annexation. These policies are in violation of United Nations resolutions and international law and lead only to the exacerbation of tension in the area thus hindering attempts to find a peaceful solution to the Palestine question.

(c) The Seminar was aware of the factors that encourage Israel in pursuing its policies. It noted with serious concern the relations between Israel and the racist regime in South Africa, in particular in the economic, military and nuclear fields. The Seminar calls upon the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and the United Nations Division for Palestinian Rights to keep under review the development of such relations and report thereon. The Seminar also demanded that Israel desist from and terminate such collaboration and abide scrupulously by the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council.

(d) The Seminar expressed grave concern about the economic and social policies of the occupying power, Israel, against the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territories. It noted that Israel pursued a policy that deprived the Palestinians of their main source of livelihood and survival, in particular, with regard to agriculture, land confiscation and takeover of water resources. The Seminar further noted the increasing utilization of cheap Arab labour by Israeli employers, which constituted exploitation and discrimination. In this context, the Seminar expressed appreciation for the endeavour and efforts of the Palestine Liberation Organization in the field of social and economic development of the Palestinian people. The Seminar called upon the United Nations and its organs and agencies to render and co-ordinate all forms of economic and social assistance to the Palestinian people, in consultation and co-operation with the Palestine Liberation Organization.

(e) The Seminar also recalled that the year 1987 marked a number of anniversaries of significant events in the history of the Palestinian people in its struggle to attain its legitimate and inalienable rights including the 70th anniversary of the Balfour Declaration, the 40th anniversary of the adoption of General Assembly resolution 181 (II), the 20th anniversary of the 1967 War and the 5th anniversary of the Israeli invasion and occupation of Lebanese territory and the massacre at Sabra and Shatila. The Seminar stressed the urgency to solve the Middle East conflict and its core issue, the question of Palestine. Those States that did not support the attainment by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights and the exercise of those rights, in particular, the right to self-determination as well as the establishment of a State of its own in Palestine, were urged to reconsider their position towards a solution to the problem.

(f) The Seminar unanimously concluded that the best way to establish a just and lasting peace in the Middle East was by convening the International Peace Conference on the Middle East under the auspices of the United Nations and with the participation of all parties to the conflict including the Palestine Liberation Organization, as well as the United States and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and other concerned States, in accordance with the guidelines laid down in General Assembly resolution 38/58 C. The Seminar supported the establishment of

a preparatory committee within the framework of the Security Council, with the participation of its permanent members as called for by General Assembly resolution 41/43 D, as a means to undertake practical steps towards the convening of the Conference.

(g) It further recalled the unyielding and firm support by the Palestine Liberation Organization, the Arab States, the Movement of the Non-Aligned Countries, the European Community and other groups of countries, of the proposed International Peace Conference on the Middle East. The Seminar was convinced that partial and piece-meal agreements would ignore the core of the Arab-Israeli problem and were not conducive to a comprehensive peaceful solution. The Seminar was of the view that the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People had a major role to play in promoting the convening of such a Conference and encouraged its efforts in this regard.

(h) The Seminar greatly appreciated the efforts undertaken by the Secretary-General of the United Nations with a view to convening the International Peace Conference on the Middle East. In this regard, the Seminar took note of the Secretary-General's report (A/42/277-S/18849) of 7 May 1987 and expressed support for the continuation of his efforts to intensify his contacts with the parties concerned and of his consultations with the members of the Security Council. In this context, the Seminar urged the Governments of Israel and the United States of America to reconsider their negative attitude towards the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East.

(i) The Seminar appealed to the members of the Security Council, and in particular to its permanent members, in exercising their responsibilities for the maintenance of international peace and security, to make every effort to achieve the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East without further delay.

(j) The Seminar viewed the results of the 18th session of the Palestine National Council held in April 1987 at Algiers, as a significant contribution in achieving a just solution to the question of Palestine and in resolving the plight of the Palestinian people. The Seminar welcomed in particular the unequivocal support of the Palestine Liberation Organization for the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East and for the establishment of a preparatory committee within the framework of the Security Council, with the participation of its permanent members.

(k) The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People has an important role to play in promoting the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East. In that context, the Seminar recommended the intensification of the political and diplomatic efforts by all concerned for reaching a comprehensive, just and durable settlement of the conflict in the Middle East.

(l) The Seminar agreed that vigorous efforts should be made to mobilize public opinion in Asia as well as in other regions of the world, in particular, through the use of the media and activities by non-governmental organizations. The Seminar suggested that the United Nations Information Centres in various cities in Asia should establish closer contacts with universities, educational institutions and non-governmental organizations. The Seminar appealed to the leaders of the major Powers and the parties to the conflict to demonstrate political will and to

play an active and constructive role in the efforts to create lasting peace in the Middle East, in particular, in the resolution of the Palestine problem.

(m) In that regard, the United Nations should make additional efforts to disseminate factual and up-to-date information on the question of Palestine, not only in its official languages but in others as well, in particular, on the United Nations resolutions relevant to the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East and the establishment of the aforementioned preparatory committee.

(n) It was important that the media should play a more responsive role in providing a balanced reporting on the Middle East and, in particular, on the plight of the Palestinians in and outside the occupied territories as a dispossessed and harassed people. The Seminar emphasized that intergovernmental organizations, institutions, such as universities, colleges, research institutes, churches and other religious establishments, as well as national and international non-governmental organizations, had a crucial role to play in the formation of public opinion, especially in the United States and Israel. Those institutions should be urged to give wider coverage and balanced treatment to the question of Palestine. It was the view of the Seminar that national committees be set up to promote the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East.

(o) Every effort should be made to step up the widespread dissemination of information, as one of the major contributions to the achievement of a just solution to the problem on the basis of the attainment by the Palestinian people in Palestine of their inalienable rights. The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and the Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat had an important role in such dissemination of information. Furthermore, the Department of Public Information, in co-operation with the Division for Palestinian Rights, should make every effort to ensure that accurate information on the question of Palestine received the widest possible dissemination.

ANNEX IV

Declaration adopted by the United Nations Asian Regional Non-Governmental Organizations Symposium on the Question of Palestine

(New Delhi, 8-10 June 1987)

Introduction

1. The second United Nations Asian Regional Non-Governmental Organizations Symposium on the Question of Palestine, on the theme "The inalienable rights of the Palestinian People" was held at the Vigyan Bhawan Conference Centre, New Delhi from 8 to 10 June 1987. The Symposium was held concurrently with the Sixteenth United Nations Seminar on the Question of Palestine, which was held from 8 to 12 June 1987, (see annex III)
2. The Symposium was attended by 21 non-governmental organizations as participants and 11 non-governmental organizations as observers, with about 80 persons in attendance, as well as by observers from several Governments, one United Nations programme, one intergovernmental organization and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO).
3. In addition to the panels held jointly with the Seminar, the Symposium considered a panel entitled "Non-governmental organizations collaboration on the question of Palestine and the role of the United Nations", at which presentations were made by Mr. David D. Karran (Guyana) and Mr. Donald Betz (United States of America), on behalf of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and the International Co-ordinating Committee for Non-Governmental Organizations on the Question of Palestine, respectively.
4. A workshop was also organized on "Non-governmental organizations activities to promote the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East and to mobilize Asian public opinion", at which presentations were made by the following three experts: Dr. Roman T. Akhramovich (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics), Dr. Ergun Ozbudun (Turkey) and Dr. Amnon Zichroni (Israel).
5. The Symposium sent a message of appreciation to Mr. Rajiv Gandhi, Prime Minister of India, and in addition, sent a message of appreciation and support to Mr. Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization.
6. The Symposium decided to create a 12-member Asian Regional Preparatory Committee; in this connection, a Chairman and an Executive Secretary were elected. The two officials were charged with the responsibility, through consultations with non-governmental organizations in the region, to identify the remaining ten members who should include representatives of non-governmental organizations from countries represented at the Symposium. It was also decided that such a body would be the prototype for an Asian Regional Co-ordinating Committee.
7. The Declaration of the Symposium, which was adopted unanimously, is reproduced below. The full text of the report will be issued in due course as a special bulletin of the United Nations Division for Palestinian Rights.

Declaration of the Symposium

8. We, the non-governmental organizations participating in the United Nations Asian Regional Non-Governmental Organizations Symposium on the Question of Palestine, wish to thank the United Nations Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for convening this meeting. We are indeed honoured by the presence of the members and observers of the distinguished United Nations body and the expert resource persons, whose valuable contribution provided a suitable perspective for working out concrete programmes of action.
9. We also wish to thank the representative of the Secretary-General, the Chief of the Division for Palestinian Rights, the International Co-ordinating Committee, the non-governmental organizations liaison officers, the staff of the Department of Conference Services and the interpreters for their valuable assistance in the preparation and execution of this meeting. We believe this meeting strengthens the bonds between the United Nations and the community of Asian non-governmental organizations involved with the Palestine question and look forward to increasing levels of understanding, appreciation and co-operation.
10. We wish also to thank very sincerely the Government of India for hosting this Symposium and for its generous co-operation. We recognize and appreciate the long-standing and unflinching support of the Government and the people of India to the just cause of the Palestinian people, in the tradition of the national liberation movement of India from the early 1920s, when it opposed the Balfour Declaration.
11. We recognize that 1987 marks the seventieth anniversary of the Balfour Declaration, the fortieth anniversary of the adoption of General Assembly resolution 181 (II) of 29 November 1947 for the partition of Palestine, the twentieth anniversary of the 1967 war and the subsequent Israeli military occupation of the West Bank and Gaza, and the fifth anniversary of the destructive Israeli aggression against Lebanon and the massacre at Sabra and Shatila and the International Year of the People of Palestine.
12. We resolutely reaffirm the international consensus that PLO is the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people in its just struggle for its inalienable rights. Taking note of the support of the Palestinian people for PLO, and of the consolidated unity established at the April 1987, eighteenth session of the Palestine National Council at Algiers, we reject outright the idea that anyone other than the Palestinian people should decide who should represent them, all the more so as the first act of any people in implementing its right to self-determination is the choice of its own representatives. We fully support the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to untrammelled independent decision-making through its own national organization, PLO.
13. Accordingly, we call upon all Governments that do not recognize PLO to do so without delay. We also call upon all Governments to support the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East and to work for the realization of such a conference as a top priority.
14. We recognize that the self-determination of the Palestinian people and their right to self-government in their own independent State in Palestine is the central requirement for peace and security, for a just and durable peace between Israel and the Palestinian national State and its Arab neighbours, and is in full accord with

one of the most fundamental principles of the Charter of the United Nations. We reaffirm that this right must be exercised without outside interference on its own national territory and under the leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organization, in conformity with relevant United Nations resolutions.

15. We fully support the Geneva Declaration on Palestine of 7 September 1983 adopted by the International Conference on the Question of Palestine, held at Geneva from 29 August to 7 September 1983, in favour of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East and we fully uphold General Assembly resolution 38/58 C of 13 December 1983. It is essential that the Conference be inclusive and be attended by the representatives of both Israel and PLO, those Arab States parties to the conflict, the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, all on an equal footing. We are aware that not only world peace but also the human and civil rights of the Palestinian people have been set back by the non-implementation of resolution 38/58 C. In this context, we reject partial and piecemeal agreements as counter-productive and not conducive to a comprehensive peaceful solution, as others totally ignore the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

16. We take serious note of the fact that, while PLO fully supports General Assembly resolution 38/58 C, the United States of America and Israel are opposed to it. We strongly feel that the position of those two Governments constitutes a serious threat to world peace and we urge all Governments to exert more pressure on the two Governments to join the global consensus on this issue.

17. We view with grave concern the law recently adopted by the Israeli Government making any meeting between an Israeli citizen and a member of PLO punishable by three years' imprisonment. This is considered an act designed to prevent peace efforts at the non-governmental organization level. We urge the Israeli Government to immediately repeal that law and call upon the United Nations and all Governments to exert their influence upon the Israeli Government to do so.

18. We note with grave concern the discriminatory policy and practices being committed by the Israeli Government against the Palestinian Arab citizens of Israel and condemn the racist laws and practices that endanger their existence in their homeland. We call upon the Israeli Government to give equal rights to the Arab citizens of Israel. We declare our full support for the struggle of the Arab Israeli community together with the Jewish democratic forces for equality and security. We believe that there can be no democracy without equal rights for all citizens.

19. We have heard with great appreciation the voice of Israeli peace forces and extend to them all our sympathy and support in their difficult task of opposition to the oppressive policies of the Israeli Government, within the Israeli Parliament and among the Israeli public. In particular, we express solidarity with those who, as an act of peace, accept imprisonment for their refusal to engage in military service in the occupied territories. We note with great satisfaction the emergence of peace forces, particularly within the Oriental Jewish Community in Israel. We regard this as a most significant development and call upon all elements interested in early peace in the Middle East to give moral and political support to the emerging peace forces within Israel.

20. We strongly condemn the continuation of the repressive measures by the Israeli administration against the Arab population in the occupied territories (arrests, tortures, demolition of homes and land requisitions, etc.) and call upon the United Nations, all Governments and people to urge the Israeli Government to stop such oppressive acts.

21. We note with great concern the continued Israeli attacks on the Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon and strongly condemn the atrocities committed against the Palestinian people in the camps. We call upon all concerned parties to enforce a durable cease-fire and to ensure the flow of medical and relief supplies to the camps through the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, the International Red Cross and other international agencies.

22. We call upon all concerned parties to guarantee the security of the Palestinian people in Lebanon and to their right to live in security in Lebanon. The presence of the Palestinian people in the refugee camps is not of their own will, but the result of the non-fulfilment of General Assembly resolution 181 (II). As this is the responsibility of all member nations of the United Nations, we call upon them and the United Nations General Assembly to take every necessary measure to ensure the security of the Palestinian people in Lebanon and elsewhere.

23. We draw attention to the continued Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon, intervention in that country's internal affairs through political coercion and oppressive actions in the south. We demand the immediate withdrawal of Israeli forces from southern Lebanon and the release of thousands held in prison. The question of Lebanon is an integral part of the Palestinian question and Israeli military expansion.

24. We believe that it is the increasing expansion of conflict areas by Israel and the growing threat it constitutes not only to the peace of this region as a whole but of Asia and the world, that makes the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East such an urgent necessity and the only practical and realistic solution to the problem of Palestine and the establishment of a Palestinian State. Immediate steps should be taken to set up a preparatory committee with the participation of the permanent members of the Security Council as the first step towards the holding of the Conference.

25. We further assert the inextricable connection between the struggle of the Palestinians for their independent homeland and every struggle in every part of the world of peoples fighting for their independence and sovereign right to build their life in their own way without any outside interference. The struggle of the Palestinian people is an integral part of the struggle of all peoples for world peace and against neo-colonialism, racism and all sorts of oppression against humanity and for a nuclear-weapon-free and non-violent world.

26. We fully appreciate the growing support in the United Nations for the Palestinian struggle and the Palestine Liberation Organization, the significant part being played in this connection by the non-aligned movement and express our awareness of the urgent need for the non-governmental organizations of Asia to take the fullest advantage of the growing favourable environment to create public opinion in the United States of America and Israel against the policies of their Governments, while at the same time mobilizing public opinion in the Asian countries.

27. We are fully confident of the powerful role that non-governmental organizations and particularly non-governmental organizations of Asia can play in creating public opinion for the urgent convening of the International Conference. We are also confident that by creating public opinion not only in Asia but also in other countries of the world we can bring pressure on the Governments of Israel and the United States of America and also strengthen the hands of our respective Governments in this task.

28. We believe the time has now come for urgent practical action. Having considered the various suggestions made at this Symposium, we pledge to mobilize people from different disciplines in Asian countries to influence their counterparts in other parts of the world, organize the dissemination of news about the conditions of the people of Palestine through the media, produce campaign pamphlets, organize film screenings, meetings, demonstrations, symposia on specific issues concerned and signature campaigns among parliamentarians of the respective Asian countries, and similar other activities.

29. We appreciate the formation of the International Co-ordinating Committee for Non-Governmental Organizations. We strongly urge the United Nations, through the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian people to continue to give all assistance to the International Chamber of Commerce in organizing a network of non-governmental organization activities at a global level on the Palestinian question. Such a co-ordination committee with regional branches is essential for building up a massive campaign by non-governmental organizations for immediately convening the International Conference and for a continuing mobilization of public opinion for the realization of the just demands of the people of Palestine. Without the active material support of such an International Co-ordinating Committee, it will not be possible to mount effective mass campaigns involving expensive modern media.

30. We, the Asian non-governmental organizations present here, decide to form an Asian Regional Co-ordinating Committee of Non-Governmental Organizations to serve as a focus for our regional efforts. We recommend that we should begin with a preparatory committee of 12 members for this purpose, to be formed through a wider discussion with other Asian non-governmental organizations for identifying the structure of such an organization and for finally constituting the preparatory committee. The delegates to the Symposium elect Mr. P. N. Haksar as the Chairman and Mr. M. S. Agwani as Executive Secretary of the Preparatory Committee for undertaking this task. The participants decide that non-governmental organization representation from countries represented by non-governmental organizations at this Symposium shall be included in the Preparatory Committee when finally constituted.

31. We call upon the international organizations of media men in the Asian region to take up the Palestine question and work together with the non-governmental organizations active on this issue. We call upon the pool of non-aligned news agencies to provide more information about the Palestine question and also about the world-wide campaign for the International Peace Conference on the Middle East.

32. We conclude this Symposium with a great feeling of confidence and call upon the United Nations, through the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, to give due consideration to the practical recommendations of activities proposed in this document and to provide necessary assistance and co-operation to the Asian Regional Co-ordinating Committee in fulfilling these tasks.

Conclusions and recommendations adopted by the Seventeenth
United Nations Seminar on the Question of Palestine

(New York, 22-23 June 1987)

Introduction

1. The Seventeenth United Nations Seminar on the Question of Palestine, entitled "The inalienable rights of the Palestinian people", was held at United Nations Headquarters, New York, on 22 and 23 June 1987.
2. Mr. Shah Mohammad Dost (Afghanistan), Acting Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, was Chairman of the Seminar, and Mr. Saviour F. Borg (Malta), was the Rapporteur.
3. Four meetings were held and seven panelists presented papers on selected aspects of the question of Palestine. In addition, representatives of 42 Governments, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), three United Nations organs, four United Nations programmes and specialized agencies, three intergovernmental organizations, one national liberation organization, and observers of 20 non-governmental organizations attended the Seminar.
4. The opening session of the Seminar was addressed by Mr. William B. Buffum, Under-Secretary-General for Political and General Assembly Affairs and Secretariat Services, on behalf of the Secretary-General, Mr. Shah Mohammad Dost, Chairman of the Seminar and Mr. Nasser Al-Kidwa, Alternate Permanent Observer of the Palestine Liberation Organization to the United Nations, who read a message from Mr. Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization. The opening session was also addressed by Mr. Isack Mudenge (Zimbabwe), on behalf of the Chairman of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, Mr. Ahmad Farouk Arnouss (Syrian Arab Republic), Rapporteur of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, Mr. Moussa Bocar Ly (Senegal), representing the United Nations Council for Namibia, Mr. Arif Shahid Khan (India), Rapporteur of the Special Committee against Apartheid, Mr. Samir Mansouri, Deputy Permanent Observer of the League of Arab States to the United Nations, Mrs. Salimatu T. Timbo, representing the Office of the Executive Secretary of the Organization of African Unity to the United Nations and Mr. Noureddine Mezni, Deputy Director of the Permanent Observer Mission of the Organization of the Islamic Conference to the United Nations.
5. Two panels were established as follows:
 - (a) "The International Peace Conference on the Middle East, in accordance with United Nations General Assembly resolution 38/58 C, the need for such a conference and efforts and prospects to promote a successful outcome, and benefits thereof": Brother David Carroll (United States of America), Mr. Ramsey Clark (United States of America), Mr. Konstantin Gueivandov (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics), Professor Atif Kubursi (Canada) and Mr. Pramathesh Rath (India). The participants in the Seminar regretted that Mr. Gueivandov was not in a position to participate in the Seminar, because his visa for the United States was not issued.

His paper was made available to all participants. Professor Atif Kubursi also addressed the impact of the economic and social policies on the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territories as well as the role of the Palestine Liberation Organization.

(b) "The Question of Palestine and North American public opinion": Professor Ibrahim Abu-Lughod (Palestinian) and Professor Francis Boyle (United States of America).

6. The report of the Seminar, which was adopted unanimously, contains a summary of the presentations made by the panelists and of the discussions of the panels, as well as conclusions and recommendations emanating from the Seminar's deliberations. The Seminar also adopted a message of support to Mr. Yasser Arafat. The full text of the report will be published in due course as a special bulletin of the United Nations Division for Palestinian Rights.

Conclusions and recommendations

7. The conclusions and recommendations adopted by the Seminar are as follows:

(a) Despite intensive efforts by the United Nations, a peaceful settlement of the Middle East conflict remains elusive and the situation in the region continues to be unstable. Recent events in the Middle East highlight the increasing urgency of finding a solution to this most complex problem. Such delays not only prolong the plight of the Palestinian people, but also continue to pose a threat to regional peace. In this age, it is necessary that international relations be restructured so that confrontation is replaced by co-operation, and conflict situations, such as the Arab-Israeli conflict, are resolved through peaceful political means, not through military force.

(b) The Seminar, concerned over the dangerous situation in the Middle East, is profoundly convinced that the vital interests of the peoples of that region, as well as interests of international peace and security as a whole, urgently dictate the need for the speediest attainment of a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict, the core of which is the question of Palestine. The full exercise by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights, including the right of return, the right to self-determination without external interference and the right to create its own independent State in Palestine, as well as the complete withdrawal of Israeli forces from all the Arab territories occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, remain the basis to solve the Palestinian problem.

(c) The situation relating to the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people continues to deteriorate. While strenuous attempts have been made to find a solution, the situation in the region is further complicated by Israel's actions in the occupied territories. Israeli policies of illegally establishing and maintaining Jewish settlements and confiscating Arab-owned lands in the occupied Palestinian territories continue. These "iron-fist policies" are accompanied by measures designed to stifle all forms of political, cultural, social and economic expression of the Palestinian people. The Israeli authorities have continued to strengthen control over most aspects of life, with the objective of obstructing the self-generating development of the occupied territories and turning them into a dependent entity, aiming at its final absorption and annexation. These policies

are in direct contravention of United Nations resolutions and international law and lead only to the exacerbation of tension in the area, further hindering attempts to find a peaceful solution.

(d) The Seminar noted with grave concern the continued Israeli economic subjugation of the Palestinian people in the occupied territories by confiscating their land, denying them the exploitation of their own water resources, preventing them from engaging in trade with the parties of their choice, and treating the people of the occupied territories as a hostage pool of cheap labour, using them as a buffer to cool an overheated Israeli economy, the first to lose their jobs at the slightest slowdown of that economy. The Seminar expressed appreciation for the endeavours and efforts of the Palestine Liberation Organization, the United Nations and its organs and agencies, as well as of intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations in the field of social and economic development of the Palestinian people under occupation. The Seminar called upon the United Nations and its organs and agencies to render and co-ordinate all forms of social and economic assistance to the Palestinian people in consultation and co-operation with the Palestine Liberation Organization.

(e) The Seminar affirmed that the problem of the exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people remained the core of the conflict in the Middle East and that no comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the region could be achieved without the full exercise of those rights, including the right of return, the right to self-determination and the right to create its own independent State in Palestine, and without the complete withdrawal of Israel from Arab territories occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem. It further reaffirmed that the Palestine Liberation Organization was the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.

(f) The Seminar considered the question of the status of Jerusalem and reiterated the position of the Security Council as contained in its resolution 478 (1980) of 20 August 1980, by which it affirmed "that the enactment of the 'basic law' by Israel constitutes a violation of international law and does not affect the continued application of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, in the Palestinian and other Arab territories occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem", and determined "that all legislative and administrative measures and actions taken by Israel, the occupying Power, which have altered or purported to alter the character and the status of the Holy City of Jerusalem, and in particular the recent 'basic law' on Jerusalem, are null and void and must be rescinded forthwith".

(g) The Seminar unanimously concluded that the best way to establish a just and lasting peace in the Middle East was to convene the International Peace Conference on the Middle East under the auspices of the United Nations and with the participation of all parties to the conflict, including the Palestine Liberation Organization, as well as the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and other concerned States, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 38/58 C. The Seminar supported the establishment of a preparatory committee within the framework of the Security Council, with the participation of its permanent members, as called for by General Assembly resolution 41/43 D, as a means to undertake practical steps towards the convening of the conference. The Seminar believed that the members of the Security Council should immediately proceed to establish the said preparatory committee.

(h) The Seminar further recalled the unyielding and firm support by the Palestine Liberation Organization, the Arab States, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, the Organization of the Islamic Conference, the Communist countries, the European Community and other groups of countries, to the proposed International Peace Conference on the Middle East. The Seminar was convinced that partial and piecemeal agreements would ignore the core of the Arab-Israeli problem and were not conducive to a comprehensive peaceful solution. The Seminar was of the view that the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People had a major role to play in promoting the convening of such a conference and encouraged its effort in this regard.

(i) The Conference should be convened without pre-conditions and its proceedings should be conducted in a constructive spirit. The aim of the Conference should be a comprehensive settlement encompassing all aspects of the Arab-Israeli conflict. The Seminar appealed to all members of the Security Council, and in particular to its permanent members, to fulfil their responsibilities for the maintenance of international peace and security, and to exercise the necessary political will and to undertake vigorous efforts to bring about the convening of the Conference.

(j) The Seminar greatly appreciated the efforts of the Secretary-General of the United Nations with a view to convening the International Peace Conference on the Middle East. In this regard, the Seminar took note of the Secretary-General's report (A/42/277-S/18849) of 7 May 1987 and expressed support for his intention to intensify his contacts with the parties in order to try to find ways of bridging the gaps between them.

(k) The Seminar viewed the results of the eighteenth session of the Palestine National Council, held in April 1987 at Algiers, as being of great importance. It welcomed in particular, the unequivocal support of the Palestine Liberation Organization for the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East and the establishment of a preparatory committee within the framework of the Security Council, with the participation of its permanent members.

(l) The Seminar recalled that the year 1987 marked a number of important anniversaries in the history of the struggle of the Palestinian people, including the seventieth anniversary of the Balfour Declaration, the fortieth anniversary of the adoption of General Assembly resolution 181 (II), the twentieth anniversary of the 1967 War and the fifth anniversary of the Israeli invasion and occupation of Lebanese territory and the massacre at Sabra and Shatila.

(m) Intensified efforts should be made to mobilize public opinion in North America and throughout the world through the use of the media. In that connection, the United Nations should make additional efforts to disseminate more factual and up-to-date information on the question of Palestine, as one of the contributions to the achievement of a just solution to the problem of Palestine on the basis of the attainment by the Palestinian people of its inalienable national rights.

(n) The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and the Division for Palestinian Rights of the United Nations Secretariat have an important role in the preparation and dissemination of information. Furthermore, the Department of Public Information of the United Nations, in co-operation with the Division for Palestinian Rights, should ensure

that accurate information on the question of Palestine receives the widest possible dissemination.

(o) It was important that the media play a more responsive role in providing more balanced reporting on the Middle East and, in particular, on the plight of the Palestinians in and outside the occupied territories. Institutions, such as universities, colleges, research institutes, churches and other religious establishments, as well as national and international non-governmental organizations, had a crucial role to play in the formation of public opinion, particularly in the United States and Canada. Those institutions should be urged to give wider coverage and more balanced treatment to the question of Palestine.

(p) The Seminar encouraged the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People to take a strong position against the proposed enactment of legislation by the United States Congress to close the Permanent Observer Office of the Palestine Liberation Organization to the United Nations in New York, or to make association with the Palestine Liberation Organization a crime. It was the view of the Seminar that such proposed legislation went against the United Nations Host Country Agreement with the United States. The Committee should examine and explore with the United Nations Legal Counsel the implications as to the compatibility or not of the proposed pieces of legislation with basic principles of international law, including the Host Country Agreement. The Seminar also urged the Committee to request the Committee on Relations with the Host Country to take a position against the proposed legislation.

ANNEX VI

Declaration adopted by the United Nations North American Regional Non-Governmental Organizations Symposium on the Question of Palestine

(New York, 24-26 June 1987)

Introduction

1. The fourth United Nations North American Regional Non-Governmental Organizations Symposium on the Question of Palestine on the theme "The inalienable rights of the Palestinian people" was held at United Nations Headquarters in New York, from 24 to 26 June 1987.
2. The Symposium was attended by 46 non-governmental organizations as participants and 24 as observers, as well as by a number of observers from Governments and intergovernmental organizations and liberation movements.
3. Mr. Alberto Velazco-San José (Cuba) opened and closed the Symposium on behalf of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. Ms. Ethel Born, Chairman of the North American Co-ordinating Committee for Non-Governmental Organizations on the Question of Palestine, served as Moderator of the Symposium.
4. The Symposium had one main panel entitled "The need for convening the International Peace Conference on the Middle East in accordance with resolutions 38/58 C: the urgency of ending 20 years of occupation". The following panelists presented papers:
 - Mr. Tawfiq Abu Ghazaleh, an attorney with the Gaza Centre for Rights and Law;
 - Mr. Latif Dori, founder, Committee for Israeli-Palestinian Dialogue;
 - Rev. Benjamin Weir, Moderator, Presbyterian Church (United States of America).Mr. Svend Robinson, a Canadian Member of Parliament, who had accepted an invitation to participate as a panelist, was unfortunately unable to attend, owing to his official duties.
5. Eight workshops were set up to deal with the following issues:
 - (a) Media/public relations;
 - (b) Challenges in defending human and civil rights;
 - (c) Coalition-building;
 - (d) Grass-roots organizing;
 - (e) Women;
 - (f) Peace and anti-intervention;

(g) Religion and relief groups;

(h) Third world communities.

Mr. David Hardin (United States) and Ms. Lea Tsemel (Israel) acted as workshop leaders for the "Media/public relations" and "Challenges in defending human and civil rights" workshops, respectively.

6. The Symposium received a message from Mr. Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization and, in return, sent a telegramme of appreciation to the Chairman.

7. The Declaration of the Symposium, which was adopted unanimously, is reproduced below. The full text of the report will be published in due course as a special bulletin of the Division for Palestinian Rights.

Declaration

8. We, the non-governmental organizations participating in the fourth United Nations North American Non-Governmental Organizations Symposium on the Question of Palestine, wish to thank the United Nations Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for making this meeting possible. We are indeed honoured by the presence of the members and observers of this distinguished United Nations body.

9. We wish also to thank the Chief of the Division for Palestinian Rights, the non-governmental organizations liaison officers, the staff of the Division and the Department of Conference Services for their invaluable assistance in the preparation and execution of this meeting.

10. We wish also to voice our appreciation to the distinguished expert panelists, workshop organizers, resource persons and facilitators who offered their invaluable insights into the question of Palestine and the potential central role to be played by non-governmental organizations in North America. The practical suggestions and strategies developed in the workshops assisted us in formulating future collaborative efforts in North America and in linking our efforts to a broader global network.

11. We believe that this meeting contributed to the constructive interaction between the United Nations and the North American non-governmental organizations community concerned with the non-implementation of General Assembly resolution 38/58 C of 13 December 1983, a resolution whose implementation we hold to be indispensable in securing a just and durable solution to the question of Palestine.

12. We call upon the peoples and Governments of the United States of America and Canada to take all possible steps to secure the implementation of General Assembly resolution 38/58 C, in order to secure a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Arab-Israeli conflict, the core of which is the question of Palestine.

13. We resolutely reaffirm the international consensus that the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) is the sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinian People. We affirm the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination without external interference and to establish an independent

Palestinian State on its own national territory under the leadership of PLO and the right of return, in conformity with all relevant United Nations resolutions.

14. We further strongly support the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East as called for at the International Conference on the Question of Palestine, held in August-September 1983, and as adopted by the General Assembly in resolution 38/58 C. We applaud the continuing efforts of the Secretary-General to establish a preparatory committee for the Conference. It is essential that the International Peace Conference be inclusive and be attended by representatives of both Israel and PLO, those Arab States parties to the conflict, the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. We are encouraged by the declaration of the European Community of February 1987 and the declaration of the Nordic countries of March 1987 and hope that they will lead to initiatives that will result in the convening of the Conference.

15. Within our larger concern for equal rights and justice for all people, we reaffirm that our focus as participants in this symposium is the Palestinian people and its struggle to achieve its inalienable rights, and that our goal and responsibility is to support that struggle through the strategies and activities proposed in our workshops.

16. As non-governmental organizations, we have the unique opportunity to contribute to this struggle without governmental constraints. Our guidelines must come from our consciences, which are informed by history, the knowledge of current events, and respect for international law.

17. Events in the territories occupied in 1967 must be seen as part of both an historical pattern and a continuum. The history of the Palestinian community living in pre-1967 Israel is instructive in two respects. The first is Israel's systematic attempt at removing the people from their land; the second is the Palestinian people's unyielding determination, which has empowered them to succeed in remaining on their land.

18. The Palestinians of 1948 have taught us the importance of "steadfastness" (steadfastness). As non-governmental organizations, we must therefore be committed to support concurrently both the struggle of the Palestinians of the 1967 occupation to remain on the land and the struggle of the entire Palestinian people to attain self-determination.

19. Non-governmental organizations in Canadian and United States society take special note of their role as representatives of an important segment of public opinion on the Palestine question. Non-governmental organizations constitute an unquenchable force to be reckoned with that derives from this public consciousness. In view of that special role and status, non-governmental organizations in North America also recognize as part of their responsibility that they go beyond the self-imposed limitations of States and Governments to contribute positively to the speedy restoration of national rights to the victimized Palestinian people.

20. The non-governmental organizations here convened recognize with appreciation the contributions that States Members of the United Nations have made to the provision of standards of world order through the promulgation of international law. Humanitarian and human rights statutes constitute the legal basis for the self-determination of peoples, including the Palestinian people. In particular,

such legal instruments as the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of the United Nations and other international covenants and conventions, guarantee that right for the Palestinian people.

21. The international community had already affirmed the right of the Palestinian Arab people to their State in Palestine as early as 1947, with the "Plan for Partition with Economic Union". The denial of that right over the ensuing 40 years, and particularly throughout the 20 years of Israel's occupation by force of the West Bank and Gaza districts of Palestine, dramatize the failure of the international community of States to uphold the standards that they themselves have set forth. We, as non-governmental organizations in North America, call upon our respective Governments to respect and implement the inalienable rights of Palestinians as a people and nation, in accordance with international law.

22. In our constant attention to the issue of Palestine, the North American non-governmental organizations cannot confront this conflict in isolation from the considerations held in other parts of the world as well.

23. As people of conscience, we cannot conduct activities in our own countries in isolation from the world consensus and expect to contribute to a positive future.

24. The non-governmental organizations in North America affirm their commitment to co-operate in good faith with the international peace community - in the Americas, Europe, Israel, in the non-aligned countries and elsewhere - in their efforts towards the restoration of Palestinian rights, both for its own sake and in conjunction with efforts to reduce the continuing violence and risk of war in the Middle East.

25. Among the suggestions emanating from the discussion groups that merit serious attention and endorsement was that of convening a non-governmental organizations-sponsored conference in North America (with the site of preference being Washington, the alternate, Ottawa) bringing together representatives of PLO and Israeli notables, and repeating the opportunity offered by the Constanta and Budapest meetings. Representatives of interested Governments, particularly from the European Community, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and North America would also be invited.

26. We also recommend that the International Co-ordinating Committee on the Question of Palestine, in co-operation with the North American Co-ordinating Committee on the Question of Palestine, convene a model International Peace Conference utilizing non-governmental organizations representatives from Israel, PLO, the five permanent members of the Security Council and the Arab parties to the conflict. It should be held in New York under United Nations auspices in conformity with General Assembly resolutions 38/58 C and 40/43 D. We further urge that this proposal be adopted by the non-governmental organizations participating in the fourth United Nations International Meeting of Non-Governmental Organizations on the Question of Palestine in Geneva from 7 to 9 September 1987. The other small group discussion recommendations are annexed to the present paper.

27. The symposium supports the Israeli citizens, both Jews and Arabs, who are peace activists and who are in danger of going to prison as a result of their struggle to bring peace and security to their people and their nation.

28. The symposium condemns attempts by the Israeli Government to limit the activities of Israeli peace activists by promulgating anti-democratic laws such as the "Law for Prevention of Terrorism".

29. In the light of the above, the symposium requests that Israel re-examine the law and its negative influence and abrogate that law. In addition, the symposium calls upon Israel to drop all charges against the peace activists.

30. The aim of the present meeting was to develop practical objectives and strategies to be implemented by North American non-governmental organizations in this the Year of the Palestinian People. Our primary work was conducted in workshops, and we affirm their conclusions as we have amended them below.

31. The Media/public relations workshop made the following recommendations:

(a) The North American Co-ordinating Committee (NACC), in close co-operation with North American non-governmental organizations, will undertake the development of a standardized guide on how to deal with the media and an annotated experts list representing the various sectors of North American society;

(b) The experts will be selected for their ability to work effectively with the electronic and print media. The guide and list will be made available to non-governmental organizations co-operating with NACC;

(c) The workshop repeatedly voiced a concern for humanizing the North American public's perception of the Palestinian people. To change minds, the participants concluded that it is necessary to develop effective techniques. Non-governmental organizations shall focus on issues of high value to their targeted audiences, the moderate public of the United States and Canada. They should provide new information in concise form to media sources. Finally, in conformity with the suggested experts list, non-governmental organizations should offer credible spokespersons to the media and the public to comment on the issues;

(d) Awareness of Palestinian culture is one method of humanizing perceptions of Palestinians. We therefore urge the North American non-governmental organizations:

- (i) To co-operate closely with the International Co-ordinating Committee on Palestine (ICCP) on the tours of Palestinian women and artists through North America in the fall of 1987 and at other times, as one way of introducing North Americans to Palestinian people, their culture and their concerns;
- (ii) To target mainstream civic and social organizations in North America (i.e. Rotary, Kiwanis, Lions, Soroptimists) in order to schedule sympathetic speakers on the Middle-East conflict, the role of the United States and the question of Palestine,
- (iii) To request the United Nations to establish a permanent display of Palestinian cultural heritage to join the existing display on Palestinian political history currently on the third floor of the United Nations General Assembly building;

- (iv) To create a mobile exhibit on Palestinian culture and history to be displayed throughout North America, which could be used in conjunction with programmes in local churches, libraries and universities.

32. The workshop on challenges in defending civil and human rights reaffirms the Third North American Non-Governmental Organization Declaration of June 1986 and:

- (a) Calls upon Israel to observe the Fourth Geneva Convention (1949) concerning the treatment of the Palestinian population in the occupied territories;

- (b) Condemns the use of any "alleged" legal system as a tool of foreign policy and as an instrument of repression of the Palestinian people;

- (c) Affirms the right of the Palestinian people to resist the Israeli occupation;

- (d) Affirms the rights of free speech and political association in the occupied territories, in Israel and in the United States, particularly during the two hundredth anniversary of the Constitution of the United States;

- (e) Opposes the Dole and Kemp bills and all related legislation and pledges collective action to defeat these bills;

- (f) Calls for legislation in support of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East as proposed by United Nations General Assembly resolution 38/58 C;

- (g) Supports Palestinian family reunification in the occupied territories, the "Los Angeles Eight" a/ defendants case and other similar cases in the coming year;

- (h) Reaffirms the non-governmental organizations theme/campaign to end the 20 years of occupation;

- (i) Salutes all those Israelis who work for Palestinian human and civil rights.

33. The Coalition-building workshop recommended the development of a broad-based coalition in North America drawing in participants from new constituencies such as third world groups, religious communities, labour unions and peace, anti-intervention and women's groups. Its work shall be aimed at redirecting United States Middle-East policy by:

- (a) Influencing public opinion, particularly in the United States, in support of the Palestinian people in their right to self-determination, including the right of return, and in support of an international peace conference to include PLO, Israel, the five permanent members of the Security Council and the Arab States who are parties to the conflict;

- (b) Ending the Israeli occupation of Palestinian and other Arab territories;

- (c) Addressing human rights violations;

- (d) Creating a forum for debate of Middle East issues in the 1988 United States presidential campaign, to result in planks in major party platforms covering

United States support for Palestinian self-determination and United States recognition of PLO as the representative of the Palestinian people and support for an international peace conference. NACC might further facilitate the work of this coalition by overseeing and encouraging contacts between non-governmental organizations along geographical lines throughout the United States and Canada.

34. The grass-roots organizing workshop:

(a) Recommends that NACC establish a national guide book of non-governmental organizations registered with the United Nations Division for Palestinian Rights to include:

- (i) National office address and one-paragraph description;
- (ii) Regional and local affiliates;
- (iii) A listing of each organization's available human and material resources;

(b) Recommends that NACC facilitate additional speaking tours on a national and local level to address grass-roots organizations, i.e., coupling Palestinians and Israelis on national tours, matching Palestinians, blacks, Latin Americans, Asians and Jews and other experts living in local areas;

(c) Recommends that NACC co-ordinate simultaneous regional (to include Canada), one-day symposia to promote the International Peace Conference before the next North American symposium. The intent is to develop greater local participation in the promotion of the Peace Conference. In an effort to broaden the base of the non-governmental organizations a committee was formed to approach other organizations in order for those organizations to become aware of the non-governmental organizations and to join the non-governmental organizations movement.

35. The Women's workshop endorses the call of the United Nations General Assembly to convene an International Peace Conference on the Middle East in conformity with the provisions of resolution 38/58 C. The women assembled further call upon all United Nations organs and specialized agencies and other intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations to provide immediate and adequate assistance projects, which will contribute to improving the living conditions of Palestinian women and children. To these ends, the women and groups assembled committed themselves to the following specific projects to be undertaken during the next 12 months:

(a) Cultural exchanges and speaking tours, to include the tour currently being set up by NACC and ICC;

(b) The creation of high visibility for the International Peace Conference. Taking a lesson from the role of entertainers in bringing African issues into the homes of America, participants agree to seek out well-known artists and entertainers to promote the International Peace Conference and to establish a dialogue with prominent public women likewise, to seek their endorsement;

(c) Letter-writing campaigns for Palestinian prisoners, particularly women and children;

(d) Material aid and community development projects, with the understanding that it is imperative to work in tandem with Palestinian women's institutions in the area, in response to their needs, to undertake specific aid projects. At the same time, participants recognized the educational benefits accruing from such a campaign.

An interim task force was set up to ensure follow-through on the four agreed areas of activity.

36. The peace and anti-intervention workshop recommends the reaffirmation and implementation of the resolutions of the 1986 North American Symposium on the Question of Palestine and calls on non-governmental organizations:

(a) To pressure the United States to support the convening of the International Peace Conference as defined in General Assembly resolution 38/58 C and to educate the peace movement about that resolution. Non-governmental organizations should work to popularize the concept of the International Peace Conference through campaigns that include slogans;

(b) To urge all peace and anti-intervention groups to work to end United States support for Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza now and to co-operate closely with North American non-governmental organizations on the question of Palestine;

(c) To commit symposium participants to convening local committees of non-governmental organizations to visit local congressional/parliamentary representatives to discuss the International Peace Conference and the pursuit of Middle East peace with them;

(d) To salute efforts towards peace undertaken by Palestinians, Israelis and other peace-loving forces around the world;

(e) To respond effectively to United States global foreign policy in a unified and collective way, particularly co-operating with the peace and anti-intervention community.

37. The religious and relief groups workshop:

(a) Urges religious organizations to encourage "Holy Land tours", which give inclusive perspectives of people, ideas and sites. Good models are available and should be sought to urge greater youth exchange programmes;

(b) Urges NACC to explore the possibility of promoting an inter-faith day of Middle East peace and appointing a task force of organizations to develop ideas for activities to be circulated in the NACC newsletter;

(c) Urges immediate investigation and other appropriate action against the treatment of United States citizens (Palestinian and other Arab Americans) who, with their families, journey to Israel and the occupied territories for a visit. They are often not allowed into the country. If they are granted a short stay, their passports are held and high bonds (thousands of dollars) are required till their departure;

(d) Urges increased advocacy efforts through continuous monitoring, questioning, challenging and influencing of public policy, in Washington and Ottawa and through district offices in local communities;

(e) Urges an ecumenical approach to constituency education utilizing the model given by the Presbyterians in their Moderator's Conference on the Middle East held in April 1987. In addition, urges circulation of available resources through NACC;

(f) Urges listing of resources on the Middle East through the NACC network, establishing some means to network with one another about what is available;

(g) Encourages the National Council of Churches in its dialogue with the United States evangelical Christian community concerning theology related to Middle East issues.

38. The third world communities workshop considered the problems and opportunities for increasing co-operation and interchange between the movement for peace and justice in the Middle East and third-world communities and their organizations. The workshop took note of the failure to attract the participation of nationally oppressed minorities and urges the adoption of the following recommendations:

(a) The facilitation of greater interchange with and participation of third-world organizations;

(b) The pursuit of discussions with Congressional black caucuses and Hispanic caucuses on the question of Palestine, especially to promote an international peace conference;

(c) The development of a network of third-world activists and experts on the question of Palestine;

(d) The organization of delegations to the Middle East;

(e) The creation of an NACC sub-committee to implement the above recommendations.

39. Additional, more comprehensive strategies and tactics emanating from the workshops and discussion groups are reproduced in annexes I and II to the present paper and should be carefully considered by the non-governmental organization community.

40. Non-governmental organizations attending the present meeting have selected a North American Co-ordinating Committee. During the coming year, the Committee is charged by this meeting to co-ordinate the work of the North American non-governmental organizations present in pursuing our common objectives and strategies. The non-governmental organizations present request a report from the Committee at the 1988 North American symposium in order to evaluate its efforts. We urge continuing North American non-governmental organizations support for the North American Co-ordinating Committee as it works to accomplish the objectives stated in the present Declaration.

41. The North American Regional Non-Governmental Organization Symposium on the Question of Palestine reaffirms the importance of the work of the United Nations

Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and strongly supports contributions from the Governments of the United States and Canada at the current or higher levels. The non-governmental organizations strongly reject attempts on the part of some in the United States to de-legitimize the importance of the work of UNRWA.

42. We, the North American non-governmental organizations, have taken note of the continuing assaults on Palestinian refugee camps and have duly condemned the atrocities committed, called for the siege to be lifted permanently and called for the free flow of medical assistance and other relief to the camps.

43. We urge all people and organizations working towards an end to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to support, through an international peace conference, the Palestinian rights of return, the right of self-determination and the establishment of an independent Palestinian State alongside of Israel as a basis for a comprehensive and lasting peace.

NACC wishes to continue to act as a resource for the United Nations Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and the Division for Palestinian Rights, as requested. NACC requests that the United Nations continue its financial support of an NACC preparatory meeting, so that NACC can fulfil its obligations in relation to the 1988 North American Symposium on the Question of Palestine.

44. In order to continue collaboration between the United Nations and the North American non-governmental organization community, we urge both the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and the Division for Palestinian Rights to send representatives to the major North American non-governmental organizations conferences.

45. We urge the Chairman of the Committee on the exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People to convey this Declaration to the General Assembly at its forty-second session as part of the Committee's report.

Notes

a/ The Immigration and Naturalization Service seeks to deport seven Palestinians and one Kenyan under the McCarran-Walter Act, accusing them of membership in an organization which promotes international communism as well as other technical immigration violations.

ANNEX VII

Declaration adopted by the International Meeting of
Non-Governmental Organizations on the Question of
Palestine

(Geneva, 7-9 September 1987)

Introduction

1. The fourth United Nations International Meeting of Non-Governmental Organizations on the Question of Palestine was held at the United Nations Office at Geneva from 7 to 9 September 1987. The Meeting was attended by representatives of 121 non-governmental organizations as participants and 149 non-governmental organizations as observers, as well as by a large number of observers from Governments, intergovernmental organizations, United Nations bodies and liberation movements.

2. Mr. Massamba Sarré (Senegal), Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, opened the Meeting and Mr. Alberto Velazco-San José (Cuba) closed the Meeting on behalf of the Committee. The opening session was addressed by Mr. Diego Cordovez, Under-Secretary-General for Special Political Affairs and representative of the Secretary-General, by Mr. Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the Executive Committee of PLO and Mr. Donald Betz, Chairman of the International Co-ordinating Committee for Non-Governmental Organizations on the Question of Palestine. A keynote address was given by Congressman Nick Joe Rahall II (United States of America). Messages of solidarity were read out on behalf of Mr. Chadli Bendjeded, President of Algeria, Mr. Syed Sharifuddin Pirzada, Secretary-General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, Mr. Chedli Klibi, Secretary-General of the League of Arab States and on behalf of the Indian National Congress and the Indian Youth Congress.

3. The work of the Meeting was conducted in panel discussions and in workshops and special-issue groups. Two panels were established and presentations were made by a number of experts, as indicated below:

(a) "The need for and the urgency of convening the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 38/58 C";

The first session of the panel was chaired by Mr. Massamba Sarré and heard the following panelists: Mr. M. S. Agwani (India); Mr. Gordon Bilney (Australia); Mr. Peter Jankowitsch (Austria); Mr. Heath N. MacQuarrie (Canada); and Mr. Vladimir Vinogradov (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics). The second session of the panel heard presentations from the following experts: Professor Ibrahim Abu-Lughod (Palestinian); Mr. Shafiq Al-Hout (Palestinian); Mr. Mattityahu Peled (Israel); Mr. Tawfiq Zayyad (Palestinian);

(b) "Palestinian political and human rights";

Panelists: Mr. Hatem Abu-Ghazalah (Palestinian); Mr. Latif Dori (Israel); Ms. Raymonda Tawil (Israel); Mr. Amnon Zichroni (Israel).

4. The following workshops were held:

(a) Mobilization of public opinion;

Workshop leaders: Mr. Donald Betz (United States of America); and Mr. James Graff (Canada); Mr. David Watkins (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland);

(b) Creative arts and the Palestinian struggle for national identity;

Workshop leader: Mr. Kamal Boulatta (Palestinian);

(c) Community development and relief work;

Workshop leader: Mr. Hans Peter Kotthaus (Austria);

(d) Mobilizing the international peace movement for a nuclear-weapon-free Middle East;

Workshop leader: Mr. Amnon Zichroni (Israel).

5. In addition, 12 special-issue groups were formed to discuss specific action proposals by non-governmental organizations interested in particular topics related to the question of Palestine.

6. The Declaration of the Meeting, which was adopted unanimously, is reproduced below. The full text of the report will be published in due course as a special bulletin of the Division for Palestinian Rights.

Declaration

7. We, the non-governmental organizations participating in the fourth United Nations International Meeting of Non-Governmental Organizations on the Question of Palestine, in this year of the Palestinian people, thank the United Nations Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for convening this meeting and we appreciate the presence of the members and observers of that United Nations body.

8. We thank the Chief of the Division for Palestinian Rights, the non-governmental organization liaison officers and the staff of the Division and the Department of Conference Services, including the interpreters, for their assistance in this Meeting. We look forward to increasing the level of mutual co-operation and understanding.

9. We were honoured by the presence of Chairman Yasser Arafat at the opening session of this Meeting and sincerely thank him for his statement and his continuing support of our efforts.

10. We express our appreciation to the distinguished experts, resource persons and moderators who spoke here.

11. We recognize the need for and the urgency of convening the International Peace Conference on the Middle East in accordance with United Nations General Assembly

resolutions 38/58 C and 41/43 D. We are concerned at the delay in convening the Conference and gravely concerned that any further delay will worsen conflict in the Middle East, intensify the suffering and oppression to which the Palestinian people are daily subjected and increase the danger of global conflagration. For that reason, the international non-governmental organizations urge that practical preparations for the convening of the International Conference be started by the permanent members of the Security Council without delay.

12. Accordingly, we call upon all Governments to work for the convening of the International Peace Conference under the auspices of the United Nations, as a matter of the utmost urgency, the participants to include the five permanent members of the Security Council, PLO, Israel, the Arab States parties to the conflict, and other concerned States, on an equal footing and with equal rights.

13. We express our conviction that one hope for peace lies with a concerted European initiative to bring Israel and the United States to accept the International Peace Conference as called for in resolution 38/58 C. To this end, we urge the non-governmental organizations in the countries members of the European Economic Community to persuade their Governments to update the Venice Declaration of 1980 to be in conformity with the guidelines enunciated in resolution 38/58 C. We note that the European Parliament has given the opportunity to a number of leaders involved in the Middle East conflict to present their views. We urge the European Parliament to invite Chairman Arafat to present the views of the Palestinian people.

14. We reaffirm that the right of return and the recognition and exercise of the right to self-determination of the Palestinian people, with all that it implies, is a central requirement for peace and security, as well as being fully in accord with one of the fundamental principles of the Charter of the United Nations. Therefore, we call on all Governments to recognize and respect that right.

15. We reaffirm the international consensus that PLO is the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people in its just struggle for its inalienable rights. Accordingly, we call on all Governments to recognize PLO.

16. We are appalled at the 1986 amendment to the 1948 Israeli Prevention of Terrorism Act, which criminalizes Israeli citizens who engage in peace talks with members of PLO. We call for the repeal of this law forthwith, and the dropping of all charges laid under this law or its amendments, particularly those relating to the Alternative Information Centre in Jerusalem. We note past acts of harassment by the Israeli authorities against individuals living under its judicial and military authority who attend meetings with members of PLO. We insist upon the basic right of all individuals to attend meetings, including this fourth United Nations International Meeting of Non-Governmental Organizations on the Question of Palestine held at Geneva. We call upon the Israeli Government to permit such individuals, without discrimination, to return home safely and unharassed after their participation in this Conference. We further condemn attempts by any Government to curtail or obstruct the freedom of its citizens to associate with PLO or any of its members. We strongly support continuing dialogue between Israelis and members of PLO as an extremely important means of promoting a just and durable peace.

17. We are greatly concerned about the policies of racial discrimination practiced by the Israeli Government against Palestinian Arab Citizens of Israel. Special

attention should be paid to the plight of the oft-neglected Palestinian Bedouins and the Arabs in the area of Beersheva and the Negev. We condemn the continuing repressive measures of the Israeli occupying Power against the Palestinian people in the occupied territories (including arrests, shootings, torture, expulsions, demolition of houses, closure of educational, cultural, and social institutions, collective punishment, land and water seizures, and censorship in all its forms), and we call upon all Governments and peoples to press the Israeli Government to end the occupation. Inhumane practices against Palestinian political prisoners and the denial of all their rights must be deplored.

18. We note with great concern the deteriorating situation in the camps of Palestinian refugees in Beirut and southern Lebanon which have been under constant attack for three years. In the absence of actual legal measures that would guarantee the security of the Palestinian civilians in Lebanon after the abrogation of the Cairo agreement, we demand that the refugees receive the international legal protection provided under the relevant international conventions, specifically the Geneva Conventions and Protocols. We call for an end to the blockade, the start of reconstruction, and the normalization of the situation of the Palestinians in Lebanon; we call for the establishment of an international delegation of eminent persons to study the situation in the field and to report its findings to the United Nations Committee on the exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People.

19. We urge our Governments to contact the appropriate parties to lift the blockade, to permit the immediate entry of the International Committee of the Red Cross and other health and relief organizations into the camps and the dispatch of medical and food supplies. We also demand the reconstruction of dwellings, hospitals and schools and the re-establishment of social and educational services.

20. We call for the ending of the continued Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon, the inhumane air raids, which take Palestinian and Lebanese lives, and the intervention in Lebanese internal affairs through political coercion and oppressive action. We demand the immediate Israeli withdrawal from southern Lebanon, in conformity with United Nations Security Council resolutions 508 (1982) and 509 (1982), and respect for its unity, sovereignty and democratic development and for the release of all those held in prison.

21. We deplore the Israeli policy of kidnapping Palestinians and others travelling in international waters and call upon all non-governmental organizations to launch a campaign against these actions, including informing maritime organizations and seamen's unions in their respective States about these acts of piracy, and to work with them to oppose these deplorable acts.

22. We, non-governmental organizations, condemn the introduction of nuclear weapons by Israel into the Middle East. We urge the United States and Western European States to terminate all co-operation with Israel in the fields of nuclear weaponry and research. We further call upon Israel to dismantle its nuclear weapons, to open its nuclear facilities to expert inspection and to sign the non-proliferation Treaty. The world has a right to know, the Israeli people have a right to know about Israel's nuclear capacity and the threat to regional and world peace which that capacity represents. The United Nations resolution on the creation of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East must be implemented.

23. We are deeply concerned about the harsh and illegitimate conditions under which Mordechai Vanunu is being held and tried. Mordechai Vanunu drew the attention of the world to the Israeli nuclear arm capability. We condemn his kidnapping from European soil. We demand a fair, just and public trial for Mordechai Vanunu and submit that the need for regional and world-wide security from nuclear warfare morally justifies his actions.

24. We note Chairman Arafat's statement on the serious threat to peace and security posed by the perpetuation of the Gulf war and concur that "we must exert every possible effort to decrease the dangerous tension in this important region of the world before fire extends to other areas and the hurricane expands and thus destruction follows". We appeal to all parties to uphold the recent United Nations Security Council resolution 598 (1987) which aimed to end the war.

25. The objective of this Meeting was to plan and co-ordinate non-governmental organization activities. Our primary work was conducted in workshops and in special working groups, and we affirm their conclusions as appended herewith.

26. We, non-governmental organizations, urgently request the establishment of a special committee on Palestinian culture to confront the systematic war being waged against Palestinian identity. The committee should consist of three Palestinian cultural experts who would advise and assist the International Co-ordinating Committee for Non-Governmental Organizations on the Question of Palestine (ICCP) in planning future non-governmental organization activities.

27. Increased non-governmental organization effectiveness demands enhanced co-ordination and organization. In the light of the growing importance of the ICCP liaison office at Geneva, we propose the establishment of a non-governmental organization liaison office in North America, and national and regional committees in Europe and elsewhere.

28. It is important that special efforts be made to extend our network to Latin America, Australia, New Zealand and other under-represented areas, and to encourage the participation of their non-governmental organizations in the international meeting to be held in 1988. We urge the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People to exert special efforts to convene a Latin American regional non-governmental organization symposium in 1988 and on a regular basis.

29. We congratulate the European non-governmental organizations on the Regional Symposium successfully convened by them immediately prior to our Meeting with valued support of the ICC secretariat. We urge the Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People to include the Final Declaration of this European Symposium in the Committee's report (to the General Assembly).

30. We urge the United Nations to convene an annual European regional symposium immediately prior to an annual international meeting. We further urge the United Nations to schedule a five-day international meeting of non-governmental organizations in the first week of September 1988 in Vienna, the format of which is to be decided in co-operation with ICCP with emphasis on workshops and special interest planning meetings.

31. We reaffirm the organization and work of ICCP and its secretariat at Geneva. We call upon the United Nations to offer every possible assistance to ICCP and its secretariat.

32. We urge the Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People to convey this Declaration to the General Assembly at its forty-second session as part of the Committee's report.

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**REPORT
OF THE
COMMITTEE ON THE EXERCISE OF
THE INALIENABLE RIGHTS
OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE**

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

OFFICIAL RECORDS: FORTY-THIRD SESSION

SUPPLEMENT No. 35 (A/43/35)



UNITED NATIONS

New York, 1988

NOTE

Symbols of United Nations documents are composed of capital letters combined with figures. Mention of such a symbol indicates a reference to a United Nations document.

(27 October 1988)

CONTENTS

	<u>Paragraphs</u>	<u>Page</u>
LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL		v
I. INTRODUCTION	1 - 7	1
II. MANDATE OF THE COMMITTEE	8 - 10	3
III. ORGANIZATION OF WORK .I.,.....,.....,~,,~.....,.....,.....,	11 - 16	4
A. Election of officers	11 - 13	4
B. Participation in the work of the Committee	14 - 15	4
c. Re-establishment of the Working Group	16	4
IV, ACTION TAKEN BY THE COMMITTEE	17 - 128	5
A. Action taken in accordance with General Assembly resolution 42/66 A of 2 December 1987	17 - 95	5
1. Review of the situation relating to the question of Palestine and efforts to implement the recommendations of the Committee	17 - 31	5
2. Reactions to developments affecting the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people	32 - 86	8
3. Action taken by the Committee to promote the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East in accordance with General Assembly resolution 38/58 C of 13 December 1983 . . .	87 - 93	21
4. Attendance at international conferences and meetings	94	23
5. Action taken by other United Nations bodies, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and intergovernmental organizations	95	24
B. Action taken by the Committee in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 42/66 A and B of 2 December 1987	96 - 128	26
1. Co-operation with non-governmental organizations . .	96 - 112	26
2. Seminars	113 - 125	29
3. Other activities	126 - 128	31

CONTENTS (continued)

	<u>Paragraphs</u>	<u>Page</u>
v. ACTION TAKEN BY THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INFORMATION IN ACCORDANCE WITH GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 42/66 C	129 - 140	33
VI, RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COMMITTEE	141 - 148	36
<u>Annexes</u>		
I. Recommendation8 of the Committee endorsed by the General Assembly at its thirty-first session		39
II. Geneva Declaration on Palestine and the Programme of Action for the Achievement of Palestinian Rights		42
III. Conclusions and recommendations adopted by the Eighteenth United Nations Seminar on the Question of Palestine, Havua, Cuba, 15 to 17 December 1987		52
IV, Conclusions and recommendations adopted by the Nineteenth United Nations Seminar on the Question of Palestine, Berlin, German Democratic Republic, 25 to 29 April 1988		57
V. Conclusions and recommendations adopted by the Twentieth United Nations Seminar on the Question of Palestine, New York , 27 to 28 June 1988		63
VI. Declaration adopted by the United Nations North American Regional NGO Symposium on the Question of Palestine, New York, 29 June to 1 July 1988		68
VII. Declaration adopted by <i>the</i> United Nations European Regional NGO Symposium on the Question of Palestine, Geneva, 29 to 30 August 1988 .		72
VIII. Declaration adopted by the International NGO Meeting on the Question of Palestine, Geneva, 31 August to 2 September 1988		75

LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

25 October 1988

Excellency,

I have the honour to enclose herewith the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for submission to the General Assembly in accordance with paragraph 4 of resolution **42/66 A** of 2 December 1987.

Accept, Excellency, the **assurances** of my highest consideration.

(Signed) Absa Claude **DIALLO**
Chairman of the Committee on the
Exercise of the Inalienable Rights
of the Palestinian People

His Excellency
Mr. **Javier Pérez de Cuéllar**
Secretary-General of the United Nations

1. INTRODUCTION

1. The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, established by General Assembly resolution 3376 (XXX) of 10 November 1975, is currently composed of 23 Member States as follows: Afghanistan, Cuba, Cyprus, German Democratic Republic, Guinea, Guyana, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mali, Malta, Nigeria, Pakistan, Romania, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic and Yugoslavia.

2. In its first report, 1/ the Committee made a number of recommendations specifically designed to enable the Palestinian people to attain and exercise its inalienable rights in Palestine as previously recognized and defined by the General Assembly. Those recommendations were first endorsed by the Assembly in its resolution 31/20 of 24 November 1976 as a basis for the solution of the question of Palestine.

3. In its subsequent reports to the General Assembly, 2/ the Committee reaffirmed its original recommendations and called for their implementation. On each occasion they have been endorsed overwhelmingly by the Assembly, which has also continued to renew and, as necessary, expand the mandate of the Committee.

4. However, despite the increasing urgency of the appeals by the Committee, the Security Council has not yet been able to act on or implement the recommendations of the Committee. The Committee remains convinced that positive consideration and action by the Security Council on the recommendations of the Committee would advance prospects for the attainment of a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict, the core of which is the question of Palestine,

5. The Committee's efforts to promote such a solution acquired particular urgency in light of the grave deterioration of the situation in the occupied Palestinian territories in the year under review as a consequence of the repressive policies and practices of Israel, the occupying Power, in its efforts to quell the Palestinian uprising (intifadah) against the occupation, which began in December 1987. Despite the international outcry over repeated violations of human rights in the occupied territories and the adoption by the Security Council of several resolutions requesting the occupying Power to abide by the relevant international instruments and United Nations resolutions, Israel continued to resort to military force against the Palestinian population resisting the occupation, and to engage in armed attacks against the integrity and sovereignty of countries in the region. The Committee expressed the greatest concern at the mounting casualties and suffering inflicted on the Palestinian people and warned that the intransigence of Israel would further exacerbate the situation, jeopardize international efforts towards a just and lasting settlement, and further endanger international peace and security. The Committee reasserted that no solution could be achieved as long as the Palestinian people was denied its inalienable rights in Palestine, including those to self-determination without external interference, to national independence and sovereignty, to return to its homes and property, and to establish its own independent sovereign State, and as long as the Palestinian and other Arab territories remained occupied.

6. The urgency of taking measures to protect the Palestinian people under occupation, to guarantee the safety and security and the legal and human rights of

the **Palestinian** refugees in all the territories under Israeli occupation and to alleviate their suffering and **the** imperative necessity of breaking out of the current **stalemate** and advancing **towards** a peaceful settlement of this longstanding question were paramount concerns in the Committee's programme of work during the year under review.

7. The Committee accordingly repeatedly appealed to the Security Council to take appropriate action to secure United Nations **objectives** on the question of Palestine, and again accorded utmost priority to the early convening of the proposed International Peace Conference on the Middle East in conformity with General Assembly resolution **38/58 C of 3 December 1983**, The Committee remains convinced that the Conference **would** make a practical and positive contribution to efforts to promote a just and lasting peace in the Middle East and **continues** to stress the urgent need for additional concrete and constructive efforts by all Governments in order to convene the Conference without further delay.

II. MANDATE OF THE COMMITTEE

8. The Committee's mandate for the year 1988 is contained in paragraphs 3 to 5 of General Assembly resolution 42/66 A of 2 December 1987 by which the Assembly;

(a) Requested the Committee to continue to keep under review the situation relating to the **question** of Palestine as well as the implementation of the **Programme** of Action for the Achievement of Palestinian Rights 3/ adopted by the International Conference on the Question of Palestine, and to report and make **suggestions** to the General Assembly or the Security Council, as appropriate)

(b) Authorised the **Committee** to continue to **exert** all efforts to promote the implementation of its recommendations, including representation at **conferences and** meetings and the sending of delegations, to make such adjustments in its approved programme of seminars and of symposia and meetings for non-governmental organizations as it may consider **necessary**, and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its forty-third session and thereafter;

(c) Requested the Committee to continue to extend its co-operation to non-governmental organizations in their contribution towards heightening international awareness of the facts relating to the question of Palestine and in creating a more favourable atmosphere for the full implementation of the Committee's recommendations, and to take the necessary steps to expand its contacts with those organizations.

9. By its resolution 42/66 B of 2 December 1987, the General Assembly also requested the Secretary-General, **inter alia**, to provide the Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat with the necessary **resources** and to ensure that it continues to discharge the tasks detailed in earlier resolutions, in consultation with the Committee and under its guidance.

10. By its resolution 42/66 C of 2 December 1987, the General Assembly requested the Department of Public Information, in full co-operation and co-ordination with the Committee, to continue its special information programme **on** the question of Palestine.

III. ORGANIZATION..WORK

A. Election of officers

11. At its 149th meeting, on 14 January 1988, the Committee decided to re-elect the following officers;

Chairman: H.E. Mr. **Massamba Sarré (Senegal)**

Vice-Chairmen: H.E. Mr. Oscar Oramas-Oliva (Cuba)
H.E. Mr. Shah Mohammad Dost (Afghanistan)

Rapporteur: H.E. Mr. Alexander Borg Olivier (Malta)

12. At its 155th meeting, on 23 August 1988, the Committee elected H.E. Mrs. Absa Claude Diallo (Senegal) as Chairman in place of H.E. Mr. **Massamba Sarré** (Senegal) who had left New York on another assignment for his country.

13. At its 150th meeting, on 10 March 1988, the Committee adopted its programme of work for 1988 (A/AC.183/1988/CRP.1/Rev.1) in implementation of its mandate.

B. Participation in the work of the Committee

14. As in previous years, the Committee reconfirmed that all States Members of the United Nations and Permanent Observers to the United Nations desiring to participate in the work of the Committee as observers were welcome to do so. Accordingly, in a letter dated 30 March 1988, the Chairman of the Committee so informed the Secretary-General, who subsequently transmitted the letter, on 20 April 1988, to States Members of the United Nations and members of the specialized agencies, and to intergovernmental regional organizations. The Committee also decided to invite the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) to participate in the work of the Committee as an observer, to attend all its meetings and to make observations and proposals for the consideration of the Committee.

15. During 1988 the Committee again welcomed as observers all the States and organisations that had participated in its work in the preceding year. 4/

C. Re-establishment of the Working Group

16. At its 149th meeting, the Committee re-established its Working Group to assist in the preparation and expedition of the work of the Committee. The Working Group was constituted as before under the chairmanship of Mr. Alexander Borg Olivier (Malta), on the understanding that any Committee member or observer could participate in its proceedings. 5/ Mr. Pramathesh Rath (India) was re-elected Vice-Chairman of the Working Group.

IV. ACTION TAKEN BY THE COMMITTEE

A. Action taken in accordance with General Assembly resolution 42/66 A of 2 December 1987

1. Review of the situation relating to the question of Palestine and efforts to implement the recommendations of the Committee

17. In accordance with its mandate, in the year under review, the Committee continued to follow developments relating to the question of Palestine and to exert all efforts to promote the implementation of its recommendations as repeatedly endorsed by the General Assembly.

18. In response to events in the region affecting the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, the Chairman of the Committee, on repeated occasions, whenever urgent action was required, brought such developments to the attention of the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council, and called for appropriate measures in accordance with United Nations resolutions (see sect. A.2 (a) below).

19. The Committee was alarmed at the serious deterioration of the situation in the occupied Palestinian territories as a result of the increasing resort by Israel to armed force and other draconian measures in an effort to suppress the popular uprising, which began in early December 1987, against the continued occupation and gradual annexation of the occupied Palestinian territories and against the Israeli policies and practices violating the rights of the Palestinian people.

20. The Committee monitored the situation on an ongoing basis through the media, the reports of missions dispatched to the area by United Nations organs and agencies as well as by non-governmental organisations, the reports of individual experts and persons from the occupied territories who participated in meetings held under the auspices of the Committee, information collected by Governments, and other sources.

21. According to this information, the number of Palestinian6 shot to death by Israeli armed forces since early December 1987 had reached a total of 248 identified cases by 27 September 1988. Another 126 Palestinians had died from beatings, tear gas inhalation, and other causes related to actions by Israeli armed forces and Israeli settlers. Thousands of Palestinians had been wounded or had suffered crushed bones in beatings administered at random by Israeli soldiers in implementation of the policy of "might, force and beatings" to suppress the uprising, announced by the Israeli Defence Minister in January 1988. The Committee was alarmed at the high proportion of youth6 and children among the victims. The Committee also noted with grave concern various reports that the total casualty toll among Palestinians was probably much higher because of the fear of many Palestinians that they would be arrested if they went to a hospital for treatment of wounds, and because the repeated sealing of entire areas, measures to restrict the activities of the press and the detention and harassment of journalists and human rights workers had made it increasingly difficult to collect systematic information on the situation. The Committee also expressed grave preoccupation at the growing involvement of armed Israeli settlers in attacks against the Palestinian population, and at the announced policy of the authorities to allow settlers to shoot. Palestinian demonstrators seen carrying what seemed to be firebombs .

22. In this connection, **the** Committee was extremely concerned at reports by humanitarian assistance organisations that were able to visit the **area** that medical **personnel** was refused access to camps and villages closed by the military **and** that hospitals had been attacked, equipment destroyed, medical personnel and patients beaten, and that patients had been arrested and taken away. In view of the high number **of** casualties, the Committee was alarmed at information that the health situation in the occupied territories and particularly **in Gaza** had **reached** catastrophic proportions and that hospitals **were** facing severe shortages because the authorities were restricting access **to** medical supplies. In this connection, the Committee deplored that the Special Committee of Experts of the World Health Organisation (WHO) had again been refused access to the occupied territories and noted that the information collected by that Committee had caused it to express deep **concern** regarding the health situation in the occupied territories,

23. The Committee further noted that, in addition to the use of force, the Israeli authorities had resorted to a policy of mass arrests, imposition of **administrative** detention without charges **or** trial, and deportations, in its efforts to eradicate the leadership of the uprising. Human rights organisations estimated that, by the end of September 1988, about 5,500 Palestinians remained in detention, 2,500 of whom had been placed under administrative detention without **charges or** trial. Several new prison camps had been built, where conditions were reported to be **in** clear violation **of** international human rights standards. **There were** numerous reports **of** severe overcrowding, mistreatment and beating, and **even** killing of prisoners, lack of hygiene **and** unavailability of medical **care**. Several cases of torture **were** also **reported**. In addition, since the beginning of the uprising, the Israeli authorities deported 33 Palestinians from the occupied territories and issued deportation **orders** on another 25, in **defiance of Security Council** resolutions and of the provisions of the Fourth **Geneva** Convention.

24. The Committee was also gravely concerned at the reported escalation of collective punishment measures directed against the entire Palestinian population. Repeatedly, Israeli forces had declared entire areas closed military zones and placed the population under extended curfews, sealing all **entry points** to villages and camps and preventing the delivery **of foodstuffs and** other essential items such **as** fuel and medicines! electricity and telephone service were repeatedly interrupted) thousands **of** trees were uprooted and crops **bulldozed**; and property was randomly destroyed in raids on Palestinian homes, which **were** reported to have become a regular occurrence. Some 236 homes **were** reported to **have** been destroyed **as of** 23 September 1988, displacing **thousands** of Palestinians, and hundreds more were reportedly scheduled for demolition.

25. The Committee further noted that Israel had imposed severe restrictions on freedom of movement within and outside the occupied territories and had intensified its restrictions on travel abroad. In this connection, the Committee **s**trongly deplored that the Israeli authorities had denied permission to travel to persons **6** from the occupied territories who had been invited by the Committee to participate in meetings of non-governmental organisations held under its auspices.

26. The growing resort by Israel to the use of **force** against the Palestinian population in general was accompanied by an intensification of measures against Palestinian economic, social and cultural institutions. Universities and other educational institutions, which had suffered frequent closings and other disruptions prior to the uprising, were closed on the West Bank from December 1987 to May 1988, and then again for varying periods of time. Most schools were also

repeatedly closed in the Gaza Strip. A large number of schools in the occupied territories were sequestered by the army, for its own use, and school property destroyed. All teachers newly appointed at the beginning of the 1987-1988 academic year were dismissed. Palestinian trade unions were also the object of harassment and punitive measures. Twenty-four unions, as well as the General Federation of Trade Unions were reported to have been closed since the beginning of the uprising, and a number of trade unionists were arrested, placed under administrative detention, or expelled. The Palestine Press Service was closed for six months and other Palestinian publications were the object of harassment through repeated closings, disruption of distribution, and the arrest and detention of many Palestinian journalists. At the end of June 1988, the military commander of the West Bank ordered closed the relief organisation In'ash el-Ussra, which served the needs of over 15,000 Palestinians, for two years, the first such self-help community group to be so closed. Many Palestinian institutions were also closed and popular committees outlawed, and their members arrested.

27. In addition, the Israeli authorities adopted a number of stringent administrative and economic measures directed at further strengthening their control over key aspects of life in the occupied territories, and to stifle Palestinian resistance to the occupation, particularly efforts to boycott the military authorities. The authorities engaged in aggressive collection of back taxes, linking proof of payment of all Israeli taxes to the issuance of any official document (such as drivers licences, marriage or birth certificates) and, in the Gaza Strip, to the requirement that existing identity cards be replaced by new ones. Direct export of agricultural produce from the occupied territories was prohibited, thus causing great material damage to Palestinian farmers, who are dependent on exports for the marketing of their produce. In addition, the amount of money that Palestinians could bring across was reduced to one fifth the amount previously allowed, thus almost eliminating the possibility of indirect export and severely reducing the amount of remittances from Palestinians working abroad, on which many families depended. The restrictions were also causing great difficulties to voluntary organisations providing services not supplied by the occupation authorities. The authorities also repeatedly imposed the closing of Palestinian shops of an essential nature, such as bakeries and pharmacies, and forced the opening of others in an effort to break protest strikes.

28. These measures directed at suppressing the uprising were taken against a backdrop of intensified de facto annexation of the occupied territories. The total area of land confiscated by Israel since 1967 had reached almost 2.8 million dunums (1 dunam = 1,000 m²), i.e. more than half the land area of the occupied Palestinian territories, by May 1988. The number of settlements reached 170 in the West Bank and 20 in the Gaza Strip, and the establishment of new settlements and the expansion of existing ones were announced. Stringent restrictions continued to be imposed on water use, new construction, the granting of credit and other activities necessary for the development of the territories.

29. The Committee noted with great concern that in his annual report on the situation of workers in the occupied Arab territories, based on three missions to the area, the Director-General of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) had concluded that the clashes resulting from the uprising and the repressive and other measures which had ensued gravely affected the situation of Arab workers in those territories. The report expressed concern that the situation of Arab workers, which was already seriously affected by the occupation, was likely to be increasingly aggravated if the occupation continued and if the serious events

taking place in the territories persisted **or** assumed greater dimensions, The repercussions on employment and on living and working conditions, *in* the view of the **ILO**, could be **extremely grave**.

30. In light of these alarming developments in the occupied territories, the Committee wishes to draw *once* again the **most** urgent attention of the General Assembly and the Security Council to the **policies** and practices of Israel, the occupying Power, which are in flagrant violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention, prevent the Palestinian people **from** attaining **its** inalienable rights, and thwart international efforts to bring about a peaceful settlement of the Palestine question, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict in the Middle **East**. In this *connection*, the Committee considers that every **effort** should be made to ensure the **safety** and protection of the Palestinians *in* the occupied territories.

31. At the same time, the Committee noted with appreciation that, *in* his report on **assistance** to the Palestinian people (**A/43/367-E/1988/82**), the **Secretary-General** had described a number of measures to respond to the emergency **situation** in the occupied territories, *in* accordance with the report he had submitted to the Security Council under resolution 605 (1987) (**S/19443**). Unfortunately, **no** action was authorised by the Security Council *on* that report owing to **the** negative vote of a permanent member of the Security **Council**. The Committee was encouraged by the assessment that, although a number of projects had been disrupted, the assistance programme continued to operate at full strength and had made considerable progress, and that all **organisations** of the United Nations **system** had expressed a willingness to expand their activities in the area, provided additional funding was available. The Committee expressed its deep appreciation to the Governments which had increased their contributions to the *programme* and, noting that needs are still **very** great and that additional funding **is** urgently needed, associated itself with the Secretary-General's appeal to the international community to **continue** to increase its support for the assistance programme. The Committee considered that intensified efforts towards genuine development of the occupied territories, with the close involvement of the Palestinian people themselves, through their representative, the PLO, **must** be a necessary accompaniment of renewed efforts to achieve a political solution of the question.

2. Reactions to developments affecting the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people

(a) Communications to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

32. In response to the very grave situation in the occupied Palestinian territories in the course of the year under review, the Chairman of the Committee repeatedly drew the **most** urgent attention of the Secretary-General and of the President of the Security Council to developments in the area and, in particular, to the intensification of repression by the Israeli military authorities, urging the adoption of appropriate measures in accordance with humanitarian principles and United Nations resolutions. The Chairman repeatedly pointed out that the **policies** and practices of Israel, the occupying Power, in the occupied Palestinian territories are in contravention of the Fourth Geneva Convention, international human rights instruments and United Nations resolutions. *He* further stressed that, **such** policies and practices pose further obstacles to international efforts to promote a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the Palestine question, **The**

Chairman reiterated his appeals to the Secretary-General and to the President of the Security Council to take all possible measures for ensuring the safety and protection of the Palestinian civilians under occupation, and to intensify all efforts towards the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 38/58 C.

33. In a letter dated 13 October 1987 (A/42/655-8/19203), the Chairman described an incident in the Gaza Strip which had resulted in the shooting death of three Palestinians and which had prompted demonstrations and a general students strike. A subsequent **incident** in which four Palestinians and an Israeli soldier had been killed had sparked widespread protests in the Gaza Strip which were still continuing. Extremely serious incidents had also been reported from the occupied West Bank, where a renewed attempt by militant Jews to enter the Islamic Holy Shrine or Al-Aqsa in Jerusalem had sparked protest demonstrations which had resulted in the death of a Palestinian woman. There had also been **dozens of** injuries among Palestinian demonstrators, and many had been arrested, **Protest** strikes had been declared in many **areas**.

34. In a letter dated 13 November 1987 (A/42/768-6/19270), the Chairman detailed a number of grave incidents which had taken place in the occupied Palestinian territories and had caused the death and injury of several Palestinians, including schoolchildren. The Chairman further reported that it had been disclosed by an official Israeli report that the Shin Beth internal **security** service had routinely subjected Palestinian detainees to physical abuse and that such abuse had been covered up in the courts.

35. On 11 December 1987 (A/42/877-6/19337), the Chairman drew urgent attention to the very dangerous situation which was being created in the occupied territories by renewed acts of violence by the Israeli troops, which had again resulted in casualties among young Palestinians. In the Gaza Strip, Israeli **troops** had shot two Palestinian youths dead and had wounded 18 others. Protesters assembled in the courtyard of a hospital **were** attacked by Israeli helicopters which dropped tear gas canisters into the crowd. Many schools and shops in the Gaza Strip remained closed and hundreds of Palestinians **stayed** away from work in Israel. In the West Bank, Israeli soldiers had shot six Palestinians, including an 11-year-old boy, to death in various towns and refugee camps, and had wounded many others in protest demonstrations. Many Palestinian protestors had been arrested. Military authorities had also detained the head of the Arab Journalists Union **for** six months without trial and had ordered the daily **Al-Fajr** to halt distribution in the West Bank for 10 days,

36. In a letter dated 29 December 1987 (A/43/73-S/19394), the Acting Chairman stated that the use of live ammunition by Israeli troops had already caused the killing of at least 23 Palestinians and injuring of hundreds of others. The number of Palestinian youths arrested by the Israeli army for suspected involvement in the recent wave of protests had risen to nearly 1,000. The army had opened two makeshift prisons to detain the hundreds of prisoners until trials could be arranged, where conditions were reported to be extremely harsh. The Israeli army was preparing to begin military trials which, based on past experience, were expected to be swift and in the nature of "a mass court-martial". Defence lawyers had not been allowed to see the detainees and Palestinian lawyers in the Gaza Strip were boycotting the military trials. The army was also **reported** to have ordered the closing of several universities and of about 800 schools in the West Bank and 92 schools in the Gaza Strip.

37, In a further letter dated 5 January 1988 (A/43/77-6/19405), the Chairman reported that Israeli military authorities had decided to expel nine Palestinians, five from the West Bank and Sour from the Gaza Strip, accusing them of being the "chief instigators" of the uprising in the territories, More than 1,000 Palestinians rounded up during the past month also remained gaoled, and trials on incitement charges were proceeding in the military courts, Further violent incidents had also taken place, resulting in several new casualties.

38. In a further letter dated 12 January 1988 (A/43/86-6/19424), the Chairman once again drew urgent attention to the continuing deterioration of the situation in the occupied Palestinian territories, particularly due to the use of live ammunition against demonstrators, mass arrests, detentions and deportations. He described a number of grave incidents which had taken place since his earlier letter and which had resulted in the death of eight Palestinians, including a pregnant woman, and in numerous injuries, The Israeli army was reported to have sent large reinforcements into the Gaza Strip and to have declared most of the area a closed military zone, barred to journalists and others, The total number of dead had reached at least 35 since the beginning of the protests in December. At least 30 Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza had been placed under administrative detention without trial for up to six months. A total number of almost 2,000 Palestinians had been arrested, the majority of whom remained gaoled awaiting trial in the military courts.

39, In a further letter dated 20 January 1986 (A/43/95-S/19441), the Chairman drew urgent attention in particular to the increasingly systematic use by Israel of collective punishment against Palestinians, It had been reported that the army was imposing "economic curfews" on refugee camps, preventing residents from leaving and thus cutting off more than 250,000 Palestinians from their sources of income, and even preventing food from reaching the camps, thus leading to serious shortages. The Chairman also reported that several violent incidents had taken place, resulting in renewed casualties among Palestinians.

40. On 10 February 1988 (A/43/132-S/19490), the Chairman said that events since his last letter had shown that, despite international appeals, Israeli authorities had increasingly resorted to random beatings, curfews, the closing of schools, and mass arrests. Live ammunition was again being used against Palestinian demonstrators, raising the death toll to at least 50 since December 1987. The Committee was also gravely concerned at the reported growing involvement of Israeli settlers in acts of violence against the Palestinian population. At least 300 Palestinians had been hospitalised for injuries inflicted in beatings by Israeli troops carrying out the policy announced by the Defence Minister of "might, force and beatings". Several hundreds of others were also beaten but ha@ reportedly avoided going to hospitals for fear of being arrested. One hundred twenty-nine Palestinians had been placed in administrative detention for six months without trial and a further 1,753 Palestinians were still under arrest, including 577 who had been sentenced to gaol terms by military courts. The Chairman further described several incidents in which another 10 Palestinians, including a 10-year-old boy, had been killed by Israeli troops.

41, In this connection, the Chairman expressed the Committee's appreciation for the report of the Secretary-General submitted in pursuance of resolution 605 (1907) (S/19433) and for its objective analysis of the situation and the identification of ways and means for ensuring the safety and protection of Palestinian civilians under Israeli occupation. The Committee in particular expressed appreciation for the steps taken by the Secretary-General in pursuance of that resolution and for

the action he planned to take to help alleviate the suffering of the Palestinian people under occupation, The Committee **stressed** that the international community should also **take** suitable action, including the measures identified in that report, to help **ensure** the protection of the Palestinian civilian population.

42. In a further letter dated 1 March 1988 (A/43/183-S/19562), the Chairman stated that the toll of Palestinians known to have been killed by **Israeli** gunfire or **beatings** was at least **79** since early December. At least **29** Palestinians had **died** since his previous letter, indicating an extremely serious increase in casualties. Another **12** deaths had been attributed to the effects of tear-gas. A humanitarian assistance organization which **had** visited the occupied **territories** had **estimated** that **injuries** ran into the thousands, many of them **victims** of beatings. Medical personnel had been refused entry to refugee camps and **areas** under curfew, and hospitals had been assaulted, medical personnel beaten, equipment smashed and patients pulled from beds and arrested. Giving a brief chronology of the incidents that had taken place since his previous letter, he reported that Israeli troops or settlers had killed Palestinians, including a **four-year-old** child, in a number of areas.

43. In a further letter dated 30 March 1988 (A/43/264-8/19710), the Chairman reported the latest incidents and stated **that** the toll of Palestinians known to have been killed by Israeli gunfire, beatings **and** tear-gas inhalation was at **least** **127** since the beginning of the uprising in early December. Children as young as three had also been beaten. The number of Palestinians **detained by** the army had reached at least **4,000**. Stringent new measures had been announced, including an easing of the rules allowing for administrative detention without **charges** or **trial**; the outlawing of the Shabiba (Youth) Movement) and allowing Israeli civilians to shoot at demonstrators who hurled firebombs. The imposition of a variety of economic restrictions had also been announced. In view of demonstrations planned to **commemorate** Land Day on 30 March, the Israeli army had now declared the entire West Bank and **Qaza Strip** closed military zones for **three** days, banning journalists and prohibiting Palestinians from travelling between the occupied territories and Israel. International telephone links had been cut, **and** food supplies restricted. The Gaza Strip had also been placed under **curfew**, meaning that **more** than **650,000** Palestinians were confined to their homes.

44. In a further letter dated 13 April 1988 (A/43/302-6/19769), the Acting Chairman drew the **most** urgent attention to the intensification of repression by Israel against the Palestinian people, including deportation of persons, the demolition of houses, the imposition of curfews **over** long periods, restrictions on media coverage, and other **measures**. Live ammunition continued to be used indiscriminately and widely against demonstrators. The growing death toll of Palestinians due to Israeli gunfire had now reached at least **138** since early December. The Committee in particular strongly deplored the expulsion of eight Palestinians to southern Lebanon, **and** the decision by the Israeli authorities to deport another **12** Palestinians, in defiance of Security Council resolutions 607 (1988) and 608 (1988).

45. In another letter dated 13 May 1988 (A/43/362-S/19881), the Acting Chairman stated that the toll of Palestinians known to have been killed by Israeli gunfire had now reached at least **180**; dozens more had reportedly died from beatings and suffocation from the particularly toxic form of **tear-gas** used by the armed forces. In addition, the Israeli authorities had **introduced** new administrative measures against the entire Palestinian population in the occupied territories in order to

tighten control over the area in further efforts to quell the uprising. Despite growing restrictions on the press and the detention of several journalists, there was information that the uprising was continuing and a number of grave incidents had taken place. Another eight Palestinians had been expelled and further deportations were planned; the number of prisoners had topped 7,000, of whom 1,200 had been placed in administrative detention.

46. On 3 June 1988 (A/43/392-5/19926), the Chairman drew urgent attention to the conviction by an Israeli court of four Israeli peace activists for meeting with members of the PLO in Romania in 1986. The Committee was also seriously concerned at the continued Israeli policy of military repression in the occupied Palestinian territories. The casualty toll had now reached 190 Palestinians killed by gunfire. More than 2,000 Palestinians were being detained without charges in a desert prison camp at Ketziot under inhuman conditions. Thousands more remained imprisoned in Israeli gaols and there had been several reports of ill-treatment of prisoners.

47. In a further letter dated 22 July 1988 (A/43/47-S/20052), the Chairman expressed the Committee's most serious concern that live ammunition, rubber bullets and beatings continued to be used widely. The number of Palestinians killed by Israeli gunfire had reached at least 230, and 9,000 Palestinians were still detained under inhuman conditions. Israeli civilians had been allowed to shoot Palestinians carrying firebombs. He detailed several instances of house demolitions, closure of schools, expulsions, banning of community organizations, and other measures taken by the military authorities.

48. On 4 August 1988 (A/43/502-6/20086), the Acting Chairman strongly deplored the deportation by Israel of eight Palestinians from the West Bank and Qaza Strip to Lebanon, on charges of being involved in inciting recent uprisings in the occupied Palestinian territories. The Committee also strongly deplored the arrest of Faisal Husseini, Director of the Arab Studies Society in Jerusalem, who was given up to six months administrative detention for allegedly participating in the co-ordination of the Palestinian uprising.

49. In another letter dated 19 August 1988 (A/43/547-5/20136), the Acting Chairman reported that the Israeli army had adopted a new pre-emptive policy of sealing off entire areas. The Gaza Strip was reportedly placed under complete and total curfew from 14 to 18 August, and separate curfews remained in effect in a number of areas. Another part of the army's new strategy had been to outlaw the "popular committees" established in the course of the uprising to keep civic affairs running. A Defence Ministry official was reported to have disclosed that more than 250 members of the committees had been jailed recently. Despite the new measures, protest demonstrations had taken place in the Gaza Strip and at least 130 persons had been injured by beatings or tear-gas on 16 and 17 August. At least 247 Palestinians had been killed since December, including two Palestinians shot to death on 16 August at Ketziot prison camp during a demonstration against the inhumane conditions of detention of some 2,500 administrative detainees at the camp. The shooting was condemned by the International Committee of the Red Cross, which stated that Israel was violating the Fourth Geneva Convention of 12 August 1949. The Acting Chairman also expressed concern that another four Palestinians were deported to Lebanon on 17 August 1988.

50. In a letter dated 29 September 1988 (A/43/663-S/20210), the Chairman of the Committee detailed a number of grave incidents which had taken place in the occupied Palestinian territories and had caused death and injury to many

Palestinians. The Chairman in particular expressed most serious concern at the use of plastic bullets by the Israeli army which had led to increasing deaths and wounding of Palestinians. The Chairman also expressed the Committee's concern at the fact that a number of Palestinian institutions perceived by the Israeli authorities to be the nucleus of a future Palestinian State were ordered closed for prolonged periods and a network of popular committees charged with organizing the Palestinian uprising in Gaze had been smashed and some 20C people had been arrested.

51. In a further letter dated 13 October 1988 (A/43/710-6/20228), the Chairman reported an intensification of the policies of repression of Israel in the occupied Palestinian territories, in particular army raids in order to prevent demonstrations, and the extension of the closure of schools and universities until 15 November. The closure of the Palestine Press Service had also been extended for one year. Live ammunition continued to be used widely and had resulted in an increase in casualties. She reported a statement by the Israeli Army Chief of Staff to the effect that the number of Palestinians wounded had almost doubled in recent weeks, and detailed several recent incidents in which Israeli troops had shot Palestinians to death.

(b) Action taken within the Security Council

52. In addition to transmitting letters to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council, the Committee followed closely the activities of the Council on matters relating to the Committee's mandate, and participated in Council debates as necessary.

53. In a letter dated 11 December 1987, addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/19333), the Permanent Representative of Democratic Yemen to the United Nations, in his capacity as Chairman of the Arab Group for the month of December, requested that an immediate meeting of the Security Council be convened to address the situation in the occupied Palestinian and other Arab territories. The Security Council considered the item at seven meetings held between 11 and 22 December 1987.

54. At the 2770th meeting of the Security Council, on 11 December 1987, the Chairman of the Committee intervened in the debate and stated that the deterioration of the situation in the occupied territories was all the more disturbing because it directly affected not merely the future of the Palestinian population but also international peace and security. He described a number of incidents which had taken place and which he had related in a letter sent to the President of the Security Council (A/42/877-S/19337) (see para, 35 above).

55. The Committee had continued to emphasize that the situation in the occupied Palestinian and other Arab territories, including Jerusalem, would continue to worsen, as long as the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people had not been exercised. The United Nations had an undeniable responsibility for ensuring the protection of the Palestinians and the enjoyment of their rights in the occupied territories. The Committee considered that it was now up to the Security Council to implement the findings of the 1983 International Conference on the Question of Palestine held at Geneva, endorsed by growing majorities in the General Assembly, in particular by calling for the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East. He underscored that the question of Palestine had reached a critical stage and urgently appealed for increased efforts to achieve a just and lasting solution to the question and to put an end to the intolerable situation of the Palestinian people.

56. At its 2777th meeting, on 22 December 1967, the Security Council adopted resolution 605 (1987) by 14 votes in favour to none against, with 1 abstention, by which it strongly deplored those policies and practices of Israel, the occupying Power, which violate the human rights of the Palestinian people in the occupied territories, and in particular the opening of fire by the Israeli army, resulting in the killing and wounding of defenceless Palestinian civilians; reaffirmed that the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, is applicable to the Palestinian and other Arab territories occupied by Israel since 1967, including Jerusalem; called once again upon Israel, the occupying Power, to abide immediately and scrupulously by that Convention; called for the exercise of maximum restraint to contribute to the establishment of peace; stressed the urgent need to reach a just, durable and peaceful settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict) and requested the Secretary-General to examine the present situation in the occupied territories by all means available to him and to submit a report containing his recommendations on ways and means for ensuring the safety and protection of the Palestinian civilians under Israeli occupation.

57. In a letter dated 4 January 1988, addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/19402), the Permanent Representative of Jordan to the United Nations, in his capacity as Chairman of the Arab Group for the month of January, requested an immediate meeting of the Security Council to address the situation in the occupied Palestinian and other Arab territories. The Security Council considered the item at its 2780th meeting held on 5 January 1988.

58. At that meeting, the Security Council adopted unanimously resolution 607 (1988), by which it reaffirmed once again that the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, is applicable to Palestinian and other Arab territories occupied by Israel since 1967, including Jerusalem; called upon Israel to refrain from deporting any Palestinian civilians from the occupied territories; strongly requested Israel, the occupying Power, to abide by its obligations arising from the Convention) and decided to keep the situation in the Palestinian and other Arab territories occupied by Israel since 1967, including Jerusalem, under review.

59. The Security Council resumed consideration of the item at its 2781st meeting, held on 14 January 1988. At that meeting, the Council adopted resolution 608 (1988) by 14 votes in favour, none against and 1 abstention. By that resolution, the Council expressed deep regret that Israel, the occupying Power, had deported Palestinian civilians in defiance of resolution 607 (1988); called upon Israel to rescind the order to deport Palestinian civilians and to ensure the safe and immediate return to the occupied Palestinian territories of those already deported; requested that Israel desist forthwith from deporting any other Palestinian civilian from the occupied territories; and decided to keep the situation under review.

60. The Security Council resumed its consideration of the item at its 2765th to 2787th meetings, on 27 and 28 January 1988, and at its 2789th and 2790th meetings, on 1 February 1988, having before it the report, dated 21 January 1988, submitted by the Secretary-General pursuant to Security Council resolution 605 (1987) of 22 December 1987 (S/19443).

61. The representative of Senegal, also in his capacity as Chairman of the Committee, intervened in the debate at the 2786th meeting of the Security Council, on 27 January 1988, and praised the report submitted by the Secretary-General as

complete, balanced and responsible. He expressed his satisfaction that the report stressed the special duty of the United Nations towards the Palestinian people, and the need to reach a negotiated, just and lasting **settlement of the Middle East** problem. Referring to the violent **repression** in the occupied territories, he stressed once again the primary responsibility of the Council, guarantor of international peace and security, and called **on** it to take measures to make Israel comply with its obligations and duties as occupying Power, under the Fourth **Geneva** Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949. He further called for the **strengthening** of humanitarian organisations in a universal effort to rehabilitate the Palestinian population, and for renewed **efforts**, through the Security Council, to advance a negotiating process **leading** to a just and lasting settlement of the Middle East problem, including the question of Palestine.

62. At its 2790th meeting, on 1 February 1988, the Security Council had before it a draft resolution (S/19466), submitted by Algeria, Argentina, Nepal, Senegal, Yugoslavia and **Zambia**, by which the Council would have called upon Israel, as the occupying Power and as a High Contracting Party to the **Geneva** Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, to accept the **de jure** applicability of the Convention to the Palestinian and the other Arab territories occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, and fully to **comply** with its obligations under that **Convention**; would have recalled the obligation of all the High Contracting Parties to ensure respect for the Convention in all **circumstances**; would have called again upon Israel to desist forthwith from its policies and practices which **violate** the human rights of **the Palestinian people**; would have requested Israel to facilitate the task of humanitarian relief agencies and request all members to give them their full **support**; would have requested the **Secretary-General** to continue to monitor the situation in the occupied territories by all means available to him and to make regular and timely reports to the **Council**; would have affirmed the urgent need to achieve, under the **auspices** of the United Nations, a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict, an integral part of which is the Palestinian problem, and expressed its determination to work towards that **end**; would have requested the Secretary-General to continue his endeavours to promote such a settlement and to **keep** the Security Council regularly **informed**; and would have decided to keep the situation under review,

63. At the **same** meeting, the Security Council proceeded to vote on the draft resolution, which received 14 votes in favour to 1 against (United States of America), with no abstentions, and was not adopted, owing to the negative vote of a permanent member of the Council.

64. In a letter dated 29 March 1988, addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/19700), the Permanent Representative of Tunisia to the United Nations, in his capacity as Chairman of the Arab Group for the month of March, requested that an urgent meeting of the Security Council be convened to discuss the situation in the occupied Arab territories. The Security Council resumed its **consideration** of the item at its 2804th meeting, held on 30 March 1988.

65. At the 2804th meeting, the representative of Senegal intervened in the debate, also in his capacity as Chairman of the Committee. He stressed the further deterioration of the situation in the region as described in his letter addressed to the President of the Security Council on the same date (A/43/264-S/19710) (see para. 43 above). He appealed to the Council to take action on the recommendations

adopted by consensus at the International Conference on the Question of Palestine held in 1963 and approved repeatedly by an increasing majority in the General Assembly for the convening of an international peace conference on the Middle East. The Chairman further stressed that the question of Palestine had now entered a critical phase and urged that increased efforts should be undertaken to provide a just and lasting solution to this question. He urgently appealed to all Council members to make a positive contribution to the adoption of appropriate measures so that the policy of dialogue could be followed by all the interested parties in order to put an end to the tragic situation which had continued for more than 40 years.

66. The Security Council resumed its consideration of the item at two further meetings held on 14 and 15 April 1988. The Acting Chairman of the Committee intervened in the debate at the 2805th meeting, on 14 April 1986, and stated that notwithstanding the resolutions adopted by the Council since December 1987 and the emphatic appeals addressed to Israel by the entire international community, the Israeli authorities had continued and intensified their repressive policy. He called on all concerned to use every possible means to guarantee the security and protection of the Palestinian civilians living under occupation, and to redouble joint efforts to secure the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 38/58 C. He urged the Council to take measures to that end and appealed to the Secretary-General to implement the recommendations contained in his report (S/19443), so that the necessary humanitarian assistance could be provided to the long-suffering Palestinian people in the occupied territories.

67. At the 2806th meeting, on 15 April 1988, the Security Council considered a draft resolution (S/19760), submitted by Algeria, Argentina, Nepal, Senegal, Yugoslavia and Zambia. By that draft resolution, the Council would have urged Israel, the occupying Power, to abide immediately and scrupulously by the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, and to desist forthwith from its policies and practices that are in violation of the Convention; would have urged Israel to rescind the order to deport Palestinian civilians and ensure the safe and immediate return to the occupied Palestinian territories of those already deported; would have urged Israel once again to desist forthwith from deporting Palestinian civilians from the occupied territories; it would have condemned those policies and practices of Israel, the occupying Power, that violate the human rights of the Palestinian people in the occupied territories, and in particular the opening of fire by the Israeli army, resulting in the killing and wounding of defenceless Palestinian civilians; would have affirmed the urgent need to achieve, under the auspices of the United Nations, a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict, an integral part of which is the Palestinian problem, and would have expressed its determination to work towards that end; would have requested the Secretary-General to submit periodic reports on the situation in the occupied territories, including those aspects relating to endeavours for ensuring the safety and protection of the Palestinian civilians under Israeli occupation; and would have decided to keep the situation under review.

68. The draft resolution received 14 votes in favour and 1 against (United States of America) and was not adopted owing to the negative vote of a permanent member of the Council.

69. In a letter dated 19 April 1988 (S/19796), the Permanent Representative of Tunisia to the United Nations requested an urgent meeting of the Security Council

to **consider** the situation created by the new deliberate attack by Israel on the territorial integrity and **sovereignty** of Tunisia, The letter stated that on 16 April 1988 a **terrorist commando** had entered the **residence** of **Mr. Khalil Al-Wasir**, Deputy Commander in Chief of the Palestinian Armed Forces and a member of the Central Council of the PLO, and had assassinated him in the presence of his wife and daughter, **Three other** persons had also died in the attack. An investigation carried out by the Tunisian **Government** had ascertained the direct responsibility of **Israel** in the **attack**, Accordingly, the **Tunisian Government** **invited** the Council to **condemn Israel's** terrorism forcefully and to take appropriate steps to avert and prevent **the repetition** of such acts. The Council considered the item at four meetings held between 21 and 25 April 1988.

70. At the 2807th meeting of the Council, on 21 April 1988, the representative of Senegal, also in his capacity as Chairman of the Committee, intervened in the debate and called on the Council to condemn unequivocally, on the one hand, the repeated violation of Tunisia's territorial integrity and sovereignty and, on the other hand, the assassination of **Khalil Al-Wasir as a terrorist act** that the international community finds intolerable, in accordance with the **principles** defined by both the Security Council and the General Assembly.

71. He further stated that the cycle of violence in the region could not be halted so long as there was **no** political solution guaranteeing the Palestinians the exercise of their inalienable right to self-determination and the **creation of a State**. Assassinations and measures of repression did not **serve** the cause of peace, but simply postponed the reaching of a peaceful settlement and **cast** doubt on the ability of the United Nations to **find** just and lasting solutions to **longstanding conflicts**. Such a solution should be sought within the framework of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East in accordance with General Assembly resolutions.

72. At its 2820th meeting, on 25 April 1988, the Security Council, by a vote of 14 in favour to none against, with 1 abstention, adopted resolution 611 (1988). By that resolution the Council condemned vigorously the **aggression** perpetrated on 16 April 1988 against the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Tunisia in flagrant violation of the Charter of the United Nations, **international law and norms of conduct**; urged Member States to take measures to prevent such acts against the **sovereignty** and territorial integrity of all States; expressed its determination to take the appropriate steps to ensure the implementation of the resolution) requested the **Secretary-General** to report urgently to the Security Council any new elements available to him and relating to the aggression; and decided to remain seized of the matter.

73. After consultations, the President of the Security Council issued the following statement on behalf of the members of the Council, on 26 August 1988 (S/20156):

"The members of the Security Council are gravely concerned by the continued deterioration of the **situation** in the **Palestinian** territories occupied by Israel since 1967, including Jerusalem, and especially by the current grave and serious situation resulting from the closing-off of areas, the imposition of curfews and the consequent **increase** in the numbers of injuries and deaths that have occurred.

"The members of the Council are profoundly concerned by the persistence of Israel, the occupying power, in continuing its policy of deporting Palestinian civilians in contravention of Security Council resolutions and the Fourth Geneva Convention, as demonstrated on 17 August 1988 by its expulsion of four Palestinian civilians to Lebanon and its decision to expel 40 more, The members request Israel immediately to desist from deporting any Palestinian civilians and immediately to ensure the safe return of those already deported.

"The members of the Council consider that the current situation in the occupied territories, described in paragraph 1 above, has grave consequences for endeavours to achieve a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East.

"They reaffirm that the Geneva Convention Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, is applicable to the Palestinian and other Arab territories occupied by Israel since 1967, including Jerusalem, and request the high contracting parties to ensure respect for the Convention.

"Recalling Security Council resolutions, the members of the Security Council will keep the situation in the occupied Palestinian territories, including Jerusalem, under review."

(c) Action taken by the General Assembly

74. The Committee considered with great concern the legal and political implications of the "Anti-Terrorism Act of 1987" enacted by the United States of America which, in the Committee's view, affected not only the work of the Committee and of the United Nations but also the prospects for peace in the Middle East. The Committee had initially considered the matter prior to the adoption of the legislation and had expressed its grave concern through its Chairman, at the 126th meeting of the Committee on Relations with the Host Country, on 14 October 1987. The Bureau of the Committee also met with the Secretary-General on 13 October 1987 to discuss the question. At its 144th meeting, on 20 October 1987, the Committee considered the matter further and took note of the decisions and statements adopted by the Group of Arab States of the United Nations, the Co-ordination Bureau of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, and the Organization of the Islamic Conference, as well as of the activities in opposition to the legislation undertaken by the North American Co-ordinating Committee of Non-Governmental Organizations on the Question of Palestine.

75. The Committee noted that, at its forty-second session, the General Assembly considered the matter under the item entitled "Report of the Committee on Relations with the Host Country" and adopted resolution 42/210, of 17 December 1987, by 143 votes in favour to 1 against (Israel), with no abstentions. By that resolution, the Assembly took note with appreciation of the Secretary-General's position with regard to the Permanent Observer Mission of the Palestine Liberation Organization to the United Nations; reiterated that the Permanent Observer Mission of the Palestine Liberation Organization to the United Nations is covered by the provisions of the Headquarters Agreement and should be enabled to establish and maintain premises and adequate functional facilities, and the personnel of the Mission should be enabled to enter and remain in the United States to carry out their official functions; requested the host country to abide by its treaty

obligations under the United Nations Headquarters Agreement and **in** this connection to refrain from taking any action that would prevent the discharge of the **official** functions of the Permanent Observer Mission of the Palestine Liberation Organization to the United Nations) requested the Secretary-General to take effective measures to ensure full respect for the Headquarters Agreement and to report, without delay, to the **General Assembly on any further development in the matter;** and decided to **keep** the matter under active review.

76. As the matter was **still** unresolved, the forty-second session of the General Assembly was resumed on 29 February 1988 at the request **of** the Permanent Representative of Bahrain to the United Nations **in his** capacity as Chairman **of** the Arab Group for the month **of** February (A/42/919) and the Permanent Representative of Zimbabwe to the United Nations, in his capacity as Chairman of the Co-ordination Bureau of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (A/42/921). The request was strongly supported by the Permanent Representative **of** Kuwait to the United Nations in his capacity as Chairman of the Organisation **of** the Islamic Conference (A/42/922) and by the Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights **of** the Palestinian People (A/42/924). The General Assembly held five plenary meetings on the matter between 29 February and 2 March 1988.

77. The Chairman of the Committee intervened in the debate at the 101st plenary meeting of the General Assembly, **on** 29 February 1988, and expressed the Committee's appreciation for the **Secretary-General's** efforts as described in his report (A/42/915), **The proper functioning of the United Nations and its ability to fulfil** its mandate under the Charter were at stake. The Committee was deeply disturbed by the host country's inability to provide assurances that the present arrangements for the PLO Observer Mission would not be curtailed or otherwise affected by the **new** legislation, and by its continued **unwillingness** to enter formally **into** the dispute settlement procedure set forth in **section 21 of** the Headquarters Agreement. Implementation by the United States Government **of** the new legislation would prevent the PLO from **exercising** its right to participate in United Nations efforts to find a comprehensive and **just settlement** to the Palestine question, which had become more urgent than ever in light of events in the occupied Palestinian territories **since** December 1987.

78. At its 104th plenary meeting, on 2 March 1988, the **General** Assembly adopted resolution **42/229 A** by 143 votes in favour to 1 against (Israel), by which **it** reaffirmed that the Permanent Observer Mission of the PLO to the United Nations **in** New York is covered by the provisions **of** the Headquarters Agreement) **considered** that the application of the legislation in question would be contrary to the international legal obligations of the host country under that **Agreement;** considered that a dispute exists between the United Nations and the United States of America, the host country, concerning the interpretation and application of the Headquarters Agreement, and that the dispute settlement procedure set out in section 21 of the Agreement should be set in operation; called upon the host country to abide by its treaty obligations under the Agreement and to provide **assurances** that no action would be taken that would infringe on the current arrangements for the official functions of the PLO Observer Mission to the United Nations in New York; requested the Secretary-General to continue his efforts in pursuance of the provisions of the **Agreement;** and decided to keep the matter under active review.

79. At the same meeting, the General Assembly also adopted resolution **42/229 B** by 143 votes in favour to none against, by which it decided, in accordance with

Article 96 of the Charter of the United Nations, to request the International Court of Justice for an advisory opinion on whether the United States of America, as a party to the Headquarters Agreement, is under an **obligation** to enter into arbitration in accordance with **section 21** of the Agreement,

80. The Committee further noted the subsequent reports of the **Secretary-General (A/42/915/Add.2 and Add.3)** in which he informed the General Assembly of the decision by the United States Government to close the office **of** the Permanent Observer Mission of the PLO to the United Nations, which he had protested as a **clear violation** of the Headquarters Agreement between the United Nations **and** the United States. The Committee participated in the subsequent meetings of **the** resumed forty-second session of the **General Assembly** held between 18 March and 22 March 1988.

81. The Acting Chairman of the Committee intervened in the debate at the 106th plenary meeting of the **General Assembly**, on 21 March 1988, and stated that the decision taken by the host **country** would be counterproductive and would jeopardise the cause of peace. The participation of the PLO in all efforts, deliberations and conferences on the Middle East, as repeatedly affirmed by the Assembly, was essential for the solution of the question of Palestine, the core of the conflict in the Middle **East**. The Committee wished once again to urge the Government of **the** host country to refrain from **implementing** the proposed measure and urgently to take steps to resolve the dispute through the machinery provided for in the Headquarters Agreement.

82. At its 109th plenary meeting, on 23 March 1988, the General Assembly, by a vote of 148 in favour to 2 against (**Israel** and United States of America), adopted resolution **42/230**. By that resolution, the Assembly **strongly** supported the position taken by the Secretary-General) reaffirmed that the Permanent Observer Mission of the PLO to the United Nations in New York is covered by the provisions of the Headquarters Agreement and that it has the right to establish **and maintain** premises and adequate functional facilities and that its personnel **should** be enabled to enter and **remain** in the United States to carry out their official functions determined that the application and enforcement of the legislation in question is inconsistent with the Headquarters Agreement and is contrary to the international legal obligations of the host country] reaffirmed that a dispute exists between the United Nations and the host **country** concerning the interpretation or application of the Headquarters **Agreement** and that the dispute settlement procedure provided for under the Agreement should be set in operation! requested the Secretary-General to continue his efforts to ensure the proper constitution of the arbitral tribunal provided for under the Agreement! deplored the failure of the host country to comply with its obligations under the Agreement and urged it to **abide** by those obligations and to desist from taking any action inconsistent with the **Agreement**; and requested the Secretary-General to take adequate measures on a preliminary basis, if necessary, in order to ensure the discharge of the official functions of the Permanent Observer *Mission* of the PLO, and to report to the General Assembly on further **developments**.

83. The forty-second session of the General Assembly **was** resumed for the third time on 13 May 1988, following the advisory opinion given by the International Court of Justice on 26 April 1988 in **response** to Assembly resolution **42/229 B**. The Committee noted with appreciation that the Court was unanimously of the opinion that. "the United States of America, as a party to the Agreement between the United Nations and the United States of America regarding the Headquarters of the United

Nations, of 26 June 1947, is under an obligation in accordance with section 21 of that Agreement, to enter into arbitration for the settlement of the dispute between itself and the United Nations" (A/42/952),

84. The Acting Chairman of the Committee spoke at the 113th plenary meeting of the General Assembly, on 13 May 1988, and called on the Assembly to endorse the advisory opinion. The Committee sincerely hoped that the host country, in the light of that opinion, would now reconsider the measures adopted to give effect to that imprudent legislation and would desist from its intent to proceed with the matter in domestic courts. The Committee urged again the host country to repeal the legislation which, in addition to the possible closing of the PLO office, also had potential adverse implications for activities by NGOs on behalf of the Palestinian cause.

85. At the same meeting, the General Assembly, by a vote of 136 in favour to 2 against (Israel and the United States of America), adopted resolution 42/232, by which it expressed its appreciation to the International Court of Justice for having found that an early answer to the request for an advisory opinion would be desirable and for having accelerated its procedure) took note of and endorsed the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice, of 26 April 1988; urged the host country to abide by its international legal obligations and to act consistently with the advisory opinion and accordingly to name its arbitrator to the arbitral tribunal provided for under section 21 of the Agreement; requested the Secretary-General to continue his efforts in this regard, and to report to the General Assembly without delay on developments in this matter; and decided to keep the matter under active review.

86. In this regard, the Committee noted the report of the Secretary-General in document A/42/915/Add.5 containing the judgement of the United States District Judge in Manhattan of 29 June 1988 concerning the PLO Observer Mission to the United Nations. The judgement dismissed the United States Government lawsuit seeking to close the PLO Mission under the Anti-Terrorism Act passed by Congress last year. The Committee also noted the decision by the United States Government not to appeal the judgement of the Federal District Court for the Southern District of New York.

3. Action taken by the Committee to promote the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East in accordance with General Assembly resolution 38/58 C of 13 December 1983

87. By resolution 42/66 D of 2 December 1987, the General Assembly noted with satisfaction the ever-increasing international consensus in favour of the early convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East; determined once again that the question of Palestine is the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict in the Middle East; reaffirmed once again its endorsement of the call for convening the Conference in conformity with the provisions of resolution 38/58 C; reiterated its endorsement of the call for setting up a preparatory committee; stressed once again the urgent need for additional concrete and constructive efforts by all Governments in order to convene the Conference without further delay; and requested the Secretary-General, in consultation with the Security Council, to continue his efforts with a view to convening the Conference and to report thereon to the General Assembly not later than 31 March 1988.

88. In the light of that resolution, the Committee once again, in adopting its programme of work (A/AC.183/1988/CRP.1/Rev.1), decided that, in its activities during 1988, it would continue, as a matter of the utmost priority, to exert all **efforts** to promote the early convening of the proposed International Peace Conference on the Middle East, while urging the understanding and further co-operation of all concerned for the resolution of a problem of such fundamental importance to the maintenance of international peace and security.

89. In light of the grave situation in the occupied Palestinian territories, the Committee also decided to give the **highest** priority to the need for ensuring the **safety** and protection of Palestinians under Israeli occupation, in accordance with the provisions of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of **Civilian** Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949. These goals were stressed in the letter addressed to the Secretary-General by the Chairman of the Committee on 30 March 1988, inviting the participation of all States and intergovernmental **organizations** in the work of the Committee (see para. 14 above). In response to the letter of the Secretary-General transmitting the Chairman's **letter, some Member States** addressed letters to the Secretary-General containing suggestions regarding the **Committee's** work. The Committee decided to take note of those suggestions and to take them into account in its future programme of work.

90. The Committee was greatly strengthened in its resolve by the **increasing** concern of the international community as a whole at the **worsening** situation in the occupied territories and the overwhelming consensus in favour of a comprehensive negotiated settlement through the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, as it emerged in particular from the **regional seminars** and from **symposia** and meetings of **NGOs** on the question of Palestine **organized** under its **auspices** (see sect. IV.B below).

91. The Committee noted with appreciation that the Secretary-General had continued his efforts with a **view to convening** the **Conference** in accordance with the above-mentioned resolution. In particular, the Committee **was** pleased to note from the report of the Secretary-General under General Assembly resolution **42/66** (A/43/272-6/19719) that the President of the Security Council, following consultations with the members of the Council, had reported that the **members were** convinced that the latest developments in the Middle East, particularly the situation in the occupied territories, called for urgent action to resolve the underlying problem through a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement, including a solution to the Palestinian problem in all its aspects. All members of the Council were in agreement concerning the desirability to convene an International Peace Conference on the Middle East. **Almost** all members had declared their support **for an** early convening of a substantive international conference under **the** auspices of the United Nations, with the participation of all **parties** concerned and of the five permanent members of the Council. **Most** of those members had reiterated their support for General Assembly **resolution 38/58 C**. Some members, however, while expressing continuing reservations concerning resolution **38/58 C** as a basis for an international conference, had reaffirmed the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, with all that this implies, as well as the right to existence and to security of all States in the region, including Israel. One member of the Council **was** of the opinion that it was not possible to make progress nor to find a peaceful solution to the problem on the basis of resolution **38/58 C**, and had pointed to a peace initiative currently under way. All but one member of the Council had invited the Secretary-General to continue his **efforts** and consultations on the subject in connection with General Assembly resolution **42/66 D**.

92. The Committee further noted that the **Secretary-General** had also consulted the **parties** directly concerned for their current positions on the convening of the International **Conference in** conformity with resolution **38/58 C**. The Committee noted with regret the Secretary-General's conclusion that it was again clear from the **communications** he had received that sufficient agreement did not exist, either among the parties directly concerned or within the Security Council, to permit the convening of the International **Peace Conference on the Middle East** as called for in resolution **42/66 D**. It also **noted** the Secretary-General's view that the recent and continuing events **in** the occupied **West Bank** and **Gaza Strip** had dramatically highlighted the urgent need for the **negotiation**, in a manner acceptable to all the parties directly **concerned**, of a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

93. The Committee was of the view that the uprising in the occupied territories and **the** repressive policies and practices of Israel, the occupying Power, as well as its repeated violations of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of countries in the area, had created a critical situation which made it imperative to advance towards a comprehensive, just **and** lasting settlement of the question of Palestine, the **core** of the Arab-Israeli conflict in the Middle East. At the same time, events during the year had also brought about a greatly increased understanding of the problem and support **for** the proposed International **Peace Conference on the Middle East** among **Governments**, intergovernmental and non-governmental organisations, and international public opinion everywhere. The Committee accordingly continued to stress the urgent need for the Security Council and the parties directly concerned to **seize** this opportunity to take positive action towards the convening of the Conference. It also stressed that that member of the Security Council and others who thus far have not shown willingness to co-operate should reconsider their positions.

4 . Attendance at international conferences and meetings

94. In accordance with its mandate, since its previous report to the General Assembly, the Committee was represented at the following international conferences and meetings!

(a) Special meetings of the United Nations Council for Namibia to **commemorate** the Week of Solidarity with the People of Namibia and their Liberation Movement, the South West Africa People's **Organization** (SWAPO), held in New York on 27 October 1987;

(b) Seventeenth Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers, held at Amman, **from** 18 to 25 March 1988:

(c) **Seminar on the International Responsibility for Namibia's Independence**, held under the auspices of the United Nations Council for Namibia at Istanbul, Turkey, from 21 to 25 March 1988;

(d) **Forty-eighth Ordinary Session of the Council of Ministers and Twenty-Fourth Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity**, held at Addis Ababa from 19 to 28 May 1988;

(e) Meeting in Solidarity with the Palestinian People and its Uprising organized by the Afro-Asian People's Solidarity Organization, Nicosia, Cyprus, from 28 to 30 June 1988;

(f) Solemn meeting of the United Nations Council for Namibia in commemoration of Namibia Day, 26 August 1988;

(g) International Symposium on Practical Ways to Support the Palestinian Trade Union Movement, organized by the European Co-ordinating Committee for **NGOs** on the Question of Palestine, held at Geneva on 28 August 1988:

(h) Conference of Foreign Ministers of Non-Aligned Countries, held at Nicosia, from 7 to 10 September 1988.

5. Action taken by other United Nations bodies, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and **intergovernmental** organizations

95. The Committee continued to follow with great interest the activities relating to the question of Palestine of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, United Nations bodies and intergovernmental organizations. The Committee especially noted the growing concern at all levels of the international community about the deterioration of the situation in the occupied Palestinian territories and in the region as a whole owing to the policies and practices of Israel, and the increasing sense of urgency with which the international community addressed the need to ensure the safety and protection of the Palestinian people under occupation, and to advance towards a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine. The Committee welcomed the growing sentiment and momentum in favour of the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East in accordance with General Assembly resolution **38/58 C**. The Committee noted in particular the following documents:

(a) Final communique of the Meeting of Ministers for Foreign Affairs and Heads of Delegation of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries to the forty-second session of the United Nations General Assembly, held in New York from 5 to 7 October 1987 (A/42/681, chap. XVIII and **XX**);

(b) Final Declaration issued by the Extraordinary Arab Summit Conference held at Amman from 8 to 11 November 1987 (A/42/779-S/19274);

(c) Declaration on the Middle East issued by the Heads of State and Government of the Twelve States Members of the European Community meeting in the European Council at Copenhagen on 4 and 5 December 1987 (A/42/858-S/19322):

(d) Communique adopted by the members of the Organization of the Islamic Conference at the United Nations, at the urgent meeting on the situation in the occupied Palestinian territories, held in New York on 15 December 1987 (**A/42/892-S/19348**);

(e) Communique issued by the Co-ordinating Bureau of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries meeting in New York on 15 December 1987 (A/42/889-5/19360);

(f) Final communique and recommendations adopted at the emergency meeting of the Al-Quds Committee held at Ifrane, Morocco, on 5 January 1988 (A/43/114-5/19464);

- (g) **Communique adopted at the urgent meeting of the members of the Organization of the Islamic Conference at the United Nations, held in New York on 19 January 1988, concerning the desecration of Al-Masjed Al-Aqsa on 15 January 1988 during Friday prayers (A/43/94-S/19439);**
- (h) **Statement by the Foreign Ministers of the Twelve States Members of the European Community on the Middle East made at Bonn on 8 February 1988 (A/43/131-S/19487);**
- (i) **Final communique and resolutions of the Seventeenth Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers, Session of Islamic Solidarity with the Uprising of the Palestinian People, held at Amman, from 21 to 25 March 1988 (A/43/273-S/19720);**
- (j) **Statement on the Middle East issued by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden at their meeting at Tromsø, Norway, on 23 and 24 March 1988 (A/43/295-S/19754);**
- (k) **Communique issued at the session of the Committee of Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the States parties to the Warsaw Treaty, held in Sofia on 29 and 30 March 1988 (A/43/276);**
- (l) **Declaration by the Twelve States Members of the European Community on Israeli Practices in the Occupied Territories, made at Bonn on 15 April 1988 (A/43/318-S/19804);**
- (m) **Communiqué adopted by the members of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference at the United Nations, at the urgent meeting to consider the situation created by the new deliberate attack on the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Tunisia, held in New York on 20 April 1988 (A/43/323-S/19813);**
- (n) **Communiqué issued by the Co-ordination Bureau of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries meeting in New York on 21 April 1988 (A/43/327-6/19820);**
- (o) **Resolutions adopted by the Council of Ministers of the Organisation of African Unity at its forty-eighth ordinary session, held at Addis Ababa from 19 to 23 May 1988 (resolutions CM/Res.1154, 1155 and 1156) (A/43/398);**
- (p) **Final declaration of the Extraordinary Arab Summit Conference held at Algiers, from 7 to 9 June 1988 (A/43/407-S/19938);**
- (q) **Joint declaration issued in Luxembourg on 15 June 1988 by the European Community and its Member States, and the Co-operation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf and its Member States (A/43/549);**
- (r) **Joint communiqué of the twenty-first ASEAN Ministerial Meeting, held at Bangkok, on 4 and 5 July 1988 (A/43/510-6/20091);**
- (s) **Communiqué of the ninth meeting of the Conference of Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community, held at Deep Bay, Antigua and Barbuda, from 4 to 8 July 1988 (A/43/480);**
- (t) **Communiqué issued at Nicosia on 7 September 1988 by the Foreign Ministers of the Committee of Nine Non-Aligned Countries on Palestine (A/43/613);**

(u) Communiqué issued by the meeting of the Council of Arab Ministers for Foreign Affairs held in New York on **30** September 1988 (**A/43/673**);

(v) Communiqué of the Co-ordination Meeting of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the **Organization** of the Islamic Conference, held in New York on 29 September 1988 (A/43/692-S/20220).

B. Action taken by the Committee in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 42166 A and B of 2 December 1987

1. Co-operation with non-governmental organizations

96. During the period under review the Committee, in accordance with its mandate under General Assembly resolution **42/66** A, continued to extend its co-operation to **NGOs** in their contribution to heightening international awareness of the facts relating to the question of Palestine and in creating a more favourable atmosphere for the full implementation of the Committee's recommendations, and continued to take the necessary steps to expand its contacts with those organizations.

97. In accordance with its mandate under General Assembly resolution **42/66** B, the Division for Palestinian Rights, in consultation with the Committee and under its guidance, organized the following activities for **NGOs** during 1988 in implementation of those objectives: regional symposia for **NGOs** in North America and Europe; an international meeting of **NGOs**; and two preparatory meetings, for the North American symposium and the International Meeting, respectively.

98. In accordance with its decision to continue to give utmost priority to efforts to promote the early convening of the proposed International Peace Conference on the Middle East, in conformity with General Assembly resolution **38/58** C, the Committee decided that non-governmental symposia and meetings should continue to **emphasize** the importance of convening the Conference and structured the programmes for those activities accordingly. In light of the **extremely** grave situation in the occupied territories and the legislation affecting the presence of the PLO Observer Mission to the United Nations in New York, and the concern expressed by **NGOs** in this regard, the Committee decided to include consideration of those topics in the programmes of the meetings for **NGOs**.

99. The Committee was greatly encouraged by the intensification of activities and programmes of **NGOs**, including the sending of fact-finding missions to the area, intensified efforts to promote greater understanding of the issue and support for the convening of the International Peace Conference, as well as relief efforts to assist Palestinians in the uprising. The Committee **was** particularly strengthened in its resolve by the growing involvement of Israeli organizations and Jewish organizations in North America and Western Europe in these efforts.

(a) North American Regional NGO Symposium and Preparatory Meeting

100. The Preparatory Meeting **for** the North American Regional NGO Symposium was held at United Nations Headquarters on 1 **and** 2 February 1988 **and** was attended by the members of the North American Co-ordinating Committee for Non-Governmental Organizations on the Question **of** Palestine and by a delegation of the Committee. The meeting elaborated the various **aspects** of the programme for the Symposium to be held in 1988 and the modalities for expanding the network of **NGOs** active on the question of Palestine in North America.

101. The North American Regional NGO Symposium was held at United Nations Headquarters from 29 June to 1 July 1988, immediately following the North American Regional Seminar, with which it was combined in the interest of economy and in accordance with the practice followed in previous years (see para. 116 below). The Symposium was attended by representatives of 47 NGOs as participants, and 34 NGOs as observers from the United States and Canada, by a delegation of the Committee, and by a number of observers from governmental and intergovernmental organisations and liberation movements. The Symposium considered two main panels on:

(a) The uprising in the occupied Palestinian territories¹ the urgency of convening the International Peace Conference in accordance with United Nations general Assembly resolution 38/58 C;

(b) Implications of United States legislation affecting the promotion in the United States and the United Nations of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.

102. The Symposium also established a number of action-oriented workshops under the general topic "Overcoming obstacles and organising in North America".

103. The Committee noted that the Symposium adopted a declaration in which the NGOs resolutely reaffirmed the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and that the PLO was the sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. The organizations further committed themselves to provide moral, political and material support for the intifadah, and called for immediate intervention by United Nations peace-keeping forces to replace the Israeli occupying forces in order to provide protection and ensure respect for the human and political rights of the Palestinian population of the West Bank and Gaza. In doing so, the organisations affirmed their support for the goals of the intifadah as repeatedly stated in leaflets issued by its Unified National Leadership. The Committee also noted with satisfaction that the declaration contained a plan of action in which the North American NGOs had agreed on practical strategies and support projects in order to promote the goal of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East, particularly through the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East in accordance with General Assembly resolution 38/58 C. (For the text of the declaration, see annex VI.)

(b) European Regional NGO Symposium

104. The European Regional NGO Symposium was held at Geneva from 29 to 30 August 1988, immediately preceding the International NGO Meeting, with which it was combined in the interest of economy and efficiency (see para. 110 below).

105. The programme for the Symposium was elaborated in consultation between the members of the European Co-ordinating Committee for NGOs on the Question of Palestine and the Committee delegation attending the Preparatory Meeting for the International NGO Meeting held at Geneva on 21 and 22 March 1988.

106. The Symposium was attended by representatives of 66 NGOs as participants and 93 NGOs as observers, as well as by a delegation of the Committee and governmental and intergovernmental observers and liberation movements,

107. The Symposium had a main theme, entitled "The Palestinian uprising and the European commitment to the International Peace Conference" and considered a panel of the same title and four **action-oriented** workshops.

108. The Committee noted that the Symposium adopted a declaration by which it **expressed** support for the Palestinian uprising and called upon the United Nations to exercise full **responsibility** for the question of Palestine and to place observer teams in the West Bank and Gaza to help protect the **people** there from continuing human rights violations. It **reaffirmed** very strongly the urgent need for the International Peace **Conference** to be convened in accordance with General Assembly resolutions **38/58 C** and **41/43 D**, as the only possible means to achieve a just and peaceful settlement. The Symposium further noted the historic links **between** Europe and the Middle East and the European Economic Community's declarations supporting the convening of an international **conference**, and called upon the **Governments** concerned to act to **ensure** the convening of the **Conference** and to end **breaches** of the **Geneva** Convention by Israel. It also called on European Governments which **had** not yet fully recognised the PLO to do **so**. The Symposium also endorsed the recommendations of the NGO-sponsored International Symposium on Practical Ways to Support the Palestinian Trade Union Movement, held at **Geneva** on 28 August 1988, and included them in the declaration. It also endorsed a programme of activities drawn up by participants in the workshops. (For the text of the declaration, see annex VII.)

(c) International Meeting of NGOs and Preparatory Meeting

109. The Preparatory Meeting for the International Meeting of **NGOs** was held at Geneva on 21 and 22 March 1988 and was attended by members of the International and European Co-ordinating **Committees** for Non-Governmental Organisations on the Question of Palestine (ICCP and **ECCP**). In this connection, the Committee delegation strongly deplored that the Israeli authorities had denied permission to **Ms. Zahera Kamal**, of the Palestine Union of Women's **Work** Committees, to depart from Israel to attend the Meeting. The Preparatory Meeting elaborated the details of the programmes for the International Meeting of **NGOs** and the European Regional Symposium to be held in 1988 and discussed future co-operation and action by **NGOs** at the **European** and the international levels. In addition, the two Co-ordinating Committees held informal consultations with the Committee delegation and **representatives** of the Division for Palestinian Rights concerning ways and means of strengthening co-operation and improving exchange of information between the United Nations and the NGO community.

110. The International Meeting of Non-Governmental Organisations **was** held at Geneva from 31 **August** to 2 September 1988. The Meeting was attended by representatives from 140 **NGOs** as participants and 138 **NGOs** as observers from all regions, including several from Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories. The Committee was pleased that a number of prominent political **personalities** had accepted its invitation to attend and address the Meeting.

111. The Meeting established two panels, namely! (a) a panel of eminent persons on the topic "The consequences of the uprising in the occupied Palestinian territories and the new urgency of convening the International Peace Conference in accordance with United Nations General Assembly resolution **38/58 C**"; and (b) a panel of persons from the occupied territories entitled "The consequences of occupation - Witnesses from the occupied territories - What has happened". In addition, five

workshops were established under the general topic "Responding to the challenge of the uprising and the search for peace",

111. The Committee noted that the Meeting adopted a declaration supporting the **Intifadah** and calling for the immediate convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 38/58 C and 41/43 D. The Meeting condemned all deportations and all other manifestations of the systematic destruction of Palestinian society and the attempts by the occupation forces to eliminate Palestinian society for the future. The Meeting urged the United Nations, the five permanent members of the Security Council and the entire international community to help to ensure the protection of the Palestinian people in the occupied territories in accordance with the suggestions contained in the Secretary-General's report (S/19443). The Meeting requested the Secretary-General to send a fact-finding mission to the occupied territories to assess the needs of the Palestinians there. The Committee also noted that the Meeting called upon the United Nations to exercise its full responsibility for the question of Palestine and place observer teams and/or any other United Nations body in the occupied Palestinian territories without delay to help protect the people there from continuing human rights violations and specifically requested the Secretary-General to establish immediately a special commission to investigate specific instances of violations. The Meeting also called on all Governments to recognize the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and to recognize the Palestine Liberation Organization. It further affirmed a programme for NGO activities drawn up by the participants in the workshops and requested the United Nations to assist in its implementation. (For the text of the declaration, see annex VIII.)

2. Seminars

113. During the period under review the Division for Palestinian Rights continued to organize seminars in consultation with the Committee and under its guidance, in accordance with its mandate under General Assembly resolution 34/65 D and subsequent resolutions. The regions covered during the reporting period were Latin America, Europe and North America.

114. The Committee further expressed its appreciation for the decision of the Government of Egypt to provide the venue for the African Regional Seminar (the twenty-first United Nations Seminar on the Question of Palestine) and the African Regional NGO Symposium. Owing to circumstances beyond its control, the Committee could not hold these events within the reporting period and has scheduled them to take place at Cairo, from 18 to 22 December 1988.

115. In accordance with previous practice, the Committee again decided that the regional seminars would continue to emphasize the urgent need for convening the International Peace Conference on the Middle East; the role of the PLO; and the need for mobilizing public opinion in the region concerned. The Committee further decided to stress the grave situation created by the policies and practices of Israel, the occupying Power, in the occupied Palestinian territories, in its efforts to suppress the Palestinian uprising.

116. The Committee was pleased by the participation in the seminars of prominent political personalities, parliamentarians and policy makers, as well as persons from the academic community and other experts, as this showed the growing concern

of the international community at all levels over the situation in the occupied Palestinian territories and its determination to promote progress towards a solution of the Palestine question.

(a) Latin American Regional Seminar, Havana, 15 to 17 December 1987

117. The Committee greatly appreciated the offer of the **Government** of Cuba to host the Latin American Regional Seminar (the Eighteenth United Nations Seminar on the **Question of Palestine**), which had been **included** in the programme of work of the Committee for 1987 but could not be held before the forty-second session of the General Assembly for reasons beyond the Committee's control.

118. The Seminar considered three panels on **the following topics:** (a) The International Peace Conference on the **Middle East**, in **accordance** with United Nations General Assembly resolution **38/58 C**, the need for such a conference and efforts and prospects to promote a successful **outcome**, and benefits **thereof**; (b) The question of Palestine and Latin American/Caribbean **public opinion**; (c) The role of **the** Palestine Liberation **Organization**.

119. The Committee noted that, in its conclusions and recommendations, the Seminar expressed its deep concern over the dangerous situation in the area and the Israeli policies and practices, **which were** in violation of international instruments, and called for attainment by the Palestinian people of **its** inalienable rights. The Seminar further called for recognition of the PLO, the sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, by **Governments** which had not yet done so. The Seminar unanimously concluded **that** the way to establish a just and lasting peace in the Middle East was by convening the International Peace Conference in accordance with General Assembly resolution **38/58 C** and **called on** Israel and the United States to reconsider their position towards the **Conference**. The Seminar also stated that the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People had an important role to play in this effort, and called for full implementation of the Committee's recommendations. Finally, the Seminar urged intensified efforts to mobilise official and public opinion in Latin America and other regions and to disseminate factual and up-to-date information on the rights of the Palestinian people and the United Nations recommendations for their attainment. (For the text of the conclusions and recommendations, see annex III.)

(b) European Regional Seminar, Berlin, German Democratic Republic, 25 to 29 April 1988

120. The Committee expressed its gratitude to the Government of the German Democratic Republic for providing the venue for the European Regional Seminar (the Nineteenth United Nations Seminar on **the** Question of Palestine), which took place at Berlin from 25 to 29 April 1988.

121. The Seminar considered the following **topics:** (a) **The** uprising in the occupied Palestinian **territories**; the urgency of convening the International Peace Conference on the **Middle East** in **accordance** with General Assembly resolution **38/58 C**; (b) The role of the PLO; (c) The question of **Palestine** and European **public** opinion.

122. The Committee noted that, in the conclusions and recommendations of **the** Seminar, it was stated that **the** Palestinian uprising in the occupied territories had confirmed the determination of the Palestinian people to reject and resist

Israeli domination and occupation. The Seminar **reaffirmed** that the PLO is the sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. It further expressed satisfaction at the growing support world wide for the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East in accordance with General Assembly resolution 38/58 C, and urged the United States and Israel to **reconsider** their negative attitudes towards that Conference. The Committee also noted with interest that the Seminar expressed appreciation for the evolving position of the Western European and the Nordic countries in this regard, and **expressed** the hope that the Committee would undertake further **endeavours with a view that** the countries of Western Europe would play an even more active role in bringing about a comprehensive political settlement. The Committee also noted the suggestions that it **intensify its** co-operation with European NGOs and its efforts so that the next European seminar could be held in a Western European country. (For the text of the conclusions and recommendations, see annex IV.)

(c) North American Regional Seminar, New York, 28 to 29 June 1988

123. The North American Regional Seminar (the Twentieth United Nations Seminar on the Question of Palestine) was held at United Nations Headquarters, on 28 and 29 June 1988.

124. The Seminar considered two panels: (a) The uprising in the occupied Palestinian territories¹ the urgency of convening the International Peace Conference on the Middle East in accordance with General Assembly resolution 38/58 C; and (b) The role of the Palestine Liberation Organisation.

125. The Committee noted that, in its conclusions and recommendations, the Seminar had remarked that the uprising in the occupied Palestinian territories had brought home to Israeli citizens the destructive impact of continued occupation, raising for the first time serious doubts about the wisdom of the policies of their Government. These doubts were also reflected in important Jewish communities in Western countries, whose political and financial support was essential to Israel. The Seminar further stated that the basic issues to be addressed in order to resolve the Arab-Israeli conflict were: Israeli recognition of and respect for Palestinian rights; Arab acceptance of the State of Israel within internationally recognized borders) acceptance by Israel of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East under United Nations auspices, and recognition by Israel and others of the right of the Palestinian people to participate in such a Conference through the PLO, its sole and legitimate representative. The Committee further noted with interest the Seminar's call for the Conference to be convened before the end of 1988. (For the text of the conclusions and recommendations, see annex V.)

3. Other activities

126. The Committee took note with appreciation that the Division for Palestinian Rights, in accordance with its mandate, had continued to prepare the following publications, under the guidance of the Committee:

(a) Monthly bulletins covering action by the Committee, other United Nations organs, and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations concerned with the question of Palestine;

(b) Reports of regional seminars, regional NGO symposia and international NGO meetings, and special bulletins on the observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People;

(c) Compilations on an annual basis of the relevant resolutions adopted by the General Assembly and the Security Council;

(d) Monitoring of Arabic, English and Hebrew press and media on developments relating to the question of Palestine and issuance of monthly reports for the use of the Committee.

127. The Committee further noted that the Division had finalized a new study entitled "The need for convening the International Peace Conference on the Middle East (In accordance with General Assembly resolution 38/58 C)". The study entitled "The origins and evolution of the Palestinian problem" (part IV), covering the period from 1984 to June 1988, is currently under finalization. This study will be added to the existing three volumes. An information note on the work of the Committee and of the Division was prepared by the Division and is now available in all the six official United Nations languages,

128. The International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People was observed on 30 November 1987 at United Nations Headquarters in New York and at the United Nations Offices at Geneva and Vienna. The Committee noted with appreciation that the International Day had been equally commemorated in many other cities throughout the world in 1987.

V. ACTION TAKEN BY THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INFORMATION IN ACCORDANCE WITH GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 42/66 C

129. The Committee **noted** with appreciation that, during the past year, the Department of Public Information continued its information programme on the question of Palestine **with** a view to furthering the world-wide dissemination of **accurate , objective and comprehensive information on the question.** The Department's **continuing mandate on the area** derived from General Assembly resolution **42/66 C of 2 December 1987**, by which the Assembly requested it to continue its *special* information programme **on** the question of Palestine during the biennium **1988-1989.**

130. In response to the **Assembly's** request, the Department has disseminated press releases, publications and audio-visual material **and has also organised** fact-finding publications and audio-visual material and has also organised fact-finding **missions** and **regional** and national encounters for journalists. Full **coverage** was provided of meetings by the General Assembly, the Security Council and the **Commission on Human Rights** as they *dealt with* the question of Palestine, and of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Population of the Occupied Territories **and** the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the **Palestinian** People,

131. The Department's coverage of the question of Palestine during the past year focused increasingly on news **items** and information concerning the situation *in* the occupied territories, particularly since December 1988, and efforts to convene an international **peace conference** on the Middle East under United **Nations** auspices.

132. In publication activities, the Department actively disseminated information through articles, press releases, brochures and booklets. The **UN Chronicle** reported extensively **on** the consideration given to the question of Palestine and other related items by the Assembly at its forty-second **session** and by the Security Council, particularly since the beginning of the uprising in the occupied territories. The meetings of the Council which related to the uprising were fully covered by press **releases.** The Department also disseminated information on the seminars and symposia held **in** different world capitals by the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. An information **officer** travelled with the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Population of the Occupied Territories during its fact-finding mission to **Amman, Damascus and Cairo** in May-June 1988 and reported *on* **testimony** taken from inhabitants of the occupied territories.

133. The Department continued to distribute a brochure on the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Population of the Occupied Territories as well as the booklet, **The United Nations and the Question of Palestine.** They are available in **Arabic, English, French, German** and Spanish and have been given wide circulation through all available channels. The Department expects to update and **revise** both publications by the end of 1988. A new booklet on the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People is at the production stage.

134. All aspects of the question of Palestine **and** other related items were covered **in** the news and taped feature radio programmes of the Department. The Arabic and Middle **East Radio** Unit, *for example,* provided broad coverage of the question,

including the uprising in the occupied territories, in its weekly programmes and telephone feeds to radio stations of the region. United Nations activities and events, including observance of 29 November 1987 as the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, received extensive coverage. Two feature programmes in the **Perspective** series, adapted in many languages, dealt with new initiatives to convene the proposed International Peace Conference. In addition, a special series of four feature programmes each in Arabic, French and Spanish were produced on the question, dealing with the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, the human dimension of the issue, United Nations economic and social assistance, and the latest efforts aimed at convening the peace conference.

135. A 22-minute film, "Palestinian Portraits", was produced in English by the Department. Although released in late 1987, the film has already been widely screened and loaned out by 34 United Nations information centres and film libraries of the United Nations Development Programme.

136. Full television coverage was provided on General Assembly and Security Council meetings on the question of Palestine. The commemoration of the International Day of Solidarity, as well as the opening ceremony of the photo-exhibit on the inalienable rights of the Palestinians, were also fully covered. A total of 241 television news packages on the various aspects of the question were prepared for world-wide dissemination. Members of delegations were also provided with video-cassette dubs and excerpts on the question of Palestine-related subjects. Cassette copies and linefeeds were made available to the major networks,

137. As in previous years, the Department once again organised activities to acquaint the media with the facts and developments pertaining to the question of Palestine. A team of 10 high-level journalists participated in a news mission to the Middle East organised by the Department. Between 13 March and 2 April, they visited Tunisia, Egypt, Jordan and the Syrian Arab Republic. A formal request to the Permanent Mission of Israel for the mission to visit Israel and the West Bank went unanswered. The mission provided the participants with an opportunity to gain first-hand knowledge and impressions on various aspects of the Palestine question. Particularly because of the heightened state of tension in the occupied territories, the mission received extensive media coverage in all the countries visited. Numerous articles were later published by the participants on the basis of their experience and interviews conducted during the mission,

138. The Department organised two regional encounters for journalists on the question of Palestine, bringing high-level journalists together with experts in the field for brief, in-depth, informal and candid discussions of the various aspects of the Palestinian problem. The first encounter was held at Nairobi, from 2 to 5 February, and was attended by 18 journalists from as many African countries, representing the print, radio and television media. The second encounter was organised at Vienna, from 17 to 20 May. About 20 journalists from the different parts of Europe participated.

139. The Department also organised two series of national encounters in which small, balanced panels of experts held meetings, in the form of in-depth press conferences, with national journalists and foreign correspondents in various countries. African national journalists encounters were held in Kfshasa, Dar es Salaam and Addis Ababa, between 29 January and 8 February. National encounters for Europe were held between 16 and 25 May in Madrid, Brussels and Stockholm.

140. United Nations information centres throughout the world continued to carry out information activities in connection with the question of **Palestine** and made available to the **public** United Nations information materials in the subject. The information centres undertook various activities in **observance** of 30 November as the International Day of **Solidarity** with the Palestinian People. They made available publications prepared for, and under the guidance of, the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and distributed information circulars in official and local languages. Exhibitions were held, **films** screened, and events organised in various centres in co-operation with the diplomatic **corps**, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for **Palestine** Refugees in the Near East and national parliaments,

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COMMITTEE

141. The year under review was marked by the courageous uprising (the intifadah) of the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territories against 20 years of Israeli occupation and for the achievement of its inalienable rights. The uprising brought to a new level the understanding of the question of Palestine and support for a comprehensive, just and lasting solution of this long-standing conflict among public opinion internationally and within Israel itself. The intensification of repressive measures by Israel, the occupying Power, in an effort to crush the uprising and its armed attacks against States in the region have been universally condemned and have aroused the most serious concern for the safety of the Palestinian people under occupation. The situation has given a new impetus to efforts to reach a peaceful settlement in accordance with United Nations resolutions and particularly through the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East as called for in General Assembly resolutions 38/58 C and 41/43 D.

142. The Committee reaffirms that, in view of the critical situation, urgent positive action by the Security Council is required on the recommendations formulated by the Committee in its first report and those adopted by the International Conference on the Question of Palestine held at Geneva in 1983, which have been repeatedly endorsed by the General Assembly, and annexes them to the present report (see annexes I and II). The Committee reaffirms that these recommendations are solidly founded on fundamental and internationally accepted principles and that the recognition, attainment and exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people are indispensable conditions in the solution of the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict in the Middle East. The Committee further reasserts that the Israeli evacuation of the territories occupied by force and in violation of the principles of the Charter and relevant resolutions of the United Nations is a conditio sine qua non for the exercise by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights in Palestine.

143. The Committee noted the action taken by the Central Council of the Palestine Liberation Organization in the light of the decision of Jordan relative to the West Bank, and the response of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization to assume full responsibility to maintain as well the functioning of the administrative structure in the occupied Palestinian territories of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. The Committee asserts that the question of representation of the Palestinian people is definitively settled and the Palestine Liberation Organization is the sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. The Committee noted the universal demand for the withdrawal of Israeli forces from the occupied Palestinian and other Arab territories and the overwhelming support for the right of the Palestinian people to establish its own independent sovereign State on Palestinian territory, voiced by participants in seminars and NGO symposia and meetings organised under the Committee's auspices, as well as by many intergovernmental organisations and Governments.

144. The Committee is convinced that these important developments open the way for the Palestinian people to establish an independent Arab State in Palestine as envisaged in General Assembly resolution 181 (II) of 29 November 1947, which has only been implemented in part. The Committee is further convinced that the United Nations and the international community as a whole must now urgently intensify their efforts to bring this about.

145. The Committee considers that it has now become imperative for the Security Council to take positive action towards the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East in accordance with the guidelines and other provisions contained in General Assembly resolutions 38/58 C and 41/43 D. That Conference remains the most comprehensive and widely accepted proposal for the attainment of a peaceful settlement. The Committee appeals to the Secretary-General to do everything in his power to ensure that active consultations are undertaken within the framework of the Security Council for this purpose. In the past year, the international consensus in favour of the convening of the Conference has clearly been consolidated. The Committee therefore intends to further intensify its efforts towards this objective, and to make it once again the focal point of its work programme in the coming year,

146. Noting that the Secretary-General has reported that sufficient agreement does not exist, either among the parties directly concerned or within the Security Council, to permit the convening of the Conference, the Committee recommends that the General Assembly should call once again for additional concrete and constructive efforts by all Governments, in particular the permanent members of the Security Council, for the convening of the Conference and for setting up the preparatory committee for the Conference in accordance with General Assembly resolution 41/43 D; and renew the mandate of the Secretary-General, in consultation with the Security Council, to continue his efforts with a view to convening the Conference.

147. Pending the attainment by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights, the Committee wishes to affirm in the strongest terms the urgent need for effective measures to ensure the safety and protection of the Palestinian population in the occupied Palestinian territories. The Committee calls on the international community, and in particular on the High Contracting Parties to the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, to do all in their power to ensure respect for the Convention by Israel, the occupying Power. The Committee calls on the Security Council to take the necessary measures to ensure compliance by Israel with Security Council resolutions 605 (1987), 607 (1988) and 608 (1988). The Committee also calls upon the Security Council to act positively on the recommendations of the Secretary-General contained in his report submitted under resolution 605 (1987) (S/19443), and in particular to make a solemn appeal to the High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention that have diplomatic relations with Israel, drawing their attention to their obligation to ensure respect for the Convention in all circumstances and urging them to use all the means at their disposal to urge Israel to abide by and to give effect to the provisions of the Convention. The Committee also calls upon the Security Council to give positive consideration to the Secretary-General's recommendations and observations concerning other ways and means available to the international community, including physical protection, legal protection, general assistance, and protection by publicity. The Committee further calls on the international community, the United Nations system and intergovernmental and non-governmental organisations to sustain and increase their assistance to the Palestinian people, in close co-operation with the PLO.

148. The Committee noted with satisfaction the increased awareness and mobilisation of international public opinion in support of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and of United Nations recommendations for a comprehensive, just and lasting solution of the Palestinian question. The Committee believes that its programme of regional seminars and NGO meetings and symposia, as well as the

journalists' encounters and other informational activities sponsored by the Committee, have played a valuable role in this process, and will continue to strive to achieve maximum effectiveness in carrying out this programme and to intensify its efforts in the implementation of its mandate.

Notes

1/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-first Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/31/35).

2/ Ibid., Thirty-second Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/32/35); ibid., Thirty-third Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/33/35); ibid., Thirty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/34/35); ibid., Thirty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/35/35); ibid., Forty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/36/35); ibid., Thirty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/37/35); ibid., Thirty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/38/35); ibid., Thirty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/39/35); ibid., Fortieth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/40/35); ibid., Forty-first Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/41/35); and ibid., Forty-second Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/42/35).

3/ Report of the International Conference on the Question of Palestine, Geneva, 29 August-7 September 1983 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.83.I.21), chap. I, sect. B.

4/ The observers at the Committee's meetings were as follows: **Algeria, Bangladesh, Bulgaria, China, Czechoslovakia, Ecuador, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Mauritania, Morocco, Nicaragua, Niger, Sri Lanka, Syrian Arab Republic, United Arab Emirates, Viet Nam, the League of Arab States and the Organization of the Islamic Conference.** The **Palestine Liberation Organisation**, as the representative of the Palestinian people, the principal party to the question of Palestine, was also an observer.

5/ The current membership of the Working Group is as follows: **Afghanistan, Cuba, German Democratic Republic, Guinea, Guyana, India, Malta, Pakistan, Senegal, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic** and, as the representative of the people directly concerned, the **Palestine Liberation Organisation.**

ANNEX1

Recommendations of the Committee endorsed by the General Assembly at its thirty-first session*

I . Basic considerations and guidelines

59. The question of Palestine is at the heart of the Middle East problem, and consequently, **the** Committee stresses its belief that no solution in the Middle East can be envisaged which does not fully take into account the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people.

60. The legitimate and inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to return to their homes and property and to achieve self-determination, national independence and sovereignty are endorsed by the Committee in the conviction that the full implementation of these rights will contribute decisively to a **comprehensive** and final settlement of the Middle East crisis,

61. The participation of the Palestine Liberation Organization, the representative of the Palestinian people, on an equal footing with other parties, **on** the basis of General Assembly resolutions 3236 (XXIX) and 3375 (XXX) is indispensable in all efforts, deliberations **and** conferences on the Middle East which are held under the auspices of the United Nations,

62. The Committee recalls the **fundamental** principle of the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force and stresses the consequent obligation for complete and speedy evacuation of any territory **so occupied**.

63. The Committee considers that it is the duty and responsibility of all concerned to enable the Palestinians to exercise their inalienable rights,

64. The Committee recommends an expanded and more influential role by the United Nations and its organs in promoting a just solution to the question of Palestine and in the implementation of such a solution. The Security Council, in particular, should take appropriate action to facilitate the exercise by the Palestinians of their right to return **to** their homes, lands and property, The Committee, furthermore, urges the **Security** Council to promote action towards a just **solution**, taking into account all the powers conferred on it by the Charter of the United Nations.

65. It is with this perspective in view and on the basis of the numerous resolutions of the United Nations, after due consideration of all the facts, proposals and suggestions advanced in the course of its deliberations, that the Committee submits its recommendations on the modalities for the implementation of the exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.

* official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-first Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/31/35), paras. 59-72.

II. The right of return

66. **The natural and inalienable right of Palestinians to return to their homes** is recognised by resolution 194 (III), which the General Assembly has reaffirmed almost every year since its adoption, **This right was also unanimously recognized** by the Security Council in its resolution 237 (1967); the time for the urgent implementation of these resolutions is long overdue.

67. Without prejudice to the right of all Palestinians to return to their homes, lands and property, the **Committee considers** that the **programme** of implementation of the **exercise** of this right may be carried out in two phases:

Phase one

68. **The first phase** involves the return to their homes of the **Palestinians** displaced as a result of the war of June 1967, The Committee recommends that:

- (i) The Security Council should request the immediate implementation of its resolution 237 (1967) and that such implementation should not be related to any other condition;
- (ii) **The resources of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and/or of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, suitably financed and mandated, may be employed to assist in the solution of any logistical problems involved in the resettlement of those returning to their homes. These agencies could also assist, in co-operation with the host countries and the Palestine Liberation Organization, in the identification of the displaced Palestinians.**

Phase two

69. The second phase deals with the return to their homes of the Palestinians displaced between 1948 and 1967, The Committee recommends that:

- (i) While the first phase is being implemented, the **United Nations in co-operation with the States directly involved, and the Palestine Liberation Organization as the interim representative of the Palestinian entity, should proceed to make the necessary arrangements to enable Palestinians displaced between 1948 and 1967 to exercise their right to return to their home, and property, in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions, particularly General Assembly resolution 194 (III);**
- (ii) **Palestinians not choosing to return to their homes should be paid just and equitable compensation as provided for in resolution 194 (III).**

III. The right to self-determination, national independence and sovereignty

70. **The Palestinian people has the inherent right to self-determination, national independence and sovereignty in Palestine. The Committee considers that the evacuation of the territories occupied by force and in violation of the principles**

Of the charter and relevant resolutions of the United Nations is a con. cto sine qua non for the exercise by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights in Palestine. The Committee considers furthermore, that upon the return of the Palestinians to their homes and property and with the establishment of an independent Palestinian entity, the Palestinian people will be able to exercise its rights to self-determination and to decide its form of government without external interference .

71. The Committee also feels that the United Nations has an historical duty and responsibility to render all assistance necessary to promote the economic development and prosperity of the Palestinian entity.

72. To these ends, the Committee recommends that :

(a) A timetable should be established by the Security Council for the complete withdrawal by Israeli occupation forces from those areas occupied in 1967; such withdrawal should be completed no later than 1 June 1977)

(b) The security Council may need to provide temporary peace-keeping forces in order to facilitate the process of withdrawal;

(c) Israel should be requested by the Security Council to desist from the establishment of new settlements and to withdraw during this period from settlements established since 1967 in the occupied territories. Arab property and all essential services in these areas should be maintained intact;

(d) Israel should also be requested to abide scrupulously by the provisions of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949 and to declare, pending its speedy withdrawal from these territories, its recognition of the applicability of that Convention!

(e) The evacuated territories, with all property and services intact, should be taken over by the United Nations, which with the co-operation of the League of Arab States, will subsequently hand over these evacuated areas to the Palestine Liberation Organization as the representative of the Palestinian people)

(f) The United Nations should, if necessary, assist in establishing communications between Gaza and the West Bank;

(g) As soon as the independent Palestinian entity has been established, the United Nations, in co-operation with the States directly involved and the Palestinian entity, should, taking into account General Assembly resolution 3275 (XXX), make further arrangements for the full implementation of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, the resolution of outstanding problems and the establishment of a just and lasting peace in the region, in accordance with all relevant United Nations resolutions!

(h) The United Nations should provide the economic and technical assistance necessary for the consolidation of the Palestinian entity.

ANNEX II

Geneva Declaration on Palestine and the Programme of Action for the Achievement of Palestinian Rights a/

A. Geneva Declaration on Palestine

In pursuance of General Assembly resolutions 36/120 C of 10 December 1961, ES-7/7 of 19 August 1982 and 37/86 C of 10 December 1962, an International Conference on the Question of Palestine was convened at the United Nations Office at Geneva from 29 August to 7 September 1963 to seek effective ways and means to enable the Palest' .ian people to attain and to exercise their inalienable rights. The Conference was opened by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, and presided over by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Senegal, Moustaphe Niassé.

* * *

1. The Conference, having thoroughly considered the question of Palestine in all its aspects, expresses the grave concern of all nations and peoples regarding the international tension that has persisted for several decades in the Middle East, the principal cause of which is the denial by Israel, and those supporting its expansionist policies, of the inalienable legitimate rights of the Palestinian people. The Conference reaffirms and stresses that a just solution of the question of Palestine, the core of the problem, is the crucial element in a comprehensive, just and lasting political settlement in the Middle East.

2. The Conference recognizes that, as one of the most acute and complex problems of our time, the question of Palestine - inherited by the United Nations at the time of its establishment - requires a comprehensive, just and lasting political settlement. This settlement must be based on the implementation of the relevant United Nations resolutions concerning the question of Palestine and the attainment of the legitimate, inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including the right to self-determination and the right to the establishment of its own independent State in Palestine and should also be based on the provision by the Security Council of guarantees for peace and security among all States in the region, including the independent Palestinian State, within secure and internationally recognized boundaries. The Conference is convinced that the attainment by the Palestinian people of their inalienable rights, as defined by General Assembly resolution 3236 (XXIX) of 22 November 1974, will contribute substantially to the achievement of peace and stability in the Middle East.

3. The Conference considers the role of the United Nations in the achievement of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East to be essential and paramount. It emphasizes the need for respect for, and application of, the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations, the resolutions of the United Nations relevant to the question of Palestine and the observance of the principles of international law.

4. The Conference considers that the various proposals, consistent with the principles of international law, which have been presented on this question, such as the Arab peace plan adopted unanimously at the Twelfth Arab Summit Conference (see A/37/696-S/15510, annex), held at Fes, Morocco, in September 1982, should

serve as guidelines for concerted international effort to resolve the question of Palestine. These guidelines include the following!

(a) The attainment by the Palestinian people of its legitimate inalienable rights, including the right to return, the right to self-determination and the right to establish its own independent State in Palestine!

(b) The right of the Palestine Liberation Organisation, the representative of the Palestinian people, to participate on an equal footing with other parties in all efforts, deliberations and conferences on the Middle East;

(c) The need to put an end to Israel's occupation of the Arab territories, in accordance with the principle of the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force, and, consequently, the need to secure Israeli withdrawal from the territories occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem!

(d) The need to oppose and reject such Israeli policies and practices in the occupied territories, including Jerusalem, and any de facto situation created by Israel as are contrary to international law and relevant United Nations resolutions, particularly the establishment of settlements, as these policies and practices constitute major obstacles to the achievement of peace in the Middle East;

(e) The need to reaffirm as null and void all legislative and administrative measures and actions taken by Israel, the occupying Power, which have altered or purported to alter the character and status of the Holy City of Jerusalem, including the expropriation of land and property situated thereon, and in particular the so-called "Basic Law" on Jerusalem and the proclamation of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel;

(f) The right of all States in the region to existence within secure and internationally recognized boundaries, with justice and security for all the people, the sine qua non of which is the recognition and attainment of the legitimate, inalienable rights of the Palestinian people as stated in subparagraph (a) above,

5. In order to give effect to these guidelines, the Conference considers it essential that an international peace conference on the Middle East be convened on the basis of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the relevant resolutions of the United Nations, with the aim of achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict, an essential element of which would be the establishment of an independent Palestinian State in Palestine. This peace conference should be convened under the auspices of the United Nations, with the participation of all parties to the Arab-Israeli conflict, including the Palestine Liberation Organisation, as well as the United States of America, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, and other concerned States, on an equal footing. In this context the Security Council has a primary responsibility to create appropriate institutional arrangements on the basis of relevant United Nations resolutions in order to guarantee and to carry out the accords of the international peace conference.

6. The International Conference on the Question of Palestine emphasizes the importance of the time factor in achieving a just solution to the problem of Palestine. The Conference is convinced that partial solutions are inadequate and delays in seeking a comprehensive solution do not eliminate tensions in the region.

**B. Programme of Action for the Achievement of
Palestinian Rights**

The International Conference on the Question of Palestine agreed that no effort should be spared to seek effective ways and means to enable the Palestinian people to attain and exercise their rights in Palestine in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights ^{b/} and the principles of international law. The Conference, taking into consideration the Geneva Declaration on Palestine (sect. A above), recommended the following Programme of Action.

I

The International Conference on the Question of Palestine recommends that all States, individually or collectively, consistent with their respective constitutions and their obligations under the Charter of the United Nations and in conformity with the principles of international law, should:

(1) Recognise the great importance of the time factor in solving the question of Palestine;

(2) Intensify efforts for the establishment of an independent Palestinian State within the framework of a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement to the Arab-Israeli conflict in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, the relevant United Nations resolutions and the guidelines of the Geneva Declaration on Palestine)

(3) Consider the continued presence of Israel in the occupied Palestinian and other Arab territories, including Jerusalem, as exacerbating instability in the region and endangering international peace and security;

(4) Oppose and reject, as a serious and continuing obstacle to peace, the expansionist policies pursued by Israel in the Palestinian and other Arab territories occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, and in particular the alteration of the geographic nature and demographic composition, and the Israeli attempt to alter, through domestic legislation, the legal status of those territories, and all the measures taken in violation of the Geneva Convention relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War, ^{c/} and the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, ^{d/} both of 12 August 1949, and of The Hague Regulations of 1907, ^{e/} such as the establishment and expansion of settlements, the transfer of Israeli civilians into those territories and the individual and mass transfers therefrom of the Arab Palestinian population)

(5) Refrain from providing Israel with assistance of such a nature as to encourage it militarily, economically and financially to continue its aggression, occupation and disregard of its obligations under the Charter and the relevant resolutions of the United Nations;

(6) Not encourage migration to the occupied Arab territories until Israel has put a definitive end to the implementation of its illegal policy of establishing settlements in the Palestinian and other Arab territories occupied since 1967;

(7) Fully comply with the relevant resolutions of the United Nations and its specialised agencies on the Holy City of Jerusalem, including those which reject Israel's annexation of Jerusalem and its declaration of that city as its capital;

(8) Undertake universal efforts to protect the Holy Places and urge Israel to take measures to prevent their desecration;

(9) Consider ways and means of meeting the threat that Israel poses to regional security in Africa in view of Israel's disregard of United Nations resolutions, and its close collaboration with the apartheid régime in the economic, military and nuclear fields, thereby contributing to the continued illegal occupation of Namibia and enhancing the régime's repressive and aggressive capacity;

(10) Encourage, through bilateral and multilateral contacts, all States, including Western European and North American States which have not done so, to welcome all peace initiatives based on the recognition of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, which were also welcomed by Chairman Yasser Arafat in his address to the International Conference on the Question of Palestine;

(11) Seek and develop ways and means to enable the Palestinian people to exercise sovereignty over their national resources;

(12) Express concern that Israel debars Palestinians from economic activity and access to national resources on Palestinian territory, in consistent violation of General Assembly resolutions on the right of the Palestinians to permanent sovereignty over their national resources;

(13) Declare null and void and counter such measures and practices applied by Israel in the occupied Palestinian and other Arab territories, including Jerusalem, as the annexation and the expropriation of land, water resources, and property and the alteration of the demographic, geographic, historical and cultural features thereof?

(14) Undertake measures to alleviate the economic and social burdens borne by the Palestinian people as a result of the continued Israeli occupation of their territories since 1967;

(15) Consider contributing or increasing special contributions to the proposed budgets, programmes and projects of the relevant organs, funds and agencies of the United Nations system that have been requested to provide humanitarian, economic and social assistance to the Palestinian people, with particular reference to:

(a) General Assembly resolution 33/147 of 20 December 1978 and the appeal of the Governing Council of the United Nations Development Programme at its thirtieth session for additional special contributions amounting to at least \$8 million during the third programming cycle (1982-1986) aimed at helping to meet the economic and social needs of the Palestinian people; f/

(b) The proposed programme budget of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development for the biennium 1984/85 regarding the establishment

within the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development of a special economic unit, g/ as requested by that Conference at its sixth session at Belgrade; h/

(c) Establishing a special legal aid fund to assist Palestinians in securing their rights under conditions of occupation, i/ in accordance with the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War;

(16) Ensure that the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East can meet the essential needs of the Palestinians without interruption or any diminution in the effectiveness of its services;

(17) Review the situation of Palestinian women in the occupied Palestinian and other Arab territories and, in view of their special hardships, urge the Preparatory Committee of the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women, to be held at Nairobi in 1985, to include this item on the agenda of the Conference;

(18) Review, if they have not yet done so, in conformity with their national legislation, their economic, cultural, technical and other relations with Israel, and the agreements governing them with the aim of ensuring that these regulations and agreements will not be interpreted or construed as implying in any way recognition of any modification of the legal status of Jerusalem and of the Palestinian and other Arab territories occupied by Israel since 1967, or an acceptance of Israel's illegal presence in those territories;

(19) Recognise that the process of enabling the Palestinian people to exercise its inalienable rights in Palestine is a significant contribution to the restoration of the rule of law in international relations)

(20) Assure the observance of the stipulations provided in General Assembly resolution 161 (II) guaranteeing to all persons equal and non-discriminatory rights in civil, political, economic and religious matters and the enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms, including freedom of religion, speech, publication, education, assembly and association;

(21) Express concern that the laws applicable in the occupied Arab territories have been totally eclipsed by a plethora of military orders that have been designed to establish a new "legal régime" in violation of The Hague Regulations of 1907, and the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War;

(22) Act in accordance with their obligations under existing international law, in particular with regard to the Geneva Conventions of 1949 which require States Parties to respect and to ensure respect for those Conventions in all circumstances, and in particular ensure the respect by Israel for the Geneva Conventions of 1949 in the occupied Palestinian and other Arab territories;

(23) Express concern that the Palestinians and other Arabs in the occupied territories are deprived of juridical and other kinds of protection, that they are victims of repressive legislation, involving mass arrests, acts

of torture, destruction of houses, and the expulsion of people from their homes, acts which constitute flagrant violations of human rights;

(24) **Recognize** the necessity that Palestinian and Lebanese prisoners detained by Israel be **accorded** the status of **prisoners** of war in accordance with the **Geneva** Convention relative to the **Treatment of Prisoners of War of 1949**, **and** if combatants, or in accordance with the **Geneva** Convention relative to the **Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War of 1949**, **and** if **civilians**;

(25) Strive for the **adoption** of international measures so that Israel will implement in the West Bank and **Gaza** the **provisions** of The Hague Regulations of 1907 and the **Geneva** Convention relative to the **Protection of Civilian Persons**, in the light of Security Council resolution 465 (1980);

(26) **Recognize**, if they have not yet **done** so, *the* Palestine Liberation Organization as the representative of the Palestinian people and establish with it appropriate **relations**;

(27) **Encourage**, in conformity with their national legislations, the formation of national committees **in support of the Palestinian people**!

(28) **Encourage** the observance of 29 November as the **International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People**, in a most effective **and** meaningful way;

(29) Request the General Assembly at its thirty-eighth session to **designate** a Year of Palestine, to be **observed** at the earliest possible time, taking into **consideration** the factors necessary to **ensure** its effective preparation for the purpose of galvanising **world-wide** public opinion and support for **further** implementation of the **Geneva** Declaration on Palestine and the **Programme of Action**.

II

The International Conference on the Question of **Palestine** stresses the obligation of all Member States, under the Charter of the United **Nations**, to enable the United Nations through an expanded and more effective role to fulfil its **responsibility** for achieving a solution to the question of Palestine. To this **end**;

A

States participating in the Conference invite the Security Council, as the organ with **primary** responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security;

(1) To suppress continuing and **growing acts** of aggression and other breaches of the peace *in* the Middle **East** which endanger peace **and** security in the region and the **world** as a whole;

(2) To take prompt, firm and **effective** steps and actions to establish an **independent sovereign** Palestinian State in Palestine through the implementation of the relevant United Nations resolutions, by facilitating the organization of the **international** peace conference on the Middle **East**, as called for in paragraph 5 of the **Geneva** Declaration on Palestine (**see** sect. A

above), and by creating in this context the appropriate institutional arrangements on the basis of relevant United Nations **resolutions** in order to **guarantee and carry out the accords of the international peace conference, including the following:**

(a) Taking measures consistent with the principle of the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force to ensure Israel's withdrawal from the Palestinian and other Arab territories occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, with a specific timetable;

(b) Undertaking effective measures to guarantee the safety and security and legal and human rights of the Palestinians in the occupied territories pending the withdrawal of the Israeli forces from the Palestinian and other Arab territories occupied by Israel since 1967, including Jerusalem;

(c) Subjecting those territories, following the withdrawal of Israel, to a short transitional period, under the supervision of the United Nations, during which period the Palestinian people would exercise its right to self-determination;

(d) Facilitating the implementation of the right to return of the Palestinians to their homes and property;

(e) Supervising elections to the constituent assembly of the independent Palestinian State in which all Palestinians shall participate, in exercise of their right to self-determination;

(f) Providing, if necessary, temporary peace-keeping forces in order to facilitate the implementation of subparagraphs (a) to (e) above,

B

Meanwhile the Security Council is also invited to;

(1) Take urgent action to bring about an immediate and complete cessation of such Israeli policies in the occupied territories and, in particular, the establishment of settlements as have been determined by the Security Council to have no legal validity and as a serious obstruction to achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East;

(2) Consider urgently the reports of the Commission established under its resolution 446 (1979) of 22 March 1979, which examined the situation concerning settlements in the Arab territories occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, and to reactivate the above-mentioned Commission;

(3) Initiate action to terminate Israel's exploitative policies which go against the indigenous economic development of the occupied territories, and to compel Israel to lift its restrictions on water use and well-drilling by Palestinian farmers as well as its diversion of West Bank water resources into the Israeli water grid system;

(4) Keep under its constant attention the actions committed by Israel against the Palestinian people in violation of the stipulations provided for in relevant General Assembly resolutions, in particular the stipulations of

resolution 161 (II) of 29 November 1947 guaranteeing to all persons equal and non-discriminatory rights and freedoms;

(5) Consider, in the event of Israel's persistent non-compliance with the relevant United Nations resolutions which embody the will of the international community, appropriate measures in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, to ensure Israel's compliance with these resolutions.

C

(1) Taking into account the recommendations of the five regional preparatory meetings of the International Conference on the Question of Palestine and the United Nations resolutions concerning economic and social assistance to the Palestinian people, the Secretary-General of the United Nations is requested to convene a meeting of the specialised agencies and other organizations associated with the United Nations, as well as representatives of the Palestine Liberation Organisation and of those countries which are hosts to Palestinian refugees and other potential sources of assistance to develop a co-ordinated programme of economic and social assistance to the Palestinian people and to ensure its implementation;

(2) The meeting should also look into the most effective inter-agency machinery to co-ordinate and sustain and intensify United Nations assistance to the Palestinian people,

D

The dissemination of accurate and comprehensive information world wide and the role of non-governmental organizations and institutions remain of vital importance in heightening awareness of and support for the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination and to the establishment of an independent sovereign Palestinian State. To these ends:

(1) The United Nations Department for Public Information, in full co-operation and constant consultations with the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, should:

(a) Co-ordinate all information activities of the United Nations system on Palestine through the Joint United Nations Information Committee;

(b) Expand publications and audio and visual coverage of the facts and of developments pertaining to the question of Palestine;

(c) Publish newsletters and articles in its respective publications on Israeli violations of human rights of the Arab inhabitants in the occupied territories and organise fact-finding missions for journalists to the area;

(d) Organise regional encounters for journalists;

(e) Disseminate appropriate information on the results of the International Conference on the Question of Palestine;

(2) The relevant **organizations of the United Nations** system should organise meetings, symposia and seminars on topics within their terms of reference relating to specific problems of the Palestinian people by establishing closer liaison with non-governmental **organizations**, the media and other groups interested in the question of Palestine.

III

The International Conference on the Question of Palestine, **convinced** of the important role of **world-wide public opinion** in resolving the question of Palestine, and in the implementation of the Declaration and Programme of Action, urges and encourages :

(1) Intergovernmental and non-governmental **organizations** to **increase** awareness by the international community of the economic and social burdens borne by the Palestinian people as a result of the continued Israeli occupation and its negative effects on the economic development of the West Asian region as a **whole**;

(2) Non-governmental organisations and professional and popular associations to intensify their efforts to support the rights of the Palestinian people in every possible **way**;

(3) **Organizations** such as those of women, teachers, workers, youths and students to undertake exchanges and other programmes of joint action with their Palestinian **counterparts**;

(4) Women's associations, in particular, to investigate the **conditions** of Palestinian women and **children** in all **occupied territories**;

(5) The **media** and other institutions to disseminate relevant information to increase public awareness and understanding of the question of Palestine)

(6) Institutions of higher education to promote the **study** of the question of Palestine in all its **aspects**;

(7) **Various** jurists' associations to establish special investigative commissions to determine the violations by **Israel of the Palestinians'** legal rights and to disseminate their findings **accordingly**;

(8) Jurists to initiate with their **Palestinian** counterparts consultations, research and investigations on the **juridical** aspects of problems affecting the southern African and Palestinian struggles, in particular the detention of political prisoners and the **denial** of prisoner-of-war status to detained members of the national liberation movements of **southern Africa and Palestine**)

(9) **Parliamentarians**, political parties, trade unions, **organizations** for solidarity and intellectuals, particularly in Western Europe and North America, to join their counterparts in other parts of the world in giving their support, where it has not been **done**, to an initiative which would express the desire of the international community to see the Palestinian people at last living in their own **independent** homeland in peace, freedom and dignity.

Notes

a/ See Report of the International Conference on the Question of Palestine, Geneva, 29 August-7 September 1983 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.83.I.21), chap. I, sects, A and B.

b/ See General Assembly resolution 217 A (III),

c/ United Nations, Treaty Series, vol. 75, No. 972, p. 135.

d/ Ibid., No. 973, p. 287.

e/ Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, The Hague Conventions and Declarations of 1899 and 1907 (New York, Oxford University Press, 1915), p. 100.

f/ See Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1983, Supplement No. 9 (E/1983/20).

g/ A/C.5/38/4, para. 8 (c).

h/ Recommendation 146 (v') of 2 July 1983 of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development.

i/ Recommendation 19 of the Latin American Regional Preparatory Meeting, Managua, Nicaragua, 12-15 April 1983 (A/CONF.114/2).

j/ African region, A/CONF.114/1; Latin American region, A/CONF.114/2; Western Asian region, A/CONF.114/3; Asian region, A/CONF.114/4; European region, A/CONF.114/5.

ANNEX III

Conclusions and recommendations adopted by the Eighteenth United Nations Seminar on the Question of Palestine

(Havana, 15-17 December 1987)

Introduction

1. The Eighteenth United Nations Seminar on the Question of Palestine, entitled "The inalienable rights of the Palestinian people", was held at the Palacio de las Convenciones at Havana, Cuba, from 15 to 17 December 1987, in accordance with the terms of General Assembly resolution 40/96 E1 of 12 December 1985.
2. The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People was represented by a delegation consisting of Mr. Massamba Sarré (Senegal), Chairman of the Committee, head of the delegation; Mr. Alberto Velaaco-San José (Cuba); Mr. Pramathesh Rath (India); and Mr. Zehdi L. Terzi (Palestine Liberation Organisation). Mr. Massamba Sarré was Chairman and Mr. Pramathesh Rath Rapporteur of the Seminar.
3. Four meetings were held and 17 panelists presented papers on selected aspects of the question of Palestine. In addition, representatives of 26 Governments, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), 2 United Nations organs, 4 United Nations programmes and specialized agencies, 2 national liberation organizations, as well as observers of 17 non-governmental organizations attended the Seminar.
4. The opening session of the Seminar was attended by Mr. Jorge Risquet, Member of the Politburo and the Secretariat, Chief of the General Department for External Relations of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba. The Seminar was addressed by the following: Mr. Isidoro Malmierca Peoli, Minister of External Relations of Cuba; Mr. Naseem Mirza, Chief, Division for Palestinian Rights, on behalf of the Secretary-Generals Mr. Massamba Sarré, Chairman of the Seminar; Mr. Imad Jada'a, Ambassador of the PLO to Cuba, who conveyed a message from Mr. Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the PLO; Mr. Ammar Amari (Tunisia), representing the Special Committee on the Situation with Regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples; and Mr. Nasreldin A. M. Idries (Sudan) representing the Special Committee against Apartheid.
5. The Seminar also heard statements from Mr. Helmut Angula, Permanent Observer of the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO) to the United Nations and from Mr. Stanley Manana, Representative of the African National Congress of South Africa to Cuba.
6. Messages of support were received from Mr. Clodomiro Almeida, former Vice-President of Chile and Secretary-General of the Socialist Party of that country, as well as from the Arab Union of Cuba of the City of Ciego de Avila.
7. On its part, the Seminar adopted messages to Mr. Yasser Arafat, to the President of the Security Council and also to the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

8. Three panels were established, The topics of these and panelists were as follows :

(a) Panel I, "The International Peace Conference on the Middle East, in accordance with United Nations General Assembly resolution 38/58 C, the need for such a conference and efforts and prospects to promote a successful outcome, and benefits thereof"! Mr. Shafiq Al-Rout (Palestinian), Mr. Tillo Declercq (Belgium), Mr. Miklós Endreffy (Hungary), Mr. Eduardo Kronfly (Colombia), Mr. Jorge Manfugas (Cuba), Mr. Paul McCloskey (United States), Mr. Mattiyahu Peled (Israel), and Mr. Gabriel Pérez Tarrau (Cuba) ;

(b) Panel II, "The question of Palestine and Latin American/Caribbean public opinion" : Mrs. Irma Cáceres Pérez (Cuba), Mr. Roberto Garcia (Nicaragua), Mr. Aivaró Menéndez Franco (Panama), Mr. Ruben Montedónico (Mexico), Mr. Juan Pereira Florilo (Bolivia), Deputy Henry Rondinel Cornejo (Peru), Mr. Juan Sanchez (Cuba) and Mr. Carlos Alberto Torrenco (Argentina);

(c) Panel III, "The role of the Palestine Liberation Organization": Mr. Fouad Moughrabi (Palestinian),

The expert members of the three panels agreed on summaries of the presentations and the discussions on the three topics. The Seminar decided to include those summaries in the report, which has been published as a special Bulletin of the United Nations Division for Palestinian Rights.

Conclusions and recommendations

9. The conclusions and recommendations adopted by the Seminar are as follows:

(a) The Seminar recalled that the year 1987 marked a number of anniversaries of significant events in the history of the Palestinian people in its struggle to attain its legitimate and inalienable rights. It was the seventieth anniversary of the Balfour Declaration, the fortieth anniversary of the adoption of General Assembly resolution 181 (II), the twentieth anniversary of the 1967 war and the fifth anniversary of the Israeli invasion and occupation of Lebanese territory and the massacre of Palestinians at the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps.

(b) The Seminar expressed its deep concern over the present dangerous situation in the Middle East which posed a serious threat to international peace and security. In the nuclear age it was necessary for international relations to be restructured so that confrontation was replaced by co-operation, and conflict situations were resolved through peaceful political means and not through military actions.

(c) The Seminar was profoundly convinced that the vital interests of all peoples of the region, as well as the interests of international peace and security, could be secured only through the attainment of a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement, on the basis of relevant United Nations resolutions and under its auspices, of the Arab-Israeli conflict of which the question of Palestine was the core,

(d) The Seminar was aware that while strenuous attempts had been made to find a solution to the Middle East conflict, the situation in the region remained

intractable. It was further aggravated by Israel's actions in the occupied Arab territories. The inalienable **rights of the Palestinian people continued to be undermined**, Israel continued its policies of illegally **maintaining and expanding Jewish settlements as well as confiscating Arab-owned lands and diverting scarce water resources to its own use in the occupied Palestinian and Arab territories.** The "iron-fist" policy of Israel **had further stifled all forms of political, cultural, social and economic expression of the Palestinian people.** Israel continued to strengthen its control over most aspects of life, with the objective **of obstructing a self-sustained development of the Palestinians in the occupied territories by turning those territories into a dependent entity with the aim of their final absorption and annexation.** Such policies were in violation of United Nations resolutions, the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and other norms of international law and exacerbated tension in the area, thus hindering attempts to find a peaceful solution to the question of Palestine.

(e) The Seminar affirmed that the denial of the exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people remained the core of the conflict in the Middle East and that a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the region could not be achieved without the full exercise of those rights, including the rights to return, to self-determination and to statehood, and without the complete withdrawal of Israel from Palestinian and Arab territories occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem. It further affirmed that the PLO was the sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. It invited Governments which had not yet done so to accord recognition of the PLO as such.

(f) The Seminar unanimously concluded that the way to establish a just and lasting peace in the Middle East was by convening the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, under the auspices of the United Nations and with the participation of all parties to the conflict, including the PLO on an equal footing, as well as the United States and the Soviet Union and other concerned States, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 38/58 C. The Seminar was convinced that partial and piecemeal solutions would ignore the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict and were not conducive to a comprehensive settlement. The need was stressed for a comprehensive attempt at establishing a just and lasting peace in the Middle East through the International Peace Conference in accordance with General Assembly resolution 38/58 C. The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People had an important role to play in promoting the convening of the Conference.

(g) The Seminar was of the view that, during 1987, international understanding of the question of Palestine and support for the attainment and exercise by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights had continued to grow. At the same time, in the region, tension and violence had continued to mount, with tragic consequences. The Seminar considered that the present situation demanded renewed and intensified collective international efforts aimed at reaching a comprehensive, just and lasting solution. Urgent positive action by the Security Council was required on the recommendations formulated by the Committee in its first report, submitted in 1976 and endorsed by the General Assembly, as well as the recommendations adopted by the International Conference on the Question of Palestine, held at Geneva in 1983. The peaceful solution of this long-standing conflict and the attainment of justice and security for all, based on the exercise by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights, remained a primary and urgent responsibility of the United Nations.

(h) The Seminar took note with appreciation of the efforts of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People to secure universal recognition of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, and of its recommendations for ensuring the exercise by the Palestinian people of those rights. The Seminar also noted with satisfaction the increased support at the United Nations for the programme of action undertaken by the Committee. It urged the international community to sustain and strengthen its support for the Committee's activities and endeavours, in particular its efforts for facilitating the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East and the establishment of a preparatory committee within the framework of the Security Council, with the participation of its permanent members.

(i) The Seminar expressed its grateful appreciation for the efforts undertaken by the Secretary-General of the United Nations with a view to convening the International Peace Conference on the Middle East. In this regard the Seminar took note of his report (A/42/714-S/19249) and expressed full support for his intention to maintain his special efforts and continue to explore with the parties ways of advancing the process. The Secretary-General, in his report, had stated that "the inability of the Government of Israel as a whole to agree to the principle of an international conference under United Nations auspices" remained a major obstacle. The Seminar concluded that the Government of Israel, along with the Government of the United States, opposed compliance with General Assembly resolution 38/58 C. In that context, the Seminar urged the Governments of Israel and the United States to reconsider their negative attitudes towards the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East.

(j) The Seminar was of the view that the recent adoption of Amendment No. 940 by the United States Senate making unlawful the establishment and maintenance of offices of the PLO in the United States ignored the fact that the PLO Observer Mission to the United Nations was present in accordance with General Assembly resolution 3237 (XXIX) of 22 November 1974. Furthermore, that legislation was contrary to the Headquarters Agreement between the host country and the United Nations. The Seminar was also of the view that the closure of the PLO Observer Mission to the United Nations would mean the elimination of an important institution contributing to the search for peace in the Middle East.

(k) The Seminar expressed its strong protest against the reported Israeli military actions against Lebanon as well as the new wave of oppression of Palestinians in the occupied territories. It demanded that those actions should cease immediately and requested the Security Council to undertake every effort under the Charter of the United Nations in order to put an end to the causes of violence and the use of force,

(l) The Seminar appealed to the members of the Security Council and in particular to its permanent members, in exercising their responsibilities for the maintenance of international peace and security, to make every effort to convene the International Peace Conference on the Middle East without further delay,

(m) The Seminar viewed the results of the eighteenth session of the Palestine National Council, held in April 1987, at Algiers, as a significant contribution to achieving a just solution to the question of Palestine and resolving the plight of the Palestinian people. The Seminar welcomed in particular the unequivocal support of the PLO for the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East in accordance with General Assembly resolution 38/58 C.

(n) The **Seminar** recalled with appreciation the support that **Governments** and peoples of Latin America had extended at the United Nations and in other forums to the Palestinian cause and for the achievement of a just and lasting peace in the Middle East. It agreed that efforts should be continued and intensified to mobilise the official and public opinion *in* the Latin American region, as well as in other regions of the world, especially through the use of the media and activities of non-governmental **organizations**. **The United Nations** should undertake additional efforts to disseminate factual and up-to-date information on the **question** of Palestine, the **plight** of Palestinians under occupation or in exile, and the measures required to be taken for the achievement of a just solution to the question of Palestine on the basis of the **attainment** by the Palestinian people in **Palestine of its inalienable rights**. **The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People** and the **Division for Palestinian Rights** had an important role in the dissemination of such information. Moreover, the United Nations **Department of Public Information** should *make every effort* to ensure that accurate information **on the question of Palestine** received the widest possible dissemination and should ensure **adequate** representation of Latin American journalists in its annual fact-finding missions to the Middle East,

(o) It was important that governmental media and international news agencies should play a more objective role in providing balanced reporting on the Middle East and, *in* particular, on the plight of the Palestinian people. The **Seminar** emphasised that intergovernmental organisations, institutions such as universities, colleges, research institutes, churches and other religious establishments as well as national and international non-governmental organisations, had a crucial role to play in the formation of public opinion, especially in the **United States** and Israel. Those institutions should be encouraged to give wider coverage and objective treatment to the question of Palestine.

ANNEX IV

Conclusions and recommendations adopted by the Nineteenth United Nations Seminar on the Question of Palestine

(Berlin, German Democratic Republic, 25-29 April 1988)

Introduction

1. The Committee on the **Exercise** of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People accepted the offer of the Government of the German Democratic Republic (GDR) to hold the Nineteenth United Nations Seminar on the Question of Palestine (Fourth **European Regional Seminar**) entitled "The inalienable rights of the Palestinian people". The Seminar was held at the Palasthotel, Berlin, from 25 to 29 April 1988, in accordance with the terms of General Assembly resolution 42/66 B of 2 December 1987.
2. The Committee on the **Exercise** of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People was represented by a delegation consisting of Mr. Alexander Borg Olivier (Malta), **Rapporteur** of the Committee, head of the **delegation**; Mr. Tom Obaleh Kargbo (Sierra Leone); Mr. Alberto Velazco-San José (Cuba); Mr. Dirk Hielscher (GDR); and Mr. Zehdi L. Terzi (Palestine Liberation Organization). Mr. Borg Olivier served as Chairman, Mr. Velazco-San José as Vice-Chairman and Mr. Kargbo as **Rapporteur** of the Seminar.
3. **The** opening session of the **Seminar** was attended by the President of the forty-second session of the **General Assembly**, Mr. Peter Florin.
4. Eight meetings were held and 14 panelists presented papers on selected aspects of the question of Palestine. In addition, representatives of 37 **Governments**, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), 3 **United Nations** organs, 4 **United Nations specialized** agencies and bodies, 1 intergovernmental **organization** as well as **observers** of 5 **non-governmental** organisations (NGOs) attended the Seminar.
5. The opening session of the Seminar was addressed by Mr. Oskar Fischer, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the GDR, and a message was received from the General Secretary of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany and Chairman of the Council of State of the GDR, H.E. Mr. Erich Honecker, which was read out by the Chairman of the Seminar.
6. At the opening session, statements were also made by the representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, **Under-Secretary-General** Joseph Verner Reed, and by H.E. Mr. Alexander **Borg** Olivier, Chairman of the **Seminar**.
7. A message was received from Mr. Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the PLO, and read out by Mr. Isam Ksmel Salem, Ambassador of the PLO to the GDR. In addition, a statement was made by Mr. Syed Sharifuddin Pirzada, Secretary-General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference.
8. The Seminar also heard statements from Mrs. Shi Yanhua (China), representing the United Nations Council for Namibia; Mr. Emmanuel Douma (Congo), representing the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples;

Mr, Dirk Hielscher (GDR), representing the Special Committee against **Apartheid**, and Mr, Achim Reichardt, General Secretary of the Solidarity Committee of the GDR. The Seminar also received a message by the Chairman of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Population of the Occupied Territories, Mr. **Daya Perera**.

9. On its own part, the Seminar adopted messages to Mr. Erich Honecker, Chairman of the Council of State of the QDR, and to Mr. Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the PLO.

10. **Three** panels were established. These panels and their panelists were as follows :

(a) Panel I: **"The Uprising in the Occupied Palestinian Territories: The Urgency of Convening the International Peace Conference on the Middle East in accordance with United Nations General Assembly resolution 38/58 C"**;

Mr. Shafiq Al-Hout (Palestinian), Mr. **Dragan Jovanic** (Yugoslavia), Mr. **Igor M. Khvorostiany** (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic), Mr. **Vladimir I. Kisselyov** (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics), Mr. **Roberto Mesa** (Spain) and Mr, **Ingo Schoenfelder** (GDR);

(b) Panel II: **"The Role of the Palestine Liberation Organisation"**;

Mr. **Yusif Sayegh** (Palestinian);

(c) Panel III: **"The Question of Palestine and European Public Opinion"**;

Mr. **Mikko Lohikoski** (Finland), Mr. **Ion Margineanu** (Romania), Mr. **Lothar Pilz** (GDR), Mr. **Müntaz Soysal** (Turkey), Mr. **Jörgen Stromberg** (Sweden), Mr. **Paolo Ungari** (Italy) and Mr. **Nicolas Voulelis** (Greece).

11. The expert members of the three panels agreed on summaries of the presentations and the discussions on the **three** topics. The Seminar decided to include those summaries in the report, which **has been published as a special bulletin of the United Nations Division for Palestinian Rights**,

Conclusions and recommendations

12. The conclusions and recommendations adopted by the **SEminar** are as followst

(a) The Palestinian uprising in the occupied territories confirms that the Palestinians are determined to reject and resist Israeli domination and occupation. The Palestinian people is struggling to preserve and protect its identity and its land and to regain and freely exercise its inalienable national rights to return, to self-determination and to the establishment of an **independent State of its own in Palestine**.

(b) While strenuous attempts have been made to bring about a solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict, the situation in the region remains intractable. It is further aggravated by Israel's reaction to the Palestinian uprising in using military might to quell the demands by the **Palestinian** people for the exercise of its inalienable human and national rights. Israel **continues** its policies of

illegally maintaining and expanding Jewish settlements as well as confiscating Arab-owned lands and diverting scarce water resources to its own use in the occupied Palestinian and Arab territories. The "iron-fist" policy of Israel has further stifled all forms of political, cultural, social and economic expressions of the Palestinian people. Israel continues to strengthen its control over most aspects of life, with the objective of obstructing a self-sustained development of the Palestinian people in the occupied territories by turning those territories into a dependent entity with the aim of their final absorption and annexation. Such policies are in violation of United Nations resolutions, the Geneva Conventions of 1949, in particular the Fourth Geneva Convention, and other norms of international law and exacerbate tension in the area, thus hindering attempts to find a peaceful solution to the question of Palestine.

(c) The Seminar agreed that the role of the PLO derives from the inalienable right of the Palestinians to Palestine, their right to identify with it, to live on its soil as a community and national entity, with its social structure and its economic life. It derives from the collective will of the Palestinians, both on Palestinian territory and outside of it, that the PLO is their legitimate and sole representative. Those two factors are the source of the legitimacy of the PLO and the determinant of the complex role it has to play. The record of the PLO confirms and solidifies that legitimacy and has won the recognition, first of all by the Arab States and, in due course, by more than 100 other States, that the PLO is the legitimate and sole representative of the Palestinians. Among the exceptions to this significant development is Israel, the United States and South Africa.

(d) The international community is becoming more deeply convinced of the need to find an immediate political settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict. That is evidenced by the growing support for the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East in accordance with General Assembly resolution 38/58 C as the only realistic and reliable means of achieving such a settlement. That support is clearly reflected in the position adopted by the PLO, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, the League of Arab States, the Organization of African Unity, the Organisation of the Islamic Conference, the European Community, the Nordic countries, as well as by the USSR, China and other socialist countries. In that regard, the Seminar emphasised in particular the sustained and continuing support by the European socialist and non-aligned countries for the exercise by the Palestinian people of its inalienable national rights and the convening of the International Peace Conference on the basis of General Assembly resolution 38/58 C.

(e) The Seminar appreciated the evolving position of Western European and Nordic countries in support of a comprehensive settlement and the convening of the International Peace Conference as expressed in the official statements by the European Community and the Nordic countries. It took also into account the position of the European Parliament in that regard and expressed the hope that the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People will undertake further endeavours with a view that the countries of Western Europe will play an even more active role in bringing about a comprehensive political settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict, guaranteeing the exercise by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights.

(f) The Seminar concluded that the way to establish a just and lasting peace in the Middle East is by convening the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, under the auspices of the United Nations and in conformity with General Assembly resolution 38/58 C, which endorsed the Geneva Declaration adopted by the

International Conference on the Question of Palestine, held at Geneva in 1983, There was concurrence that a careful **examination** of the components of that resolution, which was based on the Charter of the United Nations and the principles of international law, and took into account all relevant United Nations resolutions, and included the objective, the political elements, the framework of, and the participants in the International Peace Conference, demonstrated the credibility and applicability of that project to produce a durable solution. It is the only prescription that could claim to have the ingredients for a just solution to the conflict, for the transformation of the military conflict into peaceful political platforms. Among the parties involved in the Middle East conflict, Israel and the United States are the only ones rejecting that path.

(g) The Seminar expressed its appreciation for the efforts undertaken by the Security Council of the United Nations to bring about a just, lasting and comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict and in particular, to facilitate the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East. Attention was drawn to the report of the Secretary-General to the Security Council (S/19443 of 21 January 1988), as requested by resolution 605 (1987) of 22 December 1987, describing the existing situation in the occupied territories and indicating action to be taken by the international community to alleviate the suffering of the Palestinian people under occupation and to rectify the causes of the present situation through a peaceful negotiated settlement. The Seminar urged the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People to take the necessary steps to facilitate the implementation of those actions. Attention was also drawn to the report of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly (A/43/272) on the current situation regarding the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East. In that context, the Seminar urged the Governments of Israel and the United States to reconsider their negative attitudes toward the convening of the Conference in conformity with General Assembly resolution 38/58 C.

(h) The Seminar took note with appreciation of the efforts of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People to secure universal recognition of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, and its recommendations for ensuring the exercise by the Palestinian people of those rights. The Seminar expressed its satisfaction that the Committee had organized the Seminar for Europe and the suggestion was made that the Committee should intensify its efforts so that the next European Seminar could be held in a Western European country. The Seminar also noted with satisfaction the increased support at the United Nations for the programme of action undertaken by the Committee. It urged the international community to sustain and strengthen its support for the Committee's activities and endeavours, in particular its efforts for facilitating the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East. At the same time, all countries must act and make their own contributions toward the convening of the International Peace Conference.

(i) Although Israel and the United States are not yet convinced of the usefulness of the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, overall international conditions for accomplishing that task are not unfavourable. Additional efforts towards the political, negotiated settlement of regional conflict are essential. The hope was expressed that the forthcoming summit meeting of General Secretary Gorbachev and President Reagan would lead to a healthier international climate and produce tangible progress for a political solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict and its core, the question of Palestine.

(j) The Seminar condemned the brutal assassination by Israeli special forces in Tunis of Khalil al-Wazir, Deputy Commander-in-Chief of the Palestinian armed forces, and the open violation of ~~the~~ sovereignty and territorial integrity of Tunisia. In that regard, the Seminar was apprised of the deliberations of the Security Council and noted with appreciation the adoption of resolution 611 (1988) of 25 April 1988. The Seminar expressed its condolences to the PLO and the family of al-Wazir. It was of the view that that outrageous act of State terrorism, which has been condemned by the international community, would not deter the Palestinian people from its path to secure and exercise its inalienable rights,

(k) The Seminar expressed its serious concern over the attempts by the United States Administration to close the Permanent Observer Mission of the PLO to the United Nations in complete disregard of its legal obligations under the Headquarters Agreement. The position of the General Assembly in its resolution on that issue was unequivocally supported. The hope was expressed that that dispute between the United States and the United Nations could be resolved in accordance with the provision of the Headquarters Agreement and on the basis of the principles of international law. The Seminar took note of the Advisory Opinion **unanimously** adopted by the International Court of Justice **which** affirmed that the United States was obliged to enter into the settlement procedure under article 21 of the Headquarters Agreement. The Seminar expressed the hope that the United States would act accordingly.

(l) The Seminar recalled with **appreciation** the support that Governments and peoples of Europe have extended at the United Nations and *in other forums* to the Palestinian cause and for the achievement of a just and lasting **peace** in the Middle East. It agreed that efforts should be continued and intensified to **mobilize** official and public opinion in Europe, and *in particular in Western Europe, as well as in other regions of the world, especially through the use of the media and activities of NGOs*. The United Nations should undertake additional efforts to disseminate factual and up-to-date information on the question of Palestine, the plight of Palestinians under occupation *or in exile*, and the measures required to be taken for the achievement of a just solution to the **question of Palestine** on the basis of the attainment by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights. The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and the Division for Palestinian Rights have an important role in the dissemination of such information. **Moreover**, the United Nations Department of Public Information should make every effort to ensure that accurate information on the question of Palestine received the widest possible dissemination and should ensure adequate representation of *European* journalists in its annual fact-finding missions to the Middle East.

(m) The Seminar was apprised of the activities of the European Co-ordinating Committee for Non-Governmental Organisations on the Question of Palestine and expressed its appreciation for the manifold activities undertaken by that Committee. **Regarding** the co-operation of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People with the European Co-ordinating Committee and European NGOs in general, **the following suggestions were made:**

- (i) **To encourage the United Nations to strengthen its co-operation with the NGO community in all ways possible. In that respect, the decision that the United Nations is planning to organize regional European NGO symposia annually was noted with appreciation;**

- (ii) To encourage visits by representatives of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People to national events organised by various **NGOs**;
- (iii) To foster efforts to produce and update existing factual information material on the question of Palestine about the various aspects of the life of the Palestinian people, Its **organisations**, national identity, culture, **etc.**;
- (iv) To promote to the extent possible the translation of those publications in languages other than the official languages of the United **Nations**;
- (v) To facilitate a closer dialogue between **NGOs** and Governments for exchange of information and views.

(n) It is important that governmental media and international news **agencies** should play a more objective role in **providing balanced reporting on** the Middle **East** and, in particular, on the plight of the Palestinian people. The Seminar emphasised that intergovernmental organisations, institutions such as universities, colleges, research institutes, peace movements, churches and other religious establishments, as well as national and international **NGOs**, have a crucial role to play in the formation of public opinion, **especially** in Western Europe, the United States and Israel. Those institutions should be encouraged to give wider coverage and objective treatment to the question of Palestine.

ANNEX V

Conclusions and recommendations adopted by the Twentieth United Nations Seminar on the Question of Palestine

(New York, 27 to 28 June 1988)

Introduction

1. The **Twentieth United Nations Seminar on the Question of Palestine (Fifth North American Regional Seminar)** entitled "**The inalienable rights of the Palestinian people**", was held at United Nations Headquarters, New York, on 27 and 28 June 1988, in accordance with the terms of **General Assembly resolution 42/66 B** of 2 December 1987.
2. Four meetings were held and six panelists presented papers on **selected** aspects of the question of **Palestine**. In addition, representatives of 40 **Governments**, the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), 2 United Nations **organs**, 6 United Nations specialised **agencies** and bodies, 3 intergovernmental organisations, 3 national liberation movements as well as observers of 9 non-governmental organisations (NGOs) attended the Seminar.
3. Mr. Alexander Borg Olivier (Malta), Rapporteur of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, was Chairman, Mr. Alberto Velasco-San Jose (Cuba) Vice-Chairman, and Mr. Tom Obaleh Kargbo (Sierra Leone) Rapporteur of the Seminar.
4. The opening session was addressed by the representative of the **Secretary-General** of the United Nations, Mr. Naseem Mirza, Chief, Division for Palestinian Rights and also by Mr. Alexander Borg Olivier, Chairman of the Seminar.
5. A message was received from Mr. Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the PLO, which was read out by Mr. Zehdi L. Terzi, Permanent Observer of that organisation to the United Nations.
6. Other statements were made at the opening session by the following: Mr. Ahmad Farouk Arnouss, Rapporteur of the Special Committee on the **Situation** with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the **Granting** of Independence to Colonial Countries and **Peoples**; H.E. Mr. Jai Pratap Rana, Acting Chairman of the **Special Committee** against **Apartheid**; Mr. Samir Mansouri, Deputy Permanent Observer of the League of Arab States to the United Nations] H.E. Mr. A. Engin Ansay, **Permanent** Observer of the Organisation of the Islamic **Conference** to the United Nations; and Mrs. Monica Noshandi, Deputy Permanent Observer of the **South West Africa People's Organisation** to the United Nations. At the third **meeting**, the Observer of the African National Congress of South Africa, Dr. Ernest Fred Dube, **made a statement**.
7. **On its own part**, the Seminar adopted a message to Mr. Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the **Executive Committee** of the PLO.
8. **Two panels** were **established**. The panels and their panelists were as follows:

(a) Panel I: **"The uprising in the occupied Palestinian territoriesa the urgency of convening the International Peace Conference on the Middle East in accordance with United Nations General Assembly resolution 33/58 C"**;

Mr. Ibrahim Abu-Lughod (Palestinian), Mr. William H. Barton (Canada), Mr. Paul N. McCloskey (United States), Mr. Mattityahu Peled (Israel), Mr. V. P. Vorobyov (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics);

(b) Panel II: **"The role of the Palestine Liberation Organization"**;

Mr. Yusif Sayegh (Palestinian).

Owing to circumstances beyond his control, Mr. Yusif Sayegh **could not attend** the Seminar and his paper was read by the Permanent Observer of the PLO to the United Nations.

9. The expert members of the panels **agreed on summaries** of the **presentations** and the discussions on the two topics. The Seminar decided to include those summaries in the report, which has been published as a Special Bulletin of the United Nations Division for Palestinian Rights.

Conclusions and recommendations

10. The conclusions and recommendations adopted by the Seminar **are** as followsr

(a) The Seminar expressed its deep **concern** over the present dangerous situation in the Middle East. The vital interests of all peoples **and** States of the region, as well as the interests of international peace and security, could only be secured through the attainment of a **comprehensive**, just and lasting settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict and its **core**, the question of Palestine, on the basis of United Nations resolutions and under United Nations auspices.

(b) The Palestinian uprising in the occupied territories now in its seventh month confirms that the Palestinians are determined to reject and resist Israeli domination and occupation. Despite Israel's extremely cruel attempts to suppress it, including the use of brute force against women and children, it is all too evident that the Palestinian uprising has been thus far the most successful in challenging Israel's oppressive plans and policies and in **demonstrating** anew the Palestinian people's strong determination to **realize** its inalienable national rights. The Palestinian people is struggling to preserve and protect its identity and its land and to regain and freely exercise its inalienable national rights to return, to self-determination and to the establishment of an independent State of its own in Palestine.

(c) Israel has confiscated Palestinian lands and has been instrumental in effecting population expulsion to the extent that today less than half of the 5 million Palestinians live in historic Palestine. The varied and harsh socio-political, economic and legal conditions which characterise the Palestinian existence on their own soil are intended to create an objective condition of permanent subordination and subjugation to a State that views itself as the sovereign State of the Jewish people. Those Israeli policies of occupation, subjugation, dispossession and expulsion account for the continuing Palestinian resistance.

(d) The **campaign of civil disobedience** by the Palestinians in the occupied territories, sustained with great fortitude in the face of the use of overwhelming military force has brought home to Israeli citizens the **destructive** impact of continued occupation on their own social values. This, coupled with **increasing awareness** of the ultimate futility of attempting to maintain **suzerainty** over lands where they are outnumbered demographically, has for the first time raised serious doubts in the minds of **many** ordinary Israeli citizens about the wisdom of the policies of their Government. These doubts are also reflected in important Jewish communities in Western countries, whose political and financial **support is** essential to Israel. Once the inability to resolve the problem by confrontation is grasped by Israel the road will then be open for a negotiated settlement.

(a) The Seminar affirmed that **the denial of the exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people** remained the core of the conflict in the Middle East and that a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the region could not be achieved without the full exercise of those rights by the Palestinian people, including the rights to return, to self-determination and to the establishment of a State of its own in Palestine, and without the withdrawal of Israel from Palestinian and Arab territories occupied in 1967, including Jerusalem. It further agreed that the role of the PLO derives from the inalienable right of the Palestinians to Palestine, their right to identify with it, to **live on its soil as** a community and national entity, with its social structure and its **economic** life. It derives from the collective will of the Palestinians, both on Palestinian territory and outside of it, that the PLO is their legitimate and sole representative.

(f) The **basic** issues which must be addressed in order to resolve the Arab-Israeli conflict **area** (a) Israeli recognition of and respect for the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people which have been hitherto **denied**; (b) Arab acceptance of the State of Israel within internationally recognised borders) (c) acceptance by Israel of the International Peace **Coferenae on the Middle East**, under the auspices of the United Nations and with the participation of the five permanent members of the Security Council and all the parties to the conflict, as the mechanism to **achieve** a solution to the **conflict**; and (d) recognition by Israel and others of the fact that the Palestinian people has the right to **participate in** the International Peace **Conference through the PLO**, its **sole** and legitimate representative.

(g) The international community is becoming more deeply convinced of the urgent need to bring about an immediate political settlement of the Arab-Israeli **conflict and its core**, the question of Palestine. Tensions that persist could be further aggravated by the introduction of weapons of mass destruction into the region. There is **growing** support for the convening of the International Peace **Conference** on the Middle East in accordance with General Assembly resolution 38/58 C as the only realistic and **reliable** means of achieving such a **settlement**. **Resolution 38/58 C** reaffirms the **rights of the Palestinian people, including** the right to return, the right to self-determination and the right to establish an **independent State in Palestine** as well as the right of all States in the region to exist within **secure and intornetionally** recognised boundaries. That support is **clearly reflected in the position** adopted by the PLO, all Arab States, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, the **Organization of African Unity**, the Organisation of the Islamic Conference, the **European Community**, the **Nordic countries**, as well as by the **USSR, China and other socialist countries**. It is encouraging that all of the

permanent members of the Security Council **recognize that the** situation must not be allowed to **drift** any longer.

(h) Although Israel is **not** yet convinced of the usefulness and the United States is not yet supportive of the **convening** of the **International Peace Conference** on the Middle East in accordance with General Assembly resolution **38/58 C**, overall international **conditions** for accomplishing that task **are** very favourable. **Moreover, it** was encouraging that the relations between the United States and the USSR seem to have improved and the nations of the European Community have **acknowledged** their responsibility to encourage the **search** for a solution. Additional efforts towards the **political, negotiated** settlement of regional conflict are essential. The hope was expressed that the existing healthier international climate could produce tangible progress for a political solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict and **its core**, the question of Palestine,

(i) The Seminar **expressed** its **appreciation** and support for the efforts undertaken by the Secretary-General and the Security Council of the United Nations to bring about a just, lasting and comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israeli **conflict** and in particular, to facilitate the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East. Attention was drawn to the report of the **Secretary-General** to the Security Council (**S/19443** of 21 January 1988), as requested by resolution 605 (1987) of 22 December 1987, **describing** the existing situation in the occupied territories and indicating **action**, that may include United Nations presence therein, to be taken by the international community to alleviate the suffering of the Palestinian people under **occupation** and to rectify the **causes** of the present situation through a peaceful negotiated settlement. Attention was also **drawn to the report** of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly (A/43/272) on the current situation regarding the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East. In that **context**, the Seminar urged the **Governments** of Israel and the **United States** to **reconsider** their **attitudes** towards the convening of the Conference in conformity with **General Assembly resolution 38/58 C**.

(j) The Seminar took note with appreciation of the efforts of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People to **secure** universal recognition of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, and its recommendations for ensuring the **exercise** by the Palestinian people of those rights. The Seminar urged the international community to sustain and strengthen its support for the Committee's activities and endeavours, in particular its efforts for facilitating the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East. At the same time, all countries must act and make their own contributions towards the convening of the International Peace Conference.

(k) The Seminar unanimously stressed the **urgency** of **convening** the International Peace Conference on the Middle East in accordance with General Assembly resolution 38/58 C. The Seminar urged that the Conference be convened before the end of 1988.

(l) The Seminar viewed the results of the recent Arab Summit held at Algiers as a significant contribution to achieving a settlement of the Arab-Israeli **conflict** and the question of Palestine. The Arab States once more committed **themselves** to meaningful political and economic support to the Palestinian uprising. The Seminar welcomed in particular the unequivocal support of the Summit for the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East,

(m) The Seminar took note with great interest of the statement of 7 June 1988 by Mr. **Bassam Abu Sherif**, Advisor to Chairman **Yasser Arafat** on the prospects of a Palestinian-Israeli settlement.

(n) The Seminar expressed its serious concern over the attempts by the United States Government to close the Permanent Observer Mission of the PLO to the United Nations. The position of the General Assembly in its resolutions on that issue was unequivocally supported. The hope was expressed that that dispute between the United States and the United Nations could be resolved in accordance with the provision of the Headquarters Agreement and on the basis of the principles of international law. The Seminar expressed the hope that the United States would act in conformity with article 21 of the Headquarters Agreement as indicated by the International Court of Justice in its advisory opinion,

(o) The Seminar agreed that efforts should be continued and intensified to mobilise official and public opinion in North America especially through the use of the media and activities of national and international NGOs. The United Nations should undertake additional efforts to disseminate factual and up-to-date information on the question of Palestine, the plight of Palestinians under occupation, and the measures required to be taken for the achievement of a just solution to the question of Palestine on the basis of the attainment by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights. The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and the Division for Palestinian Rights have an important role in the dissemination of such information.

(p) It is important that the media should play a more responsive role in providing more balanced reporting on the Middle East and, in particular, on the plight of the Palestinians as well as on the efforts to convene the International Peace Conference on the Middle East. Public institutions, universities, colleges, research institutes, churches and other religious establishments, as well as national and international NGOs, have a crucial role to play in the formation of public opinion, particularly in the United States and Canada. Those institutions should be urged to give wider coverage and more balanced treatment to the question of Palestine.

Declaration adopted by the United Nations North American
Regional NGO Symposium on the Question of Palestine

(New York, 29 June-1 July 1968)

Introduction

1. The fifth **North American Regional NGO Symposium on the Question of Palestine** was held from 29 June to 1 July 1986 in accordance with General Assembly resolution **42/66 B** of 2 December 1987,
2. The Symposium was attended by **representatives** of 47 non-governmental organisations as participants and 34 such organisations as observers from the United States and Canada. Still other **NGOs** from **several** regions attended the Symposium as well as a number of governmental and intergovernmental observers.
3. The Symposium received a message from His Excellency **Mr. Yasser Arafat**, Chairman of the Executive Committee of **the Palestine Liberation Organisation**.
4. His Excellency **Mr. Alberto Velasco-San José** (Cuba) opened the Symposium on behalf of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the **Palestinian People**. **Ms. Jeanne Butterfield**, Vice-Chairperson of the North American Co-ordinating Committee for **NGOs on the Question of Palestine (NACC)** served as chairperson of the Symposium, while His Excellency **Mr. Alexander Borg Olivier**, the Rapporteur of the Committee on the Exercise of the **Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People**, presided over the closing session.
5. Two panels were established. The first considered the topic "The uprising in the occupied Palestinian territories: the urgency of convening the **International Peace Conference on the Middle East** in accordance with General Assembly resolution **38/58 c**. Under that topic the following panelists presented papers: **Ms. Hanan Mihail-Ashrawi** (Dean of the Arts School, **Bir Zeit University**); **Ms. Tikvah Parnass-Honig** (Committee to Confront the "Iron Fist"); and, **Mr. Mubarak Awad** (Director, **Palestine Centre for the Study of Non-Violence**).
6. The second panel was entitled, "Implications of the United Nations legislation affecting the promotion in the **United States and the United Nations of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People**", Papers on this topic were presented by the following persons: **Ms. Jeanne Butterfield** (Palestine Solidarity Committee, Vice-Chairperson, **NACC**); **Mr. Hanna Halaq** (Professor, **Bir Zeit University**); and, **Mr. Ramsey Clark** (former United States Attorney-General).
7. Ten workshops were set up to consider the following topics, under the general theme "overcoming obstacles and organizing in North America":
 - (a) **Congressional and parliamentary;**
 - (b) **Breakthrough in the media and beyond;**
 - (c) **Forging links between the Palestinian and North American trade union movements;**

(d) **Religious communities** obstacles created by Christian conservative **fundamentalists**; building support for Palestinian rights)

(e) **Effects of occupation on Palestinian children)**

(f) **'educating and mobilising women in solidarity with Palestinian women;**

(g) **Violations of international and United States laws: attacks on Palestinians and the PLO in the United States;**

(h) **Understanding American Jewish policy and problems of organizing within the American Jewish community)**

(i) **The importance of the Israeli/Palestinian issue to the peace and disarmament movements;**

(j) **Obstacles and strategies for organizing students in support of Palestinian rights.**

8. **The Declaration of the Symposium was adopted unanimously and is reproduced below. The Report has been published as a special bulletin of the United Nations Division for Palestinian Rights.**

Declaration

9. **We, the non-governmental organisations (NGOs) participating in the fifth United Nations North American Regional NGO Symposium on the Question of Palestine, wish to thank the United Nations Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for making this Meeting possible, We are indeed honoured by the reception, and the presence of the members and observers of this distinguished United Nations body.**

10. **We wish also to thank the Chief of the Division for Palestinian Rights and are especially grateful for his enthusiastic support throughout our deliberations. We wish to thank also the Liaison Officer, the staff of the Division and the Department of Conference Services for their invaluable assistance in the preparation and execution of this Meeting.**

11. **We wish also to voice our appreciation to the distinguished expert panelists, workshop organizers, resource persons and facilitators who offered their invaluable insights into the question of Palestine and the potential central role to be played by NGOs in North America. The practical suggestions and strategies developed in the workshops assisted us in formulating future collaborative efforts in North America and in linking our efforts to a broader global network.**

12. **We note with satisfaction the record attendance and participation in this year's Symposium, and the commitment to Palestinian rights and a just and lasting solution that such participation represents.**

13. **We believe this Meeting contributed to the constructive interaction between the United Nations and the North American NGO community concerned to promote the implementation of General Assembly resolution 38/58 C of 13 December 1983, a resolution whose implementation we hold to be indispensable.**

14. We resolutely reaffirm the international consensus that the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) is the sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. We affirm the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination without external interference and to establish an independent Palestinian State on its own national territory under the leadership of the PLO, and the right of return, in conformity with all relevant United Nations resolutions.

15. We recognise and express our concern for the role that racism, both **de facto and de jure**, plays in the situation and treatment of Palestinians inside and outside the 1967 occupied territories. State actions directed against the Palestinians by the Israeli Government, coupled with the uncritical support by the United States Administration of these Israeli policies, shows clearly that racism serves as a **buttress** for denial of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.

16. We express our admiration for the unity, courage, determination and self-sacrifice of the Palestinian people in the uprising. We commit ourselves to provide moral, political and material support for the **intifadah**. We request that the United Nations Security Council and the Secretary-General seek to arrange for an interim international peace-keeping force to replace the Israeli occupying forces in order to provide protection and ensure respect for the human and political rights of the Palestinian population of the West Bank and Gaza.

17. In doing so, we affirm our support for the goals of the **intifadah** as repeatedly stated in leaflets issued by its **united** national leadership:

(a) Refusal to deal with or give legitimacy to any Israeli-appointed civil authority (police, revenue service, department of motor vehicles, etc.). specifically, municipal council and **mayors**, which have usurped the rights and responsibilities of an elected national authority. The resignation of such appointed individuals and bodies is an immediate and unequivocal public demand (which has been heeded by most appointees so far);

(b) The rejection of all attempts at creating an "alternative" Palestinian leadership from the occupied territories and exposing them as attempts at undermining the unity and legitimate PLO leadership of the Palestinian people **everywhere**;

(c) The qualitative transformation of the **intifadah** into a full-fledged situation of civil disobedience (more accurately, civil disobedience/rebellion)

(d) Nullification of the **emergency laws** (Ottoman, British) and an immediate end to Israeli's application of them;

(e) **The dismantling of Israeli detention camps and centres and the release of all Palestinian prisoners in addition to the cancellation of the Israeli programme of intimidation and terror, including the deployment of troops against civilians in populated areas;**

(f) **The cessation of all Israeli measures aimed at creating new geo-political and demographic facts in the occupied territories such as the confiscation of land, the erection of settlements, the expropriation of resources, the deportation of Palestinians, and the demolition of houses;**

(g) The demand for the immediate end of the occupation, since Israel has been proven totally unfit to remain in charge of a civilian population whose human rights it has constantly violated in direct defiance of the Fourth Geneva Convention;

(h) Instituting free elections under the auspices of a neutral international body whereby the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza may elect their own local civil authority;

(i) Requesting international intervention in the form of an interim neutral caretakerhip of the West Bank and Gaza (whether United Nations or EEC or other) to safeguard Palestinian rights and to prevent Israel from creating further "facts" and from altering the demographics in the area;

(j) Urging temporary caretakerchip so that the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza can practice their rights, including freedom of expression, freedom of political organization, and freedom of access to Palestinians everywhere, including their legitimate PLO leadership, All of this is in preparation for the convening of the United Nations International Peace Conference as called for in General Assembly resolution 38/58 Cj

(k) The launching of a concerted Palestinian peace offensive clearly expounding political strategy, objectives, and commitments.

18. The aim of this Meeting was to develop practical strategies and support projects for concerted action by North American NGOs. Our primary work was conducted in workshops. We commend their recommendations to all NGOs for their careful consideration.

19. NGOs attending the present meeting have selected a North American co-ordinating committee. During the coming year, the committee is charged by this meeting to co-ordinate the work of the North American NGOs, present in pursuing our common objectives and strategies. The NGOs present request a report from the committee at the 1989 North American symposium in order to evaluate its efforts. We urge continuing North American NGO support for the objectives stated in the present Declaration.

20. NACC wishes to continue to act as a resource for the United Nations Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and the Division for Palestinian Rights, as requested. NACC requests that the United Nations continue its financial support of an NACC preparatory meeting so that NACC can fulfil its obligations in relation to the 1989 North American NGO Symposium on the Question of Palestine.

21. In order to continue collaboration between the United Nations and the North American NGO community, we urge both the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and the Division for Palestinian Rights to send representatives to the major North American NGO conferences,

22. We urge the Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People to convey this Declaration to the General Assembly at its forty-third session as part of the Committee's report.

ANNEX VII

Declaration adopted by the United Nations European Regional NGO Symposium on the Question of Palestine

(Geneva, 29-30 August 1988)

Introduction

1. The United Nations European Regional NGO Symposium on the Question of Palestine, the **second** for the European region, was held under the auspices of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People at the United Nations Office at Geneva from 29 to 30 August 1988. The Symposium was convened in pursuance of General Assembly resolutions 42/66 A and B of 2 December 1987.
2. The Symposium was attended by a total **number of 159** non-governmental organizations (NGOs), 93 of whom attended as observers. It was also attended by several observers from Governments, intergovernmental organisations and United Nations bodies.
3. The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People was represented by a delegation composed of H.E. Mrs. Absa Claude Diallo (Senegal), Committee Chairman, H.E. Mr. Shah Mohammad Dost (Afghanistan), Committee Vice-Chairman, K.E. Mr. Guennadi Oudovenko (Ukrainian SSR), and Mr. Zuhdi L. Terei (Palestine Liberation Organisation).
4. The programme for the Symposium was elaborated by the Committee in consultation with the European Co-ordinating Committee for NGOs on the Question of Palestine. Its main theme was "The Palestinian uprising and the European commitment to the International Peace Conference". A panel of the same title was held and presentations were made by the following experts: Prof. Ziad Abu-Amr (Palestinian); Mr. Robert Garai (Hungary); Ms. Luciana Castellina (Italy) and Mr. Ernie Ross (United Kingdom).
5. Four workshops were also held on the following topics: (a) Children under occupation (b) Mobilization for a political solution of the question of Palestine) (c) Women for Palestine) (d) Actions to improve the economic and social conditions of the Palestinian people in the occupied territories.
6. The Symposium adopted a final declaration as well as action-oriented proposals emanating from the workshops. It also elected a new European Co-ordinating Committee for NGOs on the Question of Palestine to co-ordinate the work of European NGOs from 1988 to 1990. The report will be published in due course as a Special Bulletin of the United Nations Division for Palestinian Rights.

Declaration

7. We, the non-governmental organisations (NGOs) participating in the United Nations European Regional NGO Symposium on the Question of Palestine, thank the United Nations Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for convening this meeting and we appreciate the presence of the

members and observers of that body. We thank the Chief of the Division for Palestinian Rights, the NGO liaison officers and staff of the Division and the Department of **Conference Services**, including the interpreters, for their assistance in this meeting. We express our appreciation to the distinguished experts who spoke here. We deplore the fact that one distinguished expert was prevented from attending by the Israeli Government.

8. We salute the brave people of the occupied Palestinian territories for their courage, endurance and **solidarity** throughout the **uprising** and we **note** how strongly they have focused the attention of the entire world on the **injustices** suffered by all the Palestinian people. The uprising, by rejecting the occupation and affirming the inalienable **rights** of the Palestinian people, exposes the true nature of the Israeli occupation. We extend all possible support to them in this **historic process**. We call upon the **United Nations** to exercise full **responsibility** for the Palestinian question. The United Nations should place observer teams in the West Bank and Gaza to help protect the people there from **continuing human rights** violations.

9. We reaffirm very strongly the **urgent** need for the International Peace Conference to be convened, in accordance with General Assembly **resolutions 38/58 C** and **41/43 D**, as the **only possible** means to achieve a just and peaceful settlement.

10. The historic links between the countries and peoples of Europe and those of the Middle East, and the fact that Europe is also **affected by the lack** of peace and justice in the Middle East, gives it a special responsibility and a key role in the search for a peaceful and just solution of the conflict in the **region**. **Noting** especially the declarations of the **European Community (EEC)** of February 1987 and February 1988 in support of the convening of an **international** conference, we call upon the Governments concerned to act to implement their declarations and to ensure the convening of the **International Conference** without delay.

11. We condemn the **systematic** destruction of the political, **social** and economic structure of Palestinian society and the attempt by the occupation forces to eliminate Palestinian society for the future. Even as we are meeting, the army of occupation closed down trade union headquarters and charitable institutions. These actions are wholly and specifically contrary to articles 47, 49 and 50 of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 and they **destroy** the myth of the democratic nature of Israel. We call upon all European Governments to **state** categorically that their bilateral relations with Israel will be **affected** by these **breaches** of the Geneva Convention which will be reconsidered if these and similar practices are not **ended** especially as the signatories of the Geneva Convention are **responsible** for its implementation.

12. We congratulate the members of the European Parliament who have **opposed** the ratification of the Israeli trading **protocols** with the EEC and uphold their example in practical action to demonstrate **disapproval** of Israeli actions which are wholly illegal in international law. On the same issue, we condemn the Israeli and Zionist demands addressed to the Soviet Government to establish special direct flights for **emigrants** to Israel.

13. We call upon all European Governments which have not yet fully recognised the PLO to do so, especially since the international consensus that the PLO is the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people is greatly strengthened by this

unequivocal support for the PLO by the people of the uprising. Accordingly, we call for the PLO's participation in the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, on an equal footing with all other parties in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 38/58 C and 41/43 D. We note that the Palestinians have completed the process of nation building and are now ready to have their own nation-State. Accordingly, the Palestinians' right to self-determination, in accordance with United Nations principles, must be basic to the deliberations of the Peace Conference.

14. We express our strong support for the forces of peace in Israel which favour the principle of a Palestinian State, We especially express support for those who refuse military service in occupied Palestinian and other occupied Arab territories.

15. We express our great appreciation of the work of NGOs actively involved in the Middle East, in blending missions there and in all their other activities, in support of oppressed people and in working with Palestinian NGOs. We note that NGO workers in this field are subject to physical danger and kidnapping. We give them our strong support.

16. Our primary work in this Symposium was conducted in workshops and we affirm their conclusions. We congratulate the European Co-ordinating Committee on organizing a highly successful international symposium on 28 August on practical ways to support the Palestinian trade union movement and we also affirm its conclusions.

ANNEX VIII

Declaration adopted by the International NGO Meeting on the Question of Palestine

(Geneva, 31 August-2 September 1988)

Introduction

1. The Fifth United Nations International NGO Meeting on the Question of Palestine was held under the auspices of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People at the United Nations Office at Geneva from 31 August to 2 September 1988. The Meeting was convened in pursuance of General Assembly resolution 42/66 B of 2 December 1987.

2. The Meeting was attended by a total number of 278 non-governmental organisations (NGOs), of whom 138 attended as observers. It was also attended by Mr. Joseph Verner Reed, Under-Secretary-General for Political and General Assembly Affairs and Secretariat Service, representative of the Secretary-General, and by several observers from Governments, intergovernmental organisations, United Nations bodies and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO).

3. The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People was represented by a delegation composed of H.E. Mrs. Absa Claude Diallo (Senegal), Committee Chairman, H.E. Mr. Mohammed Dost (Afghanistan), Committee Vice-Chairman, H.E. Mr. Quennadi Oudovenko (Ukrainian SSR), and Mr. Zuhdi Lahib Terai (Palestine Liberation Organisations (PLO)).

4. The programme for the Meeting was elaborated by the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People in consultation with the International Co-ordinating Committee for NGOs on the Question of Palestine (ICCP). Its main theme was "The consequences of the uprising in the occupied Palestinian territories and the new urgency of convening the International Peace Conference on the Middle East in accordance with United Nations General Assembly resolution 38/58 C".

5. A panel of the same title was established and presentations were made by the following eminent personalities:

H.E. Mr. Apolinar Díaz Callejas (Colombia); H.E. Mr. Paul Findley (United States); H.E. Mr. Rikki Jaipal (India); H.E. Mr. Gerald Kaufman (United Kingdom); H.E. Mr. Vladimir Vinogradov (USSR).

6. The following panelists presented papers on the second panel entitled "The consequences of occupation - witnesses from the occupied territories - what has happened":

Mr. Qhassan Abdelwahab El Khatib (Palestinian); Mr. Emil Habibi (Israel); Ms. Samar Hawash (Palestinian); Dr. Allam Jarrar (Palestinian); Dr. Jumana Odeh (Palestinian); Dr. Amnon Zichroni (Israel).

Five workshops were also held on the following topics: (a) Protecting the human rights and security of the Palestinian people; (b) Mobilizing to meet special

needs: health, education and welfare in the occupied territories) (c) New initiatives for mobilization for a just peace; (d) Meeting the socio-economic crisis in the occupied territories; (e) Supporting women and children. A number of special interest groups were also organized by the participating NGOs.

7. The Meeting adopted a final declaration as well as action-oriented proposals emanating from the workshops and special interest groups. The report will be published in due course as a Special Bulletin of the Division for Palestinian Rights.

Declaration

8. We, the non-governmental organisations (NGOs) participating in the Fifth United Nations International NGO Meeting on the Question of Palestine, are gathering at a time when the Palestinian struggle has entered a decisive stage. We admire and support the determination of the Palestinian people in the struggle for independence and the securing of its own State.

9. Last year, the Fourth United Nations International NGO Meeting on the Question of Palestine expressed its grave concern that any further delay in convening the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 38/58 C and 41/43 D, would worsen conflict in the Middle East and intensify the suffering and oppression to which the Palestinian people were daily subjected. Noting that the International Conference has still not been convened in spite of our warning, we now draw attention, with all the power at our command, to the murderous intensification of the daily and continuing suffering and oppression of the Palestinian people since December 1987. We vigorously renew our call for the Conference.

10. We salute the brave people of the occupied territories for their courage, endurance and solidarity throughout the intifadah (uprising) and we note that they have done more during the months of the intifadah to focus attention on the injustices suffered by the Palestinian people than the entire world community had done in the previous 40 years.

11. We condemn all deportations and all other manifestations of the systematic destruction of Palestinian society and the attempts by the occupation forces to eliminate Palestinian society for the future. We condemn all infringements of human rights and international law such as administrative detentions, imprisonment, arbitrary arrests, collective punishments, and demolition of houses, the closing of schools and educational institutions, the confiscation of property and the killing of innocent people. We warn the international community that plans for mass expulsions and population transfer (expulsions) of Palestinians are being seriously discussed in Israel. Even as we were assembling, trade union headquarters and charitable institutions were closed down. All these actions are wholly and specifically contrary to Articles 47, 49 and 50 of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949. We call upon all Governments to state categorically that their bilateral relations with Israel will be affected by these breaches of the Geneva Convention and that relations will be reconsidered if these and all breaches of the Geneva Convention are not ended.

12. In accordance with the suggestions made by the United Nations Secretary-General (S/19443) of 21 January 1988, we urge the United Nations, the five permanent members of the Security Council and the entire international

community to help to ensure the protection of the Palestinian people in the occupied territories. This should include physical protection, legal protection, general assistance to resist the violations of their rights and protection by publicity through the international media. We request the Secretary-General to send a fact-finding mission to the occupied territories to assess the needs of the Palestinians there.

13. We call upon the United Nations to exercise its full responsibility for the Palestine question. The United Nations should place observer teams and/or any other United Nations body in the occupied Palestinian territories of the West Bank and Gaza Strip without delay to help protect the people there from continuing human rights violations and Israeli war crimes. We specifically request the Secretary-General to establish immediately a special commission to investigate the repeated occurrence of maltreatment, beatings, toxic gassing, torture and shooting and killing of Palestinian children by Israeli troops, prison authorities and settlers.

14. We note that the intifadah has greatly strengthened the international consensus in favour of the Peace Conference. Accordingly, we call on all Governments to support the immediate convening of the Conference under United Nations auspices, in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 38/58 C and 41/43 D, with the participants including the five permanent members of the Security Council, the PLO, Israel, the Arab States party to the conflict, and other concerned States, on an equal footing and with equal rights. The object must be to reach a peaceful settlement between the Palestinian State to be established and Israel as conducive to the overall settlement in the Middle East.

15. Noting that the people of the intifadah are not just protesting against oppression but are calling for the self-determination, independence and right to return which is their right in accordance with the fundamental principles of the Charter of the United Nations, we call on all Governments to recognise that right and to uphold it. Recent events have created a new situation where there is no recognised sovereign authority over the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967 except that of the Palestinian people. Therefore, we call for the immediate end of the occupation. We also call on the United Nations to assist the Palestinian people in securing the right to exercise sovereignty there, according to United Nations resolutions.

16. Reaffirming the international consensus that the PLO is the sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, we note that the consensus is greatly strengthened by the unequivocal support for the PLO by the people of the intifadah and by the united national leadership of the intifadah. We therefore call on all Governments fully to recognize the PLO.

17. We demand immediate Israeli withdrawal from southern Lebanon in accordance with United Nations Security Council resolutions 425, 508 and 509. We demand the ending of the inhumane Israeli air raids and all other attacks on targets in Lebanon. We call for an end to all attempts to destabilize Lebanon and for full recognition of its unity, sovereignty and democratic development. We ask ICCP to co-ordinate the sending of delegations to Lebanon as a way to protect the Palestinian population there from the occupying authorities.

18. We condemn the introduction by Israel of nuclear weapons into the Middle East and the threat to regional and world peace which those weapons constitute. We call

for the implementation of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East and for Israel to sign the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, to dismantle its nuclear and chemical weapons and open its nuclear facilities to international inspection. We especially deplore the creation of new nuclear threats in the Middle East at a time when the United States and the Soviet Union have embarked upon reductions in nuclear weapons. We demand the immediate release of Mordechai Vanunu.

19. We express our strong support for the forces of peace in Israel which favour the International Peace Conference and the establishment of a Palestinian State. We strongly condemn the closing down of newspapers and the harassment of journalists. We express support for those who refuse military service in occupied Palestinian territories and other occupied territories of Arab countries and we call upon the Israeli Government to release the imprisoned soldiers, to drop the investigation by its security services against Yesh Gvul and to **recognize** the right of Israelis to conscientious objection. We strongly urge the Israeli Parliament to rescind the law of August 1986 which prohibits contact between Israeli citizens and representatives of Palestinian organizations.

20. A major objective of this Meeting was to plan and co-ordinate NGO activities and much of our work was conducted in workshops and in special interest group meetings. We affirm their conclusions and suggestions for action. In so doing, we draw attention to the fact that NGO opinion has been more progressive and creative than official governmental thinking. We urge all Governments, in the interest of peace and justice, to consider seriously the options defined by **NGOs**.

21. It is important that NGO effectiveness be further increased. Accordingly, we call for NGO liaison offices to be established in every United Nations designated region and we urge the United Nations to convene an annual NGO regional symposium in every region. We urge the United Nations to convene an international **meeting** in Vienna in the first week of September 1989, the format to be decided, like the format for this present meeting, in co-operation with ICCP.

22. We call upon all our fellow **NGOs** to provide every material, medical and other assistance to the Palestinian people.

23. We affirm the organization and work of ICCP and its secretariat in Geneva. We call upon the United Nations to offer every possible assistance to ICCP and its secretariat.

24. We urge ~~the~~ Chairman of the **Committee** on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People to convey this Declaration to the General Assembly at its forty-third session as part of the **Committee's** report. We urge that the results of this meeting be disseminated as widely as possible to **NGOs** unable to attend, to Governments and the media.

25. We thank the United Nations **Committee** on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for convening this meeting and we appreciate the presence of the members and observers of that body. We thank the Chief of the Division for Palestinian Rights, the NGO Liaison Officer and staff of the Division, and the Department of Conference Services, including the interpreters, for their assistance in this meeting. We express our appreciation to the distinguished experts who spoke here.

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**REPORT
OF THE
COMMITTEE ON THE EXERCISE OF
THE INALIENABLE RIGHTS
OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE**

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

OFFICIAL RECORDS: FORTY-FOURTH SESSION

SUPPLEMENT No. 35 (A/44/35)



UNITED NATIONS

New York, 1990

NOTE

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CONTENTS

	<u>Paragraphs</u>	<u>Page</u>
LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL		v
I. INTRODUCTION	1 - 8	1
II. MANDATE OF THE COMMITTEE	9 - 11	3
III. ORGANIZATION OF WORK	12 - 17	4
A. Election of officers	12 - 14	4
B. Participation in the work of the Committee	15 - 16	4
C. Re-establishment of the Working Group	17	4
IV. ACTION TAKEN BY THE COMMITTEE	18 - 93	5
A. Action taken in accordance with General Assembly resolution 43/175 A of 15 December 1988	18 - 63	5
1. Review of the situation relating to the question of Palestine and efforts to implement the recommendations of the Committee	18 - 31	5
2. Reactions to developments affecting the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people	32 - 56	9
3. Action taken by the Committee to promote the convening of the proposed International Peace Conference on the Middle East in accordance with General Assembly resolution 43/176 of 15 December 1988	57 - 61	14
4. Attendance at international conferences and meetings	62	16
5. Action taken by United Nations bodies, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and intergovernmental organizations	63	16
B. Action taken by the Committee in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 43/175 A and B of 15 December 1988	64 - 93	18
1. Co-operation with non-governmental organizations ..	64 - 82	18

CONTENTS (continued)

	<u>Paragraphs</u>	<u>Page</u>
2. Seminars	83 - 90	22
3. Other activities	91 - 93	24
V. ACTION TAKEN BY THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INFORMATION IN ACCORDANCE WITH GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 43/175 C	94 - 109	25
VI. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COMMITTEE	110 - 118	29

Annexes

I. Recommendations of the Committee endorsed by the General Assembly at its thirty-first session		33
II. Conclusions and recommendations adopted by the Twenty-first United Nations Seminar on the Question of Palestine, Cairo, 18 to 22 December 1988		36
III. Declaration adopted by the United Nations African Regional NGO Symposium on the Question of Palestine, Cairo, 18 to 21 December 1988		42
IV. Conclusions and recommendations adopted by the Twenty-second United Nations Seminar on the Question of Palestine, New York, 19 and 20 June 1989		45
V. Declaration adopted by the United Nations North American Regional NGO Symposium on the Question of Palestine, New York, 21 to 23 June 1989		52
VI. Declaration adopted by the United Nations European Regional NGO Symposium on the Question of Palestine, Vienna, 28 and 29 August 1989		57
VII. Declaration adopted by the Sixth United Nations International NGO Meeting on the Question of Palestine, Vienna, 30 August to 1 September 1989		61

LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

8 November 1989

Sir,

I have the honour to enclose herewith the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for submission to the General Assembly in accordance with paragraph 4 of resolution 43/175 A of 15 December 1988.

Accept, Sir, the assurances of my highest consideration.

(Signed) Absa Claude DIALLO
Chairman of the Committee on the
Exercise of the Inalienable Rights
of the Palestinian People

His Excellency
Mr. Javier Pérez de Cuéllar
Secretary-General of the United Nations

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, established by General Assembly resolution 3376 (XXX) of 10 November 1975, is currently composed of 23 Member States as follows: Afghanistan, Cuba, Cyprus, German Democratic Republic, Guinea, Guyana, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mali, Malta, Nigeria, Pakistan, Romania, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic and Yugoslavia.
2. In its first report, 1/ the Committee made a number of recommendations specifically designed to enable the Palestinian people to attain and exercise its inalienable rights in Palestine as previously recognized and defined by the General Assembly. Those recommendations were first endorsed by the Assembly in its resolution 31/20 of 24 November 1976 as a basis for the solution of the question of Palestine.
3. In its subsequent reports to the General Assembly, 2/ the Committee reaffirmed its original recommendations and called for their implementation. On each occasion they have been endorsed overwhelmingly by the Assembly, which has also continued to renew and, as necessary, expand the mandate of the Committee.
4. However, despite the increasing urgency of the appeals by the Committee and the grave deterioration of the situation in the occupied Palestinian territory, the Security Council has not yet been able to act on or implement the recommendations of the Committee. The Committee remains convinced that positive consideration and action by the Security Council on these recommendations would advance prospects for the attainment of a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict, the core of which is the question of Palestine.
5. The Committee's efforts to promote such a solution acquired even greater urgency in the year under review because of the further escalation of repression by Israel, the occupying Power, in its efforts to crush the Palestinian uprising, the intifadah, now in its second year. Despite the international outcry over grave and repeated violations of human rights in the occupied Palestinian territory and the adoption by the Security Council of resolutions requesting the occupying Power to abide by its obligations under international law, Israel has continued and has increased its acts of repression and oppression with the help of its armed forces and settlers against the Palestinian civilian population resisting the occupation. The Committee repeatedly expressed its most profound concern at the mounting casualties and suffering inflicted on the Palestinian people, particularly women and children, and at the intensification of tension and violence in the region, and warned that Israel's intransigence would only exacerbate the situation, jeopardize international efforts to promote a negotiating process, and further endanger international peace and security. The Committee reaffirmed that no solution could be achieved as long as the Palestinian people was denied the exercise of its inalienable rights in Palestine, including those to self-determination without external interference, to national independence and sovereignty, to return to its homes and property, and to establish its own independent sovereign State, and as long as Israel continued to occupy the Palestinian and other Arab territories.

6. The Committee therefore continued to give the highest priority to the urgent need for ensuring the safety and protection of Palestinians under Israeli occupation and for alleviating their suffering, while further intensifying its efforts to promote a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement in accordance with United Nations resolutions.

7. The Committee welcomed the historic peace initiative launched by the Palestine National Council at its nineteenth extraordinary session, held at Algiers in November 1988, and, in particular, the proclamation of the State of Palestine as a bold and significant contribution towards the achievement of peace in the Middle East. The Committee took note with satisfaction of the initiation of a dialogue between the United States of America and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) as a positive measure that contributes to redressing the imbalance between the parties. It expressed the hope that the dialogue would lead to the removal of obstacles to the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East and called for its continuation and the expansion of its political scope. The Committee considered that it was now incumbent upon the Government of Israel to respond positively to the Palestinian peace initiative, which had the overwhelming support of the international community. The Committee fully supported the courageous intifadah of the Palestinian people, which confirms in no uncertain terms the Palestinian determination to resist, reject and put an end to Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967. The Committee considered that the intifadah and the subsequent developments, as well as the general improvement in the international climate, had created a new momentum towards a negotiated settlement and that this historic opportunity should not be missed.

8. The Committee accordingly reiterated its appeals to the Security Council to take action urgently in order to secure United Nations objectives on the question of Palestine, in particular through the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, in accordance with the principles affirmed by the General Assembly in its resolution 43/176 of 15 December 1988. The Committee reiterated its firm conviction that the Conference provides the only comprehensive, practical and overwhelmingly accepted framework for peace and stressed once again the urgent need for additional concrete and constructive efforts by all concerned in order to convene the Conference without further delay.

II. MANDATE OF THE COMMITTEE

9. The Committee's mandate for the year 1989 is contained in paragraphs 3 to 5 of General Assembly resolution 43/175 A of 15 December 1988, by which the Assembly:

(a) Requested the Committee to continue to keep under review the situation relating to the question of Palestine as well as the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Achievement of Palestinian Rights 3/ and to report and make suggestions to the General Assembly or the Security Council, as appropriate.

(b) Authorized the Committee to continue to exert all efforts to promote the implementation of its recommendations, including representation at conferences and meetings and the sending of delegations, to make such adjustments in its approved programme of seminars and symposia and meetings for non-governmental organizations as it may consider necessary, and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its forty-fourth session and thereafter.

(c) Requested the Committee to continue to extend its co-operation to non-governmental organizations in their contribution towards heightening international awareness of the facts relating to the question of Palestine and creating a more favourable atmosphere for the full implementation of the Committee's recommendations, and to take the necessary steps to expand its contacts with those organizations.

10. By its resolution 43/175 B of 15 December 1988, the General Assembly also requested the Secretary-General, inter alia, to provide the Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat with the necessary resources and to ensure that it continues to discharge the tasks detailed in earlier resolutions, in consultation with the Committee and under its guidance.

11. By its resolution 43/175 C of 15 December 1988, the General Assembly requested the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat, in full co-operation and co-ordination with the Committee, to continue its special information programme on the question of Palestine, with particular emphasis on public opinion in Europe and North America.

III. ORGANIZATION OF WORK

A. Election of officers

12. At its 161st meeting, on 26 January 1989, the Committee decided to re-elect the following officers:

Chairman: H.E. Mrs. Absa Claude Diallo (Senegal)

Vice-Chairmen: H.E. Mr. Oscar Oramas-Oliva (Cuba)
H.E. Mr. Shah Mohammad Dost (Afghanistan)

Rapporteur: H.E. Mr. Alexander Borg Olivier (Malta)

13. At its 165th meeting, on 8 November 1989, the Committee elected H.E. Mr. Noor Ahmad Noor (Afghanistan) as Vice-Chairman in place of H.E. Mr. Shah Mohammad Dost (Afghanistan), who had departed from New York.

14. At its 162nd meeting, on 10 March 1989, the Committee adopted its programme of work for 1989 in implementation of its mandate.

B. Participation in the work of the Committee

15. As in previous years, the Committee reconfirmed that all States Members of the United Nations and Permanent Observers to the United Nations desiring to participate in the work of the Committee as observers were welcome to do so. Accordingly, in a letter dated 10 March 1989, the Chairman of the Committee so informed the Secretary-General, who subsequently transmitted the letter, on 29 March 1989, to States Members of the United Nations and members of the specialized agencies, and to intergovernmental regional organizations. The Committee also decided to invite Palestine, represented by the Palestine Liberation Organization, to participate in the work of the Committee as an observer, to attend all its meetings and to make observations and proposals for the consideration of the Committee.

16. During 1989, the Committee again welcomed as observers all the States and organizations that had participated in its work in the preceding year. 4/

C. Re-establishment of the Working Group

17. At its 161st meeting, the Committee re-established its Working Group to assist in the preparation and expedition of the work of the Committee. The Working Group was constituted as before under the chairmanship of Mr. Alexander Borg Olivier (Malta), on the understanding that any Committee member or observer could participate in its proceedings. 5/ Mr. Pramathesh Rath (India) was re-elected Vice-Chairman of the Working Group. Subsequently, at its 165th meeting, the Committee elected Mr. Dinesh Kumar Jain (India) as Vice-Chairman of the Working Group in place of Mr. Rath, who had departed from New York.

IV. ACTION TAKEN BY THE COMMITTEE

A. Action taken in accordance with General Assembly resolution 43/175 A of 15 December 1988

1. Review of the situation relating to the question of Palestine and efforts to implement the recommendations of the Committee

18. In accordance with its mandate, in the past year, the Committee continued to keep under review the situation relating to the question of Palestine and to exert all efforts to promote the implementation of its recommendations as repeatedly endorsed by the General Assembly.

19. In response to urgent developments affecting the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, the Chairman of the Committee, on repeated occasions, brought such developments to the attention of the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council, urging the adoption of appropriate measures in accordance with United Nations resolutions (see sect. A.2 (a) below).

20. The Committee was alarmed at the further aggravation of the situation in the occupied Palestinian territory as a result of the intensification of efforts by Israel to suppress the Palestinian intifadah, including the increasing resort to armed force and settler vigilantism, and other Draconian measures.

21. The Committee monitored the situation in the occupied Palestinian territory on an ongoing basis through the media, the reports of United Nations organs and agencies, as well as information collected by non-governmental organizations, individual experts and persons from the occupied territory who participated in meetings held under the auspices of the Committee, Governments and other sources.

22. The Committee noted that the intifadah, the uprising of the Palestinian people against military occupation and gradual annexation by Israel of the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, had continued despite overwhelming odds since 9 December 1987. Palestinians, often children and youths, have continued to challenge the Israeli occupying forces with stones, barricades, burning tyres and other means. In order to suppress the intifadah, the Israeli troops have resorted to excessive and indiscriminate use of force, which was reported to have been condoned and even encouraged at the highest level of government, with the apparent intent to punish and intimidate the population, resulting in an extensive and unprecedented range of human rights violations. Live ammunition, including rubber and plastic bullets fired at close range, was used liberally and increasingly, even in non-life-threatening situations. There was an apparently deliberate misuse of tear gas, fired, for example, into hospitals or homes. Thousands of Palestinians were the victims of beatings, deliberately aimed at breaking bones, while in the hands of the army or security personnel. As at 15 September 1989, according to the DataBase Project on Palestinian Human Rights, a respected human rights organization, the number of Palestinians shot to death by the Israeli forces or armed settlers had reached a total of 537 identified cases. Another 212 Palestinians had died from beatings, suffocation from tear gas, and other causes related to actions by the occupying forces. The Committee was particularly alarmed at what appeared to be the deliberate targeting of children in such attacks, as at least 20 per cent of the fatalities were children under 16. That percentage had increased to 28 per cent since March 1989 and 46 per cent during the month of August 1989.

23. In addition to recent demonstrations, mass strikes and tax boycotts have been organized by Palestinians in the occupied territory, and hundreds of popular committees have been set up with the objective of creating alternative structures to the Israeli Civil Administration. Initially organized to provide food and medical supplies to refugee camps under curfew, those committees were then reported to have grown and to have expanded their goals. They became responsible for the co-ordination of strike activities, alternative education, health needs, guard duties and the organization of a survival economy centred on a return to family agriculture. A number of Palestinian employees of the Israeli Civil Administration, particularly police officials, have resigned from their posts.

24. The Israeli authorities have resorted to increasingly harsh measures in their attempt to suppress such activities. A number of Palestinian newspapers and institutions were closed down and the popular committees proscribed. Currency restrictions were introduced to control money going to families and institutions in the occupied territory. New identity cards were issued in the Gaza Strip to monitor the population more closely. Sixty Palestinians were deported in violation of the fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, and numerous Security Council resolutions. Villages, towns and refugee camps have been put under prolonged curfew, sometimes for a month or more, during which time electricity, water and telephones have often been disconnected and food and medical supplies interrupted. At least 100,000 productive trees have been uprooted and crops ruined. There was a dramatic increase in the number of house demolitions in the past year, as a form of punishment of entire villages for supporting the intifadah. At least 236 Palestinian homes were destroyed for "security" reasons between December 1987 and August 1989, while another 675 buildings were destroyed on the pretext that they had been built illegally.

25. The Committee noted that, in their efforts to suppress the Palestinian leadership of the intifadah, the Israeli authorities had waged campaigns of mass arrests. It was estimated that, as at September 1989, more than 40,000 Palestinians had been in prison at one time or another, of whom only 18,000 had actually been sentenced. The Israeli authorities had also increasingly relied on the use of administrative detention without charges or trial. It was reported that, in March 1988, the power to issue administrative detention orders was extended to all officers with the rank of colonel and above. At the same time, previously existing judicial safeguards, which gave the detainees a measure of protection, were removed. Lawyers representing Palestinian detainees have maintained that the withholding of evidence for "security reasons" and administrative and other practical obstacles imposed by the Israeli authorities have made it nearly impossible to represent their clients properly. In August, the standard period of administrative detention was doubled from six months to a year. It was reported that administrative detention was increasingly used to detain prisoners of conscience. All sectors of Palestinian society were included, such as trade unionists, students, journalists, doctors, lawyers, academics, teachers, members of voluntary organizations and human rights workers, as well as labourers and the unemployed. About 13,600 Palestinians, including children, were reported to be in detention as at September 1989, 4,400 of whom were held under harsh conditions at the Ansar III camp in the Negev desert in Israel, where they had been taken in violation of the provisions of the fourth Geneva Convention.

26. The Committee was gravely concerned at the intensification of violations of the Palestinians' right to education during the second year of the intifadah.

Measures taken by the occupying Power included the complete closure of universities and the long-term and repeated closure of schools, the prohibition of home study and compensation classes in alternative locations, the use of schools as military outposts, the destruction of school property, and military raids on schools and alternative classes. Arrests, deportations and administrative detention were used against faculty, administrators and students. It was estimated that primary and secondary school children, numbering about 400,000, had been taught school for only about five months altogether during the period from the autumn of 1987 to June 1989. About 100,000 children between 6 to 8 years of age had been unable to begin first grade. About 20,000 university students had their education completely interrupted. The Committee noted with great concern the assessment by educators that the imposition of those restrictions penalizes present and future generations of Palestinians and will create serious dysfunctions in the educational system that will be extremely difficult to compensate at a later stage.

27. The Committee further noted that the health situation in the occupied Palestinian territory had continued to deteriorate and was a matter of the most serious concern. It was reported that, since the beginning of the occupation, Israeli policies had resulted in a lack of basic sanitary infrastructure and health services. The number of health personnel and hospital beds, the quantity and quality of services, the medical equipment and supplies, were increasingly insufficient to meet the needs of the Palestinian population. There was no structured health system and no long-term health planning specific to the occupied territory and independent of the Israeli system, which drained the resources of the occupied territory without providing corresponding services. The estimated 40,000 Palestinians injured during the intifadah, who were in need of physiotherapeutical rehabilitation, had created enormous strains on the already inadequate facilities. The Committee also noted with great concern continuing reports that access to medical care, even in emergency cases, was often rendered difficult by travel restrictions and curfews imposed by the occupying Power, and that hospitals had been attacked and patients arrested.

28. The Committee also noted with concern that, in his report on the situation of workers of the occupied Arab territories, based on the results of a fact-finding mission to the occupied Palestinian territory, the Director-General of the International Labour Organization (ILO), 6/ had stated that economic and other measures taken by the Israeli authorities to suppress the intifadah had led to a substantial deterioration in the standard of living of the Palestinian people - by as much as 50 per cent, according to some observers. Palestinian employees and workers were of the opinion that any development for their benefit had been reduced to a minimum in recent years, and that any efforts that they themselves had undertaken for genuine development had been slowed or wrecked in order to keep the Palestinian economy as dependent as possible on that of Israel. Palestinian workers continued to suffer from fundamental inequities in training and employment opportunities and in the level and conditions of employment and social insurance system, contributing to their vulnerability and dependence. The Israeli authorities had also continued to engage in grave infringements of the Palestinians' right to freedom of association, including raids on and closure of trade union premises, arrest, house arrest, expulsion or threat of expulsion, administrative detention and physical harassment and interrogation of trade unionists.

29. Taking into account the continuing serious aggravation of the situation in the occupied territory, which affected every aspect of Palestinian life and society,

the Committee deplored that Israel, the occupying Power, had denied entry to the territory to a number of United Nations bodies and agencies seeking to investigate the situation, in particular, the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Population of the Occupied Territories, the Commission on the Status of Women and the Special Committee of Experts of the World Health Organization (WHO). The Rapporteur and expert missions of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to investigate the needs of Palestinian educational institutions had also been unable to visit the occupied Palestinian territory. The Committee associated itself with the call made in General Assembly resolution 43/233 of 20 April 1989 for the Secretary-General to submit periodic reports on developments in the occupied Palestinian territory.

30. The Committee wishes to draw once again the most urgent attention of the General Assembly and the Security Council to the policies and practices of Israel, the occupying Power, which are in flagrant violation of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, and which prevent the Palestinian people from attaining its inalienable rights, and thwart international efforts to bring about a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict in the Middle East. The Committee reiterates its most urgent appeal to the Security Council and the international community as a whole to take all necessary measures to ensure the safety and protection of the Palestinians in the occupied territory, pending the withdrawal of Israeli forces and the achievement of a settlement.

31. The Committee further considered that, above and beyond protective and emergency relief measures, the international community must take all possible measures to halt the current economic crisis and to develop socio-economic structures that will lead to the genuine and autonomous development of the occupied Palestinian territory. The Palestinian struggle for independent nationhood requires, and is entitled to, the full support and concrete assistance of the United Nations system, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter of the United Nations and United Nations resolutions. In that connection, the Committee noted that, in resolution 43/178 of 20 December 1988, entitled "Assistance to the Palestinian people", the General Assembly affirmed that the Palestinian people cannot develop their national economy as long as the Israeli occupation persists and it expressed awareness of the increasing need to provide economic and social assistance to the Palestinian people. The resolution contained a number of requests for action by the United Nations system and by Governments and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations. The Committee also noted with appreciation the efforts of the Economic and Social Council and the relevant United Nations agencies and bodies, as well as the recommendations emanating from meetings of non-governmental organizations organized under its auspices. The Committee called on all concerned to sustain and increase their assistance to the Palestinian people, in close co-operation with the Palestine Liberation Organization, as a necessary accompaniment of renewed efforts to achieve a political solution to the Palestine question.

2. Reactions to developments affecting the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people

(a) Communications to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

32. In response to the deteriorating situation in the occupied Palestinian territory in the course of the year under review, the Chairman of the Committee repeatedly drew the most urgent attention of the Secretary-General and of the President of the Security Council to developments in the area and, in particular, to the escalation of repression by the Israeli military authorities, urging the adoption of appropriate measures in accordance with humanitarian principles and United Nations resolutions. The Chairman detailed various instances of killing and maiming of Palestinians by the Israeli armed forces and settlers, mass arrests, house demolitions and other forms of collective punishment, deportations, and other grave violations of the human and inalienable rights of the Palestinians in the occupied territory by Israel, the occupying Power. The Chairman repeatedly pointed out that those policies and practices were in contravention of the fourth Geneva Convention, international human rights instruments and United Nations resolutions, and posed further obstacles to international efforts to promote a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the Palestine question. The Chairman reiterated the Committee's appeals to the Secretary-General and to the President of the Security Council to take all possible measures for ensuring the safety and protection of the Palestinian civilians under occupation, and to intensify all efforts towards the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 43/176 of 15 December 1988.

33. The letters from the Chairman of the Committee were circulated as official documents of the General Assembly, under the agenda item entitled "Question of Palestine", and of the Security Council, and are contained in the following documents: A/43/946-S/20315; A/43/992-S/20372; A/43/994-S/20424; A/43/999-S/20505; A/43/1004-S/20563 and Corr.1; A/43/1005-S/20952; A/43/1008-S/20623; A/43/1009-S/20668; A/43/1011-S/20714; A/44/209-S/20564 and A/44/547-S/20860.

(b) Action taken within the Security Council

34. In addition to transmitting letters to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council, the Committee followed closely the activities of the Council on matters relating to the Committee's mandate, and participated in Council debates as necessary.

35. In a letter dated 8 February 1989 (S/20454), the Permanent Representative of Tunisia, Chairman of the Arab Group for the month of February, referring to the letter dated 7 February 1989 from the Permanent Observer Mission of Palestine (A/44/117-S/20451), requested an urgent meeting of the Security Council in order to consider the situation in the occupied Palestinian territory. The request was supported by the Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People in a letter dated 9 February 1989 (S/20455), in which she also reiterated the Committee's most serious concern at the deterioration of the situation in the occupied Palestinian territory. The Security Council considered the item at five meetings held between 10 and 17 February 1989.

36. The Chairman of the Committee intervened in the debate at the 2845th meeting of the Council (see S/PV.2845), held on 10 February 1989, and stated that, since

the beginning of the intifadah, there had been at least 494 fatalities and thousands injured, mostly children and young people. The situation demanded an urgent and appropriate response from the international community to ensure compliance by Israel with its obligations as an occupying Power. There was a vital need to reach a negotiated, just and lasting settlement of the Middle East problem. The Committee invited the Council to enter into an in-depth debate on the best means of translating into concrete reality the Palestinian peace initiative. The United Nations had an obligation to ensure the realization of the legitimate aspirations and inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. It was also incumbent upon the Security Council to implement the recommendations of the General Assembly on the Palestine question that had been adopted by ever-increasing majorities, particularly those calling for an international peace conference on the Middle East.

37. At its 2850th meeting, on 17 February 1989, the Security Council considered a draft resolution (S/20463) submitted by Algeria, Colombia, Ethiopia, Malaysia, Nepal, Senegal and Yugoslavia. By that draft resolution, the Council would have: strongly deplored Israel's persistent policies and practices against the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territories, especially the violation of human rights, and the continuing disregard by Israel, the occupying Power, of the relevant decisions of the Security Council; confirmed once more the applicability of the fourth Geneva Convention to that territory; called upon Israel, the occupying Power, to abide by the relevant Security Council resolutions and to comply with its obligations under the Convention; called for the exercise of maximum restraint to contribute towards the establishment of peace; expressed its determination to work towards the achievement, under the auspices of the United Nations, of a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the Middle East conflict, an integral part of which is the Palestinian problem; requested the Secretary-General to follow the implementation of the resolution, including examining the situation in the occupied Palestinian territories by all means available to him and to report to the Security Council; and decided to keep the situation under review.

38. At the same meeting, the draft resolution was voted upon. The result of the voting was 14 to 1, with no abstentions; the draft resolution was not adopted, owing to the negative vote of a permanent member of the Security Council.

39. In a letter dated 31 May 1989, addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/20662), the Permanent Representative of the Sudan to the United Nations, in his capacity as Chairman of the Group of Arab States at the United Nations for the month of May 1989, requested that an urgent meeting of the Security Council be convened to discuss the situation in the occupied Palestinian territory. The Security Council resumed its consideration of the item at five meetings, held between 6 and 9 June 1989.

40. The Chairman of the Committee intervened in the debate at the 2863rd meeting of the Security Council (see S/PV.2863) held on 6 June 1989, and stated that it was high time for the Council, responsible for the maintenance of international peace, to increase its involvement by making a positive contribution to international efforts to bring about a just and lasting peace in the Middle East. Appropriate action by the Council could do much to relieve the suffering of Palestinian civilians, including women and children, as requested by the General Assembly in its resolution 43/233 and in conformity with the recommendations and observations contained in the report prepared by the Secretary-General pursuant to Security

Council resolution 605 (1987) of 22 December 1987. She called on the Council to support the growing international solidarity in favour of the restoration of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and to act on the recommendations of the General Assembly for the establishment of a just and lasting peace, in particular those in Assembly resolution 43/176. The Palestinian leaders have resolutely adopted a courageous policy of openness, and have done their part; the international community had the duty to prevail upon Israel to respond in a positive way, for no repression could overcome the intifadah.

41. At its 2864th meeting, on 7 June 1989, the Council considered a draft resolution (S/20677) submitted by Algeria, Colombia, Ethiopia, Malaysia, Nepal, Senegal and Yugoslavia. By that draft resolution, the Council would have: strongly deplored Israeli policies and practices violating the human rights of the Palestinian people in the occupied territory; called upon Israel, as the occupying Power and as a High Contracting Party to the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, to accept the de jure applicability of the Convention to the Palestinian and other Arab territories occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem; recalled the obligations of all the High Contracting Parties, under article 1 of the Convention, to ensure respect for the Convention in all circumstances; demanded that Israel desist forthwith from deporting Palestinian civilians from the occupied territory and ensure the safe and immediate return of those already deported; expressed great concern about the prolonged closure of schools in parts of the occupied territory and called upon Israel to permit the immediate reopening of those schools; requested the Secretary-General to continue to monitor the situation in the occupied Palestinian territory by all means available to him, and to make timely reports to the Council, the first such report to be submitted no later than 23 June 1989; and decided to keep the situation in the Palestinian and other Arab territories occupied by Israel since 1967, including Jerusalem, under review.

42. At its 2867th meeting, the Security Council proceeded to vote on the draft resolution (S/20677). The result of the voting was 14 to 1, with no abstentions. It was not adopted, owing to the negative vote of a permanent member of the Security Council.

43. In a letter dated 30 June 1989, addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/20709), the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations, in his capacity as Chairman of the Group of Arab States at the United Nations for the month of June 1989, requested the convening of an immediate meeting of the Security Council to consider the situation in the occupied Palestinian territory, in particular the deportation of Palestinian civilians from the occupied Palestinian territory.

44. At its 2870th meeting, held on 6 July 1989, the Security Council had before it a draft resolution (S/20710) submitted by Algeria, Colombia, Ethiopia, Malaysia, Nepal, Senegal and Yugoslavia. The draft resolution was adopted by 14 votes to none, with 1 abstention, as Security Council resolution 636 (1989) of 6 July 1989. By that resolution, the Council deeply regretted the continuing deportation by Israel, the occupying Power, of Palestinian civilians; called upon Israel to ensure the safe and immediate return to the occupied Palestinian territories of those deported and to desist forthwith from deporting any other Palestinian civilians; reaffirmed that the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, was applicable to the Palestinian territories, occupied by Israel since 1967, including Jerusalem, and to the other occupied Arab territories; and decided to keep the situation under review.

45. In a letter dated 29 August 1989 addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/20817), the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Qatar to the United Nations, on behalf of the Group of Arab States, requested the convening of an urgent meeting of the Security Council in order to consider the situation in the occupied Palestinian territory, and in particular the deportation of Palestinian civilians from the occupied Palestinian territory.

46. The Security Council met on 30 August 1989, at its 2883rd meeting, and had before it a draft resolution (S/20820) submitted by Algeria, Colombia, Ethiopia, Malaysia, Nepal, Senegal and Yugoslavia. The draft resolution was adopted by 14 votes, with 1 abstention, as Security Council resolution 641 (1989) of 30 August 1989. By that resolution, the Council deplored the continued deportation by Israel, the occupying Power, of Palestinian civilians; called upon Israel to ensure the safe and immediate return to the occupied Palestinian territories of those deported and to desist further from deporting any other Palestinian civilians; reaffirmed that the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, is applicable to the Palestinian territories, occupied by Israel since 1967, including Jerusalem, and to the other occupied Arab territories; and decided to keep the situation under review.

47. In a letter dated 3 November 1989, addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/20942), the Permanent Representative of Kuwait to the United Nations, in his capacity as Chairman of the Group of Arab States for the month of November 1989, requested an immediate meeting of the Security Council in order to consider the current situation in the occupied Palestinian territory. The Security Council resumed its consideration of the item at three meetings held on 6 and 7 November 1989.

48. The Chairman of the Committee intervened in the debate at the 2888th meeting (see S/PV.2888), on 6 November 1989, and stated that, despite repeated indignant protests by the international community and the tireless efforts of the United Nations and its Secretary-General, the human rights situation of the civilian population in the occupied Palestinian territories had been steadily deteriorating. The Committee's concern was all the more acute since the Security Council had still not succeeded in agreeing to measures to guarantee the security of the Palestinian civilians, in particular women and children. The Chairman appealed to the Security Council to become more involved in the question of Palestine and to initiate and oversee the peace process in the region, and in particular to work resolutely with the Secretary-General to organize the International Peace Conference on the Middle East in accordance with General Assembly resolution 43/176. The United Nations had more than ever before the duty and the responsibility to promote the establishment of peace and coexistence between the Palestinian and Israeli peoples.

49. At its 2889th meeting, on 7 November 1989, the Council considered a draft resolution (S/20945/Rev.1) submitted by Algeria, Colombia, Ethiopia, Malaysia, Nepal, Senegal and Yugoslavia. By that draft resolution, the Council would have: strongly deplored those policies and practices of Israel, the occupying Power, which violated the human rights of the Palestinian people, in particular the siege of towns, the ransacking of homes, and illegal and arbitrary confiscation of property and valuables; called upon Israel to desist from such practices and actions, to lift its siege and to return the confiscated property; reaffirmed the applicability of the fourth Geneva Convention to the Palestinian and other Arab territories occupied by Israel since 1967, and called on Israel, the occupying

Power, to abide by that Convention; called upon all High Contracting Parties to that Convention to ensure respect for it, including the obligation of the occupying Power to treat the population of the occupied territory humanely at all times and in all circumstances; and requested the Secretary-General to conduct on-site monitoring of the present situation in the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, by all means available to him, and to submit periodic reports thereon, the first such report as soon as possible.

50. At the same meeting, the Security Council proceeded to vote on the draft resolution (S/20945/Rev.1). The result of the voting was 14 to 1, with no abstentions. The draft resolution was not adopted, owing to the negative vote of a permanent member of the Security Council.

(c) Action taken within the General Assembly

51. In its resolutions 43/48 of 30 November 1988 and 43/49 of 2 December 1988, the General Assembly considered the decision of the host country to deny an entry visa to the Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization, and decided to consider the agenda item entitled "Question of Palestine" in plenary meetings at the United Nations Office at Geneva from 13 to 15 December 1988. At its 78th plenary meeting, the Assembly heard a historic statement by the Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization. The Committee endorsed the Palestinian peace initiative contained in that statement.

52. At its 82nd plenary meeting, on 15 December 1988, the General Assembly adopted five resolutions on the question of Palestine. By resolutions 43/175 A, B and C, the Assembly renewed the respective mandates of the Committee, the Division for Palestinian Rights and the Department of Public Information (see paras. 9-11 above). By its resolution 43/176, the Assembly outlined principles for the achievement of a comprehensive peace through the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East (see para. 57 below). By its resolution 43/177, the Assembly acknowledged the proclamation of the State of Palestine by the Palestine National Council on 15 November 1988; affirmed the need to enable the Palestinian people to exercise their sovereignty over their territory occupied since 1967; and decided that the designation "Palestine" should be used in place of the designation "Palestine Liberation Organization" in the United Nations system, without prejudice to the observer status and functions of the PLO within the United Nations system, in conformity with relevant United Nations resolutions and practice.

53. On 14 December 1988, the Government of the United States announced its decision to open a substantive dialogue with the Palestine Liberation Organization. That positive development was welcomed by all States participating in the plenary meetings of the General Assembly held at Geneva.

54. The General Assembly subsequently decided to retain the item on the agenda of its forty-third session (General Assembly decision 43/459 of 22 December 1988). The General Assembly resumed its consideration of the item, entitled "Question of Palestine", on 18 April 1989, at the request of the Permanent Representative of Saudi Arabia in his capacity as Chairman of the Arab Group at the United Nations, contained in a letter dated 17 April 1989 (A/43/1007), and in accordance with General Assembly decision 43/459, by which the Assembly retained that item on the agenda of its forty-third session. The Assembly considered the item at three meetings, held on 18 and 19 April 1989.

55. The Chairman of the Committee intervened in the debate of the General Assembly at its 92nd plenary meeting, on 18 April 1989 (see A/43/PV.92) and stressed that the situation in the occupied Palestinian territory had continued to worsen owing to Israel's intransigence. The Chairman reported to the Assembly on various instances of killings and destruction that had taken place since the beginning of 1989 and that had been detailed in letters written on behalf of the Committee. The Committee strongly protested the further escalation of repression in recent days and the growing role of armed Israeli settlers, and wished to appeal to the international community to redouble its efforts to ensure the protection of Palestinians, the withdrawal of Israel from the occupied Palestinian territory, and the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East in accordance with General Assembly resolution 43/176.

56. On 20 April 1989, at its 94th plenary meeting, the General Assembly adopted resolution 43/233 by a vote of 129 to 2, with 1 abstention. By that resolution, the Assembly condemned those policies and practices of Israel, the occupying Power, which violate the human rights of the Palestinian people in the occupied territory; demanded that Israel abide scrupulously by the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949; requested the Security Council to consider with urgency the situation in the occupied Palestinian territory with a view to considering measures needed to provide international protection for the Palestinian civilians in the Palestinian territory occupied by Israel since 1967, including Jerusalem; stressed the urgent need to expedite the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, under the auspices of the United Nations and in accordance with the provisions of Assembly resolution 43/176 of 15 December 1988; and requested the Secretary-General to submit periodic reports on developments in the occupied Palestinian territory.

3. Action taken by the Committee to promote the convening of the proposed International Peace Conference on the Middle East in accordance with General Assembly resolution 43/176 of 15 December 1988

57. By its resolution 43/176, the General Assembly affirmed the urgent need to achieve a just and comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict, the core of which is the question of Palestine, called for the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, under the auspices of the United Nations, with the participation of all parties to the conflict, including the Palestine Liberation Organization, on an equal footing, and the five permanent members of the Security Council, based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) of 22 November 1967 and 338 (1973) of 22 October 1973 and the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people, primarily the right to self-determination, and affirmed the following principles for the achievement of comprehensive peace: the withdrawal of Israel from the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, and from the other occupied Arab territories; guaranteeing arrangements for security of all States in the region, including those named in resolution 181 (II) of 29 November 1947, within secure and internationally recognized boundaries; resolving the problem of Palestine refugees in conformity with Assembly resolution 194 (III) of 11 December 1948, and subsequent relevant resolutions; dismantling the Israeli settlements in the territories occupied since 1967; and guaranteeing freedom of access to Holy Places, religious buildings and sites. The Assembly also noted the expressed desire and endeavours to place the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, under the supervision of the

United Nations for a limited period, as part of the peace process; requested the Security Council to consider measures needed to convene the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, including the establishment of a preparatory committee, and to consider guarantees for security measures agreed upon by the Conference for all States in the region; and requested the Secretary-General to continue his efforts with the parties concerned, and in consultation with the Security Council, to facilitate the convening of the Conference, and to submit progress reports on developments in this matter.

58. In the light of that resolution, the Committee once again, in adopting its programme of work, decided that, in its activities during 1989, it would continue, as a matter of the utmost priority, to exert all efforts to promote the early convening of the proposed International Peace Conference on the Middle East. It also decided to continue to give the highest priority to the need for ensuring the safety and protection of Palestinians under Israeli occupation, in accordance with the provisions of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949.

59. The Committee was greatly strengthened in its resolve by the overwhelming consensus in favour of a comprehensive negotiated settlement through the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East and by the intensification of efforts among the international community as a whole aimed at meeting the needs of the Palestinian people under occupation, as reflected in particular by the recommendations adopted by the regional seminars and by symposia and meetings of non-governmental organizations on the question of Palestine organized under its auspices (see sect. IV.B below).

60. The Committee noted that the Secretary-General, in his report on the work of the Organization, 7/ stated that hopes for early progress in the peace process had sadly given way to mistrust and doubt among the parties concerned. Bilateral efforts to promote a dialogue between Israelis and Palestinians had been unsuccessful. The Secretary-General's constant attempts to pave the way to an effective negotiating process, including contacts with the parties concerned and the permanent members of the Security Council, had also proved inconclusive. In light of the persistence of widespread violations of human rights in the occupied Palestinian territories, the Secretary-General reminded all concerned of the urgent need for an effective negotiating process based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and taking fully into account the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, including that of self-determination.

61. The Committee was of the view that the continuation of the intifadah and the intensification of repressive measures by Israel, the occupying Power, had created a critical situation that made it imperative to advance towards a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict in the Middle East. At the same time, events during the year had also brought about a new international momentum towards a negotiated settlement under the auspices of the United Nations. The Committee accordingly continued to stress the urgent need for the Security Council and the parties directly concerned to seize this opportunity to take positive action towards the convening of the Conference.

4. Attendance at international conferences and meetings

62. In accordance with the Committee's mandate, it was represented at the following international conferences and meetings during the period since its previous report to the General Assembly:

(a) Special meetings of the United Nations Council for Namibia to commemorate the Week of Solidarity with the people of Namibia and their liberation movement, the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO), held in New York on 27 October 1988;

(b) Eighteenth Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers, held at Riyadh from 13 to 16 March 1989;

(c) Ministerial Meeting of the Co-ordinating Bureau of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, held at Harare from 17 to 19 May 1989;

(d) Fiftieth ordinary session of the Council of Ministers, held at Addis Ababa from 17 to 22 July 1989, and twenty-fifth ordinary session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity, held at Addis Ababa from 24 to 26 July 1989;

(e) International non-governmental organization conference on "Non-alignment in international relations", sponsored by the Indian Institute for Non-Aligned Studies, New Delhi, and held from 28 to 30 July 1989;

(f) Solemn meeting of the United Nations Council for Namibia in commemoration of Namibia Day, New York, 25 August 1989;

(g) International symposium on the role of foreign assistance in meeting the economic and social development requirements of the Palestinian people: from occupation to independence, sponsored by the International and the European Co-ordinating Committees for non-governmental organizations on the question of Palestine and the Society for Austro-Arab Relations, and held at Vienna on 27 August 1989;

(h) Ninth Conference of Heads of State or Government of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, held at Belgrade from 4 to 7 September 1989.

5. Action taken by United Nations bodies, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and intergovernmental organizations

63. The Committee continued to follow with great interest the activities relating to the question of Palestine of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, United Nations bodies and intergovernmental organizations. The Committee especially noted the growing concern at all levels of the international community about the deterioration of the situation in the occupied Palestinian territories and in the region as a whole, owing to the policies and practices of Israel, and the increasing sense of urgency with which the international community addressed the need to ensure the safety and protection of the Palestinian people under occupation, and to advance towards a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine. The Committee welcomed the growing sentiment and

momentum in favour of the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East in accordance with General Assembly resolution 43/176. The Committee noted in particular the following documents:

- (a) Resolutions adopted by the Inter-Parliamentary Union at the Conference held at Sofia from 19 to 24 September 1988 (A/43/759, annex);
- (b) Communiqué on the situation in the Palestinian territories occupied by Israel, issued on 26 October 1988 in New York by the Co-ordinating Bureau of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (A/43/781-S/20258, annex);
- (c) Declaration made on 21 November 1988 by the Twelve States members of the European Community on the decisions of the Palestinian National Council (A/43/853-S/20287, annex);
- (d) Communiqué of the Non-Aligned Committee of Nine on Palestine, issued at Geneva on 14 December 1988 (A/43/950, annex);
- (e) Statement on the situation in the Middle East made at Athens on 16 December 1988 by the Twelve States members of the European Community (A/43/987-S/20343, annex);
- (f) Final communiqué of the ninth session of the Supreme Council of the Co-operation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf, held at Manama from 19 to 22 December 1988 (A/44/84-S/20407, annex I);
- (g) Final communiqué issued by the Special Arab Ministerial Committee to Support the Intifadah, meeting at Tunis on 12 January 1989 (A/44/83-S/20406, annex);
- (h) Resolutions adopted by the Commission on Human Rights at its forty-fifth session, held at Geneva from 30 January to 10 March 1989 (resolutions 1989/2 A and B and 1989/19); 8/
- (i) Resolution 43/XII/89 adopted by the Union of African Parliaments at its Twelfth General Assembly, held at Yaounde on 2 and 3 March 1989;
- (j) Communiqué on the question of Palestine, issued in New York on 15 March 1989 by the Co-ordinating Bureau of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (A/43/1000-S/20533, annex);
- (k) Final communiqué of the Eighteenth Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers (Session of Islamic Fraternity and Solidarity), held at Riyadh, from 13 to 16 March 1989 (A/44/235-S/20600, annex);
- (l) Resolution adopted by the Inter-Parliamentary Union at the Conference held at Budapest from 10 to 18 March 1989 (A/44/240 and Corr.1, annex);
- (m) Final documents of the Ministerial Meeting of the Co-ordinating Bureau of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, held at Harare from 17 to 19 May 1989 (A/44/409-S/20743 and Corr.1 and 2, annex);
- (n) Resolutions adopted by the Economic and Social Council at its first and second regular sessions (resolutions 1989/34 of 24 May 1989, 1989/86 and 1989/96 of 26 July 1989);

(o) Statement issued on 31 May 1989 in Madrid by the Twelve States members of the European Community on the closing of the schools of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East in the West Bank (A/44/299-S/20667, annex);

(p) Declaration on the Middle East adopted by the Heads of State or Government of the Twelve States members of the European Community at the European Council held in Madrid on 26 and 27 June 1989 (A/44/354-S/20703, annex);

(q) Joint communiqué of the Twenty-second Ministerial Meeting of the Association of South-East Asian Nations, held at Bandar Seri Begawan, on 3 and 4 July 1989 (A/44/415-S/20749, annex);

(r) Communiqué of the Meeting of the Political Consultative Committee of the States Parties to the Warsaw Treaty, held at Bucharest on 7 and 8 July 1989 (A/44/386, annex I);

(s) Resolution adopted by the Council of Ministers of the Organization of African Unity at its fiftieth ordinary session, held at Addis Ababa from 17 to 22 July 1989 (A/44/603, annex I, resolution CM/Res.1212 (L));

(t) Declaration of the Ninth Conference of Heads of State or Government of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, held at Belgrade, from 4 to 7 September 1989 (A/44/551-S/20870, annex).

B. Action taken by the Committee in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 43/175 A and B of 15 December 1988

1. Co-operation with non-governmental organizations

64. During the period under review the Committee, in accordance with its mandate under resolution 43/175 A, continued to extend its co-operation to non-governmental organizations in their contribution to heightening international awareness of the facts relating to the question of Palestine and in creating a more favourable atmosphere for the full implementation of the Committee's recommendations, and continued to take the necessary steps to expand its contacts with those organizations.

65. In accordance with its mandate under General Assembly resolution 43/175 B, the Division for Palestinian Rights, in consultation with the Committee and under its guidance, organized the following activities for non-governmental organizations during 1988 in implementation of those objectives: regional symposia for non-governmental organizations in Africa (combined with the regional seminar), North America and Europe; an international meeting of non-governmental organizations; and two preparatory meetings, for the North American symposium and the international meeting, respectively. The non-governmental organizations symposium for the Asian region will be held at Malaysia from 18 to 22 December 1989. The non-governmental organizations symposium for the Latin American and Caribbean region, originally scheduled to be held at Buenos Aires from 31 July to 4 August 1989, has been postponed, in consultation with the Government of Argentina.

66. In accordance with its decision to continue to give utmost priority to efforts to promote the early convening of the proposed International Peace Conference on the Middle East, in conformity with General Assembly resolution 43/176, the Committee decided that non-governmental symposia and meetings should continue to emphasize the importance of convening the Conference and structured the programmes for those activities accordingly. In the light of the extremely grave situation in the occupied Palestinian territory and the new situation created by the intifadah and the proclamation of the independent State of Palestine, and subsequent developments, the Committee decided to include consideration of those topics in the programmes of the meetings for non-governmental organizations.

67. The Committee was greatly encouraged by the intensification of activities and programmes of the non-governmental organizations, including the sending of fact-finding missions to the area, intensified efforts to promote greater understanding of the issue and support for the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, as well as relief efforts to assist Palestinians in the uprising. The Committee noted with satisfaction the continuing and growing involvement of Israeli organizations and Jewish organizations in North America and Western Europe in these efforts.

(a) African Regional NGO Symposium

68. The African Regional NGO Symposium was held at Cairo from 18 to 21 December 1988 together with the African Regional Seminar (see below, paras. 86-88). The non-governmental organization (NGO) Symposium considered the topics of three panels jointly with the seminar. Two workshops specifically related to non-governmental organization activities were established for non-governmental organization participants to consider non-governmental organization mobilization and action in Africa on the question of Palestine.

69. The Committee noted that the Symposium adopted a declaration expressing full support for the Palestinian peace initiative and the proclamation of the State of Palestine and calling upon all Governments to recognize that State and on all governmental and non-governmental organizations to extend concrete assistance towards its establishment. The declaration also called for the prompt convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East under United Nations auspices, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 43/176, and expressed the commitment of non-governmental organizations to arouse international public opinion in favour of that objective. The declaration further called for the placing of the occupied Palestinian territory under United Nations supervision for a limited period as an essential part of the peace process and for the implementation of United Nations resolutions for the attainment of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. (For the full text of the declaration, see annex III to the present report.)

(b) North American Regional NGO Symposium and Preparatory Meeting

70. The Preparatory Meeting for the North American Regional NGO Symposium was held at United Nations Headquarters on 13 and 14 February 1989 and was attended by the members of the North American Co-ordinating Committee for Non-Governmental Organizations on the Question of Palestine and by a delegation of the Committee. The meeting elaborated the various aspects of the programme for the Symposium to be held in 1989 and the modalities for expanding the network of non-governmental organizations active on the question of Palestine in North America.

71. The North American Regional NGO Symposium was held at United Nations Headquarters from 21 to 23 June 1989, immediately following the North American Regional Seminar, with which it was combined in the interest of economy and in accordance with the practice followed in previous years (see paras. 89 and 90 below). The Symposium was attended by representatives of 73 non-governmental organizations as participants, and 33 non-governmental organizations as observers from the United States and Canada, by a delegation of the Committee, and by a number of observers from Governments, intergovernmental organizations, United Nations bodies and national liberation movements.

72. Two main panels were established: I. The intifadah: creating a new context for peace; and II. Convening the International Peace Conference in accordance with United Nations General Assembly resolution 43/176: Implications for Israel and the United States of the Proclamation of the State of Palestine, the Palestinian peace initiative and the intifadah. The programme for the Symposium also included eight action-oriented workshops.

73. The Committee noted that the Symposium adopted a declaration welcoming the Palestinian peace initiative as a concrete contribution to the establishment of a just and lasting peace in the region and calling upon the Governments of the United States and Israel to accept that initiative by supporting the immediate convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East in accordance with General Assembly resolution 43/176. The declaration further called for immediate measures by the United Nations system and others in order to ensure the protection of Palestinians in the occupied territory. The Committee also noted that, through their discussions in the different action-oriented workshops, the non-governmental organizations had further developed practical organizing strategies and support projects for concerted action by North American non-governmental organizations. (For the text of the declaration, see annex V to the present report.)

(c) European Regional NGO Symposium

74. The European Regional NGO Symposium was held at Vienna on 28 and 29 August 1989, immediately preceding the international non-governmental organizations meeting, with which it was combined in the interest of economy and efficiency (see paras. 80 and 82 below). In that connection, the Committee expressed its appreciation for the decision of the Government of Austria to provide the facilities of the Austrian Centre free of charge for both meetings.

75. The programme for the Symposium was elaborated by the members of the European Co-ordinating Committee for NGOs on the Question of Palestine in consultation with the Committee delegation attending the Preparatory Meeting for the international non-governmental organization meeting held at Vienna on 20 and 21 March 1989.

76. The Symposium was attended by representatives of 82 non-governmental organizations as participants and 132 non-governmental organizations as observers, as well as by a delegation of the Committee and governmental and intergovernmental observers, United Nations bodies and national liberation movements.

77. The Symposium considered the topics of two panels: I. "The dynamics of the intifadah and consequences for NGO activities" and II. "The International Peace Conference on the Middle East and the implementation of Palestinian self-determination: the role of Europe". The programme for the Symposium also included five action-oriented workshops.

78. The Committee noted that the Symposium adopted a declaration that welcomed the Palestinian peace initiative and the opening of a dialogue between the United States and the PLO, and stressed the importance of convening the International Peace Conference on the Middle East in accordance with General Assembly resolution 43/176. The declaration called for a greater contribution by European Governments to the peace process, including recognition of the Palestinian State. It rejected the plan for elections in the occupied Palestinian territory proposed by the Government of Israel as a cover for the continuation of occupation and repression, and expressed concern over human rights violations by the occupying Power. It called upon European Governments to take effective measures to ensure respect by Israel of the fourth Geneva Convention, and called upon the Security Council to take urgent measures, including deployment of a United Nations peace-keeping force, to ensure the protection and security of Palestinians under occupation. The declaration also called upon United Nations agencies to intensify their efforts to address the educational, medical and general socio-economic needs of the Palestinian people. (For the text of the declaration, see annex VI to the present report.)

(d) International Meeting of Non-Governmental Organizations and Preparatory Meeting

79. The Preparatory Meeting for the International Meeting of Non-Governmental Organizations was held at Vienna on 20 and 21 March 1988 and was attended by members of the international and European co-ordinating committees for non-governmental organizations on the question of Palestine, as well as a number of non-governmental organization observers from other regions. The Preparatory Meeting elaborated the details of the programmes for the International Meeting of Non-Governmental Organizations and the European NGO Symposium, to be held in 1989, and discussed future co-operation and action by non-governmental organizations at the international and European levels.

80. The International Meeting of Non-Governmental Organizations was held at Vienna from 30 August to 1 September 1989 and was attended by representatives from 213 non-governmental organizations as participants and 138 non-governmental organizations as observers from all regions, including several from Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories. The Committee was pleased that a number of prominent political personalities had accepted its invitation to attend and address the meeting.

81. The meeting had as a main theme "Intifadah: the continuing struggle of the Palestinian People for independence". The following panel was established: "Two peoples, two States: future relations". Six action-oriented workshops and a number of special-interest groups also met within the framework of the meeting.

82. The Committee noted that the meeting adopted a declaration that expressed full support for the Palestinian proclamation of independence and that called on all Governments to recognize the independent State of Palestine and the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the people and State of Palestine. The declaration further called for the early convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 43/176, and rejected the election plan put forward by the Government of Israel, as designed to prevent independence and to lead to the annexation of the occupied territory. The declaration also expressed concern at the increasing human rights violations in the occupied territory and called for effective international political and economic pressure on Israel, as well as for the establishment of a United Nations presence,

in order to ensure compliance with the fourth Geneva Convention. It also called for comprehensive involvement by the United Nations system in the health and socio-economic fields, in co-operation with the PLO and Palestinian non-governmental organizations, in order to meet the growing emergency and development needs of the Palestinian people. (For the text of the declaration, see annex VII to the present report.)

2. Seminars

83. During the period under review, the Division for Palestinian Rights continued to organize seminars in consultation with the Committee and under its guidance, in accordance with its mandate under General Assembly resolution 34/65 D and subsequent resolutions. The regions covered during the reporting period were Africa and North America. The Committee expressed appreciation to the Governments of Malaysia and Argentina for agreeing to provide the venue for the Asian Seminar and NGO Symposium and the Latin American and Caribbean Seminar and NGO Symposium, respectively. Those meetings could not be held within the reporting period for reasons beyond the Committee's control. The Asian Regional Seminar and NGO Symposium is scheduled to take place at Kuala Lumpur from 18 to 22 December 1989. The Latin American and Caribbean Regional Seminar and NGO Symposium, originally scheduled to take place in Buenos Aires from 31 July to 4 August 1989, was postponed, in consultation with the Government of Argentina.

84. The Committee decided that the regional seminars would emphasize the urgency of convening the International Peace Conference on the Middle East; the intifadah in the occupied Palestinian territory and its impact on the achievement of a comprehensive settlement of the Middle East conflict; the role of the Palestine Liberation Organization in the social, cultural, economic and political development of the Palestinian people; and the mobilization of public opinion in the region concerned for the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.

85. The Committee was pleased by the participation in the seminars of prominent political personalities, parliamentarians and policy-makers, as well as persons from the academic community and other experts, as this showed the growing concern of the international community at all levels over the situation in the occupied Palestinian territory, and the Committee's determination to promote progress towards a solution of the Palestine question.

(a) African Regional Seminar, Cairo, 18 to 22 December 1988

86. The Committee greatly appreciated the offer of the Government of Egypt to provide a venue for the African Regional Seminar (the Twenty-first United Nations Seminar on the Question of Palestine), which was held jointly with the African NGO Symposium.

87. The seminar established the topics of three panels: Panel I. "The uprising in the occupied Palestinian territories: the urgency of convening the International Peace Conference on the Middle East in accordance with United Nations General Assembly resolutions"; Panel II. "The role of the Palestine Liberation Organization; and Panel III. "The mobilization of African public opinion for the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people".

88. The Committee noted that the seminar adopted conclusions and recommendations in which participants expressed their conviction that recent developments regarding the Arab-Israeli conflict and its core, the question of Palestine, had created a new momentum for bringing about a solution on the basis of resolutions of the United Nations and within its framework. The seminar welcomed the Palestinian peace initiative and the proclamation of an independent Palestinian State as a positive contribution towards a peaceful settlement of the conflict in the region. The decision of the Government of the United States of America to initiate a dialogue with the Palestine Liberation Organization was also welcomed as a positive development. Israel was called upon to respond positively to the stand taken by the PLO and to recognize the national aspirations of the Palestinians in the occupied Palestinian territory. The participants of the Seminar further expressed full support for the principles contained in General Assembly resolution 43/176 as a basis for the achievement of a comprehensive peace. They urged that every assistance should be provided by the international community to the Palestinian people in its endeavours to end the occupation and to set up the infrastructure for an independent and sovereign Palestinian State. Pending the attainment of a settlement, the Seminar appealed to the United Nations to take urgent measures to protect the Palestinians under occupation. (For the text of the conclusions and recommendations, see annex II to the present report.)

(b) North American Regional Seminar, New York, 19 and 20 June 1989

89. The North American Regional Seminar (the Twenty-second United Nations Seminar on the Question of Palestine) was held at United Nations Headquarters in New York on 19 and 20 June 1989. The Seminar considered the subjects of two panels, as follows: Panel I (a): "The urgency of convening the International Peace Conference on the Middle East"; Panel I (b): "The intifadah in the occupied Palestinian territory and its impact on the achievement of a comprehensive settlement of the Middle East conflict"; and Panel II: "The role of the Palestine Liberation Organization in the social, cultural, economic and political development of the Palestinian people".

90. The Committee noted that, in the conclusions and recommendations of the seminar, the participants welcomed the proclamation of a Palestinian State and subsequent developments as important landmarks in the international endeavours towards achieving a just settlement of the question of Palestine. The seminar urged the Government of the United States of America to continue its contacts with the PLO and to broaden the political scope of the dialogue. It considered that the so-called peace initiative proposed by the Israeli authorities was inadequate and called on Israel to terminate its occupation and to accept the terms for a lasting settlement. It urged the Security Council to expedite the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East and to adopt interim measures, including the development of a United Nations peace-keeping force, to safeguard the physical security of Palestinians in the occupied territory. The violations of human rights, repressive economic measures and the closure of schools in the occupied Palestinian territory were condemned, and the United Nations system was called upon to provide urgent humanitarian assistance and to intensify its efforts towards a genuine development of the occupied territory. (For the text of the conclusions and recommendations, see annex IV to the present report.)

3. Other activities

91. The Committee took note with appreciation that the Division for Palestinian Rights, in accordance with its mandate, would continue to prepare the following publications, under the guidance of the Committee:

(a) Monthly bulletins covering action by the Committee, other United Nations organs, and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations concerned with the question of Palestine;

(b) Reports of regional seminars, regional symposia of non-governmental organizations and international meetings of non-governmental organizations, and special bulletins on the observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People;

(c) Compilations on an annual basis of the relevant resolutions adopted by the General Assembly and the Security Council;

(d) Monitoring of Arabic, English and Hebrew press and media on developments relating to the question of Palestine and the issue of monthly reports for the use of the Committee.

92. The Committee further noted that the Division had published a study entitled The Need for Convening the International Peace Conference on the Middle East (in accordance with General Assembly resolution 38/58 C). The study entitled The Origins and Evolution of the Palestine Problem (Part IV), covering the period 1984 to December 1988, has also been completed and will be added to the three previously published parts. The consolidated volume of the study will consist of four parts covering the period 1917 to 1988. The study on the plight of Palestinian children in the occupied Palestinian territory is currently being finalized. Two updated issues (March and August) of the information note on the work of the Committee and of the Division were also prepared and is now available in the six official languages of the United Nations, as well as in German and Japanese. An information note, entitled "The United Nations and non-governmental organizations on the question of Palestine", was also completed and will be made available in the six official languages of the United Nations as well as in German and Japanese.

93. The International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People was observed on 29 November 1988 at United Nations Headquarters in New York and at the United Nations Offices at Geneva and Vienna. The Committee noted with appreciation that the International Day had also been commemorated in many other cities throughout the world in 1988.

V. ACTION TAKEN BY THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INFORMATION IN
ACCORDANCE WITH GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 43/175 C

94. The Committee noted with appreciation that, during the past year, the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat continued its information programme on the question of Palestine with a view to furthering the world-wide dissemination of accurate, objective and comprehensive information on the question. The Department's continuing mandate on the area derived from General Assembly resolution 43/175 C of 15 December 1988, by which the Assembly requested it to continue its special information programme on the question of Palestine during the biennium 1988-1989.

95. In response to the request of the General Assembly, the Department of Public Information has disseminated press releases, publications and audio-visual material and has also organized fact-finding news missions and regional and national encounters for journalists.

96. Full coverage by press releases was provided at the forty-third session of the General Assembly, including its meetings at Geneva, the meetings of the Security Council, the Commission on Human Rights and other intergovernmental bodies as they dealt with the question of Palestine, and of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Population of the Occupied Territories and the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People.

97. The Department's coverage of the question of Palestine during the past year focused increasingly on news items and information concerning the situation in the occupied territories, and efforts to convene an international peace conference on the Middle East under United Nations auspices.

98. The Department disseminated information through articles, press releases, brochures and booklets. The UN Chronicle reported extensively on the consideration given to the question of Palestine and other related items by the General Assembly at its forty-third session and by the Security Council, particularly since the beginning of the uprising in the occupied territories. In the latest volume of the Yearbook of the United Nations, due to be issued shortly, a 22-page section is devoted to the question of Palestine, which is also dealt with in sections concerning refugees, human rights and the situation in the occupied territories. The commemoration of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People by the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People at Headquarters with other United Nations offices was fully covered. The Department has also disseminated information on the seminars and symposia that were held in different world capitals by the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. An information officer travelled with the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Population of the Occupied Territories during its fact-finding news mission to Tunis, Damascus, Amman and Cairo in May 1989 and reported on testimony taken from inhabitants of the occupied territories.

99. The Department continued to distribute its booklet entitled The United Nations and the Question of Palestine, an updated and revised version of which is scheduled by the end of the year.

100. Two new booklets were issued during 1989. The first booklet, entitled For the Rights of Palestinians: The Work of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, deals with the work of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. The second one, entitled Human Rights for the Palestinians: The Work of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Population of the Occupied Territories, deals with the work of the Special Committee. Both booklets were produced in Arabic, English, French, German and Spanish and disseminated on a world-wide basis.

101. A new poster on the proposed International Peace Conference on the Middle East was produced and given the widest possible circulation.

102. All aspects of the question of Palestine, including the meetings of the General Assembly held at Geneva, Palestinian refugees, Palestinian rights, the intifadah, the situation of the occupied territories, the meetings of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and the prospects for an international peace conference on the Middle East, were covered extensively in news, current affairs magazines, and other radio programmes of the Department of Public Information.

103. In addition to items in the news and in news magazines, the Department produced a special series of four radio features in French, namely, "The Palestinian Uprising" (parts 1 and 2) and "The International Conference on Peace in the Middle East" (parts 1 and 2). The weekly in-depth radio programme, entitled Perspective included five features devoted exclusively to the question of Palestine, namely, "Humanitarian assistance to Palestinian refugees", "The Palestinian uprising and the prospects for an international conference", "The General Assembly at Geneva acknowledges a Palestinian State", "The question of Palestine and the continuing search for peace" and "The situation in the occupied territories". The programme, adapted into official and non-official languages, including Bangla, Chinese, French, Hindi, Russian, Swahili and Turkish, was disseminated world wide. The International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People was featured in the weekly radio programmes in Arabic, English and Turkish. An interview with Mr. Giorgio Giacomelli, Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), on the Agency's work was also featured in the weekly radio magazines in English, Hindi and Swahili. The Arabic and Middle East Unit produced seven features devoted exclusively to the question of Palestine, including the situation in the Arab occupied territories and highlights of the General Assembly session at Geneva. Four editions of the weekly radio programme in Spanish dealt with the proclamation of a Palestinian State, the rights of the Palestinian people, Palestinian refugees and the intifadah. Extensive radio coverage in Spanish was also given to the Latin American Regional Journalists Encounter on the Question of Palestine, which was held from 26 to 28 July 1989 at Kingston, Jamaica. The North American Regional Seminar on the Question of Palestine, held in New York, was covered in the weekly news magazines in English, French and Portuguese.

104. A 15-minute educational video for high-school students, with an accompanying study pamphlet for teachers on the question of Palestine, is currently in production in three languages for distribution world wide.

105. Full television coverage was provided of meetings of the General Assembly and Security Council on the question of Palestine. Television coverage was also

provided of meetings of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and the seminars held under its auspices, as well as other official events. The commemoration of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, as well as the opening ceremony of the photo exhibit on the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, were also fully covered. A total of 138 video news packages on the various aspects of the question of Palestine were disseminated world wide through international syndicators. Furthermore, three editions of the weekly video programme, entitled "UN in Action", which is broadcast world wide in Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Japanese, Russian and Spanish, as well as by Cable News Network (CNN) in the United States, were devoted to various aspects of the question of Palestine, namely, "Palestinian women"; "UNRWA rebuilds camps in Lebanon" and "The United Nations expands humanitarian assistance to the Gaza Strip". Members of delegations were also provided with video cassette dubs and excerpts on the question of Palestine and other related items. Cassette copies and line feeds were made available to major television networks.

106. As in previous years, the Department once again organized activities to acquaint the media with the facts and developments pertaining to the question of Palestine. A team of 13 high-level journalists participated in the news mission to the Middle East organized by the Department. Between 7 and 23 May 1989, they visited Tunis, Damascus, Amman and Cairo. There was no reply to a formal request to the Permanent Mission of Israel for the news mission to visit Israel and the West Bank. The news mission provided the participants with an opportunity to gain first-hand knowledge and impressions on various aspects of the Palestine question. During the mission, the journalists met and interviewed leaders and senior officials of Egypt, Jordan, the Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia and the PLO. Numerous field visits, particularly to Palestinian refugee camps, were also organized. Particularly because of the situation in the occupied territories, the mission received extensive media coverage in all the countries visited. Numerous articles were later published by the participants on the basis of their experience and interviews conducted during the mission.

107. The Department also organized two regional encounters for journalists on the question of Palestine, bringing high-level journalists together with experts in the field for brief, in-depth, informal and candid discussions of the various aspects of the Palestinian problem. The first encounter was held at Singapore, from 30 January to 1 February 1989, and was attended by 20 journalists from many Asian countries, representing the print, radio and television media in Asia and the Pacific. The second encounter was organized at Kingston, Jamaica, from 26 to 28 July 1989. About 18 journalists from North and Latin America participated.

108. The Department also organized three series of national encounters, in which small, balanced panels of experts held meetings in the form of in-depth press conferences. In Europe, one national encounter with national journalists and foreign correspondents was held in London and two at Berlin between 16 and 19 January 1989. Asian national encounters were held at New Delhi, Bangkok, Sydney, Canberra, Wellington and Tokyo, between 24 January and 13 February 1989. National encounters for Latin America were held between 19 and 24 July 1989 at Bogotá, Quito and Santiago.

109. United Nations information centres throughout the world continued to carry out information activities in connection with the question of Palestine and made available to the public United Nations information materials on the subject. The information centres undertook various activities in observance of 29 November as

the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. They made available publications prepared for, and under the guidance of, the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and distributed information circulars in the official languages of the United Nations as well as in local languages. Exhibitions were held, films screened, and events organized in various centres in co-operation with the diplomatic corps, UNRWA and national parliaments.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COMMITTEE

110. The year under review brought about events of momentous significance in the long history of the struggle of the Palestinian people to regain and exercise its inalienable rights. The continuing uprising of the Palestinian people against over 20 years of Israeli occupation and oppression, the proclamation of the State of Palestine, and the Palestinian peace initiative announced by President Yasser Arafat at the meetings of the forty-third session of the General Assembly, held at Geneva in December 1988, have created new conditions and opportunities for concerted international action aimed at achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the problem. The growing deterioration of the situation in the occupied Palestinian territory, where hundreds of Palestinians have been killed and tens of thousands wounded, maimed and detained since the beginning of the intifadah, is a matter of utmost concern that imposes a moral duty on the United Nations and the international community as a whole to bring about expeditiously such a settlement, as well as to ensure the safety and protection of the Palestinian people under occupation.

111. The Committee considers that it is incumbent upon the Security Council to take concrete and effective action to secure those goals. The Committee believes that the recommendations contained in its first report, 9/ which have been repeatedly endorsed by the General Assembly by overwhelming majorities, provide a constructive programme for the implementation of the exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. The Committee has accordingly annexed those recommendations to the present report (see annex I) and calls for urgent positive action thereon by the Security Council. The Committee further reaffirms the validity of the Declaration and Programme of Action adopted by the International Conference on the Question of Palestine, held at Geneva in 1983, 3/ which made a valuable contribution towards the achievement of Palestinian rights. The Committee reaffirms that those recommendations are solidly founded on fundamental and internationally accepted principles and that the recognition, attainment and exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people are indispensable conditions in the solution of the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict in the Middle East. The Committee further reasserts that the Israeli evacuation of the territories occupied by force and in violation of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and relevant resolutions of the United Nations is a conditio sine qua non for the exercise by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights in Palestine.

112. The Committee reaffirms the international consensus that the Palestine Liberation Organization is the sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, whose participation on an equal footing is indispensable in any efforts and deliberations aimed at the achievement of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East. The Committee welcomes the Declaration of Independence adopted by the Palestine National Council at its meeting held at Algiers on 15 November 1988, and reiterates that the proclamation of the independent Arab State of Palestine is in fulfilment of General Assembly resolution 181 (II) of 29 November 1947. Accordingly, the Committee considers that the State of Palestine should be accorded its rightful place within the international community and the United Nations Organization. The Committee notes the widespread international support for the Palestinian peace initiative and it deeply regrets that Israel has so far failed to respond positively to it and has continued to refuse to acknowledge the inalienable national rights of the Palestinian people.

The Committee accordingly urges Israel to reverse its position and to join the international consensus.

113. The Committee considers that it has now become imperative for the Security Council to take positive action towards the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East on the basis of the framework and elements set out in General Assembly resolution 43/176 of 15 December 1988, which has the overwhelming support of the international community. The Committee reaffirms the principles for the achievement of a comprehensive peace contained in Assembly resolution 43/176, namely: the withdrawal of Israel from the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, and from the other occupied Arab territories; guaranteeing arrangements for security of all States in the region, including those named in Assembly resolution 181 (II), within secure and internationally recognized boundaries; resolving the problem of the Palestine refugees in conformity with Assembly resolution 194 (III) of 11 December 1948, and subsequent relevant resolutions; dismantling the Israeli settlements in the territories occupied since 1967; and guaranteeing freedom of access to Holy Places, religious buildings and sites.

114. In the past year, the international consensus in favour of the convening of the International Peace Conference has clearly been further consolidated. The Committee accordingly urges the Secretary-General to do everything in his power to ensure that active consultations are undertaken within the framework of the Security Council for that purpose. The Committee intends to continue to intensify its efforts towards that objective and to make it once again the focal point of its work programme in the coming year.

115. Noting that the Secretary-General has reported that his attempts to pave the way to an effective negotiating process have until now proved inconclusive, the Committee recommends that the General Assembly should call once again upon the Security Council, and in particular the permanent members, to consider measures needed to convene the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, including the establishment of a preparatory committee, and to consider guarantees for security measures in accordance with Assembly resolution 43/176, to renew the mandate of the Secretary-General to continue his efforts with the parties concerned and, in consultation with the Security Council, to facilitate the convening of the Conference.

116. The Committee protests in the strongest terms the intensification of repression by Israel, the occupying Power, against Palestinians in the occupied Palestinian territory, including children, particularly the liberal use of live ammunition, random beatings, raids and mass arrests, the increased use of administrative detention, deportations and collective punishment. The Committee condemns the unchecked violence by Israeli settlers. It also condemns the measures taken by the occupying Power to deprive the Palestinian population of their right to education, as well as administrative, economic and other measures taken to control all aspects of Palestinian life and to prevent the development of autonomous socio-economic structures. The Committee welcomes the action taken by Governments, non-governmental organizations and other bodies to denounce those measures, and welcomes the partial opening of schools as a result of that international pressure. The Committee recalls Security Council resolutions 636 (1989) of 6 July 1989 and 641 (1989) of 30 August 1989 and calls upon all concerned to redouble their efforts to expose, protest and put an end to those Israeli policies and practices, which are in violation of the Geneva Convention

relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949. Given the grave situation created by such policies and practices, the Committee calls once again upon the Security Council to consider urgently measures needed to provide international protection to the Palestinian civilians in the Palestinian territory occupied by Israel since 1967, including Jerusalem. The Committee also calls for appropriate international action to alleviate the sufferings of the Palestinians living under occupation, especially women and children.

117. The Committee further reasserts that the United Nations has a historical duty and responsibility to render all assistance necessary to promote the autonomous economic development of the occupied Palestinian territory in preparation for the attainment of independence in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions. The Committee accordingly reiterates its call upon the organizations of the United Nations system, as well as on Governments and on intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, to sustain and increase their economic and social assistance to the Palestinian people, in close co-operation with the Palestine Liberation Organization.

118. The Committee noted with satisfaction the increased awareness and mobilization of international public opinion in support of the attainment of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and of United Nations recommendations for a comprehensive, just and lasting solution of the question of Palestine. The Committee believes that its programme of regional seminars and meetings and symposia of non-governmental organizations, as well as the journalists' encounters and other informational activities sponsored by the Committee, have played a valuable role in this process, and will continue to strive to achieve maximum effectiveness in carrying out this programme and to intensify its efforts in the implementation of its mandates.

Notes

1/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-first Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/31/35).

2/ Ibid., Thirty-second Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/32/35); *ibid.*, Thirty-third Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/33/35); *ibid.*, Thirty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/34/35 and Corr.1); *ibid.*, Thirty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/35/35); *ibid.*, Thirty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/36/35); *ibid.*, Thirty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/37/35 and Corr.1); *ibid.*, Thirty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/38/35); *ibid.*, Thirty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/39/35); *ibid.*, Fortieth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/40/35); *ibid.*, Forty-first Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/41/35); *ibid.*, Forty-second Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/42/35); *ibid.*, Forty-third Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/43/35).

3/ Report of the International Conference on the Question of Palestine, Geneva, 29 August-7 September 1983 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.83.I.21), chap. I, sect. B.

Notes (continued)

4/ The observers at the meetings of the Committee were as follows: Algeria, Bangladesh, Bulgaria, China, Czechoslovakia, Ecuador, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Mauritania, Morocco, Nicaragua, Niger, Sri Lanka, Syrian Arab Republic, United Arab Emirates, Viet Nam, the League of Arab States and the Organization of the Islamic Conference. Palestine, represented by the Palestine Liberation Organization, as the representative of the Palestinian people, the principal party to the question of Palestine, was also an observer.

5/ The current membership of the Working Group is as follows: Afghanistan, Cuba, German Democratic Republic, Guinea, Guyana, India, Malta, Pakistan, Senegal, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic and Palestine, represented by the Palestine Liberation Organization, as the representative of the people directly concerned.

6/ International Labour Conference, 76th Session, Report of the Director-General, appendices (Vol. 2).

7/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 1 (A/44/1).

8/ For the printed text, see Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1989, Supplement No. 2 (E/1989/20).

9/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-first Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/31/35), paras. 59-72.

ANNEX I

Recommendations of the Committee endorsed by the
General Assembly at its thirty-first session*

I. Basic considerations and guidelines

59. The question of Palestine is at the heart of the Middle East problem, and consequently, the Committee stresses its belief that no solution in the Middle East can be envisaged which does not fully take into account the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people.

60. The legitimate and inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to return to their homes and property and to achieve self-determination, national independence and sovereignty are endorsed by the Committee in the conviction that the full implementation of those rights will contribute decisively to a comprehensive and final settlement of the Middle East crisis.

61. The participation of the Palestine Liberation Organization, the representative of the Palestinian people, on an equal footing with other parties, on the basis of General Assembly resolutions 3236 (XXIX) and 3375 (XXX), is indispensable in all efforts, deliberations and conferences on the Middle East which are held under the auspices of the United Nations.

62. The Committee recalls the fundamental principle of the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force and stresses the consequent obligation for complete and speedy evacuation of any territory so occupied.

63. The Committee considers that it is the duty and responsibility of all concerned to enable the Palestinians to exercise their inalienable rights.

64. The Committee recommends an expanded and more influential role by the United Nations and its organs in promoting a just solution to the question of Palestine and in the implementation of such a solution. The Security Council, in particular, should take appropriate action to facilitate the exercise by the Palestinians of their right to return to their homes, lands and property. The Committee, furthermore, urges the Security Council to promote action towards a just solution, taking into account all the powers conferred on it by the Charter of the United Nations.

65. It is with this perspective in view and on the basis of the numerous resolutions of the United Nations, after due consideration of all the facts, proposals and suggestions advanced in the course of its deliberations, that the Committee submits its recommendations on the modalities for the implementation of the exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.

* Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-first Session,
Supplement No. 35 (A/31/35), paras. 59-72.

II. The right of return

66. The natural and inalienable right of Palestinians to return to their homes is recognized by resolution 194 (III), which the General Assembly has reaffirmed almost every year since its adoption. This right was also unanimously recognized by the Security Council in its resolution 237 (1967); the time for the urgent implementation of these resolutions is long overdue.

67. Without prejudice to the right of all Palestinians to return to their homes, lands and property, the Committee considers that the programme of implementation of the exercise of this right may be carried out in two phases:

Phase one

68. The first phase involves the return to their homes of the Palestinians displaced as a result of the war of June 1967. The Committee recommends that:

- (i) The Security Council should request the immediate implementation of its resolution 237 (1967) and that such implementation should not be related to any other condition;
- (ii) The resources of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and/or of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, suitably financed and mandated, may be employed to assist in the solution of any logistical problems involved in the resettlement of those returning to their homes. These agencies could also assist, in co-operation with the host countries and the Palestine Liberation Organization, in the identification of the displaced Palestinians.

Phase two

69. The second phase deals with the return to their homes of the Palestinians displaced between 1948 and 1967. The Committee recommends that:

- (i) While the first phase is being implemented, the United Nations, in co-operation with the States directly involved, and the Palestine Liberation Organization as the interim representative of the Palestinian entity, should proceed to make the necessary arrangements to enable Palestinians displaced between 1948 and 1967 to exercise their right to return to their homes and property, in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions, particularly General Assembly resolution 194 (III);
- (ii) Palestinians not choosing to return to their homes should be paid just and equitable compensation as provided for in resolution 194 (III).

III. The right to self-determination, national independence and sovereignty

70. The Palestinian people has the inherent right to self-determination, national independence and sovereignty in Palestine. The Committee considers that the evacuation of the territories occupied by force and in violation of the principles

of the Charter and relevant resolutions of the United Nations is a conditio sine qua non for the exercise by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights in Palestine. The Committee considers, furthermore, that upon the return of the Palestinians to their homes and property and with the establishment of an independent Palestinian entity, the Palestinian people will be able to exercise its rights to self-determination and to decide its form of government without external interference.

71. The Committee also feels that the United Nations has an historical duty and responsibility to render all assistance necessary to promote the economic development and prosperity of the Palestinian entity.

72. To those ends, the Committee recommends that:

(a) A timetable should be established by the Security Council for the complete withdrawal by Israeli occupation forces from those areas occupied in 1967; such withdrawal should be completed no later than 1 June 1977;

(b) The Security Council may need to provide temporary peace-keeping forces in order to facilitate the process of withdrawal;

(c) Israel should be requested by the Security Council to desist from the establishment of new settlements and to withdraw during this period from settlements established since 1967 in the occupied territories. Arab property and all essential services in those areas should be maintained intact;

(d) Israel should also be requested to abide scrupulously by the provisions of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, and to declare, pending its speedy withdrawal from these territories, its recognition of the applicability of that Convention;

(e) The evacuated territories, with all property and services intact, should be taken over by the United Nations which, with the co-operation of the League of Arab States, will subsequently hand over those evacuated areas to the Palestine Liberation Organization as the representative of the Palestinian people;

(f) The United Nations should, if necessary, assist in establishing communications between Gaza and the West Bank;

(g) As soon as the independent Palestinian entity has been established, the United Nations, in co-operation with the States directly involved and the Palestinian entity, should, taking into account General Assembly resolution 3375 (XXX), make further arrangements for the full implementation of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, the resolution of outstanding problems and the establishment of a just and lasting peace in the region, in accordance with all relevant United Nations resolutions;

(h) The United Nations should provide the economic and technical assistance necessary for the consolidation of the Palestinian entity.

ANNEX II

Conclusions and recommendations adopted by the Twenty-first
United Nations Seminar on the Question of Palestine

(Cairo, 18 to 22 December 1988)

Introduction

1. The Twenty-first United Nations Seminar on the Question of Palestine (Fifth African Regional Seminar) entitled "The Inalienable rights of the Palestinian people", was held jointly with the African Regional NGO Symposium on the Question of Palestine at the Ramses Hilton Hotel, at Cairo, from 18 to 22 December 1988, in accordance with the terms of General Assembly resolution 42/66 B of 2 December 1987.
2. The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People was represented by a delegation consisting of H.E. Mrs. Absa Claude Diallo (Senegal), Chairman of the Committee; H.E. Mr. Alexander Borg Olivier (Malta), Rapporteur of the Committee; H.E. Mr. Samuel R. Insanally (Guyana); H.E. Mr. Tom Obaleh Kargbo (Sierra Leone); H.E. Mr. Agus Tarmidzi (Indonesia); and Mr. Zehdi L. Terzi (Palestine). Mrs. Absa Claude Diallo was Chairman and Mr. Alexander Borg Olivier, Rapporteur, of the seminar.
3. Nine meetings were held and 21 panelists presented papers on selected aspects of the question of Palestine. In addition, representatives of 51 Governments, Palestine, three United Nations organs, three United Nations specialized agencies and bodies, three intergovernmental organizations, two national liberation movements, as well as 50 non-governmental organizations attended the seminar.
4. The joint opening ceremony of the seminar and NGO Symposium heard a statement from H.E. Dr. Ahmed Esmat Abdel Meguid, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Egypt, delivered by H.E. Aziz Seif El Nasr, Assistant Minister for Foreign Affairs.
5. A message from the Secretary-General of the United Nations, H.E. Mr. Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, was read out by his representative, Mr. Naseem Mirza, Chief, Division for Palestinian Rights. Mrs. Absa Claude Diallo, Chairman of the seminar, also addressed the meeting.
6. A message was received from Mr. Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), which was read out by Mr. Jamal Sourani, member of the Executive Committee of the PLO.
7. Other statements were made by: Dr. Abdel Ahad Gamal El Din, President of the Supreme Council for Youth and Sports of Egypt and Chairman of the United Nations Association of Egypt; H.E. Mr. Tesfaye Tadesse (Ethiopia), Chairman of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples; Dr. Morad Ghaleb, President of the Afro-Asian People's Solidarity Organization; H.E. Mr. Agus Tarmidzi (Indonesia), speaking on behalf of the Special Committee against Apartheid; Mr. Muhammed Al-Farra, Under-Secretary-General of the League of Arab States; Mr. Al Mamoun Keita (Mali), speaking on behalf of the President of Mali, Chairman of the Organization of African Unity; and Mr. Sherif Refaat (Egypt),

representing the United Nations Council for Namibia. The seminar also received a message from Mr. Daya Perera, Chairman of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Population of the Occupied Territories and a message from the Organization of the Islamic Conference.

8. The seminar adopted a message to Mr. Yasser Arafat, and a motion of thanks to the Government and the people of Egypt.

9. Three panels were established:

(a) Panel I: "The uprising in the occupied Palestinian territories: the urgency of convening the International Peace Conference on the Middle East in accordance with United Nations General Assembly resolutions": Mr. Lotfy El-Kholy (Egypt), Mr. Rafael Estrella (Spain), Mr. Y. V. Glukhov (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics), Mr. Corentin Hervo-Akendengue (Gabon), Mr. Al Mamoun Keita (Mali), Mr. Jonathan Kuttub (Palestinian), Mr. Salah Ladgham (Tunisia), Mr. Ibbo Mandaza (Zimbabwe), Mr. Ahmed Osman (Egypt), and Mr. S. Amos Wako (Kenya);

(b) Panel II: "The role of the Palestine Liberation Organization": Mr. Nabil Sha'ath (Palestinian);

(c) Panel III: "The mobilization of African public opinion for the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people": Mr. Farouk Abu Eissa (Sudan), Mr. Donald Betz (United States of America), Mr. Gipu Felix-George (Sierra Leone), Mr. Mohamed El-Sayed Gallab (Egypt), Mr. Gora Ibrahim (South Africa), Mr. Latyr Kamara (Senegal), Mr. Gabrallah Khamsin (Sudan), Mr. Assih Kossi (Togo), Mr. Dikhigang Nasemola (South Africa), Mrs. Ruth Neto (Angola), Mr. Gesaya Nyama (Namibia), and Mr. Abdel Moneim Said (Egypt).

10. The report of the seminar, including summaries of the proceedings, has been published as a special bulletin of the United Nations Division for Palestinian Rights.

Conclusions and recommendations

11. The conclusions and recommendations adopted by the seminar are as follows:

(a) The participants in the seminar expressed their conviction that recent developments regarding the Arab-Israeli conflict and its core, the question of Palestine, have created a new momentum for bringing about a solution to this complicated and dangerous conflict, on the basis of resolutions of the United Nations and within its framework. Those developments are mainly owing to the courageous and determined struggle of the Palestinian people to attain and to exercise its inalienable rights, primarily the right to self-determination, as dramatically manifested in the continuing Palestinian intifadah in the occupied Palestinian territory. They have been facilitated by a conducive international climate characterized by increasing co-operation and the political will to solve regional conflicts in a peaceful way through negotiations.

(b) Participants welcomed the results of the nineteenth extraordinary session of the Palestine National Council at Algiers and, in particular, the proclamation of an independent State of Palestine as a positive contribution towards a peaceful

settlement of the conflict in the region. The decision adopted by the Palestine National Council and the position outlined by Mr. Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the PLO, in his address to the United Nations General Assembly on 13 December 1988, as well as in other forums, are important landmarks in the endeavours of the international community towards achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine that have resulted in increased support by all sectors of the international community for the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East and have made possible the initiation of a dialogue between the United States of America and the PLO. The decision of the Government of the United States to establish contacts with the PLO and to participate in a substantive dialogue with the PLO was welcomed as a positive development, and the hope was expressed that such contacts would lead to concrete results and to a comprehensive settlement of the conflict.

(c) The participants agreed that it was now incumbent upon the Government of Israel to respond positively to the stand taken by the PLO that has been welcomed and praised by the international community. Israel can no longer ignore the national aspirations of the Palestinians in the occupied Palestinian territory. The ongoing intifadah of the Palestinian people, which entered its second year on 9 December 1988, confirms in no uncertain terms that the Palestinians are determined to resist, to reject and to end Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967. The proclamation of the independent State of Palestine by the Palestine National Council at its nineteenth extraordinary session has received enthusiastic support from an overwhelming majority of States. The same States have hailed that proclamation as a concrete contribution towards peace. Significantly, many States have already formally recognized the State of Palestine, proclaimed at Algiers on 15 November 1988.

(d) The seminar took note of and welcomed the resolutions on the item entitled "Question of Palestine", adopted by the General Assembly on 15 December 1988 at Geneva. In particular it noted with satisfaction the call for the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, under the auspices of the United Nations, with the participation of all parties to the conflict, including the PLO, on an equal footing, and the five permanent members of the Security Council, based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people, primarily the right to self-determination. It expressed its full support for the principles contained in paragraph 3 of Assembly resolution 43/176, as a basis for the achievement of a comprehensive peace. Cognizant of the role of the Security Council in maintaining international peace and security, participants in the seminar endorsed the request to the Council to consider measures needed to convene the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, including the establishment of a preparatory committee, and to consider guarantees for security measures to be agreed upon by the Conference for all States in the region, as well as interim measures to safeguard the physical security of the inhabitants of the occupied territories pending agreement on a final comprehensive settlement. The participants considered that it was now incumbent upon Israel to accept the terms for a lasting and comprehensive settlement, which have been agreed upon by the international community as a whole, and which should be based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) of 22 November 1967 and 338 (1973) of 22 October 1973 and the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people, primarily the right to self-determination.

(e) The participants also welcomed the decision by the General Assembly, in its resolution 43/177, that the designation "Palestine" should be used in place of the designation "Palestine Liberation Organization" in the United Nations system. The participants regarded the decision as a recognition of the aspirations of the Palestinian people and a reaffirmation of the PLO as its sole legitimate representative, and also as an endorsement of the courageous steps taken during the intifadah to end the occupation and to set up the infrastructure for an independent and sovereign Palestinian State. The participants urged that every assistance should be provided by the international community to the Palestinian people in its endeavours to accomplish that important objective.

(f) The international community is becoming more deeply convinced of the need to find a just, comprehensive and lasting political settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict. That is evidenced by the growing support for the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East. That support is clearly reflected in the position adopted by the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, the League of Arab States, the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), the European Community, the Nordic countries, as well as by the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, China and other socialist countries. In that regard, the seminar noted with appreciation the sustained and continuing support by African States and peoples for the exercise by the Palestinian people of its legitimate national rights and for the convening of the International Peace Conference.

(g) The participants noted that, while strenuous attempts have been made to bring about a solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict, the situation in the region remains tense. It is aggravated by Israel's brutal suppression of the Palestinian uprising through military might, beatings, detentions, deportations, its policies of illegally maintaining and expanding Jewish settlements, as well as confiscating Arab-owned lands and diverting scarce water resources to its own use in the occupied Palestinian and Arab territories. The "iron-fist" policy of Israel has further stifled all forms of political, cultural, social and economic expressions of the Palestinian people. Israel continues to strengthen its control over most aspects of life, with a view to obstructing a self-sustained development of the Palestinian people in the occupied territories. Such policies are in violation of United Nations resolutions, the Geneva Conventions of 1949, in particular the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 1949, and other forms of international law, and exacerbate tension in the area, thus hindering attempts to find a peaceful solution to the question of Palestine. The participants noted further that those massive violations of human rights had not succeeded in ending the intifadah and were unlikely to achieve for Israel its objectives. Persistence by Israel in acts of aggression against neighbouring States, in particular Lebanon, endangered security in the region.

(h) The seminar appealed to the United Nations to take urgent measures to protect the Palestinians under occupation, to guarantee the safety and security and the legal and human rights of the Palestinian refugees in all territories under Israeli occupation and to alleviate their suffering. Adequate assistance should also be provided on a regular basis to the Palestinian refugees in the neighbouring and other countries. The United Nations system, as well as international, regional and national organizations, should continue and strengthen their humanitarian assistance to the Palestinians under occupation and to Palestinian refugees. In particular, sustained and increased support should be channelled through the United

Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, as well as non-governmental organizations working directly in the occupied territories.

(i) The seminar affirmed that the denial of the exercise of the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people remains the core of the conflict in the Middle East and that a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the region cannot be achieved without the full exercise of those rights, and without the withdrawal of Israel from the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, and other occupied Arab territories. It further affirmed that the PLO is the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people and, as such, is an essential party to any negotiations aimed at resolving the conflict by peaceful means.

(j) The seminar took note with appreciation of the efforts of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People to secure universal recognition of the inalienable national rights of the Palestinian people, and of its recommendations made in its report in 1976 a/ and repeatedly endorsed by the United Nations General Assembly since then for ensuring the exercise by the Palestinian people of those rights. The seminar also noted with satisfaction the increased support at the United Nations for the programme of action undertaken by the Committee. It urged the international community to sustain and strengthen its support for the Committee's activities and endeavours, in particular its efforts for facilitating the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East.

(k) The position of the African countries, as manifested in the declarations and resolutions of OAU, was one of solidarity with and support for the struggle of the Palestinian people for the exercise of its inalienable rights, in particular the right to self-determination and to have a State of its own. Many of the participants drew parallels between the cause of the Palestinian people and the struggle of the peoples of South Africa and Namibia. Those participants noted that, as the international community welcomed the signing of the Brazzaville agreements on the implementation of Security Council resolution 435 (1978) regarding Namibia, South Africa continued its abhorrent policies and practices of apartheid, which the participants condemned, and Israel persisted in its attempts to stifle, by brutal force and oppressive policies, the Palestinian uprising in the occupied territories. Both the policies of Israel and the apartheid policies in South Africa endanger international peace and security and were of the gravest concern to the international community. Participants also expressed concern at the collaboration between South Africa and Israel, which they condemned.

(l) The seminar viewed with appreciation the support OAU and the Governments and peoples of Africa have extended at the United Nations and in other forums to the Palestinian cause and for the achievement of a just and lasting peace in the Middle East. It agreed that efforts should be continued and intensified to mobilize official and public opinion in Africa through the use of the media and activities of the non-governmental organizations. Participants expressed the view that the co-operation of African organizations, trade unions, solidarity groups, etc. among themselves, as well as between them and their counterparts in other regions, should be expanded. The United Nations should undertake additional efforts to disseminate factual and up-to-date information on the question of Palestine and the measures required to be taken for the achievement of a just settlement to the question of Palestine. The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and the Division for Palestinian Rights have an important role in the dissemination of such information. Moreover,

the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat should make every effort to ensure that accurate information on the question of Palestine received the widest possible dissemination.

Notes

a/ See Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-first Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/31/35).

ANNEX III

Declaration adopted by the United Nations African Regional NGO Symposium on the Question of Palestine

(Cairo, 18 to 21 December 1988)

Introduction

1. The second African NGO Symposium on the Question of Palestine was held in accordance with the terms of General Assembly resolution 42/66 B of 2 December 1987, under the auspices of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, at the Ramses Hilton Hotel at Cairo from 18 to 21 December 1988. The Symposium was held in part together with the Twenty-first United Nations Seminar on the Question of Palestine (Fifth African Regional Seminar) (see annex II).
2. In addition to the panels held jointly with the seminar, two workshops specifically related to activities of non-governmental organizations were established for the Symposium to consider the following topics:
 - (a) Mobilization and networking by African non-governmental organizations to end Israeli violations of human rights of Palestinians in the occupied territories and to promote international protection for Palestinians under Israeli occupation;
 - (b) Activities of non-governmental organizations to mobilize further African public opinion and the relationship between the Palestinian uprising and the struggle of the peoples of Namibia and South Africa.
3. The Symposium participants adopted a Declaration (see below) as well as action-oriented proposals emanating from the two workshops, and elected an African Co-ordinating Committee for NGOs on the Question of Palestine. The report of the Symposium has been issued as a special bulletin of the Division for Palestinian Rights, together with that of the seminar.

Declaration

We, the non-governmental organizations participating in the Second United Nations African Regional Symposium on the Question of Palestine, are gathered in Cairo at a historic moment when the Palestinian struggle for self-determination and independence has entered a decisive phase. We hail and support the determination of the Palestinian people in its quest for national liberation and the establishment of its own independent sovereign national State.

We fully support the peace project enunciated at the Nineteenth Extraordinary Session of the Palestine National Council, convened from 13 to 15 November 1988 at Algiers, as now reflected in United Nations General Assembly resolutions 43/176 and 43/177 of 15 December 1988.

Specifically we welcome and express our support for the historic proclamation of the State of Palestine in line with General Assembly resolution 181 (II).

We call upon all Governments that have not recognized the new State of Palestine to do so and urge governmental and non-governmental organizations to extend every assistance for the strengthening of the educational, medical, economic and social institutions in the occupied territories, a necessary step for the establishment of the Palestinian State.

Further, we hail the struggle of the Palestinian people through the intifadah, now over one year old, as the popular expression of its irrepressible will to create circumstances for self-determination and independence. We call upon the international community to give unflinching support to the intifadah and unite in pressing for an end to illegal Israeli occupation, denial of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and gross human rights violations.

We call for the prompt convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East under United Nations auspices, in accordance with the guidelines spelt out under relevant United Nations resolutions, particularly General Assembly resolution 43/176 of December 1988.

We are aware of the major obstacles that have thwarted the convening of the International Peace Conference until now and the impediments that remain. But we are united in our determination to overcome any barriers to the peace process and the convening of the Conference. We undertake to arouse international public opinion for the holding of the International Peace Conference until it is convened.

We reaffirm that peace in the Middle East is unachievable without a just solution of the Palestine problem, and recognize that peace efforts in the Middle East, and particularly the new thrust of Palestinian self-determination reflecting a realistic and genuine desire for principled peace, facilitate and form part of a broader international peace initiative. We firmly believe that independence and peace for Palestine would contribute positively to global peace.

We condemn the repression in the West Bank and Gaza Strip and its escalations. International vigilance in monitoring human rights violations perpetrated against Palestinians is required now more than ever.

We, therefore, especially in view of the international legitimacy gained by the Palestine National Council's declaration of a Palestinian State to be established on the Palestinian homeland, call for the immediate implementation of General Assembly resolution 43/176 concerning the placing of the Palestinian territory occupied by Israel since 1967 under the supervision of the United Nations for a limited period, as an essential part of the peace process. Such an important international presence will ensure the physical protection of the Palestinian people of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The United Nations and international community are called upon to bear full responsibility for the protection and safety of the Palestinian people under occupation.

We reaffirm that Israeli settlements in the occupied territories are illegal and reassert the international call for the dismantling and evacuation of those settlements on the West Bank and Gaza Strip as proclaimed in General Assembly resolution 43/176. We call upon the United Nations, Governments and non-governmental organizations to take concrete actions to prevent the Israeli rulers from establishing new settlements. We also reaffirm our pledge to further our support for the right of the Palestinians to return to their homeland in accordance with General Assembly resolution 194 of 1948.

We further reaffirm the strong connection between the struggle for national liberation and peace with justice in the Middle East and that in southern Africa. We express our total and unflinching support for the struggle for the realization of the rights of self-determination, independence and other human rights in Namibia and South Africa, which must be enjoyed on the basis of equality and non-discrimination. We call upon all States and the international community to stop aiding Israel and apartheid South Africa, and urge African States to continue the severance of all relations with and the isolation of both régimes until the people realize its inalienable rights.

We reaffirm the necessity of strengthening Afro-Arab co-operation as an indispensable medium of promoting the development of the two (African and Arab) peoples, as well as the struggle against domination and racial discrimination in southern Africa and in Israeli occupied Palestine.

As non-governmental organizations, we resolve to exert every effort to oppose the co-operation between Israel and apartheid South Africa. We condemn their military nuclear build-up, which is a serious threat to regional and international peace and security.

We express our solidarity with democratic and peace-loving forces in Israel, which struggle against Israeli occupationist, expansionist and militarist policies and actions, and which support the intifadah, the proclaimed independent Palestinian State on Palestinian land and the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. We strongly condemn the unjust Israeli law which prohibits contacts between the people of Israel and the PLO and demand its total and immediate abrogation.

We append the workshop reports and urge African non-governmental organizations to work in a co-ordinated way to implement the recommendations. We note the comments of the International Co-ordinating Committee for NGOs on the Question of Palestine and its expression of assistance in the development of our work.

We have further decided to organize our work through an African co-ordinating committee. ... We ask that this report be disseminated as widely as possible throughout Africa and through the international network of non-governmental organizations, as well as to the media. We request the United Nations to provide the financial means for one meeting of the African Co-ordinating Committee per year, in conjunction with the International NGO Meeting on the Question of Palestine.

We thank the United Nations Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, the Division for Palestinian Rights, the Department of Conference Services of the Secretariat and our gracious Egyptian hosts for their efforts to ensure the success of the African NGO Symposium.

ANNEX IV

Conclusions and recommendations adopted by the Twenty-second United Nations Seminar on the Question of Palestine

(New York, 19 and 20 June 1989)

Introduction

1. The Twenty-second United Nations Seminar on the Question of Palestine (Sixth North American Regional Seminar), entitled "The inalienable rights of the Palestinian People", was held at United Nations Headquarters, New York, on 19 and 20 June 1989, in accordance with the terms of General Assembly resolution 42/66 B of 2 December 1987.
2. H.E. Mrs. Absa Claude Diallo (Senegal), Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, was Chairman; H.E. Mr. Alexander Borg Olivier (Malta), Rapporteur of the Committee, was Vice-Chairman; and H.E. Mr. Tom Obaleh Kargbo (Sierra Leone) was Rapporteur of the seminar.
3. Four meetings were held and 12 panelists presented papers on selected aspects of the question of Palestine. In addition, representatives of 57 Governments, Palestine, two non-member States, two United Nations organs, six United Nations specialized agencies and bodies, three intergovernmental organizations, as well as two national liberation movements attended the seminar.
4. At the opening session, a message of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, was read out by his representative, Mr. Naseem Mirza, Chief of the Division for Palestinian Rights. Mrs. Absa Claude Diallo, Chairman of the seminar, also addressed the meeting.
5. A message from Mr. Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization, was read out by Mr. Zuhdi L. Terzi, Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations.
6. Other statements were made at the opening session by the following: Mr. Tesfaye Tadesse (Ethiopia), Chairman of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, Mr. Guennadi Oudovenko (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic), Acting Chairman of the Special Committee against Apartheid, Mr. Daya Perera (Sri Lanka), Chairman of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Population of the Occupied Territories, Mr. Ahmet Egin Ansay, Permanent Observer of the Organization of the Islamic Conference and Mr. Tebogo Mafole, Chief Representative of the African National Congress of South Africa.
7. The seminar adopted a resolution requesting the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council to join in an immediate communication to Israel, requesting that it should rescind the recent order for the deportation of Palestinians. The seminar also adopted a message to Mr. Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization.

8. Two panels were established. The panels and their panelists were as follows:

Panel I. (a) "The urgency of convening the International Peace Conference on the Middle East"; (b) "The intifadah in the occupied Palestinian territory and its impact on the achievement of a comprehensive settlement of the Middle East conflict": Mr. Mordechai Bar-On (Israel), Rev. Elias Chacour (Palestinian), Mr. Rafael Estrella (Spain), Mr. James Graff (Canada), Ms. Zahira Kamal (Palestinian), Mr. Latyr Kamara (Senegal), Mr. Paul McCloskey (United States of America), Ms. Margaret McCormack (United States), Mr. Jack O'Dell (United States), Mr. V. P. Vorobyov (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics), Mr. James Zogby (United States).

Panel II. "The role of the Palestine Liberation Organization in the social, cultural, economic and political development of the Palestinian people": Mr. Mohammad Abu Kosh (Palestinian).

9. The report of the seminar, including summaries of the proceedings, has been published as a special bulletin of the United Nations Division for Palestinian Rights.

Conclusions and recommendations

10. The conclusions and recommendations adopted by the seminar are as follows:

(a) The participants a/ in the seminar expressed their conviction that recent developments regarding the Arab-Israeli conflict and its core, the question of Palestine, have created a new momentum for bringing about a solution to this complicated and dangerous conflict on the basis of resolutions of the United Nations and within its framework. Those developments are mainly due to the courageous and determined struggle of the Palestinian people to attain and exercise its inalienable rights, primarily the right to self-determination, as dramatically manifested in the continuing Palestinian uprising, the intifadah, in the occupied Palestinian territory. The present international climate, which is characterized by increasing co-operation and the political will to solve regional conflicts in a peaceful way through negotiations, is specially conducive to the search for a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine. It is important that this historic opportunity not be missed.

(b) The participants welcomed the results of the Nineteenth Extraordinary Session of the Palestine National Council, held at Algiers in November 1988, and, in particular, the political statement, as well as the proclamation of an independent Palestinian State, as a positive contribution towards a peaceful settlement of the conflict in the region. The decision adopted at Algiers and the position outlined by Mr. Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the PLO, in his address to the United Nations General Assembly at Geneva on 13 December 1988, as well as in other forums, are important landmarks in the international endeavours towards achieving a just settlement of the question of Palestine and have resulted in increased support by all sectors of the international community for the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East.

(c) The seminar welcomed the initiation of a dialogue between the United States and the PLO as a positive measure which contributed to redressing the

imbalance between the parties. It was hoped that the dialogue would lead to the removal of obstacles in the way of convening the International Peace Conference on the Middle East which, among other things, should ensure the full exercise by the Palestinian people of its legitimate national rights in Palestine. The wish was expressed that such contacts would lead to concrete developments and to a comprehensive settlement of the conflict. The seminar urged the Government of the United States to continue its contacts with the PLO and to broaden the political scope of that dialogue.

(d) The participants stressed that the ongoing uprising of the Palestinian people, now in its nineteenth month, confirms, in no uncertain terms, that the Palestinians are determined to resist, reject and end Israeli occupation of Palestinian territory occupied since 1967. The peace initiatives taken by the Palestinian leadership, as well as the proclamation of the independent State of Palestine by the Palestine National Council at its nineteenth extraordinary session, have received enthusiastic support from an overwhelming majority of States, which have hailed it as a concrete contribution towards peace. Significantly, a large number of States (over 90) have already formally recognized the State of Palestine.

(e) The participants agreed that it was incumbent upon the Government of Israel to respond positively to the stand taken by the representatives of the Palestinian people, which has been welcomed and praised by the international community. Israel can no longer ignore the national aspirations of the Palestinians and deny them their political rights. The seminar considered that the so-called peace initiative proposed by the Israeli authorities was inadequate. Under the Israeli plan, the only function of the elected delegates would seem to be to rubber stamp the policies of the occupying Power. Any viable peace proposal must include interim measures of protection for the Palestinian people and measures which would enable the Palestinians to exercise fully their rights to self-determination. The participants noted that, as long as the Israeli election proposals remained separate from the final objective of the exercise by the Palestinian people of its right to self-determination, they would be nothing but a device for perpetuating Israeli occupation.

(f) The seminar took note of and welcomed the resolutions on the question of Palestine adopted by the General Assembly at its forty-third session on 15 December 1988 at Geneva. In particular, it stressed the significance and timeliness of Assembly resolution 43/176 of 15 December 1988 calling for the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, under the auspices of the United Nations, with the participation of all parties to the conflict, including the PLO, on an equal footing, and the five permanent members of the Security Council, based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) of 22 November 1967 and 338 (1973) of 22 October 1973 and the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people, primarily the right to self-determination. It expressed its full support for the principles contained in paragraph 3 of Assembly resolution 43/176, as a basis for the achievement of a comprehensive peace. Cognizant of the role of the Security Council in maintaining international peace and security, the participants in the seminar urged the Council to expedite the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, and to adopt interim measures, including the deployment of a United Nations peace-keeping force to safeguard the physical security of the inhabitants of the occupied Palestinian territory, and to bring about stability in the region pending agreement on a final comprehensive settlement. The participants considered that it was incumbent upon

Israel to terminate its occupation in compliance with Security Council resolution 242 (1967) and to accept the terms for a lasting and comprehensive settlement, as agreed by the international community as a whole, as stated above.

(g) The participants regretted that one permanent member had prevented the Security Council from taking action on measures indispensable for ensuring the safety and protection of Palestinians in the occupied Palestinian territory. They pointed out that, taking into account the gravity of the acts of violence and repression by Israeli authorities against Palestinian civilians in the occupied territory, the Security Council should assume its responsibilities and provide for the protection of the Palestinian people under occupation. They called upon Israel, as the occupying Power, to respect the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 1949, accept the de jure applicability of the Convention to the Palestinian and other Arab territories occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, and fully comply with its obligations under that Convention.

(h) The participants expressed serious concern at the continued grave violations of the human rights of the civilian population in the occupied territory. The entire international community, as represented at the United Nations and other forums, has repeatedly declared that the Israeli acts of violence against the Palestinians in the occupied Palestinian territory are blatant violations of the provisions of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, which is fully binding on Israel - a State Party to the Convention. The Israeli actions are also contrary to United Nations resolutions and to the generally accepted norms of international law. In Gaza especially, new measures to control the movement of individuals had produced tinder-box conditions that could ignite at any moment. In the West Bank, settler vigilance threatened to degenerate into large-scale blood-letting. New extremist elements were taking over and had begun killing women and children. The participants strongly opposed the presence of settlers in the occupied territories. They expressed the view that the Israeli policy of establishing settlements in the occupied territory was not only a usurpation of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, but also an obstacle to the solution of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

(i) The participants drew particular attention to the damaging effects of the blanket closure of schools, including primary schools and kindergartens, as well as the barring of any alternative teaching in the West Bank, which had serious implications for the education and cognitive development of an entire generation of Palestinian children. The participants noted further that those massive violations of human rights had not succeeded in ending the intifadah and were bound to fail. Moreover, persistence by Israel in acts of aggression against neighbouring States, in particular Lebanon, endangered security in the region.

(j) The participants expressed their concern at the repressive economic measures by Israel aimed at bringing about the economic strangulation of the occupied Palestinian territories. In particular, the participants expressed outrage at the policies of large-scale, uprooting of trees, appropriation of water resources and wanton destruction of houses and buildings, which are causing irreparable damage to the environment and very serious social and economic consequences for the Palestinian people under occupation.

(k) The seminar appealed to the Security Council to take urgent measures to protect the Palestinian people under occupation, to guarantee the safety and security and the legal and human rights of the Palestinian refugees in all the territories under Israeli occupation. The United Nations system, as well as international, regional and national organizations, should continue and strengthen their humanitarian assistance to the Palestinians under occupation and to Palestinian refugees. In particular, the seminar urged an expansion of the Refugee Affairs Officer Programme of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), which provides some measure of protection by monitoring behaviour towards the Palestinians by Israel, the occupying Power. The seminar believed that the number of Relief Agency Organizations in the occupied Palestinian territory should be increased to provide 24 hours' monitoring services. The participants urged as well the establishment of staffed neuro-surgical facilities in suitable hospitals at Gaza and Nablus, in order to permit immediate treatment of the increasing number of Palestinian civilians suffering serious head wounds, to prevent death and permanent disability. At present, Maquassed Hospital is the only hospital in East Jerusalem that has such facilities. Palestinians suffering serious head wounds must be transported either to Tel Aviv or to Jerusalem for treatment, which results in delays threatening their lives or causing permanent handicaps.

(l) The seminar also urged the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and other suitable United Nations agencies to establish programmes to address the special needs of Palestinian children, psychologically and emotionally traumatized by the Israeli Defence Force and settler violence directed against them, their families, neighbours and peers. The seminar supported as well the expansion of the protective role of the International Committee for the Red Cross (ICRC) and the extension of its activities to provide emergency medical services at all levels. Participants believe that ICRC could be helpful in establishing the neuro-surgical facilities referred to above. Sustained and increased support should be channelled through all available means, including the agencies and bodies of the United Nations system, in particular through UNRWA, as well as through non-governmental organizations working directly in the occupied territory. The seminar considered that intensified efforts towards genuine development of the occupied territory, with the close involvement of the Palestinian people through its representative, the PLO, must be a necessary accompaniment of renewed efforts to achieve a political solution of the question.

(m) The seminar affirmed that the denial of the exercise of the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people remains the core of the conflict in the Middle East and that a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the region cannot be achieved without the full exercise of those rights, and without the withdrawal of Israel from the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, and other occupied Arab territories. It further affirmed that the PLO is the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, and, as such, is an essential party to any negotiations aimed at resolving the conflict by peaceful means.

(n) The seminar appreciated the efforts of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People to secure universal recognition of the inalienable national rights of the Palestinian people, and of its recommendations, made in its report in 1976, h/ and repeatedly endorsed by the United Nations General Assembly since then, for ensuring the exercise by the Palestinian people of those rights. The seminar also noted with satisfaction the increased support at the United Nations for the programme of action undertaken by

the Committee. It urged the international community to sustain and strengthen its support for the Committee's activities and endeavours, in particular its efforts for facilitating the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East.

(o) The seminar stated that the international community was deeply and firmly convinced of the urgent need to achieve a just, comprehensive and lasting political settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict. There was a broad consensus regarding the need for convening the International Peace Conference on the Middle East in accordance with General Assembly resolution 43/176. Movement towards peace in the region was facilitated by the carefully balanced Palestinian position. The continuing obstacle was the inflexible attitude of Israel. The participants called on Israel to abandon its negative position and to respond positively to international efforts to attain a just settlement.

(p) The seminar welcomed the positive results of the Arab Summit, held at Casablanca in May 1989. The Arab States, once more, committed themselves to meaningful political and economic support to the Palestinian uprising. The seminar welcomed, in particular, the unequivocal support of the Summit for the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East. Those actions taken unanimously by the Summit contributed to efforts for achieving a peaceful settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict and its core, the question of Palestine.

(q) The seminar noted with satisfaction that public opinion in North America was becoming increasingly aware of the plight of the Palestinians under occupation and the urgent need to find a just solution to the question of Palestine. The seminar agreed that efforts should be continued and intensified to mobilize official and public opinion in North America, especially through the use of the media and activities of national and international non-governmental organizations. The United Nations should undertake additional efforts to disseminate factual and up-to-date information on the question of Palestine, the plight of Palestinians under occupation and the urgent need to provide international protection to the Arab civilians in the occupied territory, as well as the measures required to be taken for the achievement of a just solution to the question of Palestine on the basis of the attainment and exercise by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights. The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and the Division of Palestinian Rights have an important role in the dissemination of such information.

(r) The seminar considered that the media and public institutions, universities, colleges, research institutes, churches and other religious establishments, as well as national and international non-governmental organizations, have a crucial role to play in the formation of public opinion and in influencing official policy, particularly in the United States of America and Canada. Those institutions and the media should be urged to give wider coverage and more balanced treatment to the question of Palestine.

Notes

a/ On 20 June 1989, Mr. Mordechai Bar-On, in a written communication, informed the United Nations Division for Palestinian Rights that he wanted to express his appreciation for the work of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and his gratitude for the opportunity given to him to participate in the seminar. He felt much sympathy with most of the wording of the conclusions and recommendations of the seminar, yet he felt that he could not endorse them formally, since he held different convictions with respect to some important points. He added that the document was drafted, understandably, from the perspective of the Committee, which stressed the rights of the Palestinians, but that it gives little consideration to the problems of Israel in this tragic conflict.

b/ See Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-first Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/31/35).

Declaration adopted by the United Nations North American
Regional NGO Symposium on the Question of Palestine

(New York, 21 to 23 June 1989)

Introduction

1. The Sixth North American Regional NGO Symposium on the Question of Palestine was held from 21 June to 23 June 1989, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 43/175 B of 15 December 1988.
2. Representatives of 106 non-governmental organizations from Canada and the United States of America participated in the work of the Symposium, 35 of whom were observers. Several observers from Governments, intergovernmental organizations and United Nations bodies also participated.
3. Mrs. Absa Claude Diallo (Senegal), Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, opened the meeting on behalf of the Committee. The programme of the Symposium was elaborated by the Committee in consultation with the North American Co-ordination Committee for NGOs on the Question of Palestine. The overall theme was "The inalienable rights of the Palestinian people".
4. The following panels were established:
 - Panel I. "The intifadah: creating a new context for peace":
Ms. Zahira Kamal, Chairman, Palestine Federation of Women's Action Committees;
Mr. Meir Amor, graduate student, Tel Aviv University; Rev. Elias Chacour, Melkite priest, Galilee, Israel.
 - Panel II. "Convening the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, in accordance with United Nations General Assembly resolution 43/176: implications for Israel and the United States of the proclamation of the State of Palestine, the Palestinian peace initiative, and the intifadah": Mr. Mahdi Abdul-Hadi, founder of the Arab Thought Forum, President, Palestinian Academic Society for the Study of International Affairs, Jerusalem; Mr. Mattityahu Peled, Professor of Arabic Literature, Tel Aviv University; Ms. Margaret McCormack, a political consultant from the United States of America.
5. Eight workshops addressed the following topics:
 - (a) Mobilizing public awareness in North America: mobilizing concern and support for:
 - (i) Palestinian children;
 - (ii) Palestinian medical and health services;
 - (iii) The victims of punitive violations of the fourth Geneva Convention;
 - (iv) Palestinian workers and their conditions of labour;

(b) Development of action-oriented strategies for better co-ordination and organization in North America:

- (i) People-to-people campaigns;
- (ii) Electoral initiatives and mobilizing public opinion;
- (iii) Humanitarian and material aid projects;
- (iv) Congressional and parliamentary strategies: human rights, foreign policy and foreign aid.

6. The Declaration of the Symposium was adopted unanimously and is reproduced below. The report, including summaries of the presentations, has been published as a special bulletin of the United Nations Division for Palestinian Rights.

Declaration

We, the non-governmental organizations participating in the Sixth United Nations North American Regional NGO Symposium on the Question of Palestine, wish to thank the United Nations Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for making this meeting possible. We are indeed honoured by the reception, and the presence of the members and observers of this distinguished United Nations body.

We wish also to thank the Chief of the Division for Palestinian Rights and are especially grateful for his enthusiastic support throughout our deliberations.

We wish to thank also the liaison officers, the staff of the Division and the Department of Conference Services of the Secretariat for their invaluable assistance in the preparation and execution of this meeting.

We are encouraged that about 90 States Members of the United Nations have recognized the State of Palestine, and encourage our own Governments to join this international consensus.

We note with satisfaction the record attendance and participation in this year's Symposium, and the commitment to Palestinian rights and a just and lasting solution to the Israeli/Palestinian conflict that such participation represents.

We wish also to voice our appreciation to the distinguished expert panelists, workshop organizers, resource persons and facilitators who offered their invaluable insights into the question of Palestine and the potential central role to be played by non-governmental organizations in North America. The practical suggestions and strategies developed in the workshops assisted us in formulating future collaborative efforts in North America and in linking our efforts to a broader global network.

We resolutely reaffirm the international consensus that the PLO is the sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. We affirm the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people in conformity with all relevant

United Nations resolutions, including the right to self-determination without external interference, the right to establish an independent Palestinian State on its own national territory under the leadership of the PLO, and the right of return. We resolutely reaffirm the international consensus as expressed through General Assembly resolution 43/177, acknowledging the proclamation of the State of Palestine by the Palestine National Council and the recognition throughout the United Nations system of "Palestine" in place of the designation "Palestine Liberation Organization".

We welcome the Palestinian peace initiative as a concrete contribution to the establishment of a just and lasting peace in the region. We call upon the Governments of the United States of America and Israel to accept this initiative by supporting the immediate convening of the International Peace Conference in accordance with General Assembly resolution 43/176. We also call upon the Government of Canada to support unequivocally the International Peace Conference and to use its influence within the Security Council to secure unanimous support for that conference. We condemn the Shamir "election" proposal as a mere pretext and transparent public relations ploy to cover Israel's illegal occupation and intensified repression of the intifadah.

We believe that this meeting contributed to the constructive interaction between the United Nations and the North American non-governmental organization community concerned with the promotion of the implementation of General Assembly resolution 43/176 of 15 December 1988, calling for an international United Nations sponsored peace conference on the Middle East.

We reaffirm our unwavering commitment to support the Palestinian people and its struggle for self-determination. We call for the immediate withdrawal of Israeli forces from the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, and other occupied Arab territories.

We honour the victims of Israel's brutal and senseless repression of the popular Palestinian uprising, including the many hundreds fatally shot, beaten, gassed and otherwise brutally murdered. We also honour the scores of thousands wounded and imprisoned under inhuman conditions in violation of international law.

We undertake to intensify our efforts to alleviate the suffering of those who have been the targets of Israeli violence, especially the children, many thousands of whom have been maimed, permanently disabled and emotionally traumatized. We call upon United Nations agencies, especially the United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), the World Health Organization, the United Nations Centre for Human Rights and the United Nations Development Programme, to intensify their efforts to address the educational, medical and general economic and social needs of the Palestinian people, in co-operation with Palestinian grass-roots organizations. We call upon States Members of the United Nations to increase their contributions and support for such efforts.

We further commit ourselves to provide moral, political and material support for the intifadah. We recognize that independent statehood for Palestine, as demanded by the Palestinian people, led by the PLO, is the expression of Palestinian self-determination, as well as a basic necessity for the preservation of the entire Palestinian people.

We call upon the United Nations Security Council and the Secretary-General to seek to arrange an extraordinary session of the United Nations General Assembly to discuss the protection of the Palestinian people in the occupied territory. We further call upon that extraordinary session to dispatch an interim international peace-keeping force to replace the Israeli occupying forces in order to provide protection and to ensure respect for the human and political rights of the Palestinian population of the West Bank and Gaza. In case it is impossible to obtain such a force, we call upon the United Nations General Assembly to request an Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice on the applicability of the 1949 Geneva Convention and the obligation to pay compensation for violations of the Convention. In addition, we urge an expansion of the Refugee Affairs Officer Programme of UNRWA which provides some measures of protection by monitoring behaviour towards the Palestinians by Israel, the occupying Power.

We recognize and express our concern for the role that racism, both de facto and de jure, plays in the situation and treatment of Palestinians inside and outside the 1967 occupied territory. State actions directed against Palestinians by the Government of Israel, supported by continued United States aid to Israel in violation of United States law, as made clear in the United States State Department human rights report on Israel and the occupied territories, shows clearly that racism serves as a buttress for denial of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. This is of growing immediate concern as the number of house demolitions, land and water confiscations are increasing, both within Israel and within the occupied territory, under the pretext of suppression of the intifadah.

We are particularly alarmed at the recently uncovered document of the Ministry of the Interior of Israel, directing the implementation of the 1986 (Markowitz) Government commission report, which calls for the eradication of tens of so-called "unrecognized" Palestinian villages within the green line. We also support the urgent appeal from the International Co-ordinating Committee for NGOs on the Question of Palestine (ICCP) and will work with ICCP to protest the currently proposed amendment to the Israeli Prevention of Terrorism Ordinance, which may become law by the end of June. By empowering the Government to seize arbitrarily the property of, and shut down, community service organizations, on the pretext that the sources of their funding may be "tainted", that amendment threatens the ability of the Palestinian community to defend itself, among other things, against the final phase of the Judaization process. The amendment will also seriously threaten the existence of Palestinian social and national institutions in East Jerusalem and can threaten the rights of Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip as well.

We note with appreciation the increasing numbers of Israeli individuals and organizations who decry racism, support a political solution and support the national and human rights of the Palestinian people. Actions such as resistance to military service in the occupied Palestinian territory, public demonstrations, peace caravans, visits to Palestinian towns and villages that have been attacked by soldiers and settlers, and the many other actions and initiatives of Israeli peace forces are essential elements in changing official Israeli policies and practices towards Palestine.

We are encouraged by General Assembly resolution 43/178 of 20 December 1988 for its actions taken to empower the United Nations Centre

for Human Settlements (Habitat) to engage a committee of experts, in consultation with the PLO, for the purpose of a comprehensive development plan in the occupied Palestinian territory. We welcome the resolution adopted by the Commission on Human Settlements on 2 May 1989, condemning Israel's demolition of Palestinian homes and decrying Israel's alteration of the demographic character of the 1967 occupied territories.

We are also encouraged that the Commission on Human Rights has actively taken up the issues of Palestinian rights in the occupied territory and would encourage the Sub-Commission on the Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities to take up the issue of the inequality of Israeli citizenship that disadvantages the Palestinian Arab minority within Israel.

We acknowledge the Economic and Social Council's resolution 1988/54 of 26 July 1988, requesting the international community, the organizations of the United Nations system, intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations to sustain and increase their assistance to the Palestinian people in close co-operation with the PLO.

The aim of this meeting is to develop practical organizing strategies and support projects for concerted action by North American non-governmental organizations. Our primary work was conducted in workshops and we received their recommendations, and commend them to all non-governmental organizations for their careful consideration and implementation.

ANNEX VI

Declaration adopted by the United Nations European Regional NGO Symposium on the Question of Palestine

(Vienna, 28 and 29 August 1989)

Introduction

1. The United Nations European Regional NGO Symposium on the Question of Palestine, the third for the European region, was held under the auspices of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People at the Austria Centre, Vienna, on 28 and 29 August 1989. The Symposium was convened in pursuance of General Assembly resolutions 42/66 A and B of 2 December 1987.
2. A total of 214 representatives of non-governmental organizations attended the Symposium, 132 of them as observers. Several observers from Governments, organizations, United Nations bodies and Palestine also participated.
3. The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People was represented by a delegation composed of Mrs. Absa Claude Diallo (Senegal), Chairman of the Committee; Mr. Alexander Borg Olivier (Malta), Rapporteur; Mr. Guennadi Oudovenko (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic); Mr. Abdul Halim Bin Ali (Malaysia) and Mr. Zuhdi L. Terzi (Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations).
4. The programme of the Symposium was elaborated by the Committee in consultation with the European Co-ordinating Committee for NGOs on the Question of Palestine. The overall theme was "The inalienable rights of the Palestinian people".
5. Two Panels were held. The first, entitled "The dynamics of the intifadah and consequences for NGO activities", was presented by Mr. Khalil Mahshi (Palestinian). The second was entitled "The International Peace Conference on the Middle East and the implementation of Palestinian self-determination: The role of Europe", at which the following experts made presentations: Mme Marie-Christine Aulas (France), Dr. Peter Jankowitsch (Austria) and Mr. Miroslav Prchal (Czechoslovakia).
6. Five workshops were also held on the following topics:
 - (a) Palestinian trade with Europe;
 - (b) The European Economic Community and Palestine: towards a more constructive policy;
 - (c) Involving Jewish communities in Europe;
 - (d) Building the Palestinian education system;
 - (e) The role of non-governmental organizations in the socio-economic development and health care in the occupied Palestinian territory.

7. The Symposium adopted a final declaration (see below), as well as action-oriented proposals emanating from the workshops. The report of the Symposium will be published in due course as a special bulletin of the Division for Palestinian Rights.

Declaration

We, the non-governmental organizations participating in the Third United Nations European Regional NGO Symposium on the Question of Palestine, welcome the recent developments which have helped towards the achievement of the goal of self-determination for the Palestinian people. Those developments have been mainly the consequence of the courageous and determined struggle of the Palestinian people for their inalienable rights, which is dramatically manifested in the occupied territories, where the Palestinian uprising, the intifadah, has been maintained in the face of the most brutal repressive methods.

We welcome the results achieved at the Nineteenth Extraordinary Session of the Palestine National Council, held at Algiers in November 1988, and in particular, the proclamation of the independent State of Palestine and the political statement. The position outlined in the Council created favourable conditions for the successful meetings of the United Nations General Assembly on the question of Palestine, which were held in December at Geneva. The statements by Mr. Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and President of the State of Palestine, at Geneva, in Paris and elsewhere have further clarified the principles of the Palestinian peace initiative. The statement of Mr. Yasser Abed Rabbo, member of the Executive Committee of the PLO at this European Symposium, by confirming and elaborating these principles, created a favourable atmosphere for the conduct of the meeting.

We welcome the initiation of a dialogue between the United States of America and the PLO as a positive contribution towards a political settlement of the crisis. We hope that the United States Government will not use this dialogue as a reason to delay the preparations for the International Peace Conference on the Middle East under the auspices of the United Nations, which we regard as the most effective way to achieve a comprehensive settlement. We stress the significance of General Assembly resolution 43/176 of 15 December 1988 calling for the convening of such a conference.

We appreciate the position of those European Governments which have recognized the State of Palestine and call upon others to follow their example. There have been encouraging developments in the positions of some European Governments and Parliaments. Those include an invitation to Mr. Arafat to address the European Parliament, and the meetings of Mr. Arafat in Madrid with the three Foreign Ministers representing the European Economic Community (EEC), leading to the Declaration of Madrid. We sincerely hope that those will lead to meetings with European heads of State and Government as a prelude to the full recognition of the State of Palestine by all European Governments.

Despite those positive developments, we feel that several European Governments are still failing to exert sufficient effort in favour of a peace

settlement in the Middle East. Europe bears a special responsibility towards the Palestinian people. European Governments should make a greater contribution either through concerted action or individually. The constructive mediating role of some European countries is providing an example.

We deeply regret that the Government of Israel has so far totally failed to respond positively to the clearly demonstrated Palestinian peace initiative and relevant United Nations resolutions. We consider that Israel's continued refusal to acknowledge the most elementary rights of the Palestinian people, including their right to self-determination and right to return to their homeland, is ultimately contrary to the basic interests of Israel. We consider, that the so-called "Shamir peace plan" is designed to cover Israel's illegal occupation and intensified repression of the intifadah, in order to perpetuate the Israeli occupation and is thus totally unacceptable. Any elections must be part of a comprehensive peace process leading to an independent Palestinian State, must be truly democratic, should take place under international supervision, should be acceptable to the Palestinians, and should include all the Palestinian people in the territories occupied since June 1967, including Jerusalem, and should ensure the return of the deportees and the release of the detainees.

We are deeply concerned by the continued and increased violations of human rights in the occupied Palestinian territory. These include the killing and injuring of civilians of all ages, destruction of houses, imprisonment without trial and deportations. We strongly deplore the grossly inadequate measures to control the violence of Jewish settlers. The breakdown in public health services is adding to the sufferings of the Palestinian population. We draw particular attention to the various measures that have been taken by the occupying Power to deprive the population of their right to education by closing educational institutions, and the outrageous action of preventing Palestinians from providing alternative educational services. We welcome the action taken by Governments, non-governmental organizations and other bodies to denounce those measures and welcome the partial opening of schools as a result of this international pressure. We demand that universities and all other educational institutions still closed by Israel be reopened and that they be kept open without further interference. We condemn the acts of repression and closure of offices carried out against Palestinian associations, such as trade unions, and demand that they be rescinded. We also vigorously deplore the repressive economic measures against the Palestinian people, including the uprooting of trees, destruction of crops with chemicals, expropriation of land and water resources and prevention of independent economic development.

The Israeli acts of violence against the Palestinians in the occupied Palestinian territories are grave violations of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, which is fully binding on Israel - a State party to the Convention. We call upon European Governments to take effective measures to ensure respect by Israel of the provisions of that Convention and United Nations resolutions. We appeal to the Security Council of the United Nations to take urgent measures to protect the legal and human rights of the Palestinian people under occupation, and to consider the deployment of a United Nations peace-keeping force to safeguard the physical security of the inhabitants. In addition, we express appreciation for the measures taken by the United Nations Relief and Works

Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) to maintain its services to the Palestinian people and we call upon it to expand its Refugee Affairs Officer Programme to provide increased services. We also call upon United Nations bodies, especially the United Nations Children's Fund, the World Health Organization, the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) and the United Nations Development Programme, to intensify their efforts to address the educational, medical and general socio-economic needs of the Palestinian people, and to develop co-operation with the Palestinian popular and grass-roots organizations independent of all Israeli intervention and supervision.

We regret the Israeli project to amend the prevention of terrorism ordinance, which may become law in October, as an extremely grave threat to the welfare of the Palestinians, since it will enable the Government of Israel to close down any community service organizations in Israel and East Jerusalem on the pretext that its funds are "tainted". We call for the proposed amendment and its obvious intentions to be given the widest public exposure, so that international pressure may be exerted against it.

We express our appreciation and thanks to the distinguished expert panelists, workshop organizers and resource persons who have offered their invaluable insights to the service of European non-governmental organizations.

We thank warmly the Government of Austria for welcoming us at Vienna and the Austrian non-governmental organizations, especially the Society for Austro-Arab Relations, for their valuable work in the preparations and the warm hospitality offered to us. We wish to thank the United Nations Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for making the European Symposium possible and the Division for Palestinian Rights of the United Nations Secretariat, as well as all other United Nations bodies that have been engaged in the preparation and execution of the Symposium.

The aim of the Symposium was to develop practical organizing strategies and support projects by European non-governmental organizations. The primary work was conducted in five workshops, and we received their recommendations, and commend them to all non-governmental organizations for their careful consideration and implementation. We congratulate the European Co-ordinating Committee, the International Co-ordinating Committee for NGOs on the Question of Palestine and the Society for Austro-Arab relations for organizing a highly successful International Symposium on 27 August, entitled "The role of foreign assistance in meeting the economic and social development requirements of Palestinian people: from occupation to independence", and affirm its conclusions.

ANNEX VII

Declaration adopted by the Sixth United Nations International NGO Meeting on the Question of Palestine

(Vienna, 30 August to 1 September 1989)

Introduction

1. The Sixth United Nations International NGO Meeting on the Question of Palestine was held under the auspices of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People at the Austria Centre, Vienna, from 30 August to 1 September 1989. The meeting was convened in pursuance of General Assembly resolution 42/66 B of 2 December 1987.
2. A total of 351 non-governmental organizations attended the meeting, 138 of whom were observers. Several observers from Governments, intergovernmental organizations, United Nations bodies and Palestine also attended the proceedings. The Meeting was also attended by H.E. Mr. Alois Mock, Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs of Austria and Mr. Ronald I. Spiers, Under-Secretary-General for Political and General Assembly Affairs and Secretariat Services.
3. The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People was represented by a delegation comprising: H.E. Mrs. Absa Claude Diallo (Senegal), Committee Chairman; H.E. Mr. Alexander Borg Olivier (Malta), Rapporteur; H.E. Mr. Guennadi Oudovenko (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic); H.E. Mr. Abdul Halim Ali (Malaysia); and Mr. Zuhdi L. Terzi (Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations).
4. The programme for the meeting was elaborated by the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, in consultation with the International Co-ordinating Committee for NGOs on the Question of Palestine. The overall theme was "Intifadah: the continuing struggle of the Palestinian people for independence".
5. A panel was established under the title "Two peoples, two States: future relations", and presentations were made by the following experts: Mr. Abraham Bardugo (Israel), Mr. Faisal Husseini (Palestinian), Mr. Nabil Shaath (Palestinian) and Mr. Hillel Shinker (Israel).
6. Six workshops were also held on the following topics: (a) (i) "Protection of the Palestinian population: the role of United Nations organs in the occupied Palestinian territory", (ii) "Protection of the Palestinian population: the role of the NGOs"; (b) "The role of NGO assistance in meeting the future economic development requirements of economic self-determination of the Palestinian people"; (c) "Mobilization for the release of Palestinian prisoners and political deportees"; (d) "Mobilization of international support for Palestinian education and cultural institutions"; (e) (i) "Building support for an independent Palestinian State with the Jewish communities"; (ii) "Building support for an independent Palestinian State among Israelis"; and (f) "The promotion of the peace process and the role of the mass media".

7. The meeting adopted a final declaration (see below), as well as action-oriented proposals emanating from the workshops. The report of the Sixth United Nations International NGO Meeting on the Question of Palestine will be published in due course as a special bulletin of the Division for Palestinian Rights.

Declaration

We, the non-governmental organizations gathered at the Sixth International Meeting of NGOs on the Question of Palestine, totally uphold the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and fully support their continuing struggle for independence, as expressed in the intifadah and by all other internationally legitimate means. We recognize and uphold the historic Proclamation of the Independent State of Palestine made on 15 November 1988. We recognize the Proclamation not only as the expression of the will of the heroic people of the intifadah, but also as the expression of the fundamental principle of the self-determination of peoples, enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. We call upon all Governments of States Members of the United Nations which have not already done so, to recognize the Proclamation of the Independent State of Palestine, in unequivocal terms and without delay.

We particularly note and welcome the statement made by President Arafat at the meeting of the General Assembly held at Geneva, on 13 December 1988, in which he recognized the right of all States in the Middle East region to exist in peace and security, including the States of Palestine and Israel. We uphold the Palestinian right of return, in a spirit of justice and of reconciliation, without prejudicing the situation of the people in Israel, details to be negotiated between the Government of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) on the basis of all relevant United Nations resolutions.

We vigorously renew the call for the early convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East in accordance with General Assembly resolution 43/176 of 15 December 1988, with the participants to include the five permanent members of the Security Council, the PLO, Israel, the Arab States party to the conflict and other concerned States, on an equal basis and with equal rights. The emphasis must be on reaching a peaceful, just and comprehensive permanent settlement between Israel and independent Palestine, as defined in the Algiers Proclamation of the Independent State of Palestine and in all relevant United Nations resolutions, for the mutual advantage of all the peoples of the region and of the world.

Reaffirming the international consensus that the PLO is the sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, we note the great strengthening of the consensus by the unwavering support for the PLO by the people of the intifadah and by the united national leadership of the intifadah. We therefore urge all Governments fully to recognize the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people and the State of Palestine, and to press for its participation on an equal footing with other parties to the conflict at the International Peace Conference as the representative of the Palestinian people.

We uphold the right of the people of the Palestinian territories occupied in 1967, including East Jerusalem, democratically to elect their representatives as part of the comprehensive settlement, but we reject the spurious plan for so-called elections put forward by the Prime Minister and Government of Israel, and whose principal international advocate is the Government of the United States of America. The plan is the opposite of democracy, designed not to advance, but to prevent independence and to lead to the annexation of the territories and the forcible expulsion of the rightful inhabitants. For full and free elections to take place as part of a definite process leading to the establishment of the independent State of Palestine, we call for Israeli withdrawal from the Palestine territory occupied in 1967 and for full and effective international supervision by the United Nations.

Recalling that the Fifth International NGO Meeting on the Question of Palestine expressed its condemnation of all the numerous acts of Israeli repression, including killing, wounding especially women and children, mass arrests, demolition of homes, expulsions, starvation, uprooting of trees, confiscation of land and sexual harassment of women prisoners, we note that those abhorrent practices have actually increased. That they have less media coverage arises not from any lessening of repression, but because the media are prevented from reporting and can themselves be penalized for doing so. We call for effective international political and economic pressure on Israel to make it comply with its obligations under the fourth Geneva Convention of 12 August 1949 and to accept United Nations Security Council resolutions. We appeal to the Security Council to establish an immediate United Nations presence in the post-1967 Israeli occupied territories, to bring an immediate end to the escalating violations of human rights, to protect the people and to bring the perpetrators of those practices to justice. We strongly recommend an expansion of the Refugee Affairs Officer Programme of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) as a practical expression of international concern for the protection of the Palestinian people under occupation. We express grave concern at the situation of the Palestinians in Lebanon, call for help for them and for the strengthening of the United Nations presence in Lebanon and Israeli withdrawal, in accordance with Security Council resolution 509 (1982) of 6 June 1982.

Given the grave intensive and escalating situation in the occupied Palestinian State, including the complex of emergency and development needs and the gradual collapse of Israeli-controlled services, we call upon all United Nations bodies (UNRWA, the United Nations Development Programme, the World Health Organization, the United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, the International Labour Organisation and others) where constitutionally possible, to admit the State of Palestine to membership and to generate a creative and intensive dialogue with the PLO and with Palestinian non-governmental organizations for a wide, effective and comprehensive United Nations involvement in the health and socio-economic fields, independent of Israeli control.

There is now an organized attempt by the Government of Israel to destroy Palestinian society, of which one of the most pernicious manifestations is the denial of education to Palestinian children through the permanent closure of schools and other educational institutions, accompanied by the penalizing of

parents for trying to teach their children in their own homes, even in such basic skills as reading and writing. This calculated attempt to try to produce an illiterate generation of Palestinians is not only contrary to every relevant article of the fourth Geneva Convention of 1949, but an affront to all civilized values. We note that international protest forced the reopening of certain junior schools, but also note that this affected only a small part of the education system, much the greater part of which remains permanently closed. We call upon Governments, educational and cultural institutions, professional associations, trade unions and individuals world wide, to utilize all cultural relations to pressure Israel (including sanctions), to cease these practices.

While noting changing attitudes in the United States of America towards Israel, we consider the changes by the Administration to be inadequate and we condemn their continuing support for the Government of Israel despite the latter's persistent and flagrant violations of Palestinian human and national rights. We consider these to be unhelpful for the achievement of progress towards the convening of the International Peace Conference.

Noting world-wide efforts for the reduction of nuclear weapons, we deplore that Israel introduced nuclear weapons into the Middle East and we deplore the escalation in research into nuclear weapons and the proliferation of chemical weapons that this has created. We call upon Israel and all other States in the region to sign the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, to dismantle its nuclear weapons and to open its nuclear installations to international inspection and to observe its treaty obligations, such as those it has with Norway for inspection to ensure the proper use of nuclear material supplied specifically for peaceful use. We deplore the growing use by Israel and other States in the region of chemical weapons against people and against crops. We call for the release of the prisoner of conscience, Mordechai Vanunu.

We strongly uphold the forces of peace in Israel that support the International Peace Conference and an independent Palestinian State. We strongly condemn the penalizing of Israeli peace activists. We express support for those growing numbers who refuse military service in occupied Palestinian territories and other occupied territories of Arab countries, and we call upon the Government of Israel to recognize the right of Israelis to conscientious objection. We urge the Israeli parliament to repeal the so-called "anti-terrorism" law of August 1986, which prohibits contact between Israeli citizens and representatives of Palestinian organizations.

We strongly condemn the proposed new amendment number 3 and urge the Israeli parliament not to pass it, as it would provide arbitrary and dictatorial powers of confiscation of the assets of charitable and educational non-governmental organizations and close to them all avenues to aid from international sources. We call for an urgent international campaign against the amendment by Governments, non-governmental organizations and all peace-loving peoples.

We note the strong desire expressed at the European Nuclear Disarmament Convention in Spain in July 1989 for peace and justice in the Middle East. We fully support the Convention proposal for a non-violent march for peace in Israel and Palestine on 29, 30 and 31 December 1989. We urge all

non-governmental organizations world wide to organize to participate in this important event.

Much of our work in this meeting was conducted in workshops and in meetings of special interest groups. We endorse their conclusions and recommendations. We draw attention to the fact that non-governmental organization opinion has consistently been more progressive and creative than official governmental thinking and we urge all Governments, in the interest of peace and justice, seriously to consider the options defined by non-governmental organizations in this Declaration and elsewhere.

It is important for the effectiveness of non-governmental organizations to be increased. We commend the activities and work of the International Co-ordinating Committee for NGOs on the Question of Palestine (ICCP) and its secretariat at Geneva. We call upon the United Nations to offer every possible assistance to ICCP and its secretariat. We urge the United Nations to convene an international meeting in the first week of September 1990, the venue and format to be decided, and to maintain its programme of regional symposia.

We request the Chairman of the United Nations Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People to convey this Declaration to the General Assembly at its forty-fourth session as part of the Committee's report. Recognizing the vital importance of information, we urge that records of this meeting be disseminated as widely as possible, to non-governmental organizations, Governments and the media.

We thank the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for convening this meeting and we greatly appreciate the presence of the members and observers of the Committee. We thank the Division for Palestinian Rights and all of the members of the United Nations Secretariat, including the interpreters, who assisted in the meeting. We also express our appreciation to the distinguished experts who spoke here. All those mentioned herein contributed greatly to the success of our meeting. We warmly thank the Government of Austria for welcoming us to Vienna and for the excellent facilities they placed at our disposal.

REPORT
OF THE
COMMITTEE ON THE EXERCISE OF
THE INALIENABLE RIGHTS
OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE

GENERAL ASSEMBLY
OFFICIAL RECORDS: FORTY-FIFTH SESSION
SUPPLEMENT No. 35 (A/45/35)



UNITED NATIONS

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CO-OPERATION ON THE **EXERCISE** OF
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UNITED NATIONS
New York, 1991

NOTE

Symbols of United Nations documents are composed of capital letters combined with figures. Mention of such a symbol indicates a reference to a United Nations document.

[24 January 1991]

CONTENTS

	<u>Paragraphs</u>	<u>Page</u>
LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL		vi
I. INTRODUCTION	1 - 7	1
II. MANDATE OF THE COMMITTEE	8 - 10	3
III. ORGANIZATION OF WORK	11 - 16	4
A. Election of officers	11 - 13	4
B. Participation in the work of the Committee	14 - 15	4
C. Re-establishment of the Working Group	16	4
IV. ACTION TAKEN BY THE COMMITTEE	17 - 79	5
A. Action taken in accordance with General Assembly resolution 44/41 A	17 - 51	5
1. Review of the situation relating to the question of Palestine and efforts to implement the recommendations of the Committee	17 - 29	5
2. Reactions to developments affecting the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people	30 - 46	8
3. Action taken by the Committee to promote the <i>convening</i> of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East in accordance with General Assembly resolution 44/42	47 - 49	12
4. Attendance at international <i>conferences</i> and meetings . . . *	50	13
5. Action taken by United Nations bodies, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and intergovernmental organisations	51	13
B. Action taken by the Committee in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 44/41 A and B	52 - 79	14
1. Regional seminars	52 - 62	14
2. Co-operation with non-governmental organisations . .	63 - 74	16
3. Standard of travel	75	18

CONTENTS (continued)

	<u>Paragraphs</u>	<u>Page</u>
4. Information activities	76 - 78	19
5. International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People	79	19
V. ACTION TAKEN BY THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INFORMATION IN ACCORDANCE WITH GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 44/41 C	80 - 93	20
VI. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COMMITTEE	94 - 103	23
<u>Annexes</u>		
I. Recommendations of the Committee endorsed by the General Assembly at its thirty-first session		28
II. Conclusions and recommendations adopted by the Twenty-third United Nations Seminar on the Question of Palestine, Kuala Lumpur, 18 to 22 December 1989		31
III. Declaration adopted by the Third United Nations Asian Regional NGO Symposium on the Question of Palestine, Kuala Lumpur, 18 to 21 December 1989 .I,..... ~		38
IV. Conclusions and recommendations adopted by the Twenty-fourth United Nations Seminar on the Question of Palestine, Buenos Aires, 5 to 9 February 1990		42
V. Declaration adopted by the First United Nations Latin American and Caribbean Regional NGO Symposium on the Question of Palestine, Buenos Aires, 5 to El February 1990 ..I,.....”		48
VI. Conclusions and recommendations adopted by the Twenty-fifth United Nations Seminar on the Question of Palestine, Freetown, 2 to 6 April 1990		53
VII. Declaration adopted by the Third United Nations African Region61 NGO Symposium on the Question of Palestine, Freetown, 2 to 5 April 1990 . .		60
VIII. Conclusions and recommendations adopted by the Twenty-sixth United Nations Seminar on the Question of Palestine, Stockholm, 7 to 11 Way 1990		64
IX. Conclusions and recommendations adopted by the Twenty-seventh United Nations Seminar on the Question of Palestine, New York, 25 and 26 June 1990		71
X. Declaration adopted by the Seventh United Nations North American Regional NGO Symposium on the Question of Palestine, New York, 27 to 29 June 1990		75

CONTENTS (continued)

	Page
XI. Declaration adopted by the Fourth United Nations Europe66 Regional NW Symposium on the Question of Palestine, Geneva, 27 to 26 August 1990 . .	80
XII. Declaration adopted by the Seventh United Nations International NGO Meeting on the Question of Palestine, Geneva, 29 to 31 August 1990	86

LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

25 October 1990

Sir.

I have the honour to enclose herewith the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for submission to the General Assembly in accordance with paragraph 4 of resolution 44/41 A of 6 December 1989.

Accept, Sir, the assurances of my highest consideration.

(Signed) Absa Claude DIALLO
Chairman of the Committee on
the Exercise of the Inalienable
Rights of the Palestinian People

His Excellency
Mr. Javier Peres de Cuéllar
Secretary-General of the United Nations

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People was established by the General Assembly in its resolution 3376 (XXX) of 10 November 1975, in which the Assembly requested the Committee to consider and recommend to it a programme designed to enable the Palestinian people to exercise its inalienable rights as recognised by the Assembly in resolution 3236 (XXIX) of 22 November 1974. During the reporting period, the Committee was composed of the following 23 Member States: Afghanistan, Cuba, Cyprus, German Democratic Republic, 1/ Guinea, Guyana, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mali, Malta, Nigeria, Pakistan, Romania, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic and Yugoslavia.

2. The recommendations made by the Committee in its first report to the Assembly 2/ were first endorsed by the Assembly in resolution 31/20 of 24 November 1976 as a basis for the solution of the question of Palestine. Those recommendations were reaffirmed by the Committee in its subsequent reports 3/ and were endorsed by the Assembly with overwhelming support on each occasion. The Assembly also continued to renew 4, as necessary, expand the mandate of the Committee.

3. Despite the repeated and urgent appeals of the Committee, the Security Council has not yet been able to act on or implement the recommendations of the Committee. The Committee is of the view that positive consideration and action by the Security Council on these recommendations would contribute to promoting a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict in the Middle East.

4. The Committee has also reiterated its appeals to the Security Council to take action urgently to convene the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, in accordance with the principles reaffirmed by the General Assembly in its resolution 44/42 of 6 December 1969. The Committee remains convinced that the Conference would provide the most comprehensive, practical and universally accepted framework for peace and it has repeatedly stressed the urgent need for an intensification of efforts by all concerned in order to convene the Conference without further delay.

5. During the year under review, the Committee was increasingly concerned at the dangerous stalemate that had developed, notwithstanding the efforts to promote peace, and at the further deterioration of the situation in the occupied Palestinian territory. The Committee strongly deplored Israel's continued reliance on military force to suppress the Palestinian uprising, the *intifadah*, now in its third year, and its rejection of the Palestinian peace initiative as proclaimed at the plenary meeting of the General Assembly at Geneva in December 1988 by the Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organisation. The Committee considered that the steps proposed by Israel were inadequate since they did not recognise the national rights of the Palestinian people and did not include interim measures of protection. The Committee also associated itself with the international protests over the likelihood of increased settlement by new Jewish immigrants in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, which would further violate the rights of Palestinians and jeopardise international efforts to progress towards peace. The Committee repeatedly condemned the mounting casualties and suffering inflicted on the Palestinian people, particularly women and children,

and warned that failure to break through the current impasse would exacerbate the situation and lead to an intensification of tension and violence with unforeseeable consequences for peace and security in the region. The Committee reaffirmed that Israel's continued occupation of the Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and the other 'occupied Arab territories and its denial of the exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people in Palestine, including those to self-determination without external interference, to national independence and sovereignty, and to return to its homes and property, constituted the principal obstacle to the achievement of a just peace.

6. The Committee deeply regrets the decision of the Government of the United States of America to suspend its dialogue with the Palestine Liberation Organization, the representative of the Palestinian people. The Committee felt that such a dialogue was a positive step that contributed to redressing the imbalance between the parties and could lead to the removal of obstacles to the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East. The Committee expressed its firm hope that ways would soon be found of resuming the dialogue and of expanding its scope to include the consideration of substantive issues in a constructive way, which could serve the great purpose of achieving peace in the Middle East. Alarmed at the deepening impasse in the peace efforts and the increase in dangerous incidents of violence against unarmed civilians, the Committee continued to intensify its efforts to promote meaningful and constructive dialogue among responsible political leaders and to stimulate action towards ensuring international protection of the Palestinians living under occupation and achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine in accordance with United Nations resolutions.

7. The Committee's efforts acquired an even greater urgency in the light of the growing crisis in the Gulf region since August 1990 and the serious risks of armed confrontation, which would have dire repercussions for the Palestinian cause and for peace and security throughout the Middle East region and beyond. The Committee is firmly of the view that the Security Council should show the same resoluteness in dealing with the question of Palestine as it did in the case of the crisis in the Gulf. It must be recognized that a prompt and just solution of the question of Palestine is of fundamental importance to the achievement of lasting peace and security in the entire Middle East.

II. MANDATE OF THE COMMITTEE

8. The Committee's mandate for the year 1990 is contained in paragraphs 3 to 5 of General Assembly resolution 44/41 A of 6 December 1989, in which the Assembly:

(a) Requested the Committee to continue to keep under review the situation relating to the question of Palestine as well as the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Achievement of Palestinian Rights 4/ and to report and make suggestions to the General Assembly or the Security Council, as appropriate;

(b) Authorised the Committee to continue to exert all efforts to promote the implementation of its recommendations, including representation at conferences and meetings and the sending of delegations, to make such adjustments in its approved programme of seminars and of symposia and meetings for non-governmental organisations as it may consider necessary, and to report thereon to the Assembly at its forty-fifth session and thereafter;

(c) Also requested the Committee to continue to extend its co-operation to non-governmental organisations in their contribution towards heightening international awareness of the facts relating to the question of Palestine and in creating a more favourable atmosphere for the full implementation of the Committee's recommendations, and to take the necessary steps to expand its contacts with those organisations.

9. In its resolution 44/41 B of the same date, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General, *inter alia*, to provide the Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat with the necessary resources and to ensure that it continued to discharge the tasks detailed in earlier resolutions, in consultation with the Committee and under its guidance.

10. In its resolution 44/41 C of the same date, the General Assembly requested the Department of Public Information, in full co-operation and co-ordination with the Committee, to continue its special information programme on the question of Palestine, with particular emphasis on public opinion in Europe and North America.

III. ORGANIZATION OF WORK

A. Election of officers

11. At its 168th meeting, on 9 January 1990, the Committee re-elected the following officer⁶

Chairman: Mrs. Absa Claude Diallo (Senegal)

Vice-Chairmen: Mr. Oscar Oremas-Olive (Cuba)
Mr. Noor Ahmad Noor (Afghanistan)

Rapporteur: Mr. Alexander Borg Olivier (Malta)

12. At its 169th meeting, on 2 March 1990, the Committee elected Mr. Ricardo Alarcón de Quesada (Cuba) as Vice-Chairman in place of Mr. Oscar Oremas-Olive (Cuba), who had departed from New York.

13. At the same meeting, the Committee adopted its programme of work for 1990 in implementation of its mandate.

B. Participation in the work of the Committee

14. As in previous years, the Committee reconfirmed that all States Members of the United Nations and Permanent Observers to the United Nations desiring to participate in the work of the Committee as observers were welcome to do so. Accordingly, in a letter dated 7 March 1990, the Chairman of the Committee so informed the Secretary-General, who subsequently transmitted the letter, on 21 March 1990, to the States Members of the United Nations and members of the specialised agencies and to intergovernmental organisations. The Committee also decided to invite Palestine, represented by the Palestine Liberation Organisation, to participate in the work of the Committee as an observer, to attend all its meetings and to make observations and proposals for the consideration of the Committee.

15. During 1990, the Committee again welcomed as observers all the States and organizations that had participated in its work in the preceding year. ^{5/}

C. Re-establishment of the Working Group

16. At its 168th meeting, the Committee re-established its Working Group to assist in the preparation and expedition of the work of the Committee on the understanding that any Committee member or observer could participate in its proceedings. ^{5/} The Working Group was constituted as before under the chairmanship of Mr. Alexander Borg Olivier (Malta). Mr. Dinesh Kumar Jain (India) was re-elected Vice-Chairman of the Working Group.

IV. ACTION TAKEN BY THE COMMITTEE

A. Action taken in accordance with General Assembly resolution 44/41 A

1. Review of the situation relating to the question of Palestine and efforts to implement the recommendations of the Committee

17. In accordance with its mandate, the Committee continued to keep under review the situation relating to the question of Palestine and to exert all efforts to promote the implementation of its recommendations as repeatedly endorsed by the General Assembly.

18. In response to urgent developments affecting the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, the Chairman of the Committee, on a number of occasions, brought such developments to the attention of the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council, urging the adoption of appropriate measures in accordance with United Nations resolutions (see paras. 30-32 below).

19. The Committee, with the assistance of the Division for Palestinian Rights, continued to monitor the situation in the occupied Palestinian territory on an ongoing basis through the media, the reports of United Nations organs and agencies, and information collected by Governments, non-governmental organisations, individual experts and persons from Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory who participated in meetings held under the auspices of the Committee and other sources.

20. The Committee noted that the intifadah, the uprising of the Palestinian people for the termination of the Israeli occupation and for the achievement of its national rights in the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, had entered its third year despite continued violent repression and great economic hardships. Moreover, the intifadah had led to a process of irreversible psychological and political transformation that had affected *not* only the Palestinian people but also the Israeli political system itself. New autonomous Palestinian civil institutions were being created, which fortified the determination of the people to become independent. The process of economic disengagement from Israel had been strengthened. International groups and foreign Governments had increased their financial commitment to the occupied Palestinian territory. Israel was being forced to recognise that the intifadah represents a confrontation with a genuine national movement. This had led to a growing debate and a political crisis within Israel and increasing criticism of the intransigent stance towards peace adopted by successive Israeli Governments.

21. The Committee noted with deep concern that in its efforts to suppress the intifadah, Israel had continued to resort to the use of often excessive and indiscriminate force, including shooting at demonstrators, intensive use of tear-gas and severely beating detainees. Fear was expressed that the Israeli Government was condoning and even encouraging extrajudicial executions of Palestinians as a means of controlling the intifadah through permissive guidelines on the use of firearms and the inadequate investigation of abuses.

22. As at 31 August 1990, according to the DataBase Project on Palestinian Human Rights, the total number of Palestinians killed since the beginning of the

intifadah through direct responsibility of the Israeli forces, armed settlers, civilians and collaborators, was 856 identified cases. Of those, 704 had died from gunfire, 63 from beatings and other actions, and 89 in *tear-gas-related* incidents. Another 104 Palestinians had died under suspicious circumstances. In addition, it was estimated that 99,150 Palestinians had been injured. The Committee noted with indignation that Israeli forces had indiscriminately used firearms against Palestinians in the precinct of the Haram al-Sharif, in Jerusalem, on 8 October 1990, which resulted in the death of over 20 Palestinians and the wounding of over 125 others, as well as the ensuing intensified repression of Palestinians throughout the occupied territory, which caused additional casualties.

23. An alarming and rapid deterioration of the situation of children was noted. The casualty toll among children was extremely high: 217 children under 16, or about 25 per cent of the total number of victims, were killed in the **intifadah**. All children were being subjected to a range of punishing collective measures, and families were reported to be experiencing grave difficulties in fulfilling primary functions of child protection and care.

24. The Committee noted that Israeli occupation authorities continued to resort to a variety of harsh measures and collective punishment in their efforts to suppress the **intifadah** and considered it a serious violation of the relevant principles and provisions of international law. *Those measures* included deportations, large-scale arrests, detentions, raids on homes and villages, prolonged curfews, confiscation of property and destruction of trees and crops. It was reported that over 13,000 Palestinians remained in prisons or detention centres at the end of 1989, and there were numerous allegations of torture and systematic ill-treatment of political detainees. The Database Project reported that, since the beginning of the **intifadah**, and until 31 August 1990, a total of 10,200 Palestinians had been in administrative detention without charges or trial for varying periods. The West Bank and Gaza had experienced a total of 7,755 days of curfews, affecting hundreds of thousands of Palestinians. A total of 1,557 houses and other structures had been demolished or sealed during the **intifadah**, about one fifth of them for "security" reasons. The Committee was particularly concerned at the lawless and violent actions of Israeli settlers, in violation of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, 2/ including attacks on individuals, raids on Palestinian villages and neighbourhoods, vandalism, confiscation of property, the desecration of Muslim religious sites and activities against Christian religious property.

25. The Committee noted with great concern the reports by the Director-General and the Special Rapporteur of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) indicating that the entire Palestinian educational system was in a state of paralysis owing to the prolonged closure of educational institutions since the beginning of the **intifadah**. While noting the formal steps taken for the gradual reopening of primary and secondary schools as a positive gesture in response to international concerns, the Committee deplored that the Israeli occupation authorities persisted in seriously disrupting the normal functioning of the schools as a form of collective punishment. Interference by soldiers, including raids, shootings and arrests of students, arbitrary closures, closures due to curfews imposed on the areas and other actions such as surrounding schools with barbed-wire fencing continued to be reported. The United Nations Works and Relief Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) had stated, in this regard, that the Israeli interventions were preventing the Agency from providing an appropriate education service to Palestine refugee children and from making the

most effective use of public funds donate& for the purpose. The Committee also noted with concern that all Palestinian universities and institutions of higher education had been closed since the beginning of the Intifadah. Some community college'were allowed to reopen in the spring, and Yethlehem University in the fall of 1990. The Committee strongly deplored that 25,000 Palestinian students had thereby been denied their right to education for t ree years, that thousands of high school graduates had been barred from continuing their education and that severe restrictions continued to be imposed on the functioning of the system of higher education,

26. The Committee took note with concern of reports to the effect that *the* health situation in the occupied Palestinian territory, particularly in Gaza, remained deplorable and had continued to deteriorate since the beginning of the Intifadah. The availability of medical care, water, sewage disposal and other needed services were subject to restrictive controls by the occupation authorities and the situation was further aggravated by the repeated and extensive imposition of curfews. The vast number of injuries inflicted during the Intifadah were reported to have totally overwhelmed the already inadequate medical facilities. It was also reported that the wounded were very often denied care for hours while being detained on police or army premises. Attacks by Israeli troops against clinics had again been reported. The Committee deplored that the Government of Israel had again refused to co-opcrate with the Special Committee of Experts set up by the World Health Assembly to study the health conditions of the inhabitants of the occupied Arab territories. The Committee noted with appreciation that a number of international organisations, non-governmental organisations and private institutions had provided humanitarian assistance to Palestinians living in the occupied Palestinian territory and had implemented projects concerned with sanitation, training of medical manpower, establishment of rehabilitation and primary health care centres, medical laboratories and others.

27. The Committee further noted that the Director-General of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) in his annual report 8/ had stated that there had been no improvement in the conditions of work and life of the workers of the occupied Arab territories and their families. Continued military occupation and massive constraints placed on agriculture, industry and other sectors prevented the endogenous economic development of the territories. The development of human resources was in jeopardy as long as schools and universities remained closed. The continued pursuit of the settlements policy remained a matter of serious concern as it had given rise to a dual legal and social system that was the source of serious inequality and tension, hsd created a discriminatory situation in the field of social benefits and ha0 a detrimental effect on the Palestinian economy. Almost 40 per cent of Palestinians in the territories went to work in Israel but the majority of them enjoyed no legal or social protection. Recognition by Israel of Palestinian trade union organisations, which had recently been unified, would ensure respect for the fundamental principles of freedom of association and lead to the Palestinian workers' interests being better defended.

28. The Committee noted with satisfaction that the Secretary-General had repeatedly expressed concern at the situation in the occupied Palaetinian territory and had sent his personal representative to the area in June 1990. In his initial raport to the Secretary-General, the personal representative had conveyed the fears expressed by Palestinians throughout the occupied territory and their profound feelings of vulnerability resulting from lack of protect-ion as well as the need to ensure their basic economic and human rights.

29. Taking into account the continuing intolerable situation in the occupied Palestinian territory, the Committee wishes to urgently draw once again the most urgent attention of the General Assembly and the Security Council to the policies and practices of Israel, the occupying Power, which are in violation of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War of 12 August 1949. The Committee reiterates its most urgent appeal to the Security Council, to the High Contracting Parties to the fourth Geneva Convention and to all concerned to take all necessary measures to ensure the safety and international protection of the Palestinians in the occupied Palestinian territory pending the withdrawal of Israeli forces and the achievement of a just settlement. The Committee further wishes to express appreciation to the Secretary-General for his personal efforts in this regard. Above and beyond protective and emergency relief measures, the international community must take all possible measures to halt the rapid deterioration in the living conditions of the Palestinian people and to develop socio-economic structures that will lead to the genuine development of the occupied Palestinian territory in preparation for independent nationhood. The Committee noted that the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) had undertaken the implementation of a number of development projects in the occupied Palestinian territory.

2. Reactions to developments affecting the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people

(a) Communications to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

30. The Chairman of the Committee on a number of occasions drew the attention of the Secretary-General and of the President of the Security Council to urgent developments in the occupied Palestinian territory. The Chairman reported on actions by the Israeli armed forces and settlers that had resulted in loss of life and injuries among Palestinians and to other measures taken by the Israeli authorities to suppress the ~~intifada~~. She pointed out that those policies and practices were in contravention of the fourth Geneva Convention, international human rights instruments and United Nations resolutions, and posed further obstacles to international efforts to promote a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the Palestine question. The Chairman reiterated the Committee's appeals to the Secretary-General and to the President of the Security Council to take all possible measures for ensuring the safety and protection of the Palestinian civilians under occupation and to intensify all efforts towards the achievement of a peaceful settlement.

31. The following letters by the Chairman were circulated as official documents of the General Assembly, under the agenda item entitled "Question of Palestine", and of the Security Council: (a) letter dated 6 December 1989 (A/44/851-S/21009); (b) letter dated 15 January 1990 (A/44/914-S/21089); (c) letter dated 15 February 1990 (A/44/920-S/21151); (d) letter dated 1 May 1990 (A/44/943-S/21281); (e) letter dated 21 May 1990 (A/44/947-S/21303); (f) letter dated 15 June 1990 (A/44/955-S/21362); and (g) letter dated 19 September 1990 (A/45/528-S/21802).

32. The Chairman also drew attention to documents adopted by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops (USA) and the Canadian Council of Churches, in a letter dated 16 January 1990 (A/45/86), and to the chapter relating to the occupied

Palestinian territory in the country reports on human rights practices for 1969 published by the Department of State of the United States of America, in a letter dated 20 March 1990 (A/45/175-6/21199).

(b) Action taken within the Security Council

33. The Committee followed closely the activities of the Security Council on matters relating to the Committee's mandate and participated in Council debates as necessary.

34. In a letter dated 12 February 1990 (S/21139), the Permanent Representative of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics to the United Nations requested a meeting of the Security Council "to consider unlawful Israeli moves to settle the occupied territories". In the letter the Permanent Representative requested the Council to call upon the Israeli Government "not to permit any action which might alter the demographic structure of the occupied territories". The Security Council considered the item at five meetings, held between 15 and 29 March 1990.

35. The Chairman of the Committee intervened in the debate at the 2911th meeting, on 15 March 1990, (S/PV.2911) and stated that the Committee was deeply concerned at recent developments in Israel's settlements policy in the occupied Palestinian territory. Recent statements by Israeli leaders showed once again Israel's obstinacy in denying the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people and refusing to admit the applicability of the fourth Geneva Convention to the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, despite the relevant Security Council and General Assembly resolutions. The settlements policy in the occupied territory, carried out by Israel since 1967, had been unanimously rejected and condemned by the international community. Referring to the work of the Commission established by the Security Council in resolution 446 (1979), she said that, unfortunately, the Council was not able to take up the Commission's third report, and hence its recommendations could not be implemented. The Committee had repeatedly expressed concern at the Israeli policy of creeping annexation, which was accompanied by acts of violence by the settlers and repressive measures against Palestinians. The Committee shared the concern expressed by various Governments and intergovernmental and non-governmental organisations at the new wave of immigration of Jews from the Soviet Union and elsewhere, and it urged all the parties concerned to ensure that the immigrants would not be used to perpetuate the occupation of Palestinian territory, to hinder the peace process and to deny the Palestinian people the exercise of its inalienable national rights.

36. On 12 April 1990, a draft resolution was circulated that was sponsored by Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Democratic Yemen, Ethiopia, Malaysia and Zaire (S/21247). By that draft resolution, the Council would have reaffirmed the applicability of the fourth Geneva Convention to the Palestinian and other Arab territories occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, would have considered that Israel's policies and practices of settling parts of its population and new immigrants in the occupied territories are violations of the fourth Geneva Convention and of the rights of the Palestinian people and the population of the other Arab territories; would have considered that the settlement of Jewish immigrants and the Israeli settlement policy in the occupied territories constitute an obstacle to achieving peace in the Middle East; would have called upon Israel, the occupying Power, to abide by its international legal obligations in this regard; would have called upon all States not to provide Israel with any assistance to be used in connection with such settlements; and would have requested the

Secretary-General to report to the Security Council on the implementation of the resolution not later than 31 May 1990. The draft resolution was not acted upon by the Council.

37. In a letter dated 21 May 1990 (S/21300), the Permanent Representative of Bahrain, in his capacity as Chairman of the Arab Group for the month of May 1990, requested the convening of an immediate meeting of the Security Council "to consider the crime of collective murder committed by Israel against the Palestinian people". The Security Council considered the matter at two meetings, held on 25 and 31 May 1990.

36. The first meeting of the Council on this matter took place at the United Nations Office at Geneva on 25 May 1990. At that meeting, the Council heard a statement by the Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (S/PV.2923).

39. The Chairman of the Committee intervened in the debate at the same meeting and stated that the occupying Power continued its climate of terror and violence, in complete defiance of international public opinion, numerous United Nations resolutions and the provisions of the 1949 Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War. She hoped the Council's deliberations would lead to energetic and immediate measures that would assure protection to the civilian population in the occupied Palestinian territory and permit that people to recover its national inalienable rights, including its right to self-determination and independence. Israel was refusing to participate in United Nations efforts to convene an international peace conference on the Middle East, where a serious threat to peace existed. At a time when the Palestinian people was open to the process of fruitful dialogue, Israel had resorted to violence and confrontation. The Council must face up to the challenge and ensure that Israel protected the civilians in the occupied territories. The Committee called upon the Security Council to meet its obligations and to send a mission to the area. The credibility of the Organisation was at stake. Israel must be made to understand that its violence and arbitrary measures would not detract from the establishment of a Palestinian State.

40. At its 2926th meeting, on 31 May 1990, the Council had before it a draft resolution (S/21326) submitted by Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Ethiopia, Malaysia, Yemen and Zaire. By that draft resolution, the Council would have established a Commission consisting of three of its members to be dispatched immediately to examine the situation relating to the policies and practices of Israel, the occupying Power, in the Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, occupied by Israel since 1967; would have requested the Commission to submit its report to the Council by 20 June 1990, containing recommendations on ways and means for ensuring the safety and protection of the Palestinian civilians under Israeli occupation, and would have decided to keep the situation in the occupied territories under constant and close scrutiny and to reconvene to review the situation in the light of the Commission's findings.

41. The draft resolution was voted upon at the same meeting. The result of the vote was 14 to 1, with no abstentions. The draft resolution was not adopted, owing to the negative vote of the United States of America, a permanent member of the Council.

42. On 19 June 1990, following consultations, the President of the Security Council issued a statement on behalf of the members of the Council (S/21363). They strongly deplored the incident, which had occurred on 12 June 1990 in a clinic belonging to UNRWA and located near to Shati camp in Gaza, in which several innocent Palestinian women and children had been wounded by a tear-gas grenade thrown by an Israeli soldier. The members of the Security Council expressed their dismay at finding that the penalty imposed on that officer had been commuted. They reaffirmed that the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, was applicable to the Palestinian and other Arab territories occupied by Israel since 1967, including Jerusalem, and requested the High Contracting Parties to ensure respect for the Convention. They also called upon Israel to abide by its obligations under that Convention.

43. In a letter dated 26 September 1990 (S/21830), the Permanent Representative of Yemen requested an urgent meeting of the Security Council to consider the current situation in the occupied Palestinian territory.

44. The Chairman of the Committee intervened in the debate at the 2945th meeting of 5 October 1990 (S/PV.2945) and expressed the Committee's deep concern at the increasing armed repression by the Israeli occupying forces. She provided the Council with detailed information on casualties, detentions and other human rights violations since the beginning of the intifadah. She also stated that the Council had so far not adopted measures to ensure the protection of Palestinians; it had not acted on the constructive report of the Secretary-General of January 1988 and had not adopted several draft resolutions proposed by the non-aligned group. She called on the Council to take adequate and firm steps to ensure Israel's compliance with its obligations under the fourth Geneva Convention and to set up urgently an appropriate system capable of ensuring the effective protection of the Palestinian population in the occupied territory. She further urged the Council to consider the question of Palestine with the same sense of urgency and determination that it had shown in the case of the Gulf crisis in order to achieve a just and lasting solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict.

45. At its 2948th meeting, on 12 October 1990, the Council adopted unanimously resolution 672 (1990), in which it expressed alarm at the violence that had taken place on 8 October at the Haram al-Sharif and other Holy Places of Jerusalem resulting in over 20 Palestinian deaths and the injury of more than 150 people, including Palestinian civilians and innocent worshippers; condemned especially the acts of violence committed by the Israeli security forces resulting in injuries and loss of human life; called upon Israel, the occupying Power, to abide scrupulously by its legal obligations and responsibilities under the fourth Geneva Convention, which is applicable to all the territories occupied by Israel since 1967; and requested, in connection with the decision of the Secretary-General to send a mission to the region, which the Council welcomed, that he submit a report to it before the end of October 1990 containing his findings and conclusions and that he use as appropriate all of the resources of the United Nations in the region in carrying out the mission.

46. Subsequently, on 24 October 1990, the Council adopted unanimously resolution 673 (1990), in which it deplored the refusal of the Israeli Government to receive the mission of the Secretary-General to the region; urged the Israeli Government to reconsider its decision and insisted that it comply fully with resolution 672 (1990) and permit the mission of the Secretary-General to proceed in keeping with its purpose; requested the Secretary-General to submit to the Council the

report requested in resolution 672 (1990); and affirmed its determination to give full and expeditious consideration to the report.

3. Action taken by the Committee to promote the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East in accordance with General Assembly resolution 44/42

47. In its resolution 44/42, the General Assembly reaffirmed the urgent need to achieve a just and comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict, the core of which is the question of Palestine. It called once again for the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, under the auspices of the United Nations, with the participation of all parties to the conflict, including the Palestine Liberation Organisation, on an equal footing, and the five permanent members of the Security Council, based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people, primarily the right to self-determination. It reaffirmed the following principles for the achievement of comprehensive peace: the withdrawal of Israel from the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, and from the other occupied Arab territories; guaranteeing arrangements for security of all States in the region, including those named in Assembly resolution 181 (II) of 29 November 1947, within secure and internationally recognised boundaries; resolving the problem of Palestine refugees in conformity with Assembly resolution 194 (III) of 11 December 1948, and subsequent relevant resolutions; dismantling the Israeli settlements in the territories occupied since 1967; and guaranteeing freedom of access to Holy Places, religious buildings and sites. The Assembly also noted the expressed desire and endeavours to place the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, under the supervision of the United Nations for a limited period, as part of the peace process; once again invited the Security Council to consider measures needed to convene the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, including the establishment of a preparatory committee, and to consider guarantees for security measures agreed upon by the Conference for all States in the region; and requested the Secretary-General to continue his efforts with the parties concerned, and in consultation with the Security Council, to facilitate the convening of the Conference, and to submit progress reports on developments in this matter.

48. The Committee noted with satisfaction that the resolution had received an unprecedented vote of 151 votes in favour, with only 3 against and 1 abstention, and therefore expressed the overwhelming consensus of the international community. In adopting its programme of work, the Committee once again decided to continue to give the utmost priority in all its activities during 1990 to promoting the early convening of the Conference. The Committee also decided to stress the urgent need for ensuring the safety and protection of Palestinians under Israeli occupation, in accordance with the provisions of the fourth Geneva Convention.

49. The Committee was greatly encouraged by the overwhelming international support for its objectives and by the intensification of efforts among the international community in favour of a just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine, as reflected in particular by the recommendations adopted by the regional seminars and by symposia and meetings of non-governmental organisations on the question of Palestine organised under the Committee's auspices (see paras. 52-79 below).

4 . Attendance at international conferences and meetings

50. In accordance with its mandate, the Committee was represented at the following international conferences and meetings during the period since its previous report to the General Assembly:

(a) Regional Seminar for the Caribbean area, held in observance of the thirtieth anniversary of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, held at Bridgetown from 19 to 21 June 1990

(b) Fifty-second ordinary session of the Council of Ministers, held at Addis Ababa from 3 to 7 July 1990, and twenty-sixth Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organisation of African Unity, held at Addis Ababa from 9 to 11 July 1990 (see A/45/482);

(c) Nineteenth Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers, held at Cairo from 31 July to 4 August 1990 (see A/45/421-S/21797) J

(d) Third Conference of Ministers of Information of the Non-Aligned Movement, held at Havana from 24 to 29 September 1990.

5 . Action taken by United Nations bodies, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and intergovernmental organizations

51. The Committee continued to follow with great interest the activities relating to the question of Palestine of United Nations bodies, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and intergovernmental organizations. The Committee noted especially the growing concern at all levels of the international community about the deterioration of the situation in the occupied Palestinian territory and in the region as a whole and the increasing sense of urgency with which the international community addressed the need to ensure the safety and protection of the Palestinian people under occupation and to advance towards a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine. The Committee welcomed the growing sentiment and momentum in favour of the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East in accordance with General Assembly resolution 44/42. The Committee took particular note of the following documents:

(a) Communiqué of the Co-ordination Meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference, held at United Nations Headquarters on 4 October 1989 (A/44/700-S/20934);

(b) Conclusions adopted by the Heads of State or Government of the Twelve States members of the European Community at the meeting of the European Council held at Strasbourg, France, on 8 and 9 December 1989 (A/45/74-S/21068);

(c) Final communiqué adopted by the tenth Summit of the Supreme Council of the Gulf Co-operation Council, held at Muscat from 18 to 21 December 1989 (A/45/73-S/21065);

(d) Resolutions adopted by the Commission on Human Rights at its forty-sixth session, held at Geneva from 29 January to 9 March 1990 (resolutions 1990/11, 1990/2 A and B and 1990/6);

(e) Joint declaration of the Eighth ASEAN-EC Ministerial Meeting held at Kuching, Malaysia, on 16 and 17 February 1990 (A/45/138-S/21161);

(f) Final communiqué of the Ministerial Meeting of the Committee of Nine on Palestine of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, held at Tunis on 11 March 1990 (A/45/166-S/21192);

(g) Resolutions adopted by the Economic and Social Council during its first regular session of 1990 held in New York from 1 to 25 May 1990 (resolution 1990/11) and during its second regular session of 1990 held at Geneva from 4 to 27 July 1990 (resolutions 1990/53 and 1990/59);

(h) Statement by the Twelve States members of the European Community on Palestinian deaths in Israel and the occupied territories since 20 May 1990 (A/45/288-S/21332);

(i) Conclusions adopted by the Heads of State or Government of the Twelve States members of the European Community at the European Council, held at Dublin on 25 and 26 June 1990 (A/45/336-S/21385);

(j) Final communiqué adopted at the Third Ministerial Conference of the Mediterranean Non-Aligned Countries, held at Algiers on 25 and 26 June 1990 (A/45/357)1

(k) Resolutions of the fifty-second ordinary session of the Council of Ministers of the Organisation of African Unity, held at Addis Ababa from 3 to 7 July 1990, (CM/RES.1276 and 1277 (LII)) and declaration of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity, held at Addis Ababa from 9 to 11 July 1990 (see A/45/482)1

(l) Joint communiqué of the Twenty-third ASEAN Ministerial Meeting, held at Jakarta on 24 and 25 July 1990 (A/45/389-S/21455);

(m) Final communiqué and resolutions adopted by the nineteenth Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers, held at Cairo from 30 July to 5 August 1990 (A/45/421-6/21797) ;

(n) Final communiqué and recommendations adopted by the Al-Quds Committee of the Organization of the Islamic Conference at its thirteenth session, held at Rabat on 15 October 1990 (S/1890).

B. Action taken by the Committee in accordance with General Assembly resolutions and B

1. Regional seminars

52. During the period under review, the Division for Palestinian Rights continued to organise regional seminars in consultation with the Committee and under its guidance, in accordance with its mandate under General Assembly resolution 34/65 D and subsequent resolutions.

53. The Committee was pleased by the participation in the seminars of prominent political personalities, parliamentarians, policy-makers and other experts,

including Israel and Palestine. The Committee expressed satisfaction that the seminars had made a positive contribution to peace efforts by providing a forum for a balanced and constructive discussion of the issues. It noted that the seminar participants had adopted conclusions and recommendations expressing support for the Committee's objectives for a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine, particularly through the "two peoples, two States" formula and the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East. It further noted the request that the Committee continue to ensure that regional seminars provide an opportunity for diverse points of view to be expressed so that a meaningful dialogue could be held among people of goodwill on all sides.

(a) Asian Regional Seminar

54. The Asian Regional Seminar was held at Kuala Lumpur from 18 to 22 December 1989. The Committee greatly appreciated the decision of the Government of Malaysia to provide a venue for this Seminar, which was held jointly with the Asian NGO Symposium.

55. The Seminar considered the topics of three panels: panel I: (a) "The urgency of convening the International Peace Conference on the Middle East"; (b) "The intifadah in the occupied Palestinian territory and its impact on the achievement of a comprehensive settlement of the Middle East conflict"; panel II: "The role of the Palestine Liberation Organization in the social, cultural, economic and political development of the Palestinian people"; and panel III: "The mobilisation of public opinion in the Asian region for the realisation of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people". Further details on the Seminar and the text of the conclusions and recommendations adopted by participants are contained in annex II.

(b) Latin American and Caribbean Regional Seminar

56. The Latin American and Caribbean Regional Seminar, which had been postponed from 1989 for reasons beyond the Committee's control, was held at Buenos Aires from 5 to 9 February 1990. The Committee was particularly grateful to the Government of Argentina for providing a venue for this Seminar, which was held jointly with the Latin American and Caribbean NGO Symposium.

57. The Seminar considered the topics of three panels: panel I: (a) "The urgency of convening the International Peace Conference on the Middle East"; (b) "The intifadah in the occupied Palestinian territory and its impact on the achievement of a comprehensive settlement of the Middle East conflict"; panel II: "The role of the Palestine Liberation Organization in the social, cultural, economic and political development of the Palestinian people"; and panel III: "The mobilisation of public opinion in the Latin American and Caribbean region for the realisation of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people". Further details on the Seminar and the text of conclusions and recommendations adopted by participants are contained in annex IV.

(c) African Regional Seminar

58. The African Regional Seminar was held at Freetown from 2 to 6 April 1990. The Committee greatly appreciated the offer of the Government of Sierra Leone to provide a venue for this Seminar, which was held jointly with the African NGO Symposium.

59. The Seminar considered the topics of three panels: panel I: (a) "The urgency of convening the International Peace Conference on the Middle East"; (b) "The intifadah in the occupied Palestinian territory and its impact on the achievement of a comprehensive settlement of the Middle East conflict"; panel II: "The role of the Palestine Liberation Organization in the social, cultural, economic and political development of the Palestinian people"; and panel III: "The mobilization of public opinion in the African region for the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people". Some details on the Seminar and the text of conclusions and recommendations adopted by participants are contained in annex VI.

(d) European Regional Seminar

60. The European Regional Seminar was held at Stockholm from 7 to 11 May 1990. The Committee was deeply grateful to the Government of Sweden for providing financial assistance and a venue for this important Seminar.

61. The Seminar considered the topics of three panels: panel I: "The intifadah: its impact on and significance for advancing towards a just solution based on the principle of two peoples, two States"; panel II: "Breaking the impasse - the urgent need for a just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine; the International Peace Conference and the role of Europe" and panel III: "The role of the Palestine Liberation Organization in the political, economic, social and cultural development of the Palestinian people". Some details on the Seminar and the text of conclusions and recommendations adopted by participants are contained in annex VIII.

(e) North American Regional Seminar

62. The North American Regional Seminar was held at United Nations Headquarters in New York on 25 and 26 June 1990. The Seminar considered the topics of two panels: panel I: "The role of the Palestine Liberation Organization in the economic, cultural and social development of the Palestinian people, and its political programme to achieve statehood for the Palestinian people" and panel II: "The intifadah, the urgency of convening the International Peace Conference on the Middle East". Some details on the Seminar and the text of conclusions and recommendations adopted by participants are contained in annex IX.

2. Co-operation with non-governmental organisations

63. The Committee, in accordance with its mandate under Assembly resolution 44/41 A, continued to extend its co-operation to non-governmental organisations (NGOs) active on the question of Palestine and to expand its contacts with them. The Division for Palestinian Rights, in consultation with the Committee and under its guidance, organised regional and international activities for NGOs during 1990 in implementation of the Committee's objectives.

64. The Committee was greatly encouraged by the intensification of activities and programmes of the non-governmental organizations, including the sending of fact-finding missions to the area, the promotion of joint activities between Israelis and Palestinians, the provision of assistance and various other activities aimed at heightening public awareness and promoting a peaceful settlement. The Committee noted with satisfaction the continuing and growing involvement of Israeli organizations and Jewish organizations in North America and Western Europe in these

efforts. It also noted that the regional symposia and the international meetings had adopted declarations expressing the full support of the non-governmental organisations for the objectives and activities of the United Nations towards a peaceful settlement of the question and reaffirming the commitment of the non-governmental organisations to intensify further their efforts in this direction.

(a) Asian Regional NGO Symposium

65. The Asian Regional NGO Symposium was held at Kuala Lumpur from 18 to 21 December 1989 together with the Asian Regional Seminar. The NGO Symposium considered the topics of three panels jointly with the Seminar. Two workshops were established for non-governmental organisations in order to consider the mobilisation of such organisations in Asia and their role in providing assistance to the Palestinian people. Some details on the Symposium and the text of the final declaration are contained in annex III.

(b) Latin American and Caribbean Regional NGO Symposium

66. The Latin American and Caribbean Regional NGO Symposium, postponed from 1989, was held at Buenos Aires from 5 to 5 February 1990, together with the Latin American and Caribbean Regional Seminar. The NGO Symposium considered the topics of three panels jointly with the Seminar. Two workshops were established for representatives of non-governmental organisations to consider the mobilisation of such organisations for the protection of and assistance to the Palestinian people under occupation and the role of organisations in the mobilisation of public opinion. Some details on the Symposium and the text of the final declaration are contained in annex V.

(c) African Regional NGO Symposium

67. The African Regional NGO Symposium was held at Freetown from 2 to 5 April 1990, together with the African Regional Seminar. The NGO Symposium considered the topics of three panels jointly with the Seminar. In addition, two workshops were established for representatives of non-governmental organisations to consider the mobilisation of their organisations for the protection of and assistance to the Palestinian people under occupation and the role of these organisations in the mobilisation of public opinion. Some details on the Symposium and the text of the final declaration are contained in annex VII.

(d) North American Regional NGO Symposium

68. The North American Regional NGO Symposium was held at United Nations Headquarters from 27 to 29 June 1990, immediately following the North American Regional Seminar, in accordance with the practice followed in previous years. The programme for the Symposium was elaborated in consultations between the Committee and the North American Coordinating Committee for NGOs on the Question of Palestine within the framework of a preparatory meeting held in New York on 22 and 23 January 1990.

69. The programme for the Symposium provided for two main panels: panel I "Breaking the impasse: Moving towards Israeli-Palestinian peace and convening the International Peace Conference on the Middle East"; and panel II: "Intifadah update". The programme also included 12 action-oriented workshops aimed at identifying future tasks for organising non-governmental organisation

constituencies in the North American region. Some details on the Symposium and the text of the final declaration are included in annex X.

(e) European Regional NGO Symposium

70. The European Regional NGO Symposium was held at Geneva on 27 and 28 August 1990, and was followed by the International NGO Meeting, which took place from 29 to 31 August 1990.

71. The programmes for the Symposium and the International Meeting were elaborated by the members of the European Co-ordinating Committee for NGOs on the Question of Palestine and the International Co-ordinating Committee for NGOs on the Question of Palestine in consultation with the Committee within the framework of a preparatory meeting held at Geneva on 26 and 27 March 1990.

72. The Symposium considered the topics of three panels: panel I: "Urgent priorities to stop settlements in the occupied territory and protect the Palestinian people. What can Europe and European non-governmental organisations do?"; panel II: "1990: Time for peace - evaluation and follow-up"; and panel III: "Two peoples-two States. Europe's contribution to achieving peace". The programme for the Symposium also included four action-oriented workshops.

(f) I n t e r n a t i o n a l

73. The International NGO Meeting had as a main theme "Palestine and Israel: Prerequisites for peace". The following panels were established: panel I: "Breaking the impasse in the peace process through the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East: The influence of Palestinian, Israeli and international NGO co-operation"; panel II: "Intifadah update"; panel III: "The changing role of non-governmental organisations"; and panel IV: "Movement of populations: The law and the politics". Six action-oriented workshops also met within the framework of the Meeting.

74. Some details on the European Symposium and the International NGO Meeting and the texts of the final declarations are contained in annexes XI and XII, respectively.

3. Standard of travel

75. At its 171st meeting, held on 25 October 1990, the Committee considered the question of travel entitlements and related arrangements for members of the Committee attending regional seminars and non-governmental organisation symposia and meetings held away from Headquarters. The Committee heard clarifications given on behalf of the Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Finance in that regard. The Committee also considered the matter at its 173rd meeting, held on 28 November 1990. The Committee stressed that members of the Committee serving on delegations to such meetings are to be accorded the status of officials on special assignment for the Committee to promote the aims and objectives of the mandate entrusted to it by the General Assembly.

4. Information activities

76. The Committee noted with appreciation that the Division for Palestinian Rights, in accordance with its mandate, continued to prepare the following publications, under the guidance of the Committee:

(a) Monthly bulletins covering action by the Committee, other United Nations organs, and intergovernmental and non-governmental organisations concerned with the question of Palestine;

(b) Reports of regional seminars, regional symposia and international meetings of non-governmental organisations;

(c) Monthly and bi-monthly reports on developments relating to the question of Palestine, monitored from the Arabic, English and Hebrew press for the use of the Committee.

77. The Committee noted that the Division had published two studies, namely, Palestinian Children in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and The Origins and Evolution of the Palestine Problem: 1917-1988. Two updated issues (February and June 1990) of the information note on the work of the Committee and of the Division were also prepared. Another information note, entitled "The United Nations and non-governmental organisation activities on the question of Palestine", was updated in October 1989 and February 1990. Both information notes were issued in the six official United Nations languages, as well as in German and Japanese. The following publications were also issued by the Division during the period under review: Resolutions and decisions of the General Assembly and the Security Council relating to the question of Palestine: 1989 (A/AC.183/L.2/Add.10) and Special bulletin on the commemoration of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

78. The following studies are currently being prepared by the Division: The question of Palestine: 1979-1989 and Acquisition of land in Palestine and Israel's policy on the West Bank and Gaza Strip water resources. A compilation of seminar papers on legal aspects of the question of Palestine is nearing its completion.

5. International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People

79. The International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People was observed on 29 November 1989 at United Nations Headquarters in New York and at the United Nations Offices at Geneva and Vienna. The Committee noted with appreciation that the International Day had also been commemorated in many other cities throughout the world in 1989.

V. **ACTIM TAKEN BY THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INFORMATION IN
ACCORDANCE WITH GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 44/41 C**

80. The Committee noted with appreciation that, during the past year, the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat continued its information programme on the question of Palestine with a view to furthering the world-wide dissemination of accurate, objective and comprehensive information on the question. The Department's continuing mandate on the area derived from General Assembly resolution 44/41 C, in which the Assembly requested it to continue its special information programme on the question of Palestine during the biennium 1990-1991.

81. In response to the Assembly's request, the Department has disseminated press releases, publications and audio-visual material and has also organised fact-finding news missions and regional and national encounters for journalists.

92. Full coverage by press releases was provided of the forty-fourth session of the General Assembly, the meetings of the Security Council, including its meetings at Geneva, the Commission on Human Rights, the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories, the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and other intergovernmental bodies as they dealt with the question of Palestine.

83. The Department's coverage of the question of Palestine during the past year focused increasingly on news items and information concerning the situation in the occupied territories and efforts to convene an international peace conference on the Middle East under United Nations auspices.

84. In publication activities, the Department actively disseminated information through articles, press releases, brochures and booklets. The UN Chronicle reported extensively on the consideration given to the question of Palestine and other related items by the Assembly at its forty-fourth session and by the Security Council, particularly since the beginning of the uprising in the occupied territories. The commemoration of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People by the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People at Headquarters with other United Nations offices was fully covered. The Department also covered and disseminated information on the seminar and symposia held in different world capitals by the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People.

85. The Department continued to distribute its publications on the question of Palestine, such as a revised version of the booklet entitled "The United Nations and the Question of Palestine" in Arabic, English, French, German and Spanish; the booklet entitled "For the Rights of Palestinians: Work of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People"; the booklet entitled "Human Rights for the Palestinians: The Work of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Population of the Occupied Territories"; the brochure entitled "The International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People" in English, which is currently being translated into French and Spanish. All publications have been given wide circulation through all available channels.

86. All aspects of the question of Palestine, including the Security Council meetings held at Geneva, Palestinian refugees, Palestinian rights, the intifadah, the situation of the occupied territories, the work of UNRWA, the meetings of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and the prospects for an international peace conference on the Middle East, were covered extensively in both official and non-official languages in news, current affairs magazines, and other radio programmes of the Department of Public Information.

87. In addition to short items in news and current affairs radio programmes, the Department of Public Information produced 12 special feature radio programmes, including one on "The question of Palestine: The continuing search for a peace settlement", which was adapted into Chinese, Hindi, Turkish and Urdu and distributed to some 350 radio stations world wide two editions on "Palestine: search for a just and durable solution" and "Question of Palestine: immigration of Soviet Jews to Israel" in French; and "The contribution of international seminars and symposia on Palestine" in Kiswahili. The "UNCTAD assistance to the Palestinian people" and "The question of Palestine" were featured in two editions of the weekly programme in Arabic, Afakon Alamiya. The Caribbean Unit produced two editions on "The question of Palestine and the Caribbean media (1) the root of the problem and (2) the Caribbean journalist perspectives" in two parts, which were distributed to all countries and territories in the Caribbean region. "The Work of UNRWA" was featured in the weekly English magazine *Scope*. All regional seminars and non-governmental organisation symposia on the question of Palestine sponsored by the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People were covered extensively in weekly regional magazines.

88. A 15-minute educational video for high-school-age students, with an accompanying study pamphlet for teachers on the question of Palestine, was produced in three languages for distribution world wide.

89. Full television coverage was provided of General Assembly and Security Council meetings on the question of Palestine. Television coverage was also provided of meetings of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and its sponsored seminars as well as other official events. The commemoration of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People and the opening ceremony of the photo exhibit on the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people were also fully covered. A large number of video news packages on the various aspects of the question of Palestine were disseminated world wide through international syndicators. Members of delegations were also provided with video cassette dubs and excerpts on the question of Palestine and other related items. Cassette copies and line feeds were made available to major television networks.

90. As in previous years, the Department once again organised activities to acquaint the media with the facts and developments pertaining to the question of Palestine. A team of 14 high-level journalists participated in the news mission to the Middle East organised by the Department, between 13 and 31 May 1990. They visited Tunis, Damascus, Amman and Cairo. A formal request to the Permanent Mission of Israel for the news mission to visit Israel and the West Bank went unanswered. The news mission provided the participants with an opportunity to gain first-hand knowledge and impressions on various aspects of the Palestine question. During the mission, the journalists met and interviewed a large number of leaders and senior officials of Egypt, Jordan, the Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia and the

Palestine Liberation Organisation. Numerous field visits, particularly to Palestinian refugee camps, were also organized. The mission received extensive media coverage in all the countries visited. Numerous articles were later published and radio and television programmes broadcast by the participants on the basis of their experience and interviews conducted during the mission.

91. The Department also organized two regional encounters for journalists on the question of Palestine, bringing high-level journalists together with experts in the field for brief, in-depth, informal and candid discussion of the various aspects of the Palestinian problem. The first encounter was held at Buenos Aires from 12 to 14 February 1990 and was attended by 24 journalists from many North and Latin American and Caribbean Countries, representing the print, radio and television media. The second encounter was held in Singapore from 26 to 28 March 1990. About 23 journalists from Asia and the Pacific participated.

92. The Department also organized three series of national encounters in which small, balanced panels of experts held meetings, in the form of in-depth press conferences. In Latin America and the Caribbean, national encounters with local journalists and foreign correspondents were held at Mexico City, Santiago and Port-of-Spain between 2 and 15 February. National encounters for Europe were held between 9 and 16 March at Oslo, London and Belgrade. Asian national encounters were held at Tokyo, Manila, Bangkok and New Delhi between 19 and 30 March.

93. United Nations information centres throughout the world continued to carry out information activities in connection with the question of Palestine and made available to the public United Nations information materials on the subject. These activities included public lectures and briefings, screening of United Nations and UNRWA films on the question of Palestine, photo exhibits and the production and dissemination of newsletters, press releases and leaflets on the various aspects of the question. The information centres undertook various activities in observance of 29 November as the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. They made available publications prepared for, and under the guidance of, the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and distributed information circulars in official and local languages. Exhibitions were held, films screened and events organized in various centres in co-operation with the diplomatic corps, UNRWA and national parliaments.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COMMITTEE

94. The year under review was one in which great hopes gave way to increasing anxiety over the prospects for a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict in the Middle East. The new and favourable opportunities for *concerted* international action towards this end created by the Palestinian peace initiative of November 1988 and by the international trends towards democratisation and relaxation of tensions were thwarted by Israel's continued intransigence and policy of armed repression of the intifadah. The Gulf crisis in the latter part of 1990 has heightened tensions and has brought ineluctably to an already troubled region. There is a serious threat of armed confrontation that could have grave repercussions for the entire region and for the question of Palestine.

95. The Committee considers that despite these disquieting events, international attention must remain focused on the imperative necessity to overcome the political and diplomatic stalemate that has hitherto blocked progress towards a settlement of the question of Palestine. The Committee reiterates once again its firm belief that such a settlement, in accordance with internationally recognised principles, is of fundamental importance for the achievement of peace and stability in the Middle East region. Noting the successful efforts to achieve consensus within the Security Council and particularly the constructive manner in which its permanent members are acting together to resolve regional conflicts, the Committee appeals to the Council to take concrete and effective action to pursue with renewed determination the peace process and endeavours to resolve the Arab-Israeli conflict, the core of which is the question of Palestine.

96. As the intifadah is about to enter its fourth year, the Committee salutes the brave Palestinian people, in particular its women and children, for the heroic struggle to end Israeli occupation and implement the proclamation of the independent Palestinian State of November 1988. The intifadah has affirmed clearly the determination of the Palestinian people to bring the occupation of their land to an end and to achieve the exercise of their inalienable rights and has also affirmed that the Palestine Liberation Organisation is the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. The Committee reaffirms the international consensus that the participation of the Palestine Liberation Organisation on an equal footing with other parties to the Arab-Israeli conflict is indispensable in any efforts and deliberations aimed at the achievement of a lasting peace in the Middle East. It also calls once again for Palestine to be accorded its rightful place within the international community and the United Nations Organisation. While the Committee notes with satisfaction that the intifadah had helped the progressive forces in Israel to intensify their efforts for a just peace, the Government of Israel has remained adamant. The Committee affirms that the continuing denial of the Palestinian people's right to self-determination and independence is entirely unacceptable and constitutes a major danger to peace. It calls upon Israel to recognise and respect the national aspirations and rights of the Palestinian people and to recognise as well the desire of its own people to a future based on peace and justice.

97. In the 15 years since the establishment of the Committee, an international consensus has gradually been achieved on the essential principles for a solution of the question of Palestine based on the attainment of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. The Committee recalls that in its first report to the General

Assembly, it had recommended modalities for the attainment of those rights (see annex I), later complemented by the Declaration and Programme of Action adopted by the International Conference on the Question of Palestine held at Geneva in 1983. Developments since the beginning of the intifadah led to an even wider consensus, as shown by the near-unanimous adoption of General Assembly resolution 44/42. In that resolution the Assembly called once again for the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, under the auspices of the United Nations, with the participation of all parties to the conflict, including the Palestine Liberation Organisation, on an equal footing, and the five permanent members of the Security Council, based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people, primarily the right to self-determination. The Committee reaffirms the principles for the achievement of a comprehensive peace contained in that resolution, namely, the withdrawal of Israel from the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, and from the other occupied Arab territories, guaranteeing arrangements for security of all States in the region, including those named in General Assembly resolution 161 (II) of 29 November 1947, within secure and internationally recognised boundaries, resolving the problem of the Palestine refugees in conformity with General Assembly resolution 194 (III) of 11 December 1948, and subsequent relevant resolutions, dismantling the Israeli settlements in the territories occupied since 1967, and guaranteeing freedom of access to Holy Places, religious buildings and sites.

96. The Committee deeply regrets Israel's continued rejection of the constructive proposals contained in that resolution, which have been explicitly accepted by the Palestine Liberation Organisation. Further, the Committee calls upon those States which have thus far prevented the implementation of General Assembly resolution 44/42 to reconsider their position and to join the international consensus. Concerned that the continued stalemate will further exacerbate tensions and encourage resort to extremism, the Committee recommends that the General Assembly should urge the Security Council, and in particular its permanent members, to consider measures needed to convene the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, including the establishment of a preparatory committee, to consider guarantees for security measures for all States in the region, and to renew the mandate of the Secretary-General to continue his efforts with the parties concerned and, in consultation with the Security Council, to facilitate the convening of the Conference. The Committee expresses its support for every effort by the permanent members of the Security Council to bring the positions of the parties to the conflict closer to each other, to create a climate of confidence between them, and to facilitate in this way the convening and successful outcome of the International Peace Conference. Recent experience in the Security Council indicates that, given the necessary political will, the Council is able to achieve consensus on important matters of concern to the international community in the area of international peace and security. The Committee urges the Council to address the question of Palestine with the same urgency and determination with a view to finding a just and lasting solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict and its core, the question of Palestine.

99. For its part, the Committee intends to continue to intensify its efforts towards this essential objective and to make it once again the focal point of its work programme in the coming year. The Committee considers that future regional seminars and non-governmental organisation symposia and international non-governmental organization meetings organized under its auspices could make a valuable contribution by examining, with the assistance of experts from all

regions, in particular Palestinian and Israelis, some of the more important and complex substantive issues that need to be addressed by the Conference.

100. Pending progress towards a political settlement, however, the Committee urges once again that all necessary measures be taken immediately to protect the Palestinian people in the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem. The Committee has repeatedly drawn the attention of the Secretary-General, the General Assembly and the Security Council to Israel's non-acceptance of the applicability of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War of 12 August 1949 and to the persistent violation by Israel of its obligations as the occupying power under that Convention. In the past year, those Israeli policies and practices have led to increasing casualties and the deterioration of already insufferable living conditions. A matter of special concern is the suffering inflicted on Palestinian women and children as a result of Israeli practices. The deportations of Palestinians, the increased restriction on freedom of movement and association, and the restrictions on educational institutions, health and social welfare organisations, as well as constant daily obstacles and harassments, have produced inhuman and intolerable conditions. The Committee considers that it is now imperative for the High Contracting Parties to the fourth Geneva Convention and for the United Nations system as a whole to ensure that Israel abide by its obligations. The Committee calls upon the Security Council to establish urgently an effective United Nations presence in the occupied territory with a legal mandate to protect the Palestinians therein. In this regard, the Committee endorses the proposed establishment by the Security Council of a United Nations observer force.

101. The Committee is deeply concerned at the process of Israeli colonisation of the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, as manifested in the continued establishment of settlements, usurpation of land and water resources, and settler vigilantism. The growing influx of new immigrants exacerbates the situation. The Committee noted that the international community had vigorously opposed the Israeli policy of establishing settlements in the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, which was in contravention of the fourth Geneva Convention, had declared those actions null and void and had demanded that Israel dismantle the settlements and withdraw from the occupied territory. The Committee calls upon the Security Council to consider the matter urgently and to undertake appropriate measures, in conformity with the fourth Geneva Convention and the relevant principles of the Charter of the United Nations, to deal with the situation.

102. The Committee wishes to reaffirm that the United Nations has a duty and responsibility to render all assistance necessary to promote the social and economic development of the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, in preparation for the full exercise of national sovereignty in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions. The Committee accordingly reiterates its call upon the organisations of the United Nations system, as well as on Governments and on intergovernmental and non-governmental organisations, to sustain and increase their economic and social assistance to the Palestinian people, in close co-operation with the Palestine Liberation Organisation.

103. The Committee noted with satisfaction the increased awareness and mobilisation of international public opinion in support of the attainment of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and of United Nations recommendations for a comprehensive, just and lasting solution of the question of Palestine. The

Committee believes that its programme of regional seminars and meetings and symposia of non-governmental organisations, as well as the journalists' encounters and other informational activities sponsored by the Committee, have played a valuable role in this process, and it will continue to strive to achieve maximum effectiveness in carrying out this programme and to intensify its efforts in the implementation of its mandate. Further, the Committee intends to continue and intensify its efforts to ensure that such meetings provide an opportunity for diverse points of view to be expressed so that a real dialogue can be held among people of good will on all sides on the basis of relevant General Assembly and Security Council resolutions. In th'o context, the Committee invites all Governments, including those of the United States of America and Israel, to participate in the work of the Committee and in the events organised by it.

Notes

1/ On 27 September 1990, the Prime Minister of the German Democratic Republic informed the Secretary-General that the prerequisite under international law for a continued membership of the German Democratic Republic in the United Nations and in other intergovernmental organisations ceased to apply with the accession as at 3 October 1990 of the German Democratic Republic to the scope of the Basic Law of the Federal Republic of Germany so as to unite Germany in a single State (A/45/557).

2/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-first Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/31/35).

3/ Ibid., Thirty-second Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/32/35); ibid., Thirty-third session, Supplement No. 35 (A/33/35) ibid., Thirty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/34/35 and Corr.1); ibid., Thirty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/35/35); ibid., Thirty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/36/35); ibid., Thirty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/37/35 and Corr.1); ibid., Thirty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/38/35); ibid., Thirty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/39/35); ibid., Fortieth Session, Supplement No. 34 (A/40/35); ibid., Forty-first Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/41/35) ibid., Forty-second Session Supplement No. 35 (A/42/35); ibid., Forty-third Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/43/35); and ibid., Forty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/44/35).

4/ Report of the International Conference on the Question of Palestine, Geneva, 29 August-7 September 1983 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.83.I.21), chap. I, sect. B.

5/ The observers at the Committee meetings were as follows: Algeria, Bangladesh, Bulgaria, China, Czechoslovakia, Ecuador, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Mauritania, Morocco, Nicaragua, Niger, Sri Lanka, Syrian Arab Republic, United Arab Emirates, Viet Nam, the League of Arab States and the Organisation of the Islamic Conference. Palestine, represented by the Palestine Liberation Organisation, as the representative of the Palestinian people, the principal party to the question of Palestine, was also an observer.

Notes (continued)

6/ Until 3 October 1990, the membership of the Working Group was as follows: Afghanistan, Cuba, German Democratic Republic, Guinea, Guyana, India, Malta, Pakistan, Senegal, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic and Palestine, represented by the Palestine Liberation Organisation, as the representative of the people directly concerned.

7/ United Nations, Treaty Series, vol. 75, No. 973.

8/ International Labour Conference, 77th Session, 1990, Report of the Director-General, appendices (vol. 2), pp. 46-49.

ANNEX I

Recommendations of the Committee endorsed by the General Assembly
at its thirty-first session*

I. Basic considerations and guidelines

59. The question of Palestine is at the heart of the Middle East problem, and consequently, the Committee stresses its belief that no solution in the Middle East can be envisaged which does not fully take into account the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people.

60. The legitimate and inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to return to their homes and property and to achieve self-determination, national independence and sovereignty are endorsed by the Committee in the conviction that the full implementation of those rights will contribute decisively to a comprehensive and final settlement of the Middle East crisis.

61. The participation of the Palestine Liberation Organisation, the representative of the Palestinian people, on an equal footing with other parties, on the basis of General Assembly resolutions 3236 (XXIX) and 3375 (XXX), is indispensable in all efforts, deliberations and conferences on the Middle East which are held under the auspices of the United Nations.

62. The Committee recalls the fundamental principle of the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force and stresses the consequent obligation for complete and speedy evacuation of any territory so occupied,

63. The Committee considers that it is the duty and responsibility of all concerned to enable the Palestinians to exercise their inalienable rights.

64. The Committee recommends an expanded and more influential role by the United Nations and its organs in promoting a just solution to the question of Palestine and in the implementation of such a solution. The Security Council, in particular, should take appropriate action to facilitate the exercise by the Palestinians of their right to return to their homes, lands and property. The Committee, furthermore, urges the Security Council to promote action towards a just solution, taking into account all the powers conferred on it by the Charter of the United Nations.

65. It is with this perspective in view and on the basis of the numerous resolutions of the United Nations, after due consideration of all the facts, proposals and suggestions advanced in the course of its deliberations, that the Committee submits its recommendations on the modalities for the implementation of the exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.

* Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-first Session,
Supplement No. 35 (A/31/35), paras. 59-72.

II. The right of return

66. The natural and inalienable right of Palestinians to return to their homes is recognised by resolution 194 (III), which the General Assembly has reaffirmed almost every year since its adoption. This right was also unanimously recognised by the Security Council in its resolution 237 (1967); the time for the urgent implementation of these resolutions is long overdue.

67. Without prejudice to the right of all Palestinians to return to their homes, lands and property, the Committee considers that the programme of implementation of the exercise of this right may be carried out in two phases:

Phase one

68. The first phase involves the return to their homes of the Palestinian displaced as a result of the war of June 1967. The Committee recommends that:

(a) The Security Council should request the immediate implementation of its resolution 237 (1967) and that such implementation should not be related to any other condition;

(b) The resources of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and/or of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugee in the Near East, suitably financed and mandated, may be employed to assist in the solution of any logistical problems involved in the resettlement of those returning to their homes. These agencies could also assist, in co-operation with the host countries and the Palestine Liberation Organisation, in the identification of the displaced Palestinians.

Phase two

69. The second phase deals with the return to their homes of the Palestinians displaced between 1948 and 1967. The Committee recommends that:

(a) While the first phase is being implemented, the United Nations, in co-operation with the States directly involved, and the Palestine Liberation Organisation as the interim representative of the Palestinian entity, should proceed to make the necessary arrangements to enable Palestinians displaced between 1948 and 1967 to exercise their right to return to their homes and property, in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions, particularly General Assembly resolution 94 (III);

(b) Palestinians choosing not to return to their homes should be paid just and equitable compensation as provided for in resolution 194 (III).

III. The right to self-determination, national independence

a n d -

70. The Palestinian people has the inherent right to self-determination, national independence and sovereignty in Palestine. The Committee considers that the evacuation of the territories occupied by force and in violation of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and relevant resolutions of the United Nations is a conditio sine qua non for the exercise by the Palestinian people of its

inalienable rights in Palestine. The Committee considers furthermore that, upon the return of the Palestinians to their homes and property and with the establishment of an independent Palestinian entity, the Palestinian people will be able to exercise its rights to self-determination and to decide its form of government without external interference.

71. The Committee also feels that the United Nations has an historical duty and responsibility to render all assistance necessary to promote the economic development and prosperity of the Palestinian entity.

72. To those ends, the Committee recommends that;

(a) A timetable should be established by the Security Council for the complete withdrawal by Israeli occupation forces from those areas occupied in 1967; such withdrawal should be completed no later than 1 June 1977;

(b) The Security Council may need to provide temporary peace-keeping forces in order to facilitate the process of withdrawal;

(c) Israel should be requested by the Security Council to desist from the establishment of new settlements and to withdraw during this period from settlements established since 1967 in the occupied territories. Arab property and all essential services in those areas should be maintained intact;

(d) Israel should also be requested to abide scrupulously by the provisions of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, and to declare, pending its speedy withdrawal from those territories, its recognition of the applicability of that Convention;

(e) The evacuated territories, with all property and services intact, should be taken over by the United Nations, which, with the co-operation of the League of Arab States, will subsequently hand over those evacuated areas to the Palestine Liberation Organisation as the representative of the Palestinian people;

(f) The United Nations should, if necessary, assist in establishing communications between Gaza and the West Bank;

(g) As soon as the independent Palestinian entity has been established, the United Nations, in co-operation with the States directly involved and the Palestinian entity, should, taking into account General Assembly resolution 3375 (XXX), make further arrangements for the full implementation of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, the resolution of outstanding problems and the establishment of a just and lasting peace in the region, in accordance with all relevant United Nations resolutions;

(h) The United Nations should provide the economic and technical assistance necessary for the consolidation of the Palestinian entity.

ANNEX II

Conclusions and recommendations adopted by the Twenty-third United Nations Seminar on the Question of Palestine

(Kuala Lumpur, 18 to 22 December 1989)

1. The Twenty-third United Nations Seminar on the Question of Palestine (Sixth Asian Regional Seminar), on the topic "The inalienable rights of the Palestinian people", was held jointly with the Third United Nations Asian Regional NGO Symposium on the Question of Palestine at Kuala Lumpur from 18 to 22 December 1989, in accordance with the terms of General Assembly resolution 42/66 B of 2 December 1987.
2. The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People was represented by a delegation comprising Mrs. Absa Claude Diallo (Senegal), Chairman of the Committee, head of the delegation and Seminar Chairman; Mr. Andreas Mavrommatis (Cyprus); Mr. Ismail Rasali (Malaysia), who served as Rapporteur of the Seminar; Mr. Tom Obaleh Kargbo (Sierra Leone); Mr. Quennadi Oudovanko (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic); and Mr. buhdi Labib Terzi, Permanent Observer for Palestine.
3. Nine meetings were held and 13 panelists presented papers on selected aspects on the question of Palestine. In addition, representatives of 38 Governments, Palestine, UNDP and the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), 3 intergovernmental organisations and 52 non-governmental organisations (NGOs) attended the Seminar.
4. The joint event was opened by Mrs. Diallo and a welcoming address was made by H.L. Datuk Abu Hassan Omar, Foreign Minister of Malaysia.
5. A message from the Secretary-General of the United Nations, H.E. Mr. Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, was read out by his representative, the Chief of the Division for Palestinian Rights. The Chairman of the Committee also addressed the meeting, as did Ms. Yoshiko Tanaka of the International Co-ordinating Committee for NGOs on the Question of Palestine, speaking on behalf of the Asian NGOs. Mr. Ahmad Al-Farra, Observer for Palestine, read out a message from Mr. Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organisation.
6. Further statements were made by the following: Mr. Kargbo, representative of the Special Committee on the Situation with Regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples; Mr. Oudovenko, Acting Chairman of the Special Committee against Apartheid; Mr. Nabil Taleb Ma'arouf, Assistant Secretary-General of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference; Mr. Moetafa Foroutan, Assistant Secretary-General of the Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee; and Mr. Fouad Boseiso, regional representative of ESCWA.
7. The Seminar and Symposium participants adopted a message to Mr. Arafat, and a motion of thanks to the Government and people of Malaysia.

8. The three panels that were established and their panelists were as follows:

Panel I: (a) "The urgency of convening the International Peace Conference on the Middle East"; (b) "The intifadah in the occupied Palestinian territory and its impact on the achievement of a comprehensive settlement of the Middle East conflict": Ms. Hanan Mikhail Achrawi (Palestinian), Mr. Paul Findley (United States of America), Tan Sri Dato Abdul Rahman Bin Abdul Jalal (Malaysia), Mr. Zhentang Liu (China), Mr. Ron McIntyre (New Zealand), Mr. Yyacheelav N. Matusov (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics), Mr. Amien Rais (Indonesia) and Tan Sri Mohd Ghassali Shafie (Malaysia);

Panel II: "The role of the Palestine Liberation Organisation in the social, cultural, economic and political development of the Palestinian people"; Mr. Nabil Sha'ath (Palestinian);

Panel III: "The mobilisation of public opinion in the Asian region for the realisation of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people": Mr. Donald Bets (International Co-ordinating Committee for NGOs on the Question of Palestine), Mr. A. Kadir Jasin (Malaysia), Mr. Daoud Kuttab (Palestinian) and Mr. Mümtaz Soyel (Turkey).

9. The report of the Seminar, including summaries of the proceedings, has been issued as a publication of the Division for Palestinian Rights of the United Nations Secretariat.

10. The conclusions and recommendations adopted by the Seminar are as follows:

Conclusions and recommendations

(a) The participants in the Seminar in reviewing recent developments concerning the question of Palestine welcomed the results of the nineteenth extraordinary session of the Palestine National Council (PNC) held at Algiers in November 1988, and, in particular, the Political Communiqué as well as the Declaration of Independence proclaiming the State of Palestine as a positive contribution towards a peaceful settlement of the conflict in the Middle East. The decision adopted by PNC at Algiers, the position outlined by H.E. President Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organisation, in his address to the General Assembly at Geneva on 13 December 1988, the debate on the question of Palestine in the General Assembly session, the adoption of resolution 43/176 on 15 December 1988 became important landmarks in the international endeavours towards achieving a just settlement of the question of Palestine and have led to increased support by all sectors of the international community for the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East. The Seminar noted with satisfaction that the provisions of that resolution had been reaffirmed in General Assembly resolution 44/42 of 6 December 1989. The participants also took note of a further qualitative improvement in the vote on this resolution. Even larger numbers of States, including Western States, cast their votes in 1989 in favour of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, reflecting the pressing need to convene such a conference.

(b) The participants noted that the Government of the United States of America had opened a dialogue with the Palestine Liberation Organisation. In this connection, the participants emphasised that the scope of such a dialogue should be

expanded and include the consideration of. • ubatentive iaauca leading to meaningful political decisions between the two parties with a view to arriving at a just and lasting solution to the question of Palestine.

(c) They also noted that the peace initiative undertaken by the Palestinian leadership as well as the proclamation of the State of Palestine by PNC at its nineteenth extraordinary aaaaion, have received enthusiastic • upport from an overwhelming majority of States who have welcomed thoe developments as a concrete contribution toward8 peace. Significantly, a large number of State8 have already recognised and acknowledged the proclamation of the State of Palestine and many State8 have eatabliahad diplomatic relation8 with it.

(d) The participant8 expressed their conviction that these development8 relating to the quaaion of Palestine have created a new momentum for bringing about a aolution to this aomplar and dangerous conflict on the basis of raaolutiona of the United Nations and within its framework. These development8 were brought about by the courageous and determined struggle of the Palestinian people for the realisation of its inalienable rights, primarily the right to self-determination, as dramatically manifested in the continuing intifadah in the occupied Palestinian territory. The present international climate, which is characterised by increasing co-operation Md the political will to solve regional conflict in a peaceful way through negotiations, has created favourable conditions for a compreheaave, juat and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine.

(e) The participant8 noted that theta eriaa a wide meaaura of agreement within the international community that a comprehensive, juat and lasting aettlement in the Middle Eart should be based on the following principles: withdrawal of Israel from the Palestinian territory oaaupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, and from the other Arab territories; acknowledgement of end respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and politiaal independence of all the States in the region, including the Batea of Israel and Palestine, and their right to live in peace within aeure and recognized boundaries; and finally, a satisfactory aolution of the Palestinian problem baaed on the recognition of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including the right to self-determination leading to the establishment of an independent State of Palestine in tha occupied Palestinian territory, including Eaat Jerusalem.

(f) The participants expressed aerioua concern at the continued grave violationa of the human rights of the civilian population in the occupied Palestinian territory. The Seminar took note with utmost concern of the continuing suffering of the Palestinian people under occupation, the enormoua toll among the Palestinians and the far-reaching aocio-•onomic, demographic and emotional consequence8 that the Palestinian people has to faoa. The entire international community, as represented at the United Nations, has repeatedly declared that the Israeli acts of violanae against the Palaatinians in the oaaupied Palestinian territory were in blatant violation of the proviaiono of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 Augurt 1949, which is fully binding on Israel - a party to the Convention. The Israeli actions are also contrary to United Nations raaolutiona and to the generally recogniaad norms of international law. In the Gaza Strip especially, new maaourea to oontrol the movement of individuals produced inhumane and intolerable conditions. In the Waat Bank, settler vigilantism threatened to develop into large-scale bloodletting. Of special concern for the participants were brutal Israeli practices uaed against Palestinian women and children. The participants strongly opposed the presence of Jewish settlers in the occupied Palestinian territory.

(g) The process of Israeli colonisation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, as manifested in the continued establishment of settlements and the brutality of settler vigilantism, was unequivocally rejected and condemned by the participants. The participants were of the view that the Israeli policy of usurping Palestinian land and establishing and strengthening settlements in that land constituted not only a gross disregard for the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, but also a serious obstacle to the solution of the Arab-Israeli conflict. They also noted with appreciation that the entire international community had vigorously opposed the Israeli policy of establishing settlements in the occupied Palestinian territory. The Seminar noted with concern the continuing funding of the illegal settlement activities by Israel in the occupied Palestinian territory. The participants stressed that all assistance, financial or otherwise, to Israel, particularly from the United States, should cease forthwith. Any aid to Israel should be made conditional upon Israel's compliance with relevant United Nations resolutions and provisions of the fourth Geneva Convention. Any assistance resulting in the development and consolidation of the Israeli settlement infrastructure in the occupied Palestinian territory is considered illegal and immoral and constitutes a serious obstacle towards achieving peace in the Middle East.

(h) The participants were of the view that the Palestinian *intifadah*, as the popular, democratic expression of the collective will of the Palestinian people under Israeli occupation, has given the struggle of the Palestinians the force of authenticity as well as moral ascendancy and political maturity. The *intifadah*, now in its third year, embraces three dimensions: the overt and visible resistance to the Israeli occupation while simultaneously expressing the Palestinian people's commitment to its sole and legitimate leadership, the Palestine Liberation Organization; the social transformation and nation-building as the embodiment of statehood through the establishment of authentic, alternative popular infrastructure of the Palestinian society; and, finally, the *intifadah* was instrumental in bringing about a clear-cut political articulation through the PNC resolutions of November 1988. The participants supported the view expressed by the Secretary-General that the message of the *intifadah* was direct and unequivocal, namely, that Israeli occupation, which has now been in effect for 22 years, will continue to be rejected, and that the Palestinian people will remain committed to the exercise of its legitimate political rights, including self-determination.

(i) The Seminar appealed to the Security Council to take urgent measures to ensure physical protection of the Palestinian people under occupation, to guarantee the safety and security and the legal and human rights of the Palestinian refugees in all the territories under Israeli occupation. The participants regretted that on 7 November 1989 a permanent member of the Council had again prevented the Security Council from taking action on measures indispensable for ensuring the safety and protection of Palestinians in the occupied Palestinian territory. The Seminar participants stressed that the repressive policies and practices of Israel vis-à-vis Palestinians in the occupied territory and in particular the so-called policy of "transfer" or deportation of Palestinians, a gross violation of recognised instruments of international law, had been repeatedly condemned by the United Nations Security Council, the General Assembly, as well as by an overwhelming majority of States Members of the United Nations. They pointed out that, taking into account the gravity of the acts of violence and repression by Israeli authorities against Palestinian civilians in the occupied territory, the Security Council should assume its responsibilities and ensure protection of the Palestinian people under occupation. The participants called on Israel, the

occupying Power, to respect the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection Of Civilian Persons in Time of War, and accept the de jure applicability of the Convention to the Palestinian territory and other Arab territories occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, and to comply fully with its obligations under that Convention.

(j) The participants welcomed the courageous steps taken by the Palestinians during the intifadah to end the Israeli occupation and to set up an alternative infrastructure that can be used as a basis for an independent and sovereign State of Palestine. The Seminar considered that intensified efforts towards genuine development of the occupied Palestinian territory, with the close involvement of the Palestinian people through its representative, the Palestine Liberation Organisation, must be a necessary accompaniment of renewed efforts to achieve a political solution to the question. The United Nations system as well as international, regional and national organisations should continue and strengthen their humanitarian assistance to the Palestinians under occupation and to the Palestinian refugees. In particular, sustained and increased support should be channelled through the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and other United Nations bodies and agencies, as well as through non-governmental organisations working directly in the occupied Palestinian territory.

(k) The participants agreed that it was incumbent upon the Government of Israel to respond positively to the stand taken by the Palestine Liberation Organisation which has been welcomed and praised by the international community. Israel can no longer ignore the national aspirations of the Palestinian people and deny them their political rights, in particular their right to self-determination. The Seminar considered that the steps proposed by the Israeli Government were grossly inadequate. Any viable peace initiative must include interim measures of protection for the Palestinian people and measures that would enable Palestinians to exercise fully their right to self-determination. The participants stressed that in the so-called Israeli election proposals did not include the final objective of the exercise by the Palestinian people of all its inalienable rights including its right to self-determination and the establishment of an independent sovereign State, they are nothing but an instrument for perpetuating Israeli occupation.

(l) The Seminar affirmed that the denial of the exercise of the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people remained the core of the conflict in the Middle East and that a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the region cannot be achieved without the full exercise of those rights, without the withdrawal of Israel from the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, and from the other occupied Arab territories. It further affirmed that the Palestine Liberation Organisation was the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, and, as such, was an essential party to any negotiations aimed at resolving the conflict by peaceful means.

(m) The Seminar, in particular, stressed the significance of General Assembly resolution 43/176 of 15 December 1988 calling for the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, under the auspices of the United Nations, with the participation of all parties to the conflict, including the Palestine Liberation Organisation, on an equal footing, and the five permanent members of the Security Council, based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people, primarily the right to self-determination. Cognizant of the role of the Security

Council in maintaining international peace and security, the participants in the Seminar urged the Security Council to expedite the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, and to adopt interim measures including the deployment of a United Nations peace-keeping force to safeguard the physical security of the people of the occupied Palestinian territory and to bring about stability in the region pending agreement on a final comprehensive settlement. The participants considered that it was incumbent upon Israel to terminate its occupation in compliance with resolution 242 (1967) and to accept the terms for a lasting and comprehensive settlement in the region.

(n) The Seminar stated that the international community was deeply and firmly convinced of the urgent need to achieve a just, comprehensive and lasting political settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict and its core, the question of Palestine. This is evidenced by the growing support for the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East. That support is clearly reflected in the position adopted by the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, the League of Arab States, the Organisation of African Unity, the Organisation of the Islamic Conference, the European Community, the Nordic States, Japan, as well as by the USSR, China, and other socialist countries. In that regard, the Seminar noted with appreciation the sustained and continuing support by all States and peoples of the Asian and the Pacific region for the exercise by the Palestinian people of its legitimate national right and for the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East. The position of Asian States was one of solidarity with an support for the struggle of the Palestinian people for the exercise of its inalienable rights. There was a broad consensus regarding the need for convening the International Peace Conference on the Middle East in accordance with the provisions laid down in General Assembly resolution 43/176 of 15 December 1988 and reaffirmed in resolution 44/42 of 6 December 1989. Movement towards peace in the region was facilitated by the carefully balanced and constructive policy adopted by the PLO. The continuing obstacle was the inflexible position of the Government of Israel as well as the attitude of one permanent member of the Security Council. The participants called upon Israel to abandon its negative position and to respond positively to international efforts aimed at a just and lasting political settlement of the question of Palestine.

(o) The Seminar took note of the continuing endeavours by the Secretary-General to set into motion a mechanism of consultations within the Security Council with a view to advancing the peace process, including the prospects for convening the International Peace Conference on the Middle East.

(p) The Seminar appreciated the efforts of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People to secure universal recognition of the inalienable national rights of the Palestinian people, and of its recommendations, made in its report in 1976, and repeatedly endorsed by the General Assembly since then, for ensuring the exercise by the Palestinian people of those rights. The Seminar also noted with satisfaction the increased support at the United Nations for the programme of action undertaken by the Committee. It urged the international community to sustain and strengthen its support for the Committee's activities and endeavours, in particular, its efforts for facilitating the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East.

(q) The Seminar took note with appreciation of the activities of the Division for Palestinian Rights of the United Nations Secretariat and of its commitment to work, under the guidance of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights

of the Palestinian People, towards the attainment and exercise by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights.

(r) The Seminar viewed with appreciation the support Governments and peoples of Asia have extended at the United Nations and in other organisations to the Palestinian cause and for the achievement of a just and lasting peace in the Middle East. The Seminar participants agreed that efforts should be continued and intensified to mobilise official and public opinion in Asia through NGO activities and the use of the media. Participants expressed the view that the co-operation of Asian organisations, trade unions, solidarity groups and so on, among themselves as well as between them and their counterparts in other regions, should be expanded. The United Nations should undertake additional efforts to disseminate factual and up-to-date information on the question of Palestine and the measures required for the achievement of a just settlement to the question of Palestine. The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People has an important role in the dissemination of such information. For its part, the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat should make every effort to ensure that accurate information on the question of Palestine received the widest possible dissemination.

(s) The participants expressed their warm appreciation to the Government and the people of Malaysia for providing a venue for the Asian Regional Seminar and NGO Symposium on the Question of Palestine, and for the facilities, courtesies and hospitality extended to them.

ANNEX III

Declaration adopted by the Third United Nations Asian Regional NGO Symposium on the Question of Palestine

(Kuala Lumpur, 18 to 21 December 1989)

1. The Third United Nations Asian Regional NGO Symposium on the Question of Palestine, on the theme "The inalienable rights of the Palestinian people", was held at Kuala Lumpur from 18 to 21 December 1989. The Symposium was held in part together with the Twenty-third United Nations Seminar on the Question of Palestine, which took place from 18 to 22 December 1989 (see annex II).

a. In addition to the panels held jointly with the Seminar, two workshops specifically related to non-governmental organisation (NGO) activities were established to consider the following topics:

(a) "Mobilising the NGO network in Asia";

(b) "The role of NGO assistance in meeting the needs of the Palestinian people: medical, economic, and educational support".

3. The Symposium participants adopted a declaration and action-oriented proposals emanating from the workshops and elected an Asian Co-ordinating Committee for NGOs on the Question of Palestine. The report of the Symposium has been issued as a publication of the United Nations Division for Palestinian Rights together with that of the Seminar.

4. The NGOs participating in the Symposium adopted the following declaration:

Declaration

We, the non-governmental organisations (NGOs) gathered at the United Nations Asian Regional Seminar and Symposium on the Question of Palestine, totally uphold the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and fully support its continuing struggle for independence, as expressed in the intifadah and by all other internationally legitimate means. We recognise and uphold the historic proclamation of the State of Palestine made on 14 November 1989. We recognise the proclamation not only as the expression of the continuous struggle of the heroic Palestinian people culminating in the intifadah, but also as an expression of the fundamental principle of the self-determination of peoples enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. We call on all Governments of Asia and the Pacific region who have not already done so to recognise the State of Palestine, in unequivocal terms and without delay.

We particularly note and welcome the declaration by President Arafat at the General Assembly meeting held at Geneva on 14 December 1988 in which he recognised the right of all States in the Middle East region to exist in peace and security, including the States of Palestine and Israel. We uphold the Palestinians' inalienable right of return to their homeland and their right to

freedom *and* sovereignty, in the spirit of justice and of reconciliation, details to be negotiated between the Israeli Government and the PLO on the basis of all relevant United Nations resolutions.

We vigorously renew the call for the early convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East in accordance with General Assembly resolution 43/175 of 15 December 1966 and as reaffirmed in resolution 44/42 of 6 December 1969, with participants to include the five permanent members of the Security Council, the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), Israel, the Arab States party to the conflict and other concerned States on an equal basis and with equal rights. The emphasis must be on reaching a peaceful, just and comprehensive political settlement between Israel and independent Palestine as defined by the Palestine National Council in the Algiers Declaration of independence and in all relevant United Nations resolutions, for the mutual advantage of all the peoples of the region and of the world. The need for the international conference is further reinforced by the recognition of the State of Palestine by an overwhelming number of nations.

Reaffirming the international consensus that the PLO is the sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, we note the great strengthening of the consensus by the unwavering support for the PLO by the people of the *intifada* and by the united national leadership of the *intifada*. We therefore urge all Governments fully to recognise the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people and the State of Palestine, and to press for its participation on an equal footing with other parties to the Arab-Israeli conflict at the International Peace Conference on the Middle East as the representative of the Palestinian people.

We, Asian NGOs, call for the immediate end to the military occupation of Palestine. We note with *utmost* concern and indignation that the Israeli repression, including killing, wounding, especially of women and children, mass arrests and detentions, demolition of homes, expulsions, starvation, uprooting of trees, confiscation of land, closures of educational institutions and other violations of human rights continue. The fact that they have less media coverage arises not from any lessening of repression but because the media are prevented from reporting and can be penalised for doing so by the Israeli authorities. We nevertheless demand that media from all countries make every effort to cover and report events in occupied Palestine.

We call for effective international political and economic pressure on Israel to make it comply with its obligations under the Fourth Geneva Convention and to accept Security Council resolutions. We appeal to the Security Council to establish an immediate United Nations presence in the Palestinian territory occupied by Israel since 1967, to bring an immediate end to the escalating violations of human rights, to protect the Palestinian people and to bring the perpetrators of these practices to justice. We strongly recommend an expansion of UNRWA's Refugee Affairs Officer Programme as a practical expression of international concern for the protection of the Palestinian people under occupation.

We express grave concern at the situation of the Palestinians in Lebanon, call for help for them and for the strengthening of the United Nations peace-keeping activities in Lebanon and demand that Israel withdraw all its military forces unconditionally to the internationally recognised boundaries

of Lebanon in accordance with Security Council resolution 509 (1992) of 6 June 1992. We wish to alert the world to the illegal diversion to Israel via subterranean channels of the waters from the Lebanese Litani and Hasbani Rivers. The result will be the desertification of the rich farmland of South Lebanon, the evacuation of the population and, we fear, the formal incorporation of South Lebanon into "Greater Israel". We express our appreciation for the peace efforts of the Arab League in resolving the crisis in Lebanon and particularly in assisting the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon.

We strongly uphold the forces of peace in Israel that support the International Peace Conference on the Middle East and an independent Palestinian State. We strongly condemn the penalising of Israeli peace activities. We express support for those growing numbers of Israeli citizens who refuse military Service in occupied Palestine and other occupied Arab territories, and we call upon the Israeli Government to recognise the right of Israelis to conscientious objection. We urge the Israeli Parliament to repeal Amendment No. 2 of August 1986 the So-called "anti-terrorism" law, which prohibits contact between Israeli citizens and representatives of the PLO.

We Strongly condemn the proposed new Amendment No. 3 to the above law, which threatens charitable institutions, and urge the Israeli parliament not to pass it as it would provide arbitrary and dictatorial powers of confiscation of the assets of charitable and educational NGOs and close to them all avenues to aid from international Sources. We call for an urgent international campaign against that amendment by Governments, NGOs and all peace-loving peoples.

We Strongly condemn the Israeli practice of closing schools and kindergartens in occupied Palestine since the beginning of the intifadah and the continuous closures of Palestinian universities. We urgently call for international pressure to bear on the Israeli Government to immediately reopen all schools and universities and to stop this deplorable form of collective punishment. We urge the United Nations to implement its own resolutions, including sanctions that will ask the Governments of those Member States to reconsider their official, social, cultural and educational exchange programmes with Israel as well as grants or other educational facilities it gives to Israel, as long as Israel fails to respect the basic right of the Palestinian community to provide education for its children.

We call upon all NGOs to establish contact with and extend support to fellow NGOs in occupied Palestine, especially related to human rights, women, health, labour, children and education.

We call upon all Asian NGOs to monitor the relationships among Asian governmental and private institutions and Israeli governmental and private institutions, particularly in the areas of trade, labour, armaments and intelligence-gathering. We urge NGOs to publicise these linkages and to take collective action against them, including organising boycotts of Israeli products regardless of exporting or mediating country.

We declare that the policies and practices of zionism and Israel are forms of racism. We appeal to the United Nations to consider impositions of mandatory sanctions against these racist policies and practices.

We call upon all Asian NGOs to appeal to their respective Governments to bring greater pressure upon the United States to end its unconditional support for Israel. We express our satisfaction with the PLO/United States dialogue at Tunis although the pace of this dialogue is very slow. We call upon the United States to advance the level of this dialogue to lead to early convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East. Further, we appeal to Asian NGOs to seize any opportunity to express their opposition to the United States Government's unqualified support (financial and otherwise) for Israeli policies that violate Palestinian human rights. Specifically we call on NGOs to organize popular campaign, vigils or sit-ins directed at United States embassies and its other governmental institutions. Such campaigns could also be directed at other Governments that lend support for Israeli policies against Palestinians.

We support the Security Council resolution that condemns illegal settlement in occupied Palestine, and we oppose any action by States or individuals that lend support to illegal settlement in occupied Palestine. We call upon all Governments that permit Jewish emigration to provide sufficient guarantees to ensure that those emigrants do not settle in the territory of occupied Palestine.

We request all Asian Governments to support the important role of NGOs in Asia in mobilising public opinion and to extend financial and other assistance to these organisations so that they can more effectively support the struggle of the Palestinian people.

We consider the formation of the Asian Regional' Co-ordinating Committee of NGOs to be a significant step in the mobilisation of public opinion throughout Asia in support of the rights of the Palestinian people. We ask the United Nations to extend every support possible to ensure the firm foundation and functioning of the Co-ordinating Committee. The Asian Regional Co-ordinating Committee looks forward to close co-operation with the International Co-ordinating Committee and the other regional Co-ordinating Committees to maximise the effectiveness of the NGO network in support of the rights of the Palestinian people.

We thank the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for convening this meeting and we greatly appreciate the presence of the Members and Observers of the Committee. We thank the Division for Palestinian Rights and all of the United Nations Secretariat, including the interpreter who assisted in this meeting. We express our appreciation to the distinguished experts who spoke here and to the presence and contribution of members of the International Co-ordinating Committee. All those mentioned here contributed greatly to the success of our meeting.

We sincerely thank the people and Government of Malaysia for welcoming us to Kuala Lumpur, for their warm hospitality and for the excellent facilities they placed at our disposal.

ANNEX IV

Conclusions and recommendations adopted by the Twenty-fourth United Nations Seminar on the Question of Palestine

(Buenos Aires, 5 to 9 February 1990)

1. The Twenty-fourth United Nations Seminar on the Question of Palestine (Fourth Latin American and Caribbean Regional Seminar), on the topic "The inalienable rights of the Palestinian people", was held jointly with the First United Nations Latin American and Caribbean Regional NGO Symposium on the Question of Palestine at Buenos Aires from 5 to 9 February 1990, in accordance with the terms of General Assembly resolution 44/41 B of 6 December 1969.
2. The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People was represented by a delegation comprising Mr. Oscar Oramas-Olive (Cuba), head of the delegation and Seminar Chairman; Mr. Alexander Borg-Olivier (Malta), who served as Vice-Chairman and Rapporteur of the Seminar) Mr. Dragoslav Pejic (Yugoslavia), Vice-Chairman of the Seminar) and, Mr. Zuhdi Labib Terzi (Permanent Observer of Palestine).
3. A total of 9 meetings were held and 14 panelists presented papers on selected aspects of the question of Palestine. Representatives of 34 Governments, Palestine, 2 United Nations organs, 3 United Nations specialised agencies and bodies, 2 intergovernmental organisations and 27 non-governmental organisations attended the Seminar.
4. The joint event was opened by Mr. Oramas-Olive and a welcoming address was made by H.E. Dr. Alfredo Carim Yoma, Secretary of State of Special Affairs in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Worship of Argentina.
5. A message from the Secretary-General of the United Nations was read out by his representative the Chief of the Division for Palestinian Rights. Mr. Oramas-Olive also addressed the meeting, as did Mr. Ahmad Sobeh, representative of Palestine in Brazil, who read out a message from Mr. Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO).
6. Further statements were made by Mr. Oramas-Olive on behalf of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, Mr. Virendra Gupta on behalf of the Special Committee against Apartheid, Mr. Sufian Barasi on behalf of the League of Arab States and Mr. Pejic on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.
7. The Seminar and Symposium participants adopted a message to Mr. Arafat as well as a motion of thanks to the Government and people of Argentina. They also adopted a message to the Foreign Minister of Israel deploring that two Palestinians from the occupied territory had not been issued travel permits by the Israeli authorities and were thus unable to attend the meeting.
6. The three panels that were established and the panelists were as follows:

Panel I: (a) "The urgency of convening the International Peace Conference on the Middle East"; (b) "The intifadah in the occupied Palestinian territory and its impact on the achievement of a comprehensive settlement of the Middle East conflict": Archbishop Halarion Capucci (Palestinian), Mr. Pedro Catella (Argentina), Mr. Amos Kenan (Israel), Mr. Luciano Osorio Rosa (Brazil), Mr. Isam Kamel (Palestinian), Mrs. Francisca Sauquillo (Spain), Mr. Ricardo Valero (Mexico) and H.E. Mr. Alberto Velasco-San José (Cuba);

Panel II: "The role of the Palestine Liberation Organisation in the social, cultural, economic and political development of the Palestinian people": Mr. Wadjan Al-Borno (Palestinian)

Panel III: "The mobilisation of public opinion in the Latin American and Caribbean regions for the realisation of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people": Mr. Thomas W. Gittens (Guyana), Mr. Jean-Marie Lambert (Office of the International Co-ordinating Committee for Non-Governmental Organisations on the Question of Palestine), Mr. Carlos Pachá (Argentina), Mr. Manuel Felipe Sierra (Venezuela) and Mr. William Waack (Brazil).

9. The report of the Seminar, including summaries of the proceedings, has been issued as a publication of the Division for Palestinian Rights.

10. The conclusions and recommendations adopted by the Seminar are as follows:

Conclusions and recommendations

(a) The participants in the Seminar expressed their conviction that recent developments regarding the Arab-Israeli conflict and its core, the question of Palestine, have created a new momentum for bringing about a solution to this complicated and dangerous conflict on the basis of the resolutions of the United Nations and within its framework. These developments are mainly due to the courageous and determined struggle of the Palestinian people to attain and exercise its inalienable rights, primarily the right to self-determination, as dramatically manifested by the continuing Palestinian uprising, the intifadah, in the occupied Palestinian territory. The present international climate, the political will to resolve regional conflicts in a peaceful way through negotiations within the framework of the United Nations, is especially conducive to the achievement of a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine. It is imperative that this historic opportunity not be missed and that efforts be redoubled in 1990 to overcome remaining obstacles so that the process of negotiations can be initiated without delay.

(b) The participants in the Seminar, in reviewing developments concerning the question of Palestine, welcomed the decisions adopted by the Palestine National Council (PNC) at Algiers in November 1988 and the constructive position outlined by Mr. Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the PLO, in his address to the General Assembly at Geneva on 13 December 1988. These developments, which led to the adoption of resolution 43/176 on 15 December 1988, became important landmarks in the international endeavours aimed at achieving a just settlement of the question of Palestine. The Seminar also noted with satisfaction the adoption of General Assembly resolution 44/42 of 6 December 1989. The participants were greatly encouraged

by the vote on this balanced and comprehensive resolution, which was supported by an even larger number of States, including Latin American and Caribbean States, and for the first time, almost all Western States, all members of the European Community. This important development once again reflected the overwhelming support of the international community for the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, with the participation of all parties to the conflict, including the PLO, on an equal footing, and the five permanent members of the Security Council, based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people, primarily the right to self-determination.

(c) The participants welcomed the fact that the Government of the United States of America had opened a dialogue with the PLO and emphasised that the scope of such a dialogue should be expanded to include the consideration in a constructive manner of substantive issues so as to enhance the process of negotiations leading to a just and lasting solution to the question of Palestine,

(d) The participants in the Seminar welcomed efforts by Israelis and Palestinians to engage in direct dialogue and joint activities as a way of promoting mutual understanding, as well as a process of reconciliation between the two sides and the creation of a climate more conducive to negotiations. They appreciated the recent initiative "1990, Time for Peace": of 29 to 31 December 1989 in Jerusalem, where many persons, including Israelis and Palestinians, demonstrated in support of peaceful negotiations, respect of civil and human rights and in support of the two States/two peoples principle. The participants considered that the United Nations should offer its good offices and organise appropriate activities to bring together Palestinians and Israelis under its auspices.

(e) The participants noted that there existed a wide measure of agreement within the international community that a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement in the Middle East should be based on the principles outlined in General Assembly resolutions 43/176 and 44/42, namely, withdrawal of Israel from the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, and from the other Arab territories; acknowledgement of and respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of all the States in the region, including Israel and Palestine, and their right to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries; and finally, a satisfactory solution of the Palestinian problem based on the recognition of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, primarily the right to self-determination and the establishment of an independent Palestinian State in the occupied Palestinian territory.

(f) The participants expressed serious concern at the continued grave violations by Israel, the occupying Power, of the human rights of the civilian population in the occupied Palestinian territory, causing even greater suffering to the Palestinian people under occupation with far-reaching socio-economic, demographic and emotional consequences. The entire international community, as represented at the United Nations, has repeatedly declared that the Israeli policies and practices against the Palestinians in the occupied Palestinian territory are in violation of the provisions of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, which is fully binding on Israel, a party to the

Convention, and also contrary to United Nations resolutions and to the generally recognised norms of international law. A matter of special concern for the participants was the suffering inflicted on Palestinian women and children as a result of the brutal Israeli practices. In the Gaza Strip, particularly, new measures to control the movement of individuals produced inhumane and intolerable conditions.

(g) The process of Israeli colonisation of the Palestinian territory, as manifested in the continued establishment of settlements, usurpation of land and water resources, and the brutality of settler vigilantism, was unequivocally rejected and condemned by the participants. They noted with appreciation that the entire international community had vigorously opposed the Israeli policy of establishing settlements in the occupied Palestinian territory, which was in contravention of the fourth Geneva Convention, and stressed that Israel bore full responsibility for these illegal practices. The participants noted the expected increase in the number of Jewish immigrants to Israel and deplored the recent statements by the Government of Israel regarding the settlement of those immigrants in the occupied Palestinian territory. Any such action will be illegal and will complicate the attainment of a just and comprehensive settlement of the question of Palestine. The participants appealed to Governments to ensure that members of the Jewish community emigrating to Israel were not used as a tool to perpetuate Israeli occupation of Palestinian territory.

(h) The participants were of the view that the Palestinian *intifadah* was a clear manifestation of the popular, democratic expression of the collective will of the Palestinian people under Israeli occupation that has given the struggle of the Palestinian people its hitherto suppressed identity, moral ascendancy and political maturity. The *intifadah*, now in its third year, embraces three dimensions: the overt and visible and fearless resistance to the Israeli occupation and the indivisibility of the Palestinian people and its sole and legitimate leadership, the PLO; the opportunity for social transformation and nation-building as the embodiment of statehood through the establishment of authentic, alternative popular infrastructure of the Palestinian society; and, finally, the *intifadah* was instrumental in bringing about a clear-cut political articulation and direction as manifested through the PNC decisions of November 1988. The participants supported the view expressed by the Secretary-General that the message of the *intifadah* was direct and unequivocal, namely, that the Israeli occupation, which had been in effect for 22 years, was unacceptable and would continue to be rejected, and that the Palestinian people were committed and determined to exercise their legitimate political rights, including self-determination, no matter what the price would be for attainment of their objective.

(i) The Seminar appealed to the international community and, in particular, to the Security Council to take urgent measures to ensure physical protection of the Palestinian people under occupation and to guarantee the safety and security and the legal and human rights of the Palestinian people in all the territories under Israeli occupation. They urged the Security Council to take into account the gravity of the acts of violence, human rights violations, including the so-called policy of "transfer" or deportation of Palestinians, which has been repeatedly condemned by the Security Council and the General Assembly, and other forms of repression by Israeli authorities against Palestinian civilians in the occupied Palestinian territory, and to

assume and discharge its responsibilities and ensure protection of the Palestinian people under occupation. The participants stressed de jure applicability of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, and demanded that Israel abide by the Convention.

(j) The participants welcomed the courageous steps taken by the Palestinians during the intifadah to end the Israeli occupation and to set up an alternative infrastructure that could be used as a foundation for an independent and sovereign State of Palestine. The Seminar considered that intensified efforts *towards* genuine development of the occupied Palestinian territory, with the close involvement of the Palestinian people through its representative, the PLO, were a necessary corollary to renewed efforts to achieve a political solution of the question of Palestine.

(k) The participants appealed to the Government of Israel to respond positively to the peace initiative by the PLO, which has been welcomed and praised by the international community. Israel should recognize that it could no longer ignore the national aspirations of the Palestinians and deny them their inalienable rights, in particular, their right to self-determination. The Seminar considered that the steps proposed by the Israeli Government were inadequate, since they did not include interim measures of protection for the Palestinian people and measures that would ensure that Palestinians would be enabled to exercise fully their right to self-determination. The participants called upon Israel to respond positively and with courage to international efforts aimed at a just and lasting political settlement of the question of Palestine, which would be of benefit to all parties concerned, including the international community as a whole.

(l) The Seminar took note with appreciation of the continuing endeavours by the Secretary-General to advance the peace process, including the prospects for *convening* the International Peace Conference on the Middle East. The participants in the Seminar urged the Security Council to expedite the convening of the International Peace Conference and to adopt interim measures, including the deployment of a United Nations peace-keeping force to safeguard the physical security of the people of the occupied Palestinian territory and to bring about stability in the region pending agreement on a final comprehensive settlement.

(m) The Seminar strongly endorsed the persistent efforts of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People to secure universal recognition of the inalienable national rights of the Palestinian people, and urged the international community to sustain and strengthen their support for the Committee's activities and, in particular, its efforts aimed at facilitating the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East.

(n) The Seminar took note with appreciation of the activities of the Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat and of its commitment to work, under the guidance of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, towards the attainment of a just, comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East, which would, *inter alia*, ensure the exercise by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights.

(o) The participants in the Seminar were of the view that the United Nations should undertake additional efforts to disseminate factual and up-to-date information on the question of Palestine and on the measures required for the achievement of a just settlement to the question of Palestine. The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and the Division for Palestinian Rights have an important role to play in the collection and dissemination of such information. For its part, the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat should make every effort to ensure that accurate information on the question of Palestine receive the widest possible dissemination.

(p) The Seminar noted with appreciation the steps taken by the countries members of the European Community in promoting the convening of the International Peace Conference and in providing increased assistance to the Palestinian people.

(q) The Seminar noted with appreciation the sustained and continuing support by the Governments and peoples of the Latin American and Caribbean region for the exercise by the Palestinian people of its legitimate national rights and for the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East. The position of these States was one of solidarity with and support for the struggle of the Palestinian people for an independent State of Palestine and for the exercise of its inalienable rights. In this context the Seminar stressed the importance of the establishment by Governments of Latin American and Caribbean States of diplomatic representation with the PLO as the representative of the Palestinian people or upgrading of existing arrangements, as the case may be, as a manifestation of solidarity of the countries of the region with the people of Palestine. At the same time, the participants stressed that it was of utmost importance that all States in the Latin American and Caribbean region be unanimous in their support for the United Nations resolutions establishing the path for a comprehensive, peaceful solution to the question of Palestine. The participants in the Seminar, in particular, expressed their appreciation to the Government of the Republic of Argentina for its support of the cause of the Palestinian people and for the consistent support it has given to the question of Palestine at the United Nations.

(r) The participants noted that Argentina was home to sizeable communities of Jews and Arabs who had arrived in various waves of immigration. They had prospered in peaceful coexistence, practising their religion, their traditions and their own customs, thus providing an excellent model for the people of Israel and Palestine to live together in peace and prosperity. The participants expressed their warm appreciation to the Government and the people of the Republic of Argentina for providing a venue for the Latin American and Caribbean Regional Seminar and NGO Symposium on the Question of Palestine and for the facilities and warm hospitality extended to them. This meeting constituted an important contribution to the peace process related to the Middle East conflict and to the question of Palestine in particular.

ANNEX V

Declaration adopted by the First United Nations Latin American and Caribbean Regional NGO Symposium on the Question of Palestine

(Buenos Aires, 5 to 8 February 1990)

1. The First United Nations Latin American and Caribbean Regional NGO Symposium on the Question of Palestine, on the theme "The inalienable rights of the Palestinian people", was held at Buenos Aires from 5 to 8 February 1990, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 44/41 B of 6 December 1989. The Symposium was held in part together with the Twenty-fourth United Nations Seminar on the Question of Palestine, which took place from 5 to 9 February 1990.

2. In addition to the panels held jointly with the Seminar, two workshops specifically related to non-governmental organisations (NGO) activities were established to consider the following topics:

(a) "Mobilisation and networking by non-governmental organisations to ensure the protection of, and promote assistance to, the Palestinian people under Israeli occupation";

(b) "Non-governmental organizations activities to further mobilise public opinion for the realisation of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people".

3. The symposium participants adopted a declaration and action-oriented proposal emanating from the workshops and elected an Interim Latin American and Caribbean Co-ordinating Committee for NGOs on the Question of Palestine. Together with that of the Seminar, the report of the Symposium has been issued as a publication of the Division for Palestinian Rights.

4. The NGOs participating in the Symposium adopted the following declaration:

Declaration

We, the Latin American non-governmental organisations (NGOs) meeting in the City of Buenos Aires from 5 to 9 February 1990, in the first United Nations Latin American and Caribbean Regional Seminar and NGO Symposium on the Question of Palestine, on the theme "The inalienable rights of the Palestinian people", declare our support for the struggle of the Palestinian people for independence and national liberation, in exercise of its rights to self-determination, as expressed in the heroic popular uprising, the *intifada*, and through the diplomatic efforts deployed by the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), its sole and legitimate representative.

We welcome the declaration of independence of the State of Palestine adopted by the Palestine National Council at its historic meeting at Algiers on 15 November 1988. We urge all Governments of Latin America and the Caribbean to recognise the independent Palestinian State forthright and without delay. As a prior step, we call for the opening of diplomatic missions of Palestine.

We point out that despite the considerable progress achieved at the international level in terms of peace, dialogue and co-operation, the question of Palestine continues to be one of the key conflicts threatening world peace and is still awaiting a peaceful, just and lasting solution, despite the positive Palestinian peace proposals.

We reaffirm our commitment to continue working within the framework of the relevant resolutions adopted by the United Nations, in particular General Assembly resolutions 43/176 of 15 December 1988 and 44/42 of 6 December 1989, which were adopted by an overwhelming majority of 151 Member States.

We stress the importance of the role the United Nations can play in any peace process, recalling its contribution that culminated in the full independence of the Namibian people, which can serve as a source of inspiration for the Middle East.

We call upon the United Nations to take urgently all possible measures that will permit effect to be given to the whole body of resolutions adopted on the question of Palestine.

We support the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, under the auspices of the United Nations, with the participation of all parties involved in the conflict, including the PLO, on an equal footing, and of the five permanent members of the Security Council.

We express our appreciation of the declaration by President Yasser Arafat at the meeting of the General Assembly held at Geneva on 13 December 1988, in which he recognised the right of all States in the region to exist in peace and security, within secure and internationally recognised borders.

We call for the withdrawal of Israel from the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, as well as from all other occupied Arab territories.

We pronounce ourselves in favour of resolving the problem of the Palestinian refugees within the framework of the relevant resolutions of the United Nations and condemn any attempt to expel the Palestinians from their land.

We call for the immediate and total dismantling of the Jewish settlements established in the occupied territories since 1967 and condemn any policy designed to continue establishing new settlements.

We call upon Governments and the competent international organisations to take measures to prevent Israel from settling Jewish immigrants from the Soviet Union and other countries in the Palestinian territory occupied by Israel, as the Israeli Prime Minister Y. Shamir has stated that they may be. We warn that bringing in new settlers will have harmful consequences for the Palestinians in the occupied territories, and recall that, *inter alia*, the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics have made official statements opposing it.

We firmly reject all diversionary attempts or manoeuvres by the Israeli Government and others to set obstacles in the way of negotiations for the establishment of the independent State of Palestine on Palestinian land.

We express our rejection and our strongest condemnation of the repressive methods and practices employed by the State of Israel against the Palestinian people. These have increased in extent and magnitude, affecting all sectors of the Palestinian population. The killings, beatings, mass arrests, expulsions, detention in concentration camps, sexual violence and imposition of curfews especially affect women and children and must end immediately.

We call for the immediate cessation of the policy of demolition of Palestinian housing, deforestation, confiscation of land and property, and the banning of sowing and harvesting.

We call for an immediate end to the press censorship as well as the imposition of penalties on those media which report the brutalities of the repression to which the Palestinians are subjected. The purpose of this censorship is to silence and weaken the international condemnation of these practices.

We call on the Israeli parliament not to adopt Amendment No. 3 of August 1989 to the Prevention of Terrorism Ordinance, which would give the State arbitrary powers to confiscate income and properties from the NGOs and would reduce the possibility of their receiving aid from international sources.

We reaffirm our support for the heroic struggle of the Palestinian people under the leadership of the PLO, its sole and legitimate representative, and for its unified national leadership, the protagonist of the *intifadah*, which has entered its victorious third year.

We call for effective international political and economic pressure on Israel to make it comply with its obligations under the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, and accept United Nations resolutions.

We appeal to the Security Council to take the appropriate measures to ensure the necessary United Nations presence for the protection of the Palestinian people and to put an end to the human rights violations in the occupied territory and to bring the perpetrators of these practices to justice.

We recommend an expansion of the Refugee Affairs Officer Programme of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East as a practical expression of international concern for the protection of the Palestinian people under occupation.

We also request that the specialised agencies of the United Nations pay greater attention to the Palestinian question, including by admitting the State of Palestine as a member, which will allow for an intensive exchange with the PLO and Palestinian NGOs with the aim of ensuring adequate coverage of needs in such sectors as education, health and development, without any control by Israel.

We condemn Israel's policy of closing Palestinian educational establishments in the occupied territories and all attempts to deprive children and young people of access to education. This practice is an insult to those norms which should govern the workings of a civilized society and violates a basic human right and we call for the immediate and unconditional reopening of all Palestinian educational establishments in the occupied territories.

We request Latin American and Caribbean educational establishments that maintain co-operation progress with their Israeli counterparts to reconsider the terms of such co-operation so long as measures restricting education in the occupied territories remain in effect.

We warmly greet all peace-loving forces in Israel, and in the Jewish community abroad, that work vigorously in favour of the International Peace Conference and for the independent Palestinian State, under difficult conditions. We condemn the repression to which Israeli activists who advocate dialogue and peace have been subjected and the punishments meted out to Israeli soldiers who refused to suppress Palestinians in the occupied territories.

We welcome and support the initiative "1990, Time for Peace" taken by the European Peace Movement, the NGOs, Palestinians and Israeli peace-loving forces, which demonstrated for peace from 28 to 30 December 1989, and we deplore the repression to which the Israeli, Palestinian, European and American Participants were subjected.

We call upon Governments that co-operate with Israel in the arms field, especially the United States of America, to cease to do so and we denounce the danger posed to world peace and security by the collaboration between South Africa and Israel in the nuclear sphere.

We call upon the Governments of Latin American and Caribbean countries to consider the possibility of applying economic, cultural and other sanctions against Israel as long as that country persists in its practice of violating the human rights of the Palestinian people.

We denounce the practices of the Government of Israel in Latin America, which take the form of indiscriminate arms sales, the training of repressive groups, co-operation with dictatorial regimes and involvement in practices aimed at the destabilisation of democratic Governments.

We call upon NGOs to work for dialogue and understanding among the Arab and Jewish communities in Latin America with a view to making a contribution to the peace process in the Middle East.

We request the Governments of Latin American and Caribbean countries to support the work of NGOs involved in promoting a just and lasting solution to the question of Palestine.

We express our concern at the lack of information in Latin America on the question of Palestine, which hampers efforts to counter the systematic disinformation campaign orchestrated by pressure groups allied with the Israeli Government, and we request the United Nations to disseminate more

information. We encourage also all mass media in the region to provide better coverage about the Middle East problem.

We consider that the establishment of a Latin American and Caribbean regional NGO committee on the question of Palestine will be a significant step in the mobilisation of public opinion for the achievement of a just and lasting solution of the problem under consideration. In this connection we seek maximum support from the United Nations and from the International Co-ordinating Committee and other regional committees.

We thank the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and the Division for Palestinian Rights for having convened this meeting. We also thank the Government of Argentina for the hospitality it has shown to us and the facilities it placed at our disposal.

ANNEX VI

Conclusions and recommendations adopted by the Twenty-fifth United Nations Seminar on the Question of Palestine

(Freetown, 2 to 6 April 1990)

1. The Twenty-fifth United Nations Seminar on the Question of Palestine (Sixth African Regional Seminar), on the topic "The inalienable rights of the Palestinian people", was held jointly with the Third United Nations African Regional NGO Symposium on the Question of Palestine at Freetown from 2 to 6 April 1990, in accordance with the terms of General Assembly resolution 44/41 B of 6 December 1989.

2. The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People was represented by a delegation comprising: Mrs. Absa Claude Diallo (Senegal), head of the delegation and Seminar Chairman; Mr. Guennadi I. Oudovenko (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic); Mr. Tom Obaleh Aarqbo (Sierra Leone) who served as Rapporteur; Mr. Chinmaya Gharekhan (India); and Mr. Zuhdi Labib Terzi (Permanent Observer of Palestine).

3. Seven meetings were held and 16 panelists presented papers on selected aspects of the question of Palestine. Representatives of 14 Governments, Palestine, United Nations organs, United Nations specialised agencies and bodies, international organisations as well as non-governmental organisations attended the Seminar.

4. The joint event was opened by Mrs. Diallo and a welcoming address was made by The Hon. Alhaji Dr. Abdul Karim Koroma, Foreign Minister of Sierra Leone. A message from the Secretary-General of the United Nations was read out by his representative, the Chief of the Division for Palestinian Rights. Mrs. Diallo also addressed the meeting, as did Dr. Morad Whaled, President of the Afro-Asian People's Solidarity Organisation, on behalf of the African non-governmental organisations. Mr. S. H. Qerjawi, Ambassador of Palestine in Sierra Leone, read out a message from Mr. Yaaser Arafat, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organisation.

5. Further statements were made by the following: Mr. Aarqbo on behalf of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples; Mr. Oudovenko, Vice-Chairman of the Special Committee against Apartheid; Mr. Nabil Marouf, Assistant Secretary-General of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference; and Mr. Nquuq Etish Mowotsh of the Organisation of African Unity.

6. The participants in the Seminar and Symposium adopted a message to Mr. Arafat as well as a motion of thanks to the Government and people of Sierra Leone. They also adopted a message to the Foreign Minister of Israel deeply regretting that a travel permit had not been issued by the Israeli authorities to a Palestinian from the occupied territory who had been invited as a panelist.

7. The three panels that were established and their panelists were as follows:

Panel I: (a) "The urgency of convening the International Peace Conference on the Middle East"; (b) "The intifadah in the occupied Palestinian territory and its

impact on the achievement of a comprehensive settlement of the Middle East conflict": Mr. Vital Belle (Congo), Mr. Benjamin Beit-Hallahmi (Israel), Mr. Yehia El-Gamal (Egypt), H.E. Mr. Latyr Kamara (Senegal), Mr. Moibo Noumoudion Kouyate (Mali), Senator Michael Laniqan (Ireland), Mr. Andrew Seleke (ANC), Mr. A. S. Zasytkin (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) and Mr. Salah Zuheikeh (Palestinian);

Panel II: "The role of the Palestine Liberation Organization in the social, cultural, economic and political development of the Palestinian people": Mr. Jinnies Iesa Atrash (Palestinian);

Panel III: "The mobilisation of public opinion in the African region for the realisation of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people"; Mr. Farouk Abu Eissa (Sudan), Dr. Bukar Bukarambe (Nigeria), Mr. Gipu Felix-George (Sierra Leone), Mr. Ahmed Gore Ebrahim (PAC), Mr. Mikko Lohikoski (Finland) and Mr. Lamine Jawara (Gambia).

6. The report of the Seminar, including summaries of the proceedings, has been issued as a publication of the Division for Palestinian Rights.

9. The conclusions and recommendations adopted by the Seminar are as follows:

Conclusions and recommendations

(a) The participants in the Seminar expressed their conviction that recent developments regarding the Arab-Israeli conflict and its core, the question of Palestine, have created a new momentum for bringing about a solution to this complicated and dangerous conflict on the basis of the resolutions of the United Nations and within its framework. The courageous and determined struggle of the Palestinian people to attain and exercise its inalienable rights, primarily the right to self-determination, has been dramatically manifested in the continuing and intensified Palestinian uprising, the *intifadah*, in the occupied Palestinian territory as well as in the Palestinian peace initiative proclaimed in November 1988. The present international climate, which is characterized by the political will to resolve regional conflicts in a peaceful way through negotiations within the framework of the United Nations, is especially conducive to the achievement of a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine. It is imperative that this historic opportunity not be missed and that efforts be redoubled in 1990 to overcome remaining obstacles so that the process of negotiations within the context of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East can be initiated without further delay.

(b) The participants in the Seminar noted with appreciation the sustained and continuing support by the Governments and peoples of the African region for the exercise by the Palestinian people of its legitimate national rights and for the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East. The position of these States, as manifested in the declarations and resolutions of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), was one of solidarity with and support for the struggle of the Palestinian people for an independent State of Palestine and for the exercise of its inalienable rights. In this context, the participants stressed the importance of intensified Afro-Arab relations both bilaterally and within the framework of OAU and the League of Arab States (LAS). They asked, in particular, the Palestine Liberation Organization to intensify and enhance the level of its

relations with the African States. The Seminar welcomed the recognition of the State of Palestine proclaimed by the Palestine National Council (PNC) in November 1988, by many African Governments as a manifestation of solidarity of the countries of the region with the people of Palestine. At the same time, it expressed concern about resuming diplomatic ties with Israel by some African States.

(c) The participants in the Seminar, in reviewing developments concerning the question of Palestine, welcomed the decisions adopted by the PNC at Algiers in November 1988 as reflected in its Political Communiqué and the constructive position taken by Mr. Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organisation, in his address to the general Assembly at Geneva on 13 December 1988, which presented the Palestinian peace initiative. These developments had led to the adoption of Assembly resolution 43/176 of 15 December 1988 and have become important landmarks in the international endeavours aimed at achieving a just settlement of the question of Palestine. The Seminar also noted with great satisfaction the adoption of general Assembly resolution 44/42 of 6 December 1989. The participants were greatly encouraged by the vote on this balanced and comprehensive resolution (151 votes in favour, 3 against and 1 abstention), which was supported by an even larger number of States including all member States of OAU, and for the first time, by all States members of the European Community. This important development once again reflected the overwhelming support of the international community for the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, with the participation of all parties to the conflict, including the Palestine Liberation Organisation, on an equal footing, and the five permanent members of the Security Council. In order to realise, *inter alia*, the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people, primarily the right to self-determination, the Conference should be convened on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and other relevant resolutions. The participants noted with regret that the negative position of a permanent member of the Security Council and another State, party to the conflict, had obstructed the implementation of General Assembly resolution 44/42 of 6 December 1989.

(d) The participants noted that there existed a wide measure of agreement within the international community that a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement in the Middle East should be based on the principles outlined in General Assembly resolutions 43/176 of 15 December 1988 and 44/42 of 6 December 1989, and it should include the withdrawal of Israel from the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, and from the other Arab territories; acknowledgement of and respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of all the States in the region, including Israel and Palestine, and their right to live in peace within secure and recognised boundaries) and finally, a satisfactory solution of the Palestine problem based on the recognition of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, primarily the right to self-determination and the establishment of an independent Palestinian State in the occupied Palestinian territory.

(e) The Seminar received reports regarding political developments in Israel resulting from the *intifada*. The Palestinian uprising has had far-reaching effects on every aspect of Israeli politics. Specifically, it has led to a major government crisis and has helped the progressive forces fighting for a just peace to engage in dialogue and joint activities with the Palestinians as a way to promote mutual understanding and reconciliation and to break down prejudices and stereotypes. The participants warmly appreciated the demonstration at Jerusalem

"1990, Time for Peace", held from 29 to 31 December 1989, where many persons including Israelis and Palestinians supported peaceful negotiations, respect for civil and human rights and the "two peoples, two States" principle. They considered that the United Nations should offer its good offices and organise appropriate activities to bring together Palestinians and Israelis under its auspices.

(f) The participants expressed serious concern at the continued grave violations by Israel, the occupying Power, of the human rights of the civilian population in the occupied Palestinian territory, causing even greater suffering to the Palestinian people under occupation, with far-reaching emotional, socio-economic and demographic consequences. The entire international community, as represented at the United Nations, has repeatedly declared that the Israeli policies and practices against the Palestinians in the occupied Palestinian territory are in violation of the provisions of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, to which Israel is a High Contracting Party, and also contrary to United Nations resolutions and to generally recognised norms of international law. The participants appealed to the Contracting Parties to the Convention to take appropriate measures to respect and to ensure respect for the provisions of the Convention. A matter of special concern for the participants was the suffering inflicted on Palestinian women and children as a result of the brutal Israeli practices. The increased restrictions of the movement of individuals, health and social welfare organisations as well as the constant daily obstacles and harassments have produced inhuman and intolerable conditions.

(g) The process of Israeli colonisation of the Palestinian territory as manifested in the continued establishment of settlements, usurpation of land and water resources, and the brutality of settler vigilantism was unequivocally rejected and condemned by the participants. They noted with appreciation that the entire international community had vigorously opposed the Israeli policy of establishing settlements in the occupied Palestinian territory, which was in contravention of the fourth Geneva Convention, and stressed that Israel bore full responsibility for these illegal practices. The participants noted the systematic increase in the number of Jewish immigrants to Israel and deplored the recent statements by the Government of Israel regarding the settlement of those immigrants in the occupied Palestinian territory at a time when Israel denied the Palestinians the right to return to their homes. Any such action will be illegal and will complicate the attainment of a just and comprehensive settlement of the question of Palestine. The participants appealed to Governments to ensure that members of the Jewish community emigrating to Israel were not used as tools to perpetuate and strengthen the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territory, in conformity with the provisions of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which says in article 12, *inter alia*, that the right of everyone to liberty of movement and freedom to choose his residence and the right of everyone to leave any country, including his own "shall not be subject to any restrictions except those which are provided by law, are necessary to protect national security, public order (*ordre public*), public health or morals or the rights and freedoms of others, and are consistent with the other rights recognised in the present covenant". In this connection, participants took note of the recent meeting of the Security Council and its consideration of the "unlawful Israeli moves to settle the occupied territories". They urged the Council to condemn the settlement of immigrants in the occupied territories, declare it illegal and consider them as a new and serious obstacle to peace and to call upon the Israeli Government to review and abandon its obstructionist position.

(h) The participants were of the view that the intifadah was a clear manifestation of the popular and democratic expression of the collective will of the Palestinian people under Israeli occupation that has given the struggle of the Palestinian people its hitherto suppressed identity and moral ascendancy. The intifadah, now in its third year, embraces three dimensions: the overt, visible and fearless resistance to the Israeli occupation and the indivisibility of the Palestinian people and its sole and legitimate leadership, the Palestine Liberation Organisation; the opportunity for social transformation and nation-building as the embodiment of statehood through the establishment of an authentic, alternative popular infrastructure of the Palestinian society) and, finally, the intifadah was instrumental in bringing about a clear-cut political articulation and direction as manifested through the PNC decisions of November 1988. The participants supported the view expressed by the Secretary-General that the message of the intifadah was direct and unequivocal, namely, that the Israeli occupation, which had been in effect for 22 years, was unacceptable and would continue to be rejected, and that the Palestinian people would remain committed to the exercise of its legitimate political rights, including self-determination.

(i) The participants welcomed the fact that the Government of the United States of America had opened a dialogue with the Palestine Liberation Organisation and emphasised that the level of the dialogue should be raised and its scope should be expanded to include the consideration in a constructive manner of substantive issues so as to enhance the process of negotiations leading to a just and lasting solution to the question of Palestine.

(j) The Seminar participants appealed to the international community and, in particular, to the Security Council to take urgent measures to ensure physical protection of the Palestinian people under occupation, to guarantee the safety and security and the legal and human rights of the Palestinian people in all the territories under Israeli occupation. They urged the Security Council to take into account the gravity of the acts of violence and human rights violations, including the so-called policy of "transfer" or deportation of Palestinians, which have been repeatedly condemned by the Security Council and the General Assembly, and other forms of repression by Israeli authorities against Palestinian civilians in the occupied Palestinian territory. They requested the Security Council to assume and discharge its responsibilities and to ensure protection of the Palestinian people under occupation. The participants also stressed the de jure applicability of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, and demanded that Israel abide by the Convention.

(k) The participants welcomed the courageous steps taken by the Palestinians during the intifadah to end the Israeli occupation and to set up an alternative infrastructure as a foundation for an independent and sovereign State of Palestine. The Seminar considered that intensified efforts towards genuine development of the occupied Palestinian territory, with the close involvement of the Palestinian people through its representative, the Palestine Liberation Organisation, were a necessary corollary to renewed efforts to achieve a political solution of the question of Palestine.

(l) The participants urged the Government of Israel to respond positively to the peace initiative of the Palestine Liberation Organisation, which had been welcomed and praised by the entire international community. Israel should recognise that it could no longer ignore the national aspirations of the Palestinians and continue to deny them their inalienable rights, in particular,

their right to self-determination. The Seminar considered that the steps proposed by the Israeli Government were inadequate, since they did not include interim measures of protection for the Palestinian people and measures that would enable the Palestinians to exercise fully their right to self-determination. The participants called upon Israel to respond positively to international efforts aimed at a just and lasting political settlement of the question of Palestine, which would be of benefit to all parties concerned, including the international community as a whole.

(m) The Seminar participants expressed their appreciation to the Secretary-General for his continuing endeavours to advance the peace process, including the prospects for convening the International Peace Conference on the Middle East. The participants in the Seminar urged the Security Council to expedite the convening of the Conference and to adopt interim measures including the deployment of a United Nations force to safeguard the physical security of the people of the occupied Palestinian territory and to bring about stability in the region pending agreement on a final and comprehensive settlement.

(n) The participants in the Seminar endorsed the persistent efforts of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People to secure universal recognition of the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people and urged the international community to sustain and strengthen its support for the Committee's activities and, in particular, the Committee's efforts aimed at facilitating the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East.

(o) The Seminar participants took note with appreciation of the activities of the Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat and of its commitment to work, under the guidance of and in consultation with the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, towards the attainment of a just, comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East, which would, *inter alia*, ensure the exercise by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights. The participants noted with appreciation that a much larger number of NGOs were participating in the regional NGO symposia and international meetings and requested that extra resources should be made available to cope with this work.

(p) The participants in the Seminar requested the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat, in full co-operation with the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and the Division for Palestinian Rights, to continue its special information programme on the question of Palestine and, in particular, to disseminate information on all the activities of the United Nations system relating to the question of Palestine, to continue to issue and update publications on the various aspects of the question of Palestine, including Israeli violations of the human rights of the Arab inhabitants of the occupied territory, to expand its audio-visual material on the issue, to organise fact-finding missions to the area for journalists and to organise regional and national encounters for journalists.

(q) Participants drew parallels between the struggle of the Palestinian and South African peoples. They expressed concern about the dangers emanating from the policies pursued by the regimes of Israel and South Africa. In this context they condemned the ever-increasing military and nuclear collaboration between the two regimes.

(r) The participants welcomed the release of Mr. Nelson Mandela and other political prisoners in South Africa, as well as the unbanning of the African National Congress, the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania and other organisations. At the same time, they urged the South African régime to implement conditions laid down in the unanimous declaration of the General Assembly special session against apartheid in December 1989 so as to create a climate conducive to negotiations aimed at eradicating apartheid.

(s) Participants congratulated the people of Namibia on their independence and paid a tribute to their supreme sacrifice in achieving that freedom. They noted that the independence of Namibia was the latest proof that the legitimate yearning of a people cannot be denied or ignored forever.

(t) Participants also noted that the process of Namibia's independence under United Nations supervision supported the proposal of the Palestine Liberation Organisation to have a similar process in the occupied territories of Palestine. They emphasised that there was a need to involve international supervision to ensure that any peace plan to be implemented in the occupied territories was free and fair.

(u) The participants in the Seminar took note with appreciation of the valuable support the Government of Sierra Leone had extended over the years to the just cause of the Palestinian people as well as of the efforts aimed at a just solution of the question of Palestine in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions. They also expressed their profound gratitude to the Government and the people of Sierra Leone for providing a venue for the African Regional Seminar and NGO Symposium on the Question of Palestine, and for the facilities and warm hospitality extended to them.

ANNEX VII

Declaration adopted by the Third United Nations African Regional
NGO Symposium on the Question of Palestine

(Freetown, 2 to 5 April 1990)

1. The Third United Nations African Regional NGO Symposium on the Question of Palestine on the theme "the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people" was held at Freetown from 2 to 5 April 1990. The Symposium was held in part together with the Twenty-fifth United Nations Seminar on the Question of Palestine, which took place from 2 to 6 April 1990.
2. In addition to the panels held jointly with the Seminar, two workshops specifically related to non-governmental organisations (NGO) activities were established to consider the following topics:
 - (a) "Mobilization and networking by NGOs to ensure the protection of, and to promote assistance to, the Palestinian people under Israeli occupation";
 - (b) "Non-governmental organisation activities to further mobilise public opinion for the realisation of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people".
3. The NGO participants in the Symposium adopted a declaration and action-oriented proposals emanating from the workshop. They also decided to extend the term of office of the African Co-ordinating Committee for NGOs on the Question of Palestine until the next African Regional NGO Symposium on the Question of Palestine and to increase its membership to include one member from Sierra Leone. Together with the report of the Seminar, the report of the Symposium has been issued as a publication of the Division for Palestinian Rights.
4. The NGOs participating in the Symposium adopted the following declaration⁸

Declaration

We, the non-governmental organisations (NGOs) participating in the Third United Nations African Regional NGO Symposium on the Question of Palestine, convened at the Bintumani International Conference Centre from 2 to 5 April 1990 at Freetown declare our total support and solidarity with the Palestinian people, in their struggle for full liberation.

We take this opportunity to applaud the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), the sole and authentic representative of the Palestinian people, and reaffirm positively and unreservedly its extraordinary efforts for the resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict and its efforts to engender a new conscience of direction to achieve a just and lasting peace and the establishment of the independent State of Palestine.

We whole-heartedly reaffirm our support for the struggle of the Palestinian people to exercise its legitimate and inalienable rights in the spirit and framework of the intifadah.

We further support all the Palestinian efforts towards a solution based on the initiative launched by the nineteenth extraordinary session of the Palestine National Council, held at Algiers from 12 to 15 November 1988. In particular, we support the declaration of independence of the State of Palestine as a bold and significant contribution towards the achievement of peace in the Middle East.

We call for the immediate convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East under United Nations auspices in accordance with the guidelines as given under the relevant United Nations resolutions, particularly, General Assembly resolution 44/42 of 6 December 1989.

We call upon all Governments to increase pressure both politically and economically on Israel to withdraw from the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, and from the other Arab territories. We urge them to consider seriously the possibility of the use of collective economic sanctions as a proven and effective means of pressure.

We call for the strengthening of Afro-Arab solidarity and co-operation in support of the Palestinian cause and appeal to the African countries to further intensify their efforts towards the achievement of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and the establishment of their own sovereign and independent State.

We urge the Security Council to take positive concrete steps to protect the human rights of the Palestinians within the occupied territories and to mobilize all the means within its power to prevent the creation of new settlements, the demolition of houses, the continued closure of institutions of learning, the policy of economic strangulation as exemplified in cruel tax raids and sieges as well as the use of administrative detention.

We sincerely and fervently hope that the outcome of the Seminar and the NGO Symposium will contribute positively to the achievement of a just, lasting and comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict, of which the question of Palestine is the core..

We reaffirm our unconditional commitment to support the Palestinian people in its quest to achieve the full realisation of an independent and sovereign State of Palestine.

We deplore the settlement of Jewish immigrants from the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and other countries in the occupied Palestinian territory, which is in flagrant violation of international law. This will further reduce the already limited resources available to the Palestinians of Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza. What is more, by drastically changing the demographic composition of the occupied territories, the settlement there of Soviet and other immigrants will push the prospect of a just and lasting solution to the Palestinian problem yet further away and will further destabilise the already highly volatile situation.

We call upon all Governments to take measures that would prevent the continued brutal acts including the use of chemical weapons ("tear-gas"), which has led to many miscarriages among the Palestinian women and, in some

cases, has led to death among the very old and very young, as well as acts of repression against children and workers in the occupied Palestinian territory.

We view with grave concern the development of the Israeli nuclear capabilities as a threat to international peace and security, in particular in the Middle East and parts of Africa.

We denounce the increasing economic, military and security collusion between Israel and South Africa. This collusion between the two racist régimes is mainly directed against the liberation movements in both South Africa and occupied Palestine as well as against the neighbouring States. Co-operation between Israel and South Africa had extended lately to all fields, including nuclear co-operation. The possession of nuclear weapons of mass destruction by the two regimes remains a real danger, an eminent menace to peace and security in the Middle East and Africa and the world at large.

We commend all Governments that have recognised the State of Palestine and we call upon all other Governments, intergovernmental organisations and non-governmental organisations to extend all moral, material, financial, diplomatic and other assistance to the new State of Palestine.

We urge all African Governments that have relations with Israel to suspend those relations until Israel recognises the establishment of the free and independent State of Palestine on the territory occupied by Israel since 1967.

We call upon African NGOs interested in the question of Palestine, in addition to establishing contact and supporting the efforts of the African Co-ordinating Committee for NGOs on the Question of Palestine, to establish direct contact with the Palestine Committee NGOs at Tunis.

We call upon the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and the Division for Palestinian Rights to establish closer co-operation with both OAU and IAS in enhancing their common efforts regarding the Palestinian question and, in particular, mobilisation and networking among African NGOs.

In order to achieve the desired objectives of our resolution, we, the participants in the NGO Symposium, consider advisedly the following programmes of action for implementation:

(a) Establish closer contact with the International Co-ordinating Committee for NGOs on the Question of Palestine (ICCP);

(b) Consider all available assistance and facilities that could be provided by the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and the Division for Palestinian Rights, in New York, from within the means available to them and in accordance with the relevant rules and procedures of the United Nations;

(c) Identify all significant days in the struggle of the Palestinian people such as 29 November (International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People), 15 November (Palestine National Council), 9 December

(Beginning of the Intifadah) and 30 March (Land Day) for popular activities in their respective countries and communities;

(d) NGOs to call upon their Governments to contact the Government of the United States to engage in a constructive and expanded dialogue with the Palestine Liberation Organisation;

(e) Continue strengthening and supporting the African Co-ordinating Committee for NGOs on the Question of Palestine;

(f) Encourage African NGOs to visit the occupied Palestinian territory and to invite Palestinian NGOs from the occupied Palestinian territory to tour African States and further mobilise African public opinion, with the emphasis on the grass-roots level and on action;

(g) Observe an African-Palestinian week with exhibitions containing pictures, videos, films and posters about atrocities committed in the occupied Palestinian territory;

(h) Utilise religious and social institutions as platforms for the dissemination of information relating to and promoting a just and lasting peace in Palestine;

(i) Mobilise the national and local media and involve cultural and other groups in the dissemination of information on the question of Palestine. This should include the twinning of towns, villages, hospitals, schools, etc., between those in the occupied territories and other countries to create a more intimate as well as a better informed concern for the Palestinian problem;

(j) Establish exchange programmes for African NGOs to invite Palestinian NGOs from the occupied Palestinian territory to tour the African States and further mobilise African public opinion in support of the Palestinian cause;

(k) Invite Nobel laureates and other international and notable personalities to take a position and lend their moral support to the cause of the Palestinian people.

We append the workshop reports, which will be issued in the final report of the NGO Symposium, to be published separately by the Division for Palestinian Rights, and we urge African NGOs to work in a co-ordinate way to implement the recommendations.

In conclusion, we wish to extend our unqualified profound gratitude and support to the United Nations and to the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and, in particular, to its indefatigable Chairman, Mrs. Absa Claude Diallo, for her wise guidance and direction during all of our deliberations.

We wish to express our profound appreciation to the Government and people of the Republic of Sierra Leone for hosting the Third African Regional NGO Symposium on the Question of Palestine in this picturesque international Conference Hall. We thank our gracious hosts for all their kind assistance and efforts to ensure the success of this Symposium. We thank the Division for Palestinian Rights and the Department of Conference Services for facilitating our work.

ANNEX VIII

Conclusions and recommendations adopted by the Twenty-sixth United Nations Seminar on the Question of Palestine

(Stockholm, 7 to 11 May 1990)

1. The Twenty-sixth United Nations Seminar on the Question of Palestine (Fourth European Regional Seminar), on the theme "Peace and justice for the Palestinian people", was held at Stockholm from 7 to 11 May 1990, in accordance with the terms of General Assembly resolution 34/41 B of 6 December 1969.
2. The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People was represented by a delegation comprising Mrs. Absa Claude Diallo (Senegal), Chairman of the Committee and head of delegation; Mr. Alexander Borg Olivier (Malta), Vice-Chairman and Rapporteur of the Seminar) Mr. Hadi Thayeb (Indonesia), Vice-Chairman) and Mr. Zuhdi Labib Terzi (Palestine).
3. A total of 7 meetings were held and 20 panelists presented papers on selected aspects of the question of Palestine. Representatives of 47 Governments, Palestine, 1 United Nations organ, 1 United Nations specialized agency, 1 intergovernmental organisation, and 17 non-governmental organisations, as observers, attended the Seminar.
4. The event was opened by Mrs. Diallo and a welcoming address was made by H.E. Mr. Sten Andersson, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden.
5. A statement on behalf of the Secretary-General of the United Nations was made by his representative, the Under-Secretary-General for Political and General Assembly Affairs and Secretariat Services. Mrs. Diallo also addressed the meeting, as did Mr. Eugene Makhlouf, who read out a message from Mr. Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organisation.
6. The Seminar adopted a message to Mr. Arafat and a motion of thanks to the Government and people of Sweden.
7. The three panels that were established and their panelists were as follows:
 - (a) Panel I: "The intifadah: its impact and significance for advancing towards a just solution of the principle of two peoples, two States": Mrs. Hanan Ashrawi (Palestinian), Mrs. Marisa Cinciari-Rodano (Italy), Mr. Igor Khvorostiany (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic), Mr. Hans Peter Kotthaus (Federal Republic of Germany), Mr. Mikko Lohikoski (Finland), Mrs. Nelly Maes (Belgium), Mr. Evert Svensson (Sweden) and Mr. Dedi Zucker (Israel))
 - (b) Panel II: "Breaking the impasse - the urgent need for a just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine; the International Peace Conference and the role of Europe": Mr. Michele Achilli (Italy), Mr. Moshe Amirav (Israel), Marie-Christine Aulas (France), Rabbi Balfour Brickner (United States of America), Mr. Joseph Caesar (Malta), Ms. Viola Furubjelke (Sweden), Mr. Antonio Lacerda de Queiroz (Portugal), Mr. Wan Jingehang (China),

Mr. Martin Weiss (Federal Republic of Germany) and Mr. Andrei Zakharov (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics)

(c) Panel III: "The role of the Palestine Liberation Organisation in the political, economic, social and cultural development of the Palestinian people": Mr. Rhalid al-Hassan (Palestinian).

8. The report of the Seminar, including a summary of the proceedings, has been issued as a publication of the Division for Palestinian Rights,

9. The Seminar participants adopted the following conclusions and recommendations:

Conclusions and recommendations

The participants in the Seminar took note with appreciation of the sustained efforts of the European countries to promote a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine, in accordance with United Nations resolutions. They stressed the great importance of the valuable contribution that the European countries could make towards the achievement of an equitable settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict in the Middle East. The participants expressed their conviction that negotiations based on the "two peoples, two States" principle and that adequately addressed the rights and concerns of both parties, Israelis and Palestinians, would result in peace with justice in the region. They noted with satisfaction that the Seminar had made a positive contribution to the peace process by providing a forum for a balanced and constructive discussion of the relevant issues by speakers representing viewpoints of the parties concerned, and by participants from Europe and from other regions at the governmental as well as non-governmental levels.

The participants were encouraged by the fact that recent developments regarding the Arab-Israeli conflict and its core, the question of Palestine, had created a new momentum for bringing about a just solution to this complex and dangerous conflict on the basis of the resolutions of the United Nations and within its framework. The Intifadah and the Palestinian peace initiative of November 1966 are a manifestation of the courageous and determined struggle of the Palestinian people to attain and exercise its inalienable rights, primarily the right to self-determination. These developments and the present international climate, characterized by a new political will to resolve regional conflicts in a peaceful manner with the assistance of the United Nations, had opened new possibilities for breaking the impasse and progressing towards peace. Important sectors of the Israeli public were opposed to the unbending policies of their Government and had become active in support of the two-State solution. It was therefore imperative that this historic opportunity not be missed and that efforts be redoubled in 1990 to overcome remaining obstacles so that the process of negotiations could be initiated without further delay, particularly through the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East,

The participants highlighted the important developments that had led to the adoption of General Assembly resolution 43/176 of 15 December 1988. They considered that these developments had given impetus to international endeavours aimed at achieving a comprehensive and just settlement of the

question of Palestine and the Arab-Israeli conflict. They noted the adoption of General Assembly resolution 44/42 of 6 December 1989, the most recent Assembly resolution on the question of Palestine, and were greatly encouraged by the overwhelming vote in favour of this balanced and comprehensive resolution, which included, for the first time, all member States of the European Community. This demonstrated the international consensus on the necessity of convening the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, under the auspices of the United Nations, with the participation of all parties to the conflict, including the PLO, on an equal footing, and the five permanent members of the Security Council, based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 336 (1973) and the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people, primarily the right to self-determination.

The participants called upon those States which had thus far prevented the implementation of resolution 44/42 to reconsider their position and to join the international consensus. They further expressed their support for every effort by the permanent members of the Security Council to bring the position of the parties to the conflict closer to each other, to create a climate of confidence between them and to facilitate in this way the convening and successful outcome of the International Peace Conference.

The participants expressed their appreciation for the position adopted by European Governments in response to the proclamation of the State of Palestine, the Palestinian Arab State to exist side by side with the State of Israel, in conformity with the two-State principle, as envisaged in General Assembly resolution 161 (II) of 29 November 1947. The participants welcomed in particular the readiness demonstrated by the member States of the European Community to participate actively in the search for a peaceful settlement of the conflict and to co-operate fully in the economic and social development of the peoples of the region.

The participants noted that there existed an international consensus on the principles for the achievement of comprehensive peace as affirmed in General Assembly resolutions 43/176 and 44/42, namely: the withdrawal of Israel from the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, and from the other Arab territories occupied since 1967; guaranteeing arrangements for the security of all States in the region, including those named in resolution 181 (II), within secure and internationally recognised boundaries) resolving the problem of the Palestine refugees in conformity with General Assembly resolution 194 (III) of 11 December 1948, and subsequent relevant resolutions) dismantling the Israeli settlements in the territories occupied since 1967; and guaranteeing freedom of access to holy places, religious buildings and sites. The participants expressed satisfaction that all European countries supported these principles and had voted in favour of resolution 44/42. The consensus thus achieved among the European countries constitutes a significant contribution to the urgently needed peaceful resolution of the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

The Seminar noted that the ~~intifada~~ had had far-reaching effects including on every aspect of Israeli politics. Specifically, it had led to a major government crisis and had helped the progressive forces working for a just peace to engage in dialogue and joint activities with the Palestinians as a way to promote mutual understanding and reconciliation and to break down

prejudices and stereotypes. The participants endorsed the objectives of the demonstration at Jerusalem "1990, Time for Peace", held from 29 to 31 December 1999, in which Israelis, a large number of Palestinians, Europeans and others had expressed support for peaceful negotiations, respect for civil and human rights and the "two peoples, two States" principle. They agreed that the United Nations should continue to offer its good offices and organise appropriate activities to bring together Palestinians and Israelis under its auspices.

Participants expressed serious concern at the continued grave violations by Israel, the occupying Power, of the human rights of the civilian population in the occupied Palestinian territory, which had caused increasing loss of life, hardships and suffering with far-reaching emotional, socio-economic and demographic consequences. The international community had repeatedly declared that the Israeli policies and practices in the occupied Palestinian territory were in violation of its obligations as a party to the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, and also contrary to United Nations resolutions and to generally recognised norms of international law. The participants appealed to the High Contracting Parties to the Convention, including its European signatories, to take appropriate measures to ensure respect for the provisions of that Convention. The Seminar noted that certain economic measures taken in the past had produced positive results. A matter of special concern for participants was the suffering inflicted on Palestinian women and children as a result of the brutal Israeli practices. The increased restrictions on the movement of individuals and on educational institutions, health and social welfare organisations, as well as the constant daily obstacles and harassments, have produced inhuman and intolerable conditions.

The participants deplored the process of Israeli colonisation of the occupied Palestinian territory as manifested in the continued establishment of settlements, usurpation of land and water resources, and settler vigilantism. They were alarmed at the recent establishment of additional settlements and the secret funding by the Israeli Government of a new settlement in the Christian Quarter of Jerusalem and condemned these actions as insensitive and provocative. The international community had vigorously opposed the Israeli policy of establishing settlements in the occupied Palestinian territory, which was in contravention of the fourth Geneva Convention, had declared these actions null and void and had demanded that Israel dismantle the settlements and withdraw from the occupied territory. The participants deplored the recent statements by the Government of Israel regarding the increased settlement of Jewish immigrants in the occupied Palestinian territory while Israel continued to deny the Palestinians the right to return to their homes. They reaffirmed the international consensus that such actions were illegal and would further jeopardise the attainment of a just and comprehensive settlement of the question of Palestine. The participants appealed to Governments to ensure, in conformity with the provisions of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, that members of the Jewish community emigrating to Israel were not used as a tool to perpetuate and strengthen the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territory. They recalled that article 12 of the Covenant states, *inter alia*, that the right of everyone to liberty of movement and freedom to choose his residence and the right of everyone to leave any country, including his own "shall not be subject to any restrictions except those which are provided by law, are necessary to protect national security,

public order (ordre public), public health or morals or the rights and freedoms of others, end are consistent with the other rights recognised in the present covenant". In this connection, participants took note of the recent meetings of the Security Council and its consideration of the "unlawful Israeli moves to settle the occupied territories". They urged the Council to condemn the settlement of immigrants in the occupied territories, declare it illegal end consider it a new and serious obstacle to peace and to call upon the Israeli Government to review and abandon its obstructionist position.

The participants welcomed the fact that the Government of the United States of America had opened a dialogue with the Palestine Liberation Organisation end emphasized that the level of the dialogue should be raised end its scope should be expended to include the consideration in a constructive manner of substantive issues so as to enhance the process of negotiations leading to a just end lasting solution to the question of Palestine.

The Seminsr participants appealed to the international community and, in psrtkular, to the Security Council to assume and discharge its responsibilities end to take urgent measures to ensure the physical protection and to guarantee the safety end security and the legal and human rights of the Palestinian people under Israeli occupation. They urged the Security Council to take into account the gravity of the acts of violence and human rights violations, including the deportation of Palestinians, which have been repeatedly condemned by the Security Council and the General Assembly, end other actions taken by the Israeli authorities against Palestinians in the occupied territory. The participants again stressed the de jure applicability of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, and demanded that Israel abide by the Convention.

The participants welcomed the courageous steps taken by the Palestinians during the intifadah to establish en alternative infrastructure as a foundation for en independent and sovereign State of Palestine and their efforts to end the Israeli occupation. The Seminar considered that intensified international action towards genuine social end economic development of the occupied Palestinian territory, with the close involvement of the Palestinian people through its representative, the Palestine Liberation Organisation, were a necessary corollary to renewed efforts to achieve a political settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict, the core of which is the question of Palestine. The participants welcomed the eteps already taken by the European countries in this regard aud urged them to increase further their valuable assistance to the Palestinian people.

The participants urged the Government of Israel to respond constructively to the peace initiative of the Palestine Liberation Organisation, which had been welcomed and praised by the entire international community. They stressed that Israel should recognise that it could no longer ignore the national aspirations of the Palestinians and continue to deny them their inalienable rights, in particular their right to self-determination, Israel should also acknowledge the aspirations of its own people to a future of peace and justice. The Seminsr considered that the steps proposed by the Israeli Government on 15 May 1989 were inadequate, since they did not include interim measures of protection for the Palestinian people and measures that would enable the Palestinians to exercise fully their right to self-determination.

The participants called upon Israel to respond positively to international efforts aimed at a just and lasting political settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict, the core of which is the question of Palestine, which would ensure peaceful co-existence between the Israeli and Palestinian peoples and bring an end to decades of conflict in the region. The Seminar appealed to European countries to pursue their efforts vigorously to convince Israel of the urgent need for a positive and constructive response to peace efforts.

The participants emphasized the urgent need for progress in efforts for peace. They were unanimous in expressing concern that if progress were not made soon, extremist elements on both sides would further inflame the situation with grave consequences for international peace and security.

The Seminar participants expressed their appreciation to the Secretary-General for his continuing endeavours to advance the peace process and to facilitate the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East. The participants urged the Security Council to expedite the convening of the Conference and to adopt interim measures including the deployment of a United Nations force to safeguard the physical security of the people of the occupied Palestinian territory and to bring about stability in the region pending agreement on a final and comprehensive settlement.

The participants in the Seminar endorsed the persistent efforts of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People to bring about a solution of the question of Palestine through the attainment of the national rights of the Palestinian people and urged the international community to sustain and strengthen its support for the Committee's activities and, in particular, for its efforts to facilitate the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East. They noted with appreciation that the Committee was intensifying its efforts to ensure that the United Nations regional seminars on the question of Palestine provided an opportunity for diverse points of view to be expressed so that a real dialogue could be held among people of goodwill on all sides. In this context, the participants expressed satisfaction that there had been a constructive and frank exchange at the Seminar between the Israeli and Palestinian participants. The Seminar noted, however, that while Palestinians representing the Palestine Liberation Organisation had participated in the Seminar, the official viewpoint of Israel had yet to be expressed. The participants expressed the hope that the Government of Israel would be represented at future meetings convened by the United Nations for this purpose and that representatives who could reflect a broad range of political viewpoints were given an opportunity to participate in such meetings. The participants suggested that future seminars and NGO symposia should consider, within the context of the International Peace Conference, some of the most substantive issues that need to be addressed.

The participants appealed to all European Governments to support the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People in its efforts and urged the same Governments to give serious consideration to participation in the work of the Committee as members or observers. The participants considered that increased representation by European countries in the work of the Committee would broaden the scope of its deliberations and increase its effectiveness.

The Seminar participants took note with appreciation of the activities of the Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat and of its commitment to work, under the guidance of and in consultation with the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, towards the attainment of a just, comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East in accordance with the resolution⁶ of the United Nations.

The participants in the Seminar were of the view that the United Nations should undertake additional efforts to disseminate factual and up-to-date information on the question of Palestine and on measures required for the achievement of a just settlement to the question of Palestine. The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and the Division for Palestinian Rights had an important role to play in the collection and dissemination of such information. For its part, the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat should continue to make every effort to ensure that accurate information on the question of Palestine received the widest possible dissemination and should continue its special information programme on the question of Palestine in full co-operation with the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, with particular emphasis on public opinion in Europe and North America.

The participants in the Seminar took note with appreciation of the valuable humanitarian and other support the Government of Sweden had extended over the years to the just cause of the Palestinian people as well as its efforts towards a just solution of the Arab-Israeli conflict, the core of which is the question of Palestine, in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions. They also expressed their profound gratitude to the Government and the people of Sweden for providing a venue for the European Regional Seminar on the Question of Palestine and for the facilities and warm hospitality extended to them.

ANNEX IX

Conclusions and recommendations adopted by the Twenty-seventh United Nations Seminar on the Question of Palestine

(New York, 25 and 26 June 1990)

1. The Twenty-seventh United Nations Seminar on the Question of Palestine (Seventh North American Regional Seminar), on the theme "Peace and justice for the Palestinian people - an imperative for the 1990s", was held at United Nations Headquarters, New York, on 25 and 26 June 1990, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 44/41 E1 of 6 December 1969.
2. Mrs. Absa Claude Diallo, Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, acted as Chairman of the Seminar and H.E. Mr. Alexander Borg Olivier, Rapporteur of the Committee, acted as Rapporteur.
3. Four meetings were held and 12 panelists presented papers on selected aspects of the question of Palestine. Representatives of 47 Governments, Palestine, 1 non-member State, 2 United Nations organs, 7 United Nations specialised agencies and bodies, 3 intergovernmental organisations, 1 national liberation movement and 15 non-governmental organisations attended the Seminar.
4. The Seminar was opened by Mrs. Diallo and was addressed by the representative of the Secretary-General, the Under-Secretary-General for Political and General Assembly Affairs and Secretariat Services. A message from Mr. Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization, was read out by the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations.
5. At the opening meeting, further statements were made by Mr. Ricardo Alarcón de Quesada, Vice-Chairman of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, Mr. Guennadi Oudovenko, Vice-Chairman of the Special Committee against Apartheid, Mr. Clovis Maksoud, Permanent Observer of the League of Arab States, Mr. Ahmed Engin Ansay, Permanent Observer of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference and Mr. Count Pieterse, Chief Representative of the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania.
6. The Seminar participants adopted a message to Mr. Arafat.
7. The two panels that were established and their panelists were as follows:
Panel I: "The role of the Palestine Liberation Organization in the economic, cultural and social development of the Palestinian people, and its political programme to achieve statehood for the Palestinian people": Mr. Ibrahim Abu-Lughod (Palestinian);
Panel II: "The intifadah, the urgency of convening the International Peace Conference for a 'two peoples, two States' solution, and the role of North America": Mr. Mahdi Abdul-Radi (Palestinian); Mr. Faisal Hussein (Palestinian); H.E. Mr. Latyr Kamara (Senegal); Mr. Amos Kenan (Israel); Mr. Hans Peter Kotthaus (Federal Republic of Germany); Mr. Michael Langan (Ireland); Mrs. Margaret McCormack (United States of America); Rabbi Marshall Meyer (United

States of America) The Most Reverend Michael J. Peers (Canada), Mr. Chaim Shur (Israel); and Mr. Andrei Zakharov (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics).

8. The report of the Seminar, including a summary of the proceedings, has been issued as a publication of the Division for Palestinian Rights.

9. The Seminar adopted the following conclusion⁶ and recommendations:

Conclusions and recommendations

(a) The participants expressed appreciation once again for the opportunity to have a full and candid discussion of aspects of the question of Palestine and the Arab-Israeli conflict under the auspices of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. They expressed satisfaction that the Seminar had made a positive contribution to the peace process by providing a forum for a balanced and constructive discussion of the issues.

(b) The participant⁶ reaffirmed the view that negotiations based on the "two peoples, two States" principle, which adequately addressed the rights and concerns of both the Israelis and Palestinians, would result in peace and justice in the region, as envisaged in General Assembly resolutions 161 (II) and 194 (III). Statements were made indicating that important sectors of the Israeli public have become active in support of the "two States" solution. Appreciation was expressed for the position adopted by a large number of Governments and NGOs in response to the proclamation of the State of Palestine, the Palestinian Arab State, to exist side by side with the State of Israel. The participants urged that negotiations should be based on the "land for peace" formula embodied in Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 339 (1973), which provide a foundation for an eventual settlement, and the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people, including primarily the right to self-determination.

(c) They noted the adoption of General Assembly resolution 44/42 of 6 December 1999 and were encouraged by the overwhelming vote in favour of this balanced and comprehensive resolution which, for the first time, was supported by all members of the European Community. This resolution reaffirmed the necessity of convening the International Peace Conference on the Middle East under the auspices of the United Nations with the participation of all parties to the conflict, including the PLO and the five permanent members of the security Council. Regret was expressed that to date there has been no progress in that regard. The PLO has explicitly accepted these resolutions whereas some recent statement⁶ on the part of the newly formed Government of Israel seemed to cast doubt on its adherence to Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973).

(d) Participants expressed deep concern at the continued loss of life in the occupied territories and at the continued violations by Israel of the human rights of the civilian population in the occupied Palestinian territory. The international community has repeatedly declared that the Israeli policies and practices in the occupied Palestinian territory were in violation of its obligations as a party to the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War and contrary to United

Nations resolutions and generally recognised norms of international law. The participants appealed to the parties to the Convention to ensure respect for its provisions. They deplored recent statement? by the Israeli Government implying the prospect of increased settlement of immigrants in the occupied Palestinian territory, while Israel continues to deny Palestinians the right to their homes. The participants supported the right of freedom of movement and the right of everyone to leave any country and the right to return to one's own country. However, those rights could not be used as a pretext to settle immigrants or Israeli civilians in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem. They urged the Security Council to prevent such illegal settlements.

(e) Participants viewed with grave concern the tragic incidents that have taken place recently in Israel and in the occupied Palestinian territory. They deplored the attack in Israel on the Palestinian workers from Qana leading to several deaths and 10 wounded, which sparked demonstrations throughout the occupied territories that resulted in 7 additional Palestinian deaths by Israeli army gunfire and in the wounding of hundreds of others. Further, the participants expressed their concern over the recent incursion of the Israeli Defence Forces into the VNRWA Health Centre in Qasa town in which many civilians and, in particular, infants and young children, were injured. At the same time, participants expressed deep concern at the aborted raid on Tel Aviv beaches by Palestinian guerrillas and noted that the Palestine Liberation Organisation dissociated itself from that attack.

(f) The participants supported the intifadah and the Palestinian peace initiative of November 1988 as efforts by the Palestinian people in its struggle to attain and exercise its inalienable rights. The participants considered that the steps proposed by the Israeli Government on 14 May 1999 were inadequate, since they did not include interim measures of protection for the Palestinian people nor other measures that would enable the Palestinians to fully exercise their right to self-determination. It was noted that the intifadah had far-reaching implications, which included effects on aspects of Israeli politics. Specifically, it had led to a major government crisis and helped the forces working for a just peace to engage in dialogue and joint activities with the Palestinians as a way to promote mutual understanding. They agreed that the United Nations should continue to offer its good offices and organize activities to bring together Palestinians and Israelis under its auspices. Participants appealed to all Governments with influence, including the United States, Western European countries and Israel, and the Palestinians to pursue more vigorous efforts towards a fair and just solution to the Middle East dispute,

(g) Participants appealed to the Security Council to assume and discharge its responsibilities and to take urgent measures to ensure the physical protection and to guarantee the safety and security of the Palestinian people under Israeli occupation, including prevention of deportation of Palestinians, which had been repeatedly condemned by the Security Council and the General Assembly. They urged the Security Council, particularly its permanent members, to undertake every effort to facilitate the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East and to adopt interim measures, including the deployment of a United Nations force to safeguard the physical security of the people of the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem,

(h) The participants noted with appreciation that the Secretary-General had taken the initiative to send a Personal Representative to Israel and the occupied territories to look into the situation and report back to him. The participants expressed appreciation for the Secretary-General's continuing endeavours to advance the peace process and to facilitate the convening of the International Peace Conference.

(i) The participants called upon the Committee to ensure that United Nations regional seminars on the question of Palestine provided an opportunity for diverse points of view to be expressed so that a meaningful dialogue could be held among people of goodwill on all sides. Satisfaction was expressed with the constructive and frank exchange that had taken place at that seminar between the Israeli and Palestinian participants, as well as nationals of other countries, including those of Jewish faith. It was noted, however, that while Palestinians representing the PLO had participated, the Government of Israel had yet to agree to be represented in such forums. The hope was expressed that the Government of Israel would be represented at future meetings. Participants suggested that future seminars and NGO symposia related to the question of Palestine should consider some of the substantive issues that needed to be addressed.

(j) Participants called upon all countries and particularly the United States and other Western countries to support the Committee's activities and its objective of expanding dialogue among opinion shapers and responsible political leaders. Those Governments as well as other Members of the United Nations were urged to participate in the work of the Committee as members or observers. The participants expressed the view that the Committee could make a significant contribution through the convening of seminars and symposia to widen the exchange of views ultimately leading to areas of common approval. It was noted with concern that the United States Government had, for the present, suspended its dialogue with the Palestine Liberation Organization. Participants considered that that action constituted a serious setback for the peace process. The participants expressed the hope that the dialogue would be re-established as soon as possible and its scope expanded to include the consideration in a constructive manner of substantive issues so as to enhance the process of negotiations leading to a just and lasting solution to the question of Palestine. Adversaries must speak together if peace was to be achieved.

ANNEX X

Declaration adopted by the Seventh United Nations North American
Regional NGO Symposium on the Question of Palestine

(New York, 27 to 29 June 1990)

1. The Seventh United Nations North American Regional NGO Symposium on the Question of Palestine, on the theme "The inalienable rights of the Palestinian people", was held at United Nations Headquarters in New York from 27 to 29 June 1990.
2. The Symposium was attended by representatives of 110 North American non-governmental organisations (NGOs), 43 of them as observers. NGOs from other regions were also present, as were a number of governmental and intergovernmental observers.
3. Mrs. Absa Claude Diallo opened the meeting on behalf of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. The opening session was also addressed by the Permanent Observer of Palestine, who read out a message from Mr. Yassar Arafat, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organisation, and by Ms. Jeanne Butterfield, Chairman of the North American Co-ordinating Committee for NGOs on the Question of Palestine (NACCP), who served as Moderator of the Symposium.
4. The programme for the Symposium was drawn up by the Committee in consultation with the NACCP. The panels and panelists were as follows:

Panel I: "Breaking the impasse: moving towards Israeli-Palestinian peace and convening the International Peace Conference" - Mrs. Absa Claude Diallo; Ms. Mahdi Abdul-Hadi (Palestinian); Mrs. Maha Wuetaklem Nassar (Palestinian); Mr. Edward Said (Palestinian); Mr. Shmual Amir (Israel); Mr. Jack O'Dell (United States of America) and Mr. Joel Beinin (United States of America).

Panel II: "Intifadah update": Mrs. Chaya Amir (Israel); Mr. Hillel Bardin (Israel) and Mrs. Zahira Kamal (Palestinian).
5. Twelve workshops were also organised under the general theme "Milestones and future tasks for organising NGO constituencies".
6. The NGOs participating in the Symposium adopted a declaration, together with action-oriented proposals emanating from the workshops and elected a new North American Co-ordinating Committee for NGOs on the Question of Palestine.
7. The report of the Symposium, including a summary of the proceedings, will be issued as a publication of the Division for Palestinian Rights.
8. The declaration adopted by the participating NGOs reads as follows:

Declaration

We, the non-governmental organisations (NGOs) participating in the Seventh United Nations North American Regional NGO Symposium on the Question of Palestine, wish to thank the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for making this meeting possible. We are indeed honoured by the reception and the presence of the members and observers of this distinguished United Nations body.

We wish also to thank the Chief of the Division for Palestinian Rights and are especially grateful for his enthusiastic support throughout our deliberations. We wish to thank also the liaison officers, the staff of the Division and of the Department of Conference Services for their invaluable assistance in the preparation and execution of this meeting.

We honour the victims of Israel's brutal and senseless repression of the heroic Palestinian uprising, with specific homage to the children of the atones and the sufferings and agonies they have endured. We commit ourselves to provide moral, political and material support to all the Palestinian people in their struggle for self-determination and freedom.

We are heartened by the substantive contributions of the expert panelists, workshop organisers, resource persons and facilitators, as well as the insightful input of the record number of NGOs that participated in and observed this Symposium.

We resolutely reaffirm the overwhelming international majority decision that the PLO is the sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. We affirm the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people in conformity with all relevant United Nations resolutions, including the right to self-determination without external interference, the right to establish an independent Palestinian State on its own national territory under the leadership of the PLO and the right of return. We absolutely reaffirm the position of an overwhelming international majority as expressed through General Assembly resolution 43/177 of 15 December 1988 acknowledging the proclamation of the State of Palestine by the Palestine National Council and the decision that the designation "Palestine" should be used in place of the designation "Palestine Liberation Organisation" in the United Nations system, without prejudice to the observer status and function of the Palestine Liberation Organization within the United Nations system, in conformity with relevant United Nations resolutions and practice.

We condemn the persistent attempts by the United States Government to prevent Palestine's full participation in United Nations agencies and affiliated bodies.

We welcome the Palestinian peace initiative as a practical means towards the establishment of a just and lasting peace in the region. We call upon the Governments of the United States and Israel to respond positively to this initiative by supporting the immediate convening of the International Peace Conference in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 43/176 of 15 December 1986 and 44/42 of 6 December 1989, which demonstrated for the first time the support of all members of the European Community. The PLO has explicitly accepted these resolutions, whereas some recent statements on the

part of the newly formed Government of Israel cast doubt on its adherence to Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973).

We deplore the decision of the United States Government to suspend dialogue with the PLO. We consider such suspension to encourage Israel's occupation and confiscation of and expanded settlement on Palestinian land.

We undertake to intensify our efforts to complement international efforts to allay the suffering of those who have been the targets of Israeli violence, especially the children, many thousands of whom have been maimed, permanently disabled and emotionally traumatised. We call upon the United Nations system, agencies, organisations and programmes, especially the United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, the World Health Organisation, the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation, the International Labour Organisation and the United Nations Development Programme, to intensify their efforts to address the educational, medical, housing and general economic and social needs of the Palestinian people in co-operation with Palestinian communities, popular committees and grass-roots organisations. We call upon States Members of the United Nations to increase their contributions and support for such efforts. We once again call for an expansion of the refugee affairs programme, and call for the Refugee Affairs Officer Programme of UNRWA to be encouraged to take a pro-active role, and not merely a passive observer role.

We welcome greater co-ordination among United Nations agencies on the Palestine question and particularly encourage their co-ordination with NGOs whose work complements United Nations programmes. We are gratified by the first United Nations-sponsored meeting of the Latin American and Caribbean NGOs at Buenos Aires, this year, and by their formation of a co-ordinating committee on the question of Palestine. We look forward to interacting with NGOs in that region and support the successful convening of the next meeting in 1991.

We recognise and express our continued concern for the role that *de facto* and *de jure* racism plays in Israel's treatment of the Palestinian people, both those in the occupied territory and those citizens of Israel who - without the benefit of "Jewish nationality" - are denied most basic rights under Israeli law. Actions by the State of Israel directed against Palestinians, supported by United States aid in violation of United States law, demonstrate how racism forms an element of Israel's state ideology, which denies the Palestinian people their inalienable rights. This is of continued concern as the demolition of Palestinian homes and villages, as well as the confiscation of Palestinian land and water, are accelerating, both within Israel and in the occupied territory under cover of the *intifadah*.

We deplore the United States veto of the Security Council proposal for a United Nations force to be dispatched to the occupied territory that would protect the Palestinian civilian population. We encourage the General Assembly to invoke the "Uniting for Peace" resolution, which would legally empower it to act in such a critical situation in accordance with the inherent right of collective and self-defence in customary international law. We further call upon all States parties to the fourth Geneva Convention to fulfil their obligations under common article 1 of that Convention to "ensure

respect" for the Convention by monitoring, recording of and intervening in Israeli human rights violations against Palestinians in the occupied territory.

We are convinced that Soviet Jewish immigration to Israel presents a further assault on all segments of the Palestinian community in every part of historic Palestine. More Palestinian lands are slated for confiscation, existing Jewish settlements are being expanded and the planning and building of new settlements continue unabated on Palestinian land with Israeli Government subsidies, in spite of official statements to the contrary. This is true whether it is within the "green line", where the last phases of "Judaization" are in progress, or in the territory occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem. We, therefore, call for an immediate ban on all Israeli confiscation of and settlement on Palestinian land. We further call for a ban on United States Government funding of Soviet Jewish immigration to Israel until Israeli occupation of the West Bank, Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem has ended. We further call upon the United States and Canadian Governments to open their doors to Soviet Jewish immigration.

We applaud this year's NGO concern at United States aid to Israel and we consider such aid as essential to breaking the present impasse created by the United States and Israeli intransigence and obstructionism to the peace initiative of the Palestine National Council at its nineteenth session. We believe that the continuation of United States aid to Israel under current circumstances is morally, politically and legally wrong. We insist that the United States Government enforce its own laws regulating military and economic assistance, particularly considering Israel's violations of United States human rights provisions and arms export restrictions, and further insist that the United States apply to Israel the principles embodied in the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act of 1986. We call upon the Canadian Government to impose economic and other sanctions against Israel in view of the persistent, systematic and massive violence in contravention of the fourth Geneva Convention, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

We denounce Israeli laws that prohibit contacts between Israeli citizens and the PLO. Such laws explicitly obstruct dialogue between Israeli and Palestinian individuals, given that virtually all Palestinians stand by the PLO.

We join the anti-apartheid community in its deep concern over the continued military collaboration between Israel and South Africa. We take note also of General Assembly resolution 44/113 of 15 December 1989, which calls for an investigation of Israeli-South African collaboration in the development of medium-range nuclear missiles, and we look forward to the upcoming report of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research.

We applaud Nelson Mandela and the African National Congress for their position that black South Africans and Palestinians both suffer under a "unique form of colonialism". We further commend Mr. Mandela for his principled refusal on numerous occasions during his visit to the United States to distance himself from and sever solidarity with the Palestinian struggle and the PLO. We take inspiration from the anti-apartheid movement in North America in its successful sanctions campaign against South African apartheid. We endeavour to take similar action vis-à-vis Israel. We believe our efforts

and those of **the anti-m movement are complementary, reciprocal and together advance the cause of world justice and peace.**

The aim of this meeting is to develop practical organising strategies and support projects for concerted action by North American NGOs. Our primary work was conducted in workshops and we receive their recommendations and commend them to all NGOs for their careful consideration and implementation.

ANNEX XI

Declaration adopted by the Fourth United Nations European Regional
NGO Symposium on the Question of Palestine

(Geneva, 27 and 28 August 1990)

1. The Fourth United Nations European Regional NGO Symposium on the Question of Palestine was held under the auspices of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on 27 and 28 August 1990. The Symposium was convened in response to General Assembly resolution 44/41 B of 6 December 1989.
2. The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People was represented by a delegation comprising Mrs. Absa Claude Diallo (Senegal), Committee Chairman; Mr. Alexander Berg Olivier (Malta), Committee Rapporteur; Mr. Samuel R. Insanelly (Guyana); Mr. Ismail Razali (Malaysia); and Mr. Zuhdi Labib Terzi (Palestine).
3. A total of 141 non-governmental organisations (NGOs) attended the Symposium, 72 of them as observers. Several observers from Governments, intergovernmental organisations and United Nations bodies also participated.
4. The opening meeting was addressed by the Chairman of the Committee, Mrs. Absa Claude Diallo (Senegal), by the Chairman of the European Co-ordinating Committee for NGOs on the Question of Palestine (ECCP), Mr. Mikko Lohfkoski (Finland), and also by the Permanent Observer of Palestine, Mr. Zuhdi Labib Terzi.
5. The programme of the Symposium was drawn up by the Committee in consultation with ECCP. The three panels and the panelists were as follows:

Panel I: "Urgent priorities to stop settlements in the occupied territory and protect the Palestinian people. What can Europe and European NGOs do?"; Mrs. Marie-Christine Aulas (France), Dr. Bashir Al-Khairi (Palestinian), Dr. Ruchama Marton (Israel), Mrs. Carla Pecis (Italy) and Mr. Maxim Ghilan (France);

Panel II: "1990: Time for Peace. Evaluation and follow-up", Mr. Flavio Lotti (Italy), Mrs. Rana Nashaxhebeh (Palestinian) and Ms. Tamar Gosansky (Israel);

Panel III: "Two peoples - Two States": Mrs. Maria Gaai (Greece), Dr. Mustafa Barghouti (Palestinian), Mrs. Tamar Goeansky (Israel), Ms. Salwah Hdeib (Palestinian) and Mr. Nabeel Sha'atli (Palestinian).
6. Four workshops also took place on the following topics; (a) refugees; (b) culture; (c) involving Jewish communities in Europe; and (d) trade with the occupied territory (export and import).
7. The NGOs participating in the Symposium adopted a final declaration as well as action-oriented proposals emanating from the workshops and elected a new nine-member European Co-ordinating Committee for NGOs on the Question of Palestine. The report of the Symposium, including summaries of the proceedings, will be published as a publication of the Division for Palestinian Rights.

8. The NGOs participating in the Symposium adopted the following declaration:

Declaration

The participants expressed appreciation for the opportunity once again to discuss various aspects of the question of Palestine and the Arab-Israeli conflict under the auspices of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. They considered that the Symposium, by providing a forum for an exchange of opinions as well as experiences about concrete actions, had made a positive contribution to the peace process.

The participants reconfirmed their support for the intifadah and the Palestinian peace initiative of November 1988. These were seen by the participants as genuine proofs of the willingness of Palestinian people and their sole legitimate representative, the PLO, to search for a mutually acceptable, just peace. They appealed to the European Governments to support unequivocally these decisions and to establish official relations with the PLO, and to recognise the State of Palestine if they had not yet done so.

The participants deeply regretted that the United States had decided to suspend its dialogue with the PLO and expressed the hope that it would be re-established as soon as possible and its scope expanded to include the consideration of substantive issues in a constructive way so as to enhance the process of negotiations leading to a just and lasting solution of the question of Palestine.

The participants reaffirmed their conviction that negotiations based on the two States, Palestine and Israel, principle, which addresses the basic rights and concerns of both the Palestinians and the Israelis would result in peace and justice in the Middle East, based on the principles embodied in General Assembly resolutions 181 (II) and 194 (III). Reports from the "1990: Time for Peace" initiative, held at Jerusalem from 29 to 31 December 1989, and various other peace initiatives indicated that important sectors of the Israeli public had become active in support of the "two States" solution.

Appreciation was expressed for the position adopted by a large number of European and other Governments and NGOs in response to the proclamation of the State of Palestine to exist side by side with the State of Israel. The participants stressed that peace negotiations should be based on the formula embodied in the Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and on the implementation of the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people, primarily their right to self-determination, and should provide a foundation for a just and lasting peace settlement.

The participants welcomed the adoption of General Assembly resolution 44/42 of 6 December 1989 by an overwhelming vote in favour of this balanced and comprehensive resolution, which, for the first time, was supported by 81 European States. In this resolution, the Assembly reaffirmed the necessity of convening the International Peace Conference on the Middle East under the auspices of the United Nations with the participation of all parties to the conflict, including the PLO, on an equal footing, and the five permanent members of the Security Council. The participants deeply regretted that there

had been no progress in that regard. The PLO has explicitly accepted these resolutions. However, the Government of Israel has by its recent statements and practical actions demonstrated that it continues to violate the Security Council resolutions.

The Symposium was organised while an extremely dangerous situation was gaining momentum in the Gulf, threatening to draw the whole region into a catastrophe of immense dimensions.

The participants reaffirmed their respect for international law and United Nations principles. Accordingly they considered that the acquisition of territory by force was illegal. The participants called upon Iraq to comply with the Security Council resolutions demanding the withdrawal of Iraqi forces from Kuwait. Only the strict observance of the Security Council resolution can prevent the crisis from spilling over into a military confrontation, which would harm the interests of all peoples in the region. Therefore, the participants urged all Governments to refrain from any military actions, which should be undertaken - if necessary - exclusively under the authority of the Security Council, with all armed forces, including those of the United States, being placed under United Nations command.

The participants noted that diplomatic efforts were being undertaken by the Secretary-General and by others including members of the League of Arab States and expressed the hope that these endeavours would contribute towards a peaceful solution of the crisis.

The participants, noting the near unanimity attained by the Security Council in dealing with this crisis and welcoming the higher profile of the United Nations and its Security Council, called upon its permanent members, especially the three European States - France, the United Kingdom and the Soviet Union - to show the same resoluteness in solving the Arab-Israeli conflict and its core question of Palestine and in securing the implementation of its resolution concerning this question.

Participants emphasized that the current crisis in the Gulf should not in any way detract from the urgent attention that needs to be given to a solution of the question of Palestine, without which there cannot be lasting peace and stability in the region.

The participants strongly denounced the continued violations by Israel of the human rights of the Palestinians in the occupied Palestinian territory, which has led to continued loss of life. The European NGOs, as part of the international community, have repeatedly declared that the Israeli policies and practices in the occupied Palestinian territory are in gross violation of its obligations as a party to the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War and contrary to United Nations resolutions and generally recognised norms of international law.

The participants requested the European Governments parties to the Convention to fulfil their duty by ensuring that Israel stops the violations of its provisions.

The participants expressed in particular their grave concern at the continued closure of Palestinian universities since 1988 and called for their

immediate reopening. They further called upon the Governments of Europe and upon the European Community to restrict educational and cultural contacts with Israel until such time as all Palestinian educational establishments are reopened.

The participants viewed with grave concern the consequences of continued, massive immigration to Israel from Eastern European countries while at the same time the Government of Israel was increasing its settlements in the occupied Palestinian territory and especially in Jerusalem, contrary to principles of international law and repeated Security Council resolutions. More Palestinian lands are slated for confiscation, existing Jewish settlements are being expanded and the planning and building of new settlements continue unabated. At the same time, the Israeli Government refuses to recognize the right of Palestinians to return to their homes.

The participants strongly requested the European governments to undertake resolute actions collectively and individually to ensure that Israel ceases all settlement activity in the occupied Palestinian territory, in conformity with Security Council resolution 465 (1980).

The participants supported the right of freedom of movement and the right of everyone to leave any country and the right of return to one's own country. However, these rights cannot be used as a pretext to settle immigrants or Israeli civilians in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem. They urged the European Governments to undertake any necessary efforts to ensure that the Security Council would act to prevent such illegal settlements.

The participants called upon States concerned with Jewish immigration, particularly the Soviet Union, to seek guarantees that such immigration will not lead to settlement in the occupied Palestinian territories, thereby infringing upon the right of the Palestinian people, and will be in conformity with relevant United Nations resolutions and legal instruments of human rights.

They also requested the European and other Governments to help the plight of Soviet Jews and other emigrants by enabling those who wish to settle in Europe to do so.

Participants expressed concern that the idea of expulsion (transfer) of Palestinians out of their country had gained further political legitimacy in Israel when new extremist parties such as Meledet and Tnuat entered the Israeli Parliament on the basis of transfer programmes.

Since then, more and more voices within the Israeli establishment and public opinion have been openly calling for the further mass expulsion of Palestinians from their homeland as a means of solving the Palestinian question and making room for the new massive Soviet Jewish immigration to Israel.

In the light of the growing danger of war in the Middle East and the possible participation of Israel in this war, concern was expressed that the Israeli establishment might foster and use the atmosphere of war to carry out this plan of further mass expulsion of the Palestinian people..

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The participants called upon the international community and Europe in particular to exercise due diligence in that regard to prevent Israel from carrying out such plans.

The participants expressed their grave concern about the violence against Palestinians that had taken place recently in Israel and in the occupied Palestinian territory, such as the unprovoked attack on Palestinian workers from Gaza and incursion of Israeli army into the UNRWA Health Centre in Gaza town. These and similar continued actions by the Israeli Government, the occupying Power, and individuals, as well as the lack of effective measures by the international community to put an end to this policy, have seriously eroded the trust of many Palestinians in the sincerity or willingness of the international community to help bring about a peaceful settlement. The participants were deeply worried about the prospect that Israeli intransigence and aggression would further deepen frustration among the Palestinians and that a cycle of violence would render more difficult the search for a peaceful settlement.

The participants expressed their resolute support for the Palestinian people struggling against the Israeli occupation and defending the Palestinian society and its social, economic and political institutions against the illegal onslaught of settlers and of the Israeli occupation forces.

The participants expressed their support to the Israeli peace forces, who are working under difficult conditions, especially after the coming into power of an extremist Government. They called upon European NGOs and institutions to support the Israeli peace forces and to give them their full support and co-operation.

Participants appealed to the Security Council to assume and discharge its responsibilities and to take urgent measures to ensure the physical protection and to guarantee the safety and security of the Palestinian people under the Israeli occupation, including prevention of deportation of Palestinians, which has been repeatedly condemned by the Security Council and General Assembly. The participants were encouraged that the European Governments, indeed all Governments except that of the United States, supported the proposal for taking practical measures for the protection of the Palestinian people and urged all Governments to transform their stated will into practical action without delay. In this respect, the participants welcomed the decision of the European Community to send a representative to Jerusalem as a step in the right direction.

The participants stressed the urgent need to ensure a permanent presence of European NGOs in the occupied Palestinian territory in order to monitor the human rights situation there and to provide any possible protection to the civilians. They further urged the European Parliament, other European institutions and all European Governments to undertake all necessary measures in that respect.

The participants also urged the Security Council, particularly the permanent members, which include three European Governments, to make every effort to facilitate the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East and to adopt interim measures, including the deployment of a United Nations force to safeguard the physical security of the people of the

occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and the people in other occupied Arab territories.

The participants called upon European NGOs to continue their co-operation and joint activities together with Israeli peace forces and Palestinians in the spirit of the "1990, Time for Peace" initiative, and to participate in the planned follow-up actions during 1990-1991. They also supported initiatives to engage broader participation of peace forces from Arab countries in this co-operation, which should also aim at curbing the continuing dangerous military buildup in the Middle East.

The participants requested the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People to provide every assistance through the newly elected European Co-ordinating Committee for NGOs on the Question of Palestine to European NGOs in implementing their resolutions on the question of Palestine. Such support could include sponsoring effective meetings on special issues, etc., and the promotion of a better understanding of the issues of special concern to the Palestinians and Israelis.

The participants also called upon the Committee to ensure that the United Nations regional and international NGO meetings should continue to provide an opportunity for diverse points of views to be expressed so that a meaningful dialogue might continue to be held among people of good will on all sides. The participants called on all European countries to intensify their support for the Committee's activities. European Governments were urged to participate in the work of the Committee as members or observers.

The aim of the Symposium was - in addition to a meaningful dialogue - to develop practical activities for concerted action by European NGOs. That part of the work was therefore conducted in workshops, and the Symposium received their recommendations. The participants commend them to all European NGOs for their careful consideration and implementation.

ANNEX XII

Declaration adopted by the Seventh United Nations International NGO Meeting on the Question of Palestine

(Geneva, 29 to 31 August 1990)

1. The Seventh United Nations International NGO Meeting on the Question of Palestine was held under the auspices of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, at the United Nations Office at Geneva from 29 to 31 August 1990. The Meeting was convened in response to General Assembly resolution 44/41 B of 6 December 1990.
2. The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People was represented by a delegation comprising Mrs. Absa Claude Diallo (Senegal), Committee Chairman, Mr. Alexander Borg Olivier (Malta), Rapporteur Mr. Samuel R. Insanally (Guyana); Mr. Ismail Resell (Malaysia); and Mr. Zuhdi L. Terzi (Palestine).
3. A total of 229 non-governmental organizations (NGOs) attended the Meeting, 64 of them as observers. Several observers from Governments, intergovernmental organizations and United Nations bodies also attended the proceedings.
4. At the opening meeting, the Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva made a statement on behalf of the Secretary-General. The Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization sent a message, which was read out by Mr. Nabil Ramlawi, Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations Office at Geneva. Other opening statements were made by Mrs. Absa Claude Diallo and by Mr. Don Betx, Chairman of the International Co-ordinating Committee of NGOs on the Question of Palestine (ICCP).
5. The programme for the Meeting was prepared by the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People in consultation with ICCP. The overall theme was "Palestine and Israel: prerequisites for peace". The four panels and panelists were as follows:

Panel I: Wreaking the impasse in the peace process through the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East: the influence of Palestinian, Israeli and international NGO co-operation"; Mrs. Tamar Gossansky (Israel), Mr. Mattityahu Peled (Israel), and Mr. Nabeel Sha'ath (Palestinian);

Panel II: "Intifadah update": Dr. Mustafa Barghouti (Palestinian), Mr. Ibrahim Dakkak (Palestinian), Mr. Hashem Mahameed (Israel) and Dr. Haider Abdel Shafi (Palestinian);

Panel III: "The changing role of NGOs": Mr. Jean-Marie Lambert (ICCP), Mr. Ghassan Abdallah (Palestinian), Mr. James Graff (Canada), Mrs. Maha Muskalem-Nassar (Palestinian) and Mr. Amnon Zichroni (Israel);

Panel IV: "Movement of populations I the law and politics": Mr. Ibrahim Abu-Lughod (Palestinian), Mr. Amnon Zichroni (Israel) and Mr. Bashir Al-Kairi (Palestinian).

6. Six workshops were also held on the following topics! (a) women; (b) peace organizations; (c) Christian, Jewish and Muslim communities; (d) health; (e) education; and (f) agriculture. A number of special interest groups were also organised by the participating NGOs.

7. The NGOs participating in the Meeting adopted a final declaration as well as action-oriented proposals emanating from the workshops. The report, including summaries of the proceedings, will be issued as a publication of the Division for Palestinian Rights.

8. The declaration adopted by participant NGOs reads as follows:

Declaration

We, the non-governmental organisations (NGOs) gathered at the Seventh International NGO Meeting on the Question of Palestine, are meeting at a time when the Middle East situation is more serious and more threatening to world peace than for many years. This need for the International Peace Conference in accordance with General Assembly resolution 44/42 of 6 December 1959 and earlier resolutions, for which we have called repeatedly at previous International Meetings, has never been more urgent. We now call for Steps by the Secretary-General to prepare for the International Peace Conference as a matter of urgency. As the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, the PLO should participate in the International Peace Conference on an equal basis with all other parties to the conflict, as called for in resolution 44/42. We remind all signatories to the fourth Geneva Convention of their contracted obligation to ensure respect in all circumstances for the Convention and to bring to justice persons committing or ordering to be committed grave breaches of the Convention.

Meeting after almost 1,000 days of the intifadah, we commend the Palestinian people of the intifadah in their heroic struggle to end the occupation and to implement the proclamation of 15 November 1958 of the independent State of Palestine. We call upon all Governments to recognise the State. We call for full international support for the intifadah. We strongly uphold the support of the people of the intifadah for the PLO as the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. We strongly affirm that the continuing denial of the Palestinian people's right to self-determination is entirely unacceptable and constitutes a major danger to peace.

We are appalled at the continuing, bloody repression of the Palestinian people by the Government of Israel and its endless violations of human rights, both in Israel and in occupied Palestine. As well as condemning the repression in occupied Palestine we condemn the official and escalating discrimination by both legalistic and "iron-fist" methods against the Palestinian citizens in Israel. We are gravely concerned with the increasing and deliberate destruction of Palestinian culture and identity and call for strong international pressure for the reopening of all schools and universities in occupied Palestine. Noting the refusal of the Israeli Government to respond to the demands of the international community, we call for the application of effective international political and economic sanctions against Israel to make it respect the rights of the Palestinian people and comply with its obligations under the fourth Geneva Convention of

12 August 1949. We note that Israel is designated as an occupying Power in Security Council resolutions 607 (1988) and 608 (1965) of 5 and 6 January 1956 and in other resolutions. We call for the urgent establishment by the Security Council of an effective United Nations presence with a legal mandate to protect the population of occupied Palestinian territory.

We condemn as unjust and unacceptable the actions of the Government of the United States of America in vetoing on 31 May 1990 the otherwise unanimously approved Security Council draft resolution for a United Nations fact-finding mission to the occupied territories. We view with concern the unwarranted suspension by the United States of its dialogue with the PLO on 20 June. We call for the immediate resumption of a serious and constructive United States of America/PLO dialogue that would contribute to the convening of the International Conference on Peace in the Middle East. We also condemn the United States record of continuing congressional and executive actions that have helped to make possible Israel's repression of Palestinian human rights .

Affirming the principle of the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force, we call upon Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait in accordance with Security Council resolution 660 (1990), as we continue to call upon Israel to withdraw from the territory it occupies.

We note the power the United Nations has exercised to enforce Security Council resolution 660 (1990) and call upon it to exert equal efforts to enforce all other United Nations resolutions concerning the acquisition of territory by force as part of a comprehensive Middle East peace settlement. We call for all Middle East issues to be dealt with on an equal basis and in accordance with international law. We welcome the peace initiative by the Secretary-General of the United Nations and also other initiatives by members of the League of Arab States.

We call for the end of the massive military buildup in the Middle East, with the withdrawal of all foreign forces, and for any military presence to be under United Nations control. We note that for many years, the policies of successive United States Governments have helped and encouraged Israeli occupation and annexation of Arab territory with gross violations of human rights, even though United States law specifically stipulates that countries engaged in gross violations of human rights are not eligible to receive United States foreign aid. In this context, we condemn the double standards of the United States Government.

We condemn the Israeli Government's policy of settling Jews in the occupied Palestinian territory, and other Arab territories, including Jerusalem. We call upon all States concerned with Jewish emigration, particularly the Soviet Union, to seek guarantees that such emigration will not lead to settlement in the occupied territories, will not infringe the rights of Palestinians either in Israel or occupied Palestine, and will not infringe upon the Palestinian right of return. Noting from past experience that the overwhelming majority of Jewish emigrants from the Soviet Union do not wish to go to Israel, let alone to occupied Palestine, we call upon all countries to which they might wish to immigrate to facilitate such immigration.

We call upon the Government of Israel to cancel the so-called "anti-terrorism law", which prohibits Palestinians and Israelis from meeting with official representatives of the Palestinian people. Furthermore, we call upon the Government of Israel and its legislature to stop all proceedings to deprive Mr. Mohammed Miari of his parliamentary immunity and also to stop all legal procedures to prosecute him for his participation in the campaign of the "boat of return".

Recognising the extreme gravity of the present situation, we recognise and stress the important role of the forces of peace in Israel which support the International Peace Conference and an independent Palestinian State and we strongly uphold them in all their efforts for peace and justice for all peoples.

Much of our work in this Meeting was conducted in workshops. We endorse their conclusions and recommendations. We urge all Governments seriously to consider the options defined by NGOs in this Declaration.

We urge the United Nations to convene an international meeting of NGOs in the late summer of 1991, the venue and format to be decided in consultation with the International Co-ordinating Committee for NGOs on the Question of Palestine (ICCP), and to maintain its programme of regional symposia. We commend the work of ICCP and its secretariat at Geneva and call upon the United Nations to offer every possible assistance to the Committee and its secretariat.

We request the Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People to convey this Declaration to the General Assembly at its forty-fifth session as part of the Committee's report. We urge that records of this meeting be disseminated widely by the United Nations to NGOs, Governments and the media.

We thank the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for convening this Meeting and we greatly appreciate the presence of the Chairman, members and observers of the Committee. We thank the Division for Palestinian Rights and all others of the Secretariat, including the interpreters who assisted in this Meeting. We express our appreciation to the distinguished experts who spoke here, and we regret that some of our invited panelists and resource persons were prevented from attending by Israeli authorities. The success of this Meeting was greatly contributed to by all those herein mentioned.

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**REPORT
OF THE
COMMITTEE ON THE EXERCISE OF
THE INALIENABLE RIGHTS
OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE**

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

OFFICIAL RECORDS: FORTY-SIXTH SESSION

SUPPLEMENT No. 35 (A/46/35)



UNITED NATIONS

New York, 1992

NOTE

Symbols of United Nations documents are composed of capital letters combined with figures. Mention of such a symbol indicates a reference to a United Nations document.

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[3 March 1992]

CONTENTS

	<u>Paragraphs</u>	<u>Page</u>
LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL		v
I. INTRODUCTION	1 - 8	1
II. MANDATE OF THE COMMITTEE	9 - 11	3
III. ORGANIZATION OF WORK	12 - 18	4
A. Election of officers	12 - 15	4
B. Participation in the work of the Committee	16 - 17	4
C. Re-establishment of the Working Group	18	4
IV. ACTION TAKEN BY THE COMMITTEE	19 - 74	5
A. Action taken in accordance with General Assembly resolution 45/67 A	19 - 52	5
1. Review of the situation relating to the question of Palestine and efforts to implement the recommendations of the Committee	19 - 33	5
2. Reactions to developments affecting the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people .	34 - 47	9
3. Action taken by the Committee to promote the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East in accordance with General Assembly resolution 45/68	48 - 50	12
4. Attendance at international conferences and meetings	51	13
5. Action taken by United Nations bodies, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and intergovernmental organizations	52	13
B. Action taken by the Committee and the Division for Palestinian Rights in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 45/67 A and B	53 - 74	15
1. Regional seminars	54 - 59	15
2. Cooperation with non-governmental organizations	60 - 67	16

CONTENTS (continued)

	<u>Paragraphs</u>	<u>Page</u>
3. Information activities	68 - 72	18
4. International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People	73	18
5. Proposal for establishing a computerized database	74	19
V. ACTION TAKEN BY THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INFORMATION IN ACCORDANCE WITH GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 45/67 C	75 - 86	20
VI. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COMMITTEE	87 - 95	23

Annexes

I. Recommendations of the Committee endorsed by the General Assembly at its thirty-first session	27
II. Conclusions and recommendations adopted by the Twenty-eighth United Nations European Seminar on the Question of Palestine, Madrid, 27 to 30 May 1991	30
III. Eighth United Nations North American Regional NGO Symposium on the Question of Palestine, Montreal, 28 to 30 June 1991	35
IV. Declaration adopted by the Fifth United Nations Regional NGO Symposium on the Question of Palestine, Vienna, 26 to 27 August 1991	37
V. Declaration adopted by the Eighth United Nations International NGO Meeting on the Question of Palestine, Vienna, 28 to 30 August 1991	40

LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

15 November 1991

Sir,

I have the honour to enclose herewith the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for submission to the General Assembly in accordance with paragraph 4 of resolution 45/67 A of 6 December 1990.

Accept, Sir, the assurances of my highest consideration.

(Signed) Absa Claude DIALLO
Chairman of the Committee on
the Exercise of the Inalienable
Rights of the Palestinian People

His Excellency
Mr. Javier Pérez de Cuéllar
Secretary-General of the United Nations

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People was established by the General Assembly in its resolution 3376 (XXX) of 10 November 1975, in which the Assembly requested the Committee to consider and recommend to it a programme designed to enable the Palestinian people to exercise its inalienable rights as recognized by the Assembly in resolution 3236 (XXIX) of 22 November 1974. During the reporting period, the Committee was composed of the following 23 Member States: Afghanistan, Belarus, Cuba, Cyprus, Guinea, Guyana, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mali, Malta, Nigeria, Pakistan, Romania, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine and Yugoslavia. 1/

2. The recommendations made by the Committee in its first report to the General Assembly 2/ were first endorsed by the Assembly in its resolution 31/20 of 24 November 1976 as a basis for the solution of the question of Palestine. Those recommendations were reaffirmed by the Committee in its subsequent reports 3/ and were endorsed by the Assembly with overwhelming support on each occasion. The Assembly also continued to renew and, as necessary, expand the mandate of the Committee.

3. Despite the repeated and urgent appeals of the Committee, the Security Council has not yet been able to act on or implement the recommendations of the Committee. The Committee is of the view that positive consideration and action by the Security Council on these recommendations would contribute to promoting a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict in the Middle East. The Committee has also reiterated its appeals to the Security Council to take action urgently to convene the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, in accordance with the principles reaffirmed by the General Assembly in its resolution 45/68 of 6 December 1990, which provides the most comprehensive, practical and universally accepted framework for peace.

4. The Committee believes that, with the recent manifestation of a renewed international determination to ensure equity, justice and consistency in the application of the principles of international law, it is of the utmost importance to intensify efforts to bring about a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict. In this regard, the Committee has continued to stress the importance of implementation of all General Assembly and Security Council relevant resolutions on the question of Palestine and the Middle East situation.

5. During the past year, and particularly in the aftermath of the conflict in the Gulf, the Committee expressed its most serious concern at the further deterioration of the situation in the occupied Palestinian territory and at the continued imposition of harsh repressive measures by the occupying Power, Israel. The Committee decided to do everything possible to strengthen its role in monitoring the situation of Palestinians under occupation and promoting the adoption of concrete measures by the High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention 4/ to ensure respect by Israel, the occupying Power, of the Convention in all circumstances, in conformity with their obligation under article 1 of the Convention. In this regard, the Committee

expressed full support for the efforts of the Secretary-General regarding the convening of a meeting of the High Contracting Parties in accordance with Security Council resolution 681 (1990).

6. The Committee strongly deplored Israel's continued reliance on military force to suppress the Palestinian uprising, the intifadah, which had continued for a fourth year against overwhelming odds. The Committee further deplored Israel's rejection of the Palestinian peace initiative of December 1988, of the United Nations resolutions aimed at advancing the peace process, and of all other efforts to promote peace. The Committee also condemned the intensification of land confiscation and of the settlements policy and practice pursued by Israel in the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, the imposition of a prolonged general curfew in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip during and after the conflict in the Gulf, and the increasing restrictions on freedom of movement and economic activity of Palestinians, which greatly jeopardized their livelihood.

7. The Committee reaffirmed that Israel's continued occupation of the Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and the other occupied Arab territories and its denial of the exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people in Palestine, including those to self-determination without external interference, to national independence and sovereignty, and to return to its homes and property, constitute the principal obstacle to the achievement of a just peace.

8. The Committee was concerned that the continued stalemate in the peace process, together with the ongoing repression of the intifadah and the creeping annexation of the occupied Palestinian territory, and the worsening economic and other living conditions of Palestinians in the entire region, might lead to disastrous consequences for the Palestinian people as a whole. The Committee believed that a solution was urgently needed in the aftermath of the Gulf War, taking into account the new opportunities that now exist, on the basis of international law and in conformity with the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations and the relevant United Nations resolutions, which must be applied in an even-headed manner.

II. MANDATE OF THE COMMITTEE

9. The Committee's mandate for the year 1991 is contained in paragraphs 3 to 5 of General Assembly resolution 45/67 A of 6 December 1990, in which the Assembly:

(a) Requested the Committee to continue to keep under review the situation relating to the question of Palestine as well as the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Achievement of Palestinian Rights; 5/ and to report and make suggestions to the General Assembly or the Security Council, as appropriate;

(b) Authorized the Committee to continue to exert all efforts to promote the implementation of its recommendations, including representation at conferences and meetings and the sending of delegations, to make such adjustments in its approved programme of seminars and symposia and meetings for non-governmental organizations as it may consider necessary, and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its forty-sixth session and thereafter;

(c) Also requested the Committee to continue to extend its cooperation to non-governmental organizations in their contribution towards heightening international awareness of the facts relating to the question of Palestine and creating a more favourable atmosphere for the full implementation of the Committee's recommendations, and to take the necessary steps to expand its contacts with those organizations.

10. In its resolution 45/67 B of the same date, the General Assembly also requested the Secretary-General, inter alia, to provide the Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat with the necessary resources and to ensure that it continues to discharge the tasks detailed in earlier resolutions, in consultation with the Committee and under its guidance.

11. In its resolution 45/67 C of the same date, the General Assembly requested the Department of Public Information, in full cooperation and coordination with the Committee, to continue its special information programme on the question of Palestine, with particular emphasis on public opinion in Europe and North America.

III. ORGANIZATION OF WORK

A. Election of officers

12. At its 175th meeting, on 6 February 1991, the Committee re-elected the following officers:

Chairman: Mrs. Absa Claude Diallo (Senegal)

Vice-Chairman: Mr. Ricardo Alarcón de Quesada (Cuba)

Rapporteur: Mr. Alexander Borg Olivier (Malta)

13. At its 178th meeting, on 16 July 1991, the Committee also elected Mr. Khodaidad Basharmal (Afghanistan) as Vice-Chairman.

14. At its 180th meeting, on 7 October 1991, the Committee elected Mr. Victor Camilleri (Malta) as Rapporteur in place of Mr. Alexander Borg Olivier (Malta).

15. At its 177th meeting, on 8 April 1991, the Committee adopted its programme of work for 1991 (A/AC.183/1991/CRP.1/Rev.1) in implementation of its mandate.

B. Participation in the work of the Committee

16. As in previous years, the Committee reconfirmed that all States Members of the United Nations and Permanent Observers to the United Nations desiring to participate in the work of the Committee as observers were welcome to do so. Accordingly, in a letter dated 10 April 1991, the Chairman of the Committee so informed the Secretary-General, who subsequently transmitted the letter, on 19 April 1991, to the States Members of the United Nations and members of the specialized agencies and to intergovernmental organizations. The Committee also decided to invite Palestine, represented by the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), to participate in the work of the Committee as an observer, to attend all its meetings and to make observations and proposals for the consideration of the Committee.

17. During 1991, the Committee again welcomed as observers all the States and organizations that had participated in its work in the preceding year. 6/ The Committee also welcomed the additional participation of Qatar as from 22 February 1991.

C. Re-establishment of the Working Group

18. At its 175th meeting, the Committee re-established its Working Group to assist in the preparation and expedition of the work of the Committee on the understanding that any Committee member or observer could participate in its proceedings. 7/ The Working Group was constituted as before under the chairmanship of Mr. Alexander Borg Olivier (Malta). Mr. Dinesh Kumar Jain (India) was re-elected Vice-Chairman of the Working Group. Mr. Victor Camilleri (Malta) was elected Chairman of the Working Group as from 7 October 1991.

IV. ACTION TAKEN BY THE COMMITTEE

- A. Action taken in accordance with General Assembly resolution 45/67 A
 1. Review of the situation relating to the question of Palestine and efforts to implement the recommendations of the Committee

19. In accordance with its mandate, the Committee continued to keep under review the situation relating to the question of Palestine and to exert all efforts to promote the implementation of its recommendations as repeatedly endorsed by the General Assembly.

20. In response to urgent developments affecting the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, the Chairman of the Committee, on a number of occasions, brought such developments to the attention of the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council, urging the adoption of appropriate measures in accordance with United Nations resolutions (see paras. 34 and 35 below).

21. The Committee, with the assistance of the Division for Palestinian Rights, continued to monitor the situation in the occupied Palestinian territory on an ongoing basis through the media, the reports of United Nations organs and agencies, as well as information collected by Governments, non-governmental organizations, individual experts and persons from Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory who participated in meetings held under the auspices of the Committee, and other sources.

22. The Committee expressed its support for the intifadah, the uprising of the Palestinian people for the end of Israeli occupation and for the achievement of the inalienable national rights of the Palestinian people. The Committee noted that the intifadah had continued for a fourth year despite overwhelming odds and increased repressive measures, and that it had pursued its efforts to maintain the structure and well-being of Palestinian society through organizing popular and civil committees for self-defence, medical relief, information and public education, as well as provisions and supplies. The Committee received repeated appeals from Palestinians living under occupation urging the United Nations to do all in its power to ensure the safety and protection of the Palestinian people, to meet emergency needs, and to bring about the impartial and comprehensive implementation of all United Nations resolutions, and expressing their determination to remain on their land and to maintain and consolidate their resistance to Israeli occupation.

23. The Committee noted with deep concern that, in its efforts to suppress the intifadah, Israel had continued to resort to the use of often excessive or indiscriminate force, including shooting at demonstrators, the misuse of tear-gas and punitive beatings. It was reported that the Israeli authorities were effectively condoning, if not encouraging, extrajudicial executions as a means of controlling unrest. In June 1991, a Palestinian human rights group published the names of 47 persons who were said to have been killed in Israel Defence Forces (IDF) undercover operations since January 1989. As at 31 July 1991, according to the Palestine Human Rights Information Centre, the

total number of Palestinians killed since the beginning of the intifadah through direct responsibility on the part of the Israeli forces, armed settlers, civilians and collaborators, amounted to 966 identified cases. Of these, 812 had died from gunfire, 91 in tear-gas-related incidents and 63 from other causes. In addition, it was reported that 116,118 Palestinians had been injured. An alarmingly high proportion of children, about 25 per cent of the total, were victims of the repression of the intifadah.

24. The Committee noted that Israeli occupation authorities continued to resort to a variety of harsh measures and collective punishments against Palestinians. These measures included deportations, large-scale arrests, detentions, raids on homes and villages, prolonged curfews which culminated during the Gulf War, and the destruction of trees and crops. According to the Israeli military prosecutor, since the beginning of the intifadah until February 1991, 75,000 Palestinians were detained, 14,000 of whom under administrative detention orders, i.e. without charges or trial. A human rights organization reported that the incarceration rate for the occupied territories is by far the highest known anywhere in the world, i.e. close to 1,000 prisoners per 100,000 inhabitants. The Committee noted with concern reports that the Israeli General Security Service continued to use torture as an interrogation method against Palestinians. Ill-treatment and deteriorating conditions, including a reduction in food rations, had prompted hunger strikes at several Israeli prisons and detention centres in June 1991.

25. It was also reported that, through July 1991, the West Bank and Gaza had experienced a total of 10,391 days of curfews, affecting hundreds of thousands of Palestinians. A total of 2,017 houses and other structures had been demolished or sealed and 118,735 trees had been uprooted. The Committee noted with particular concern the continued lawless and violent actions of Israeli settlers, including attacks on individuals, raids on Palestinian villages and vandalism.

26. The Committee was alarmed at the further increase in Israeli settlement activity in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and in the confiscation of Palestinian lands in the period under review, in contravention of the provisions of the aforesaid Fourth Geneva Convention and several Security Council resolutions. 4/ It was estimated that, between the beginning of the intifadah and 31 July 1991, a total of 504,120 dunums of land (1 dunum = 1,000 m²) had been confiscated by the Israeli authorities. Over 230,000 Israeli settlers were reported to reside in some 170 settlements, rural and urban, in the occupied Palestinian territory, including expanded East Jerusalem. The settler population had increased by 9,000 to 10,000 in the West Bank in 1990; it was estimated that 4 per cent of the Soviet immigrants who had arrived in 1990 had settled in the occupied territories. Several new settlements were established and others were expanded in the West Bank in the first half of 1991. Furthermore, it was reported that the Israeli Government had budgeted more than \$500 million during the 1990/91 fiscal year for settlements in the occupied territory and related expenses, and that the Housing Minister had drawn up plans to build 36,000 housing units in the occupied territories, including Jerusalem. In this connection, the Committee also noted with great concern the continued exploitation by Israel of Palestinian water resources for the benefit of the Israeli population and settlers, to the detriment of Palestinian farmers and residents of the occupied territory.

27. The Committee expressed the greatest concern at the intensification of controls and restrictions against the Palestinian people in the occupied territory during and after the war in the Gulf. The longest-running comprehensive curfew in the territories since they were first occupied in 1967 was imposed for several weeks from mid-January 1991 and was enforced with the use of firearms and summary trials of curfew violators. Palestinians in the occupied territory were confined to their homes, on a 24-hour basis, and curfew breaks would be allowed only every three to four days, for a couple of hours in different areas and at different times, primarily to enable women and young children to shop for food. It was reported that the curfews had caused extreme hardships such as denial of medical care, food and medicine shortages, crop and livestock losses, and had had devastating consequences for the Palestinian economy as a whole.

28. In addition, it was reported that a ban was imposed on Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza entering Israel or Jerusalem without a special permit issued by the military authorities. The new permit was the latest, and most restrictive, in a series of pass systems which tightly control the movements of Palestinians living under occupation, and was continued after the end of the war. One third of the total Palestinian labour force from the occupied territory was thereby prevented from earning an income for an extended period of time; by April 1991, it was estimated that 75,000 to 100,000 Palestinians had lost their jobs with Israeli employers.

29. It was also reported that these new restrictions were accompanied by punitive measures affecting the Palestinian economy, such as the imposition of fines on a vast scale by the military personnel for stone-throwing, curfew violations and other security offences; severe restrictions on Palestinian capital transfers, imports, exports and business licences; an oppressive system of taxation, including the excessive use of force in the collection of taxes; and collective punishments in the form of bans on Palestinian commercial activity.

30. The new pass regulations were also reported to have had damaging consequences for education, culture and freedom of worship. Large numbers of Palestinians from the West Bank were prevented from praying at the holy sites in Jerusalem or from participating in the city's cultural and intellectual life. Many students and teachers, as well as employees of research centres, newspapers and other institutions, were negatively affected by the restrictions. Moreover, as of June 1991, it was reported that nearly 70 per cent of university students - those at Najah, Birzeit, and the Islamic University at Gaza - continued to be denied the right to enter their universities, and there was no indication as to when they might be allowed to reopen.

31. The Committee was disturbed by the imposition of additional measures restricting access to proper health care services for Palestinians. Measures continued to be taken to prevent those wounded in the intifadah from receiving the hospital care they required, including delay and blocking of the transport of the injured, repeated attacks on hospitals and detention of the injured inside hospitals and clinics. Measures were also taken against the operation of the primary health-care programmes carried out by Palestinian clinics and health-care committees, including the closing or demolition of clinics and the confiscation of equipment. Fees for government health services were

increased, causing particular hardship to poor sections of the population. Increased restrictions on travel to Jerusalem resulted in further reductions in the availability of medical care for Palestinians as the new regulations interfered with transporting of patients and medical personnel to el-Mukased and other hospitals in East Jerusalem, which serve those with serious health problems who cannot find suitable treatment in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The Committee further deplored that, during the Gulf War and despite the many urgent appeals, the military authorities had not taken adequate measures to ensure the safety of the Palestinian population living under occupation through the distribution of gas masks and other protective gear, and the installation of warning systems. In view of the grave deterioration of health conditions in the occupied territory, the Committee deplored that Israel had continued to refuse to cooperate with the Special Committee of Experts established by the World Health Assembly and to allow it access to the area.

32. The Committee further noted that the Director-General of the International Labour Organisation (ILO), in his annual report g/ had stated that there had been no improvement in the conditions of work and life of the workers of the occupied Arab territories and their families and in fact, as a consequence of the Gulf War and measures taken by the Israeli authorities, the workers of the territories and their families had been put into a more precarious position than they had known for some time. The consequences of those events had served to aggravate an already difficult economic situation caused by various constraints on agriculture, industry and other sectors of the economy. In addition, the relatively poor efforts that had previously been made to promote development and employment opportunities in the territories, commensurate with the requirements of a rapidly growing labour force, had resulted in lower living standards, disturbing social conditions, increasing unemployment and general tension.

33. Taking into account the continuing intolerable situation in the occupied Palestinian territory, the Committee wishes to draw once again the most urgent attention of the General Assembly and the Security Council to the policies and practices of Israel, the occupying Power, which are in violation of the aforesaid Fourth Geneva Convention. The Committee reiterates its most urgent appeal to the Security Council, to the High Contracting Parties to the Convention and to all concerned to take all necessary measures to ensure the safety and international protection of the Palestinians in the occupied Palestinian territory pending the withdrawal of Israeli forces and the achievement of a just settlement. The Committee further wishes to express appreciation to the Secretary-General for his personal efforts in this regard. Above and beyond protective and emergency relief measures, the international community must take all possible measures to halt the rapid deterioration in the living conditions of the Palestinian people and to develop socio-economic structures that will lead to the genuine development of the occupied Palestinian territory in preparation for independent nationhood. The Committee noted that the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) had undertaken the implementation of a number of development projects in the occupied Palestinian territory.

2. Reactions to developments affecting the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people

(a) Communications to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

34. The Chairman of the Committee on a number of occasions drew the attention of the Secretary-General and of the President of the Security Council to urgent developments in the occupied Palestinian territory. The Chairman condemned the resumption by Israel of its policy of deportations as well as the indiscriminate shooting of demonstrators by the army, and the intensification and expansion of collective punishment such as the imposition of curfews and mass detention of Palestinian civilians, including minors. She drew attention to urgent appeals received by the Committee from Palestinians in the occupied territory requesting immediate action by the United Nations to ensure their safety and protection. She also deplored the intensification of the settlement policy and practice in the occupied Palestinian territory. The Chairman pointed out that those policies and practices were in violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention and requested that Israel accept the de jure applicability of that Convention to all the territories occupied since 1967 and abide scrupulously by the provisions of that Convention and relevant Security Council resolutions. The Chairman appealed urgently to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council and to all parties concerned, in particular the High Contracting Parties to the Convention, to take all necessary measures for ensuring the safety and protection of the Palestinian civilians under occupation and to intensify all efforts towards the achievement of a peaceful settlement.

35. The following letters by the Chairman of the Committee were circulated as official documents of the General Assembly, under the agenda item entitled "Question of Palestine", and of the Security Council: (a) letter dated 18 December 1990 (A/45/881-3/22012); (b) letter dated 14 January 1991 (A/45/925-S/22073); (c) letter dated 6 February 1991 (A/45/915-S/22207); (d) letter dated 1 March 1991 (A/45/968-S/22294); (e) letter dated 26 March 1991 (A/45/985-S/22388); and (f) letter dated 18 April 1991 (A/45/998-S/22511).

(b) Action taken within the Security Council

36. The Committee followed closely the activities of the Security Council on matters relating to the Committee's mandate and participated in Council debates as necessary.

37. The Security Council resumed its consideration of the situation in the occupied Palestinian territory at its 2953rd, 2954th and 2957th meetings, on 7, 9 and 16 November 1990, and at its 2965th to 2968th, and 2970th meetings, on 5, 8, 10, 12 and 20 December 1990, respectively, having before it the report submitted to the Security Council by the Secretary-General (S/21919 and Corr.1 and S/21919/Add.1-3) in accordance with resolution 672 (1990).

38. The Chairman of the Committee spoke in the debate at the 2954th meeting of the Security Council, on 9 November 1990, and praised the report submitted by the Secretary-General as a very useful and valuable document that had provided a better understanding of the imperative need to meet the challenge

issued by Israel and to take all steps necessary to accelerate the process of reaching a peaceful settlement of the Middle East conflict and, thereby, the question of Palestine. She recalled the Assembly's repeated call for an international peace conference on the Middle East, under the auspices of the United Nations, with the participation of all parties to the conflict, including the PLO, on an equal footing, and the five permanent members of the Security Council, based on Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people, primarily the right to self-determination. She urged the Council to set up a system of protection for the Palestinian civilians in the occupied Arab territory. The High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention should find the necessary means of ensuring respect for that Convention by Israel, as the occupying Power. She hoped that the debate would lead to the adoption of a resolution that would guarantee the Palestinian population effective protection and represent a decisive step to a comprehensive solution of the crisis in the Middle East.

39. At its 2970th meeting, on 20 December 1990, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 681 (1990), in which it deplored the decision by the Government of Israel, the occupying Power, to resume the deportation of Palestinian civilians; urged the Government of Israel to accept the de jure applicability of the aforesaid Convention, of 1949, to all the territories occupied by Israel since 1967; called upon the High Contracting Parties to the Convention to ensure respect by Israel, the occupying Power, for its obligations under the Convention in accordance with article I thereof; requested the Secretary-General, in cooperation with the International Committee of the Red Cross, to develop further the idea expressed in his report of convening a meeting of the High Contracting Parties to the Convention and to discuss possible measures that might be taken by them under the Convention and for this purpose to invite the Parties to submit their views on how the idea could contribute to the goals of the Convention, as well as on other relevant matters, and to report thereon to the Council; also requested the Secretary-General to monitor and observe the situation regarding Palestinian civilians under Israeli occupation, making new efforts in this regard on an urgent basis, and to utilize and designate or draw upon the United Nations and other personnel and resources present there, in the area and elsewhere, needed to accomplish this task and to keep the Security Council regularly informed; further requested the Secretary-General to submit a first progress report to the Council by the first week of March 1991 and every four months thereafter, and decided to remain seized of the matter as necessary.

40. The Committee noted that, prior to the adoption of Security Council resolution 681 (1990), the President of the Council made a statement (S/22027), on behalf of its members, by which the members of the Council reaffirmed their determination to support an active negotiating process in which all relevant parties would participate leading to a comprehensive, just and lasting peace to the Arab-Israeli conflict through negotiations which should be based on Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and which should take into account the right to security of all States in the region, including Israel, and the legitimate political rights of the Palestinian people. The members agreed that an international conference, at an appropriate time, properly structured, should facilitate efforts to achieve a negotiated settlement and lasting peace in the Arab-Israeli conflict. However, the members were of the view that there was no unanimity as to when

would be the appropriate time for such a conference. The statement further said that, in the view of the members of the Council, the Arab-Israeli conflict was important and unique and must be addressed independently, on its own merits.

41. At the 2973rd meeting of the Security Council, on 4 January 1991, the President of the Council made a statement (S/22046) on behalf of its members, expressing deep concern about recent acts of violence in Gaza, especially actions by Israeli security forces against Palestinians, which had led to scores of casualties. The members of the Council deplored those actions, particularly the shooting of civilians. They reaffirmed the applicability of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 to all the Palestinian territories occupied by Israel since 1967, including Jerusalem, and requested that Israel, the occupying Power, fully comply with the provisions of the Convention.

42. The President made a further statement (S/22408), on behalf of the Council, at its 2980th meeting on 27 March 1991, by which the members of the Council expressed grave concern at the continued deterioration of the situation in the Palestinian and other Arab territories occupied by Israel since 1967, including Jerusalem, and especially by the serious situation resulting from the imposition of curfews by Israel. The members of the Council deplored the decision of 24 March 1991 by the Government of Israel to expel four Palestinian civilians in violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention, and called upon Israel to desist from deporting Palestinians and to ensure the safe return of those deported.

43. In a letter dated 23 May 1991 (S/22634), the Permanent Representatives of Côte d'Ivoire, Ecuador, Cuba, India, Zaire and the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of Yemen requested an urgent meeting of the Security Council to examine the situation created by the deportations by Israel of four Palestinians from the occupied territories.

44. At its 2989th meeting, on 24 May 1991, the Security Council adopted unanimously resolution 694 (1991), in which it declared that the action of the Israeli authorities of deporting four Palestinians on 18 May was in violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949, which is applicable to all the Palestinian territories occupied by Israel since 1967, including Jerusalem; deplored this action and reiterated that Israel, the occupying Power, refrain from deporting any Palestinian civilian from the occupied territories and ensure the safe and immediate return of all those deported.

(c) Visit by the President of the General Assembly to the Palestinian refugees in the occupied territories and in Jordan

45. Professor Guido de Marco, President of the forty-fifth session of the General Assembly, visited the Palestinian refugees in the occupied territories and in Jordan from 2 to 7 January 1991. He was accompanied by the Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), Mr. Giorgio Giacomelli, and staff. The President met with the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Israel, Mr. David Levy, and other Israeli officials. He visited the Jabalia, Beach and Nuseirat refugee camps in the Gaza Strip, and the Jalasone refugee camp in the West Bank. He also visited a number of clinics and other installations and met with prominent Palestinians as well as with representatives from

Palestinian women's organizations, UNRWA officials and others, who briefed him on the current situation with regard to the intifadah. In Jordan, the President met with Crown Prince Hassan, Mr. Modar Badran the Prime Minister, Mr. Taher al-Masri the Minister for Foreign Affairs, and other senior government officials. He also met with Mr. Farouk Qaddoumi, head of the Political Department of the PLO, and other PLO officials. He visited the Baqa'a, Wadi Seer and Jerash refugee camps and met with UNRWA, UNDP and other United Nations officials and diplomats.

46. At its 176th meeting, on 22 February 1991, the Committee was briefed by Professor de Marco on his visit to the Palestinian refugees in the occupied territories and in Jordan. In view of the importance of the President's report and its relevance to the work of the Committee, the Committee decided that the report should be widely disseminated as a United Nations document.

47. In a letter dated 22 April 1991, addressed to the Secretary-General, the Chairman of the Committee transmitted the comprehensive report of the President of the General Assembly and requested its circulation as a document of the General Assembly under the item on the question of Palestine (A/45/1000).

3. Action taken by the Committee to promote the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East in accordance with General Assembly resolution 45/68

48. By its resolution 45/64 of 6 December 1990, the General Assembly reaffirmed the urgent need to achieve a just and comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict, the core of which is the question of Palestine. It called once again for the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, under the auspices of the United Nations, with the participation of all parties to the conflict, including the PLO, on an equal footing, and the five permanent members of the Security Council, based on Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people, primarily the right to self-determination. It reaffirmed the following principles for the achievement of comprehensive peace: the withdrawal of Israel from the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, and from the other occupied Arab territories; guaranteeing arrangements for security of all States in the region, including those named in General Assembly resolution 181 (II) of 29 November 1947, within secure and internationally recognized boundaries; resolving the problem of Palestine refugees in conformity with Assembly resolution 194 (III) of 11 December 1948, and subsequent relevant resolutions; dismantling the Israeli settlements in the territories occupied since 1967; and guaranteeing freedom of access to Holy Places, religious buildings and sites. The Assembly also noted the expressed desire and endeavours to place the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, under the supervision of the United Nations for a limited period, as part of the peace process; once again invited the Security Council to consider measures needed to convene the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, including the establishment of a preparatory committee, and to consider guarantees for security measures agreed upon by the Conference for all States in the region; and requested the Secretary-General to continue his efforts with the parties concerned, and in

consultation with the Security Council, to facilitate the convening of the Conference, and to submit progress reports on developments in this matter.

49. In adopting its programme of work, the Committee decided to continue to give the utmost priority to promoting the early convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East. The Committee decided to take an active role in all aspects relating to the convening of the Conference and the search for peace, and to initiate a process of interaction with all concerned for the regular exchange of information and views.

50. The Committee was greatly encouraged by the overwhelming international support for its objectives and by the intensification of efforts among the international community in favour of a just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine, as reflected in particular by the recommendations adopted by the regional seminar and by symposia and meetings of non-governmental organizations on the question of Palestine organized under the Committee's auspices (see paras. 54-67 below).

4. Attendance at international conferences and meetings

51. In accordance with its mandate, the Committee was represented at the following international meetings during the period since its previous report to the General Assembly:

(a) Fifty-fourth ordinary session of the Council of Ministers, held at Abuja, Nigeria, from 27 May to 1 June 1991, and twenty-seventh Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity, held at Abuja from 3 to 5 June 1991;

(b) Tenth Ministerial Meeting of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, held at Accra from 2 to 7 September 1991.

5. Action taken by United Nations bodies, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and intergovernmental organizations

52. The Committee continued to follow with great interest the activities relating to the question of Palestine of United Nations bodies, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and intergovernmental organizations. The Committee noted especially the growing concern at all levels of the international community about the further deterioration of the situation in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and the increasing sense of urgency with which the international community addressed the need to ensure the safety and protection of the Palestinian people under occupation and to advance towards a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine. The Committee took particular note of the following documents:

(a) Final communiqué of the annual meeting of Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the States members of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, held in New York, on 1 October 1990 (see A/46/113-S/22345);

(b) Communiqué of the Meeting of the Coordinating Bureau of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries on the situation in the occupied Palestinian territory, held in New York, on 9 October 1990 (A/45/603-S/21858);

(c) Resolution on the Israeli act of aggression against the Holy Al-Aqsa Mosque and the Dome of the Rock, adopted by the Council of the League of Arab States at its extraordinary session, held at Tunis on 17 and 18 October 1990 (S/21897);

(d) Declaration on the Middle East by the European Council, 30 October 1990 (A/45/700-S/21920);

(e) Communiqué of the Organization of the Islamic Conference on the Situation in Jerusalem, issued at the United Nations on 14 December 1990 (A/45/887-S/22017);

(f) Declaration on the Middle East issued by the 12 States members of the European Community at the meeting of the European Council, held in Rome on 14 and 15 December 1990 (A/45/888-S/22018);

(g) Communiqué of the eleventh session of the Supreme Council of the States members of the Gulf Cooperation Council, held at Doha, Qatar, from 22 to 25 December 1990 (A/45/948-S/22191, p. 7);

(h) Resolutions adopted by the Commission on Human Rights at its forty-seventh session (resolutions 1991/1 A and B, 1991/3 and 1991/6 of 15 February 1991);

(i) Declaration on the Gulf crisis issued on 19 February 1991 by the 12 States members of the European Community (see A/45/960-S/22247);

(j) Closing statement issued after the joint meeting of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the States members of the Bureau of the Fifth Islamic Summit Conference and the Nineteenth Conference of Islamic Foreign Ministers and of the States members chairing the standing committees of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, held at Cairo, on 21 February 1991 (see A/46/94-S/22256);

(k) Resolution 13/6 adopted by the Commission on Human Settlements on 8 May 1991 (A/46/8);

(l) Economic and Social Council resolutions 1991/19 of 30 May 1991 and 1991/69 of 26 July 1991, and decisions 1991/279 and 1991/280 of 26 July 1991;

(m) Resolutions of the fifty-fourth ordinary session of the Council of Ministers of the Organization of African Unity, held at Abuja from 3 to 5 June 1991 (A/46/390, CM/res. 1334 and 1335 (LIV));

(n) Declaration on the peace process in the Middle East issued on 29 June 1991 by the European Council (A/46/285-S/22766);

(o) Joint communiqué of the twenty-fourth ASEAN Ministerial Meeting, issued at Kuala Lumpur on 20 July 1991 (A/46/323-S/22836, paras. 29-31);

(p) Final document of the Tenth Ministerial Meeting of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, held at Accra from 2 to 7 September 1991 (A/46/659-S/23223);

(q) Statement on the Middle East peace process issued by the European Community and its member States on 10 October 1991 (A/46/573).

B. Action taken by the Committee and the Division for Palestinian Rights in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 45/67 A and B

53. The Committee and the Division for Palestinian Rights, pursuant to their respective mandates, organized a number of regional seminars and non-governmental organization symposia and meetings in 1991. In adopting its programme of work for the year, the Committee decided that in these activities, it would focus on the following priority issues:

(a) The need for convening with urgency the International Peace Conference on the Middle East on the basis of the relevant United Nations resolutions for the achievement of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the region;

(b) The intifadah of the Palestinian people, the situation in the occupied Palestinian territory and the need for international support and assistance;

(c) International protection of the Palestinian people under occupation, including measures that could be taken by the High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention in order to ensure respect for the Convention by Israel, the occupying Power, in all circumstances;

(d) The increasing Jewish immigration - Israel's settlement policy in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem - the adverse impact on the achievement of a just settlement of the question of Palestine.

1. Regional seminars

54. In accordance with the programme of work for the 1990-1991 biennium, European and Asian regional seminars were included in the calendar of meetings to be held under the auspices of the Committee in the period under review.

(a) European Regional Seminar

55. The European Regional Seminar on the Question of Palestine was held at Madrid from 27 to 30 May 1991. The Committee was deeply grateful to the Government of Spain for agreeing to provide the venue for this important seminar and for providing the conference facilities free of charge.

56. The Seminar considered the topics of two panels: Panel I: "The intifadah; the safety and protection of the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territory"; Panel II: "The urgency of the implementation of the United Nations resolutions on the question of Palestine and the situation in

the Middle East". Some details on the Seminar and the text of the conclusions and recommendations adopted by the participants are contained in annex II to the present document.

57. The Committee was pleased by the participation in the Seminar of prominent political personalities, parliamentarians, policy makers, and other experts, including Israelis and Palestinians. The Committee expressed satisfaction that, for the first time, a seminar on this issue had met in a country member of the European Community at a moment characterized by new opportunities, as well as by a rapidly deteriorating situation in the occupied Palestinian territory. The Committee noted that the Seminar participants had adopted conclusions and recommendations expressing support for the Committee's objectives for a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine, particularly through the "land for peace" formula and the "two peoples, two States" principle and the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East. Participants had also expressed deep concern at the violations of Palestinian human rights by Israel and had called for measures to be taken to ensure respect by the occupying Power for the Fourth Geneva Convention.

(b) Other regional seminars

58. At its 177th meeting, held on 8 April, the Committee accepted with gratitude the kind offer of the Government of Cyprus to provide the venue for the Asian Regional Seminar. The Seminar is scheduled to be held at Nicosia from 20 to 24 January 1992.

59. In accordance with established practice, the North American Seminar would have been held in New York immediately preceding the North American Non-governmental Organization (NGO) Symposium. As the Symposium, however, was held in Montreal, Canada, financial and logistical considerations led the Committee to decide not to hold the Seminar in 1991 and instead to consider organizing another appropriate activity at a suitable time.

2. Cooperation with non-governmental organizations

60. The Committee, in accordance with its mandate under General Assembly resolution 45/67 A, continued to extend its cooperation to non-governmental organizations active on the question of Palestine and to expand its contacts with them. The Division for Palestinian Rights, in consultation with the Committee and under its guidance, organized regional symposia and an international meeting for non-governmental organizations during 1991 in implementation of the Committee's objective. The Committee noted that non-governmental organizations had further intensified their activities to assist the Palestinian people and to promote a just and comprehensive peace.

(a) North American Regional NGO Symposium

61. The North American Regional NGO Symposium was held at Montreal, Canada, from 28 to 30 June 1991. The Committee expressed its deep gratitude to the Government of Canada for providing the venue for this important event. The programme for the Symposium was elaborated in consultation between the Committee and the North American Coordinating Committee for NGOs on the

Question of Palestine within the framework of a preparatory meeting held in New York on 11 and 12 February 1991.

62. The programme for the Symposium provided for two main panels: Panel I: "Palestine: Protecting lives and promoting peace - the impact of the Gulf war"; and Panel II: "Palestine: Responding to current developments". The programme also included 20 action-oriented workshops on various topics related to the question of Palestine. Some details on the Symposium are included in annex III to the present document.

63. The Committee expressed its satisfaction that for the first time, a symposium of North American NGOs on the Question of Palestine had been held away from United Nations Headquarters, thereby enabling the Committee to reach out to a wider constituency. The Committee noted that the NGOs had adopted a variety of concrete proposals and action programmes to guide their future work, and had elected a new coordinating committee for the region.

(b) European Regional NGO Symposium

64. The European Regional NGO Symposium was held at Vienna, on 26 and 27 August 1991, and was followed by the International NGO Meeting, which took place from 28 to 30 August 1991. The Committee expressed its gratitude to the Government of Austria for having kindly provided the venue for these two activities at the Austria Centre, free of charge.

65. The programmes for the Symposium and the International Meeting were elaborated by the Committee in consultation with the European Coordinating Committee for NGOs on the Question of Palestine and the International Coordinating Committee for NGOs on the Question of Palestine within the framework of a preparatory meeting held at Geneva on 25 and 26 March 1991.

66. The Symposium had as its main theme "Time for Palestine: The role of Europe in securing Palestinian rights" and considered the topics of two panels entitled: "Implementation of United Nations resolutions on Palestine: European collective responsibility and strategies following the Gulf war"; and "International protection of the Palestinian people: The responsibilities of European States as co-signatories of the Fourth Geneva Convention". The programme for the Symposium also included seven action-oriented workshops. The Committee noted that the Symposium participants had adopted a declaration and action-oriented proposals, and had elected a new coordinating committee for the region. Further details on the Symposium are contained in annex IV to the present document.

(c) International NGO Meeting

67. The International NGO Meeting had as its main theme "Palestine Now" and considered the topics of three panels as follows: "United Nations protection, United Nations resolutions, from the Gulf to Palestine"; "Palestine update"; and "NGO Forum - A call to action. What have we accomplished? What remains to be done? How shall we proceed?" Six action-oriented workshops also met within the framework of the Meeting. The Committee noted that the Meeting participants had adopted a declaration and action-oriented proposals, and had elected a new international coordinating committee. Some additional details on the Meeting are contained in annex V to the present document.

3. Information activities

68. The Committee noted with appreciation that the Division for Palestinian Rights, in accordance with its mandate, continued to prepare the following publications, under the guidance of the Committee:

(a) Monthly bulletins covering action by the Committee, other United Nations organs, and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations concerned with the question of Palestine;

(b) Reports of regional seminars, regional symposia and international meetings of non-governmental organizations;

(c) Monthly and bimonthly reports on developments relating to the question of Palestine, monitored from the Arabic, English and Hebrew press for the use of the Committee.

69. The Committee noted that the Division had issued a study entitled "The question of Palestine: 1979-1990". This publication updated an earlier brochure on the question of Palestine prepared in the late 1970s. The work on the update of a study entitled "Acquisition of land in Palestine" is nearing completion. The study entitled "Water resources in the occupied Palestinian territory" is being finalized. A compilation of seminar papers entitled "Question of Palestine: legal aspects" is being prepared for publication.

70. An updated issue (April 1991) of the information note entitled "The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and the Division for Palestinian Rights" was also prepared. Another information note, entitled "The United Nations and non-governmental organizations activities on the question of Palestine", was updated in October 1991. Both information notes were issued in the six official United Nations languages, as well as in German.

71. In response to a decision of the Committee, the Division prepared monthly issues of the publication entitled "Approaches towards the settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict". These compilations of the relevant statements, declarations and proposals regarding the settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict, including the question of Palestine and the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, were prepared for the use of the Committee.

72. The following publications were also issued by the Division during the period under review: Resolutions and decisions of the General Assembly and the Security Council relating to the question of Palestine: 1990 (A/AC.183/L.2/Add.11) and Special bulletin on the commemoration of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

4. International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People

73. The International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People was observed on 29 November 1990 at United Nations Headquarters in New York and at the United Nations Offices at Geneva and Vienna. The Committee noted with

appreciation that the International Day had also been commemorated in many other cities throughout the world in 1990.

5. Proposal for establishing a computerized database

74. In its programme of work for 1991, the Committee included a request to the Division for Palestinian Rights to study the feasibility of establishing a computerized database relating to the question of Palestine. The Committee noted that steps were taken by the Division to initiate such a study, in cooperation with the relevant departments of the Secretariat.

V. ACTION TAKEN BY THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INFORMATION IN ACCORDANCE WITH GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 45/67 C

75. The Department continued to provide press coverage of all meetings of relevant United Nations bodies, including the Security Council and the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. Press releases were issued on regional seminars and symposia organized by the Committee, including those held in Madrid and Montreal.

76. All regional seminars and NGO symposia on the question of Palestine sponsored by the Committee on the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People were covered extensively in weekly regional magazines.

77. Additional press releases were issued containing the texts of the Secretary-General's statements relating to the question of Palestine and the situation in the occupied Arab territories, and press releases issued by UNRWA on its activities were reissued and disseminated by the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat.

78. The Department of Public Information responded to almost 200 inquiries on the question of Palestine between January and June 1991. Additionally, this issue is integrated into the presentation given visitors during the guided tours conducted by the Public Services Section of the Department.

79. The Department of Public Information continued to distribute its publications, including a revised version of the booklet The United Nations and the Question of Palestine in Arabic, English, French, German and Spanish; the booklet For the Rights of Palestinians: Work of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People; the booklet entitled Human Rights for the Palestinians: The Work of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Population of the Occupied Territories. A total of 13,703 of these publications, in Arabic, English, French, German and Spanish were distributed.

80. The World Chronicle produced a video entitled "Visit of the General Assembly President to the Occupied Territories". Professor Guido de Marco, Deputy Prime Minister of Malta and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Justice, and President of the forty-fifth session of the General Assembly, stresses the human dimension of the question of Palestine and the need to solve this problem through United Nations efforts. The Audio Visual Promotion and Distribution Unit disseminated worldwide to its film and video libraries and to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization the video entitled "About the UN: Palestine".

81. Fifty-nine radio programmes of varying lengths on the question of Palestine and related topics were produced between 1 January and 30 June 1991.

82. The Department co-sponsored two national encounters for journalists on the question of Palestine, held at Brussels, on 22 May, and at Bonn, on 24 May 1991. Those two events were hosted at Brussels in cooperation with the Parliamentary Association for Euro-Arab Cooperation and with the support of the Commission of the European Communities, and at Bonn in cooperation with the German Association for the United Nations. The theme of the two

encounters was the protection of Palestinian civilians under Israeli occupation. Two Palestinian and two Israeli panelists addressed that theme in each of the two cities with brief opening remarks, followed by a substantive dialogue between the four panelists and about 40 senior media representatives who had been invited to participate. The two Palestinian panelists were Nasser Al-Kidwa, Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations, and Sa'ab Erekat, Professor of Political Science at An-Najah University, Nablus, West Bank. The two Israeli panelists were Yael Dayan, Labour Party activist and author, and Aviador Feldman, an attorney who co-founded the Israeli human rights documentation centre "Betsalem", and who had appeared in a number of landmark civil rights cases in Israel. The two encounters were moderated by the Chief of the Anti-Apartheid, Decolonization and Palestine Programmes Section of the Department of Public Information.

83. From 3 to 5 June 1991, the Department sponsored in Helsinki, with the support of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland, an international encounter for European journalists on the question of Palestine. It explored the prospects for an international peace conference on the Middle East, and was moderated by the Under-Secretary-General for Political and Security Council Affairs. There were nine panelists: Yasir Abed Rabbo, member of the Executive Committee of the PLO; Hanan Mikhail-Ashrawi, Dean of the Faculty of Arts, Bir Zeit University, Ramallah, West Bank; Haim Ramon, Member of the Israeli Knesset, Labour Party; Elazar Granot, Chairman, United Workers Party, Israel; Fuchang Yang, Deputy Foreign Minister of China; Simon James Fraser, Middle East Policy Planner, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, United Kingdom; Anatoly Ivanovich Philyov, First Deputy Head, Directorate for the Middle East and North Africa, USSR; William Quandt, Senior Fellow at the Brookings Institution, Washington, D.C., United States of America; and Mohammed El-Shafei Abdel Hanid, former Assistant Minister for Foreign Affairs of Egypt. There were 62 media participants, including columnists, senior editors and editorial writers. They represented the following news organizations:

Zeri I Populit (Albania); Die Presse (Austria); De Standaard, Le Soir (Belgium); Demokratia, Duma (Bulgaria); Xinhua (China); CTK, Narodni Obroda, Reflexe (Czechoslovakia); Information, Politiken (Denmark); Helsingen Sanomat, Hufvudstadsbladet, Oy Gig Films Ab, Uusi Suomi (Finland); Le Monde (France); Berliner Zeitung, Westdeutscher Rundfunk (Germany); Messimvrini, Ta Nea (Greece); Hungarian Radio, Nepszabadsag (Hungary); Morqunbladij (Iceland); The Irish Times, The Sunday Independent (Ireland); Il Corriere della Sera, La Repubblica (Italy); Ha'aretz, Davar, New Outlook (Israel); Al-Fajr (Jerusalem); Luxemburger Wort (Luxembourg); The Sunday Times of Malta (Malta); Elsevier, Trouw (Netherlands); NRK (Norway); Palestine News Agency - "WAFA" (PLO); Gazeta Wyborcza Polityka (Poland); Expresso, Publico (Portugal); AZI, România Libera (Romania); El Mundo, El País, TVE (Spain); Svenska Dagbladet (Sweden); La Tribune de Genève, 24 Heures (Switzerland); Cumhuriyet, Milliyet (Turkey); Izvestia, Nezavisimaya Gazeta, Novosti, Novoye Vremya (USSR); The Guardian, The Times (United Kingdom); Borba, Nedjelja, Oslobodjenje (Yugoslavia).

84. DPI is in the process of completing preparations for a news mission to the Middle East which will take place during the end of October and early November 1991. The mission is conceptualized as a follow-up to the Helsinki

Encounter which had as its theme: "Prospects for an International Peace Conference on the Middle East". It is intended to provide journalists an opportunity to acquaint themselves firsthand with the facts of the question of Palestine. To this end, meetings will be arranged with the leadership of the PLO, senior government officials of Tunisia, Jordan, the Syrian Arab Republic and Egypt, as well as individual Palestinians in the refugee camps. Twelve senior journalists from Europe will participate in the mission. They represent the following papers:

Le Soir (Belgium); Pol'tiken (Denmark); Helsingin Sanomat (Finland); Le Monde (France); Berliner Zeitung (Germany); Messimvrini (Greece); Irish Times (Ireland); Il Corriere della Sera (Italy); Trouw (Netherlands); Público (Portugal); El País (Spain); The Guardian (United Kingdom).

85. The United Nations information centres/United Nations information services have taken an active role in disseminating information on the question of Palestine. All European UNICs/UNISs played a part in the selection of journalists, and in some cases panelists, who participated in the International Encounter for European Journalists on the Question of Palestine; UNIC Brussels and UNIC Bonn assisted Headquarters in organizing two national encounters, in Brussels and Bonn, respectively. Other UNICs/UNISs have also undertaken specific programmes with respect to the question of Palestine, e.g. Bogota, Cairo, Tokyo.

86. The Department held two briefings at Headquarters for NGO representatives relating to the question of Palestine. The first was entitled "A UN perspective on Palestinian rights", and the second, "Prospects for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East". Total participation was 1,000 NGO representatives. The Department also transcribed and edited summaries of the briefings mentioned above and distributed them to UNICs/UNISs, and to the headquarters of over 1,200 NGOs associated with the Department. Additionally, the Department regularly features and distributes United Nations information materials, documents and press releases to NGO representatives, including all documents disseminated by the Division for Palestinian Rights, the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories, and the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COMMITTEE

87. The year under review was one of great change, marked by the tragic events of war, but also by renewed hopes for peace with justice in the region, as the international community expressed its determination to ensure equity and consistency in the application of the principles of international law and of United Nations resolutions. Solidarity with the Palestinian people became an even more urgent task in the aftermath of the conflict arising from the situation between Iraq and Kuwait, as their suffering increased manifold and their existence as a people appeared increasingly threatened. Israel's stepped-up colonization and economic strangulation of the occupied Palestinian territories, its increasing violations of human rights, and the growing numbers of Palestinian refugees made it imperative that a just and comprehensive settlement of the question of Palestine be finally achieved. At the same time, the new spirit of international cooperation in resolving regional conflicts peacefully and the current initiatives in this regard have given rise to hope that a concrete peace process can be initiated.

88. The Committee expresses its continued and full support for the intifadah, the courageous struggle of the Palestinian people, to end Israeli occupation and implement the proclamation of independence of November 1988. Through the intifadah, the Palestinian people has clearly expressed its national purpose and its determination to bring about the exercise of its inalienable rights and has affirmed that the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) is its sole legitimate representative. The Committee reaffirms the international consensus that full respect for, and the realization of, the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people are indispensable for the solution of the question of Palestine. The Committee calls once again upon Israel to recognize and respect the national aspirations and rights of the Palestinian people and to acknowledge as well the desire of its own people for a future based on peace with justice. The Committee appeals to all progressive forces in Israel to intensify further their efforts to bring about this essential objective.

89. The Committee welcomes the convening by the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics of a conference for the achievement of a comprehensive peace based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and on the land-for-peace principle, to ensure security and recognition for all States in the region, including Israel, as well as the legitimate political rights of the Palestinian people. The Committee expresses the earnest hope that such a conference will bring about a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the question of Palestine based on internationally recognized principles and United Nations resolutions. The Committee hopes that the role of the United Nations will be generally intensified in this process.

90. The Committee recalls that an international consensus has already been achieved on the essential principles for such a solution. In its first report to the General Assembly, the Committee had recommended modalities for the attainment of Palestinian rights (see annex I), later complemented by the Declaration and Programme of Action adopted by the International Conference on the Question of Palestine, held at Geneva in 1983. The intifadah and the Palestinian peace initiative of 1988 led to an even wider consensus, as shown

once again by the near-unanimous adoption of General Assembly resolution 45/68 of 6 December 1990. In that resolution the Assembly called once again for the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, under the auspices of the United Nations, with the participation of all parties to the conflict, including the PLO, on an equal footing, and the five permanent members of the Security Council, based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people, primarily the right to self-determination.

91. The Committee recalls the principles for the achievement of comprehensive peace contained in that resolution, namely:

(a) The withdrawal of Israel from the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, and from the other occupied Arab territories;

(b) Guaranteeing arrangements for the security of all States in the region, including those named in General Assembly resolution 181 (II) of 29 November 1947, within secure and internationally recognized boundaries;

(c) Resolving the problem of the Palestine refugees in conformity with General Assembly resolution 194 (III) of 11 December 1948 and subsequent relevant resolutions;

(d) Dismantling the Israeli settlements in the territories occupied since 1967;

(e) Guaranteeing freedom of access to the Holy Places, religious buildings and sites.

92. Pending progress towards a political settlement, however, the Committee considers it is of the utmost urgency that all necessary measures be taken to protect the Palestinian people in the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, in accordance with the provisions of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, and numerous resolutions of the Security Council and the General Assembly. In the past year, Israel's continued violation of the Convention has led to increasing casualties and the deterioration of already unbearable living conditions. A matter of special concern is the suffering inflicted on Palestinian women and children as a result of Israeli practices. The Committee considers that it is now all the more urgent for the High Contracting Parties to the Geneva Convention and for the United Nations system as a whole to ensure that Israel abide by its obligations as the occupying Power and, in particular, to implement Security Council resolution 681 (1990) of 20 December 1990 and subsequent resolutions.

93. The Committee is deeply concerned at the growing Israeli colonization of the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, as manifested in the intensified establishment and expansion of settlements, confiscation of land and water resources and settler vigilantism, in violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention and United Nations resolutions. The growing influx of new immigrants exacerbates the situation. The Committee considers that it is incumbent upon the Security Council to review the matter urgently and to undertake appropriate measures, in conformity with the Fourth Geneva

Convention and the relevant principles of the Charter of the United Nations, to deal with the situation.

94. The Committee wishes to reaffirm that the United Nations has a duty and responsibility to render all assistance necessary to promote the social and economic development of the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, in preparation for the full exercise of national sovereignty in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions. The Committee accordingly reiterates its call upon the organizations of the United Nations system, as well as on Governments and on intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, to sustain and increase their economic and social assistance to the Palestinian people, in close cooperation with the PLO.

95. The Committee noted with satisfaction the increased international support for the attainment of a comprehensive, just and lasting solution of the question of Palestine in the year under review. The Committee believes that its programme of regional seminars, NGO meetings and other informational activities has played a valuable role in this process and it will continue to strive to achieve maximum effectiveness in the implementation of its mandate. The Committee will continue and intensify its efforts to ensure that those meetings provide a useful forum for an in-depth consideration of the substantive issues to be addressed in any peace process, with the assistance of experts from all regions and representing diverse points of view, including Palestinians and Israelis. The Committee once again extends an invitation to all Governments, including those of the United States of America and Israel, to participate in its work and in the events organized under its auspices.

Notes

1/ At the 59th meeting of the forty-fifth session of the General Assembly, the President of the General Assembly informed the Assembly that in accordance with its resolution 3376 (XXX), of 10 November 1975, the members of the Committee are appointed by the Assembly and following consultations with the regional groups, it has been agreed that the Byelorussian SSR (later renamed Belarus) should be appointed to fill the vacancy created as a result of the accession of the German Democratic Republic to the Federal Republic of Germany with effect from 3 October 1990.

2/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-first Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/31/35).

3/ Ibid., Thirty-second Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/32/35); ibid., Thirty-third Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/33/35); ibid., Thirty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/34/35 and Corr.1); ibid., Thirty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/35/35); ibid., Thirty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/36/35); ibid., Thirty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/37/35 and Corr.1); ibid., Thirty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/38/35); ibid., Thirty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/39/35); ibid., Fortieth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/40/35); ibid., Forty-first Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/41/35); ibid., Forty-second Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/42/35); ibid., Forty-third Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/43/35); ibid., Forty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/44/35); and ibid., Forty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/45/35).

Notes (continued)

4/ Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, United Nations Treaty Series, vol. 75, No. 973.

5/ Report of the International Conference on the Question of Palestine, Geneva, 29 August-7 September 1983 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.83.I.21), chap. I, sect. B.

6/ The observers at the Committee meetings were as follows: Algeria, Bangladesh, Bulgaria, China, Czechoslovakia, Ecuador, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Mauritania, Morocco, Nicaragua, Niger, Qatar, Sri Lanka, Syrian Arab Republic, United Arab Emirates, Viet Nam, the League of Arab States and the Organization of the Islamic Conference. Palestine, represented by the Palestine Liberation Organization, as the representative of the Palestinian people, the principal party to the question of Palestine, was also an observer.

7/ The membership of the Working Group was as follows: Afghanistan, Belarus, Cuba, Guinea, Guyana, India, Malta, Pakistan, Senegal, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine and Palestine, represented by the Palestine Liberation Organization, as the representative of the people directly concerned.

8/ International Labour Conference, 78th Session, 1991, Report of the Director-General, appendices (vol. 2), pp. 41 and 42.

ANNEX I

Recommendations of the Committee endorsed by the General Assembly at its thirty-first session*

I. Basic considerations and guidelines

59. The question of Palestine is at the heart of the Middle East problem, and consequently, the Committee stresses its belief that no solution in the Middle East can be envisaged which does not fully take into account the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people.

60. The legitimate and inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to return to their homes and property and to achieve self-determination, national independence and sovereignty are endorsed by the Committee in the conviction that the full implementation of those rights will contribute decisively to a comprehensive and final settlement of the Middle East crisis.

61. The participation of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), the representative of the Palestinian people, on an equal footing with other parties, on the basis of General Assembly resolutions 3236 (XXIX) and 3375 (XXX), is indispensable in all efforts, deliberations and conferences on the Middle East which are held under the auspices of the United Nations.

62. The Committee recalls the fundamental principle of the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force and stresses the consequent obligation for complete and speedy evacuation of any territory so occupied.

63. The Committee considers that it is the duty and responsibility of all concerned to enable the Palestinians to exercise their inalienable rights.

64. The Committee recommends an expanded and more influential role by the United Nations and its organs in promoting a just solution to the question of Palestine and in the implementation of such a solution. The Security Council, in particular, should take appropriate action to facilitate the exercise by the Palestinians of their right to return to their homes, lands and property. The Committee, furthermore, urges the Security Council to promote action towards a just solution, taking into account all the powers conferred on it by the Charter of the United Nations.

65. It is with this perspective in view and on the basis of the numerous resolutions of the United Nations, after due consideration of all the facts, proposals and suggestions advanced in the course of its deliberations, that the Committee submits its recommendations on the modalities for the implementation of the exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.

* Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-first Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/31/35), paras. 59-72.

II. The right of return

66. The natural and inalienable right of Palestinians to return to their homes is recognized by resolution 194 (III), which the General Assembly has reaffirmed almost every year since its adoption. This right was also unanimously recognized by the Security Council in its resolution 237 (1967); the time for the urgent implementation of these resolutions is long overdue.

67. Without prejudice to the right of all Palestinians to return to their homes, lands and property, the Committee considers that the programme of implementation of the exercise of this right may be carried out in two phases.

Phase one

68. The first phase involves the return to their homes of the Palestinians displaced as a result of the war of June 1967. The Committee recommends that:

(a) The Security Council should request the immediate implementation of its resolution 237 (1967) and that such implementation should not be related to any other condition;

(b) The resources of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and/or of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, suitably financed and mandated, may be employed to assist in the solution of any logistical problems involved in the resettlement of those returning to their homes. These agencies could also assist, in cooperation with the host countries and the PLO, in the identification of the displaced Palestinians.

Phase two

69. The second phase deals with the return to their homes of the Palestinians displaced between 1948 and 1967. The Committee recommends that:

(a) While the first phase is being implemented, the United Nations, in cooperation with the States directly involved, and the PLO as the interim representative of the Palestinian entity, should proceed to make the necessary arrangements to enable Palestinians displaced between 1948 and 1967 to exercise their right to return to their homes and property, in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions, particularly General Assembly resolution 94 (III);

(b) Palestinians choosing not to return to their homes should be paid just and equitable compensation as provided for in resolution 194 (III).

III. The right to self-determination, national independence and sovereignty

70. The Palestinian people has the inherent right to self-determination, national independence and sovereignty in Palestine. The Committee considers that the evacuation of the territories occupied by force and in violation of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and relevant resolutions of the United Nations is a condition sine qua non for the exercise by the

Palestinian people of its inalienable rights in Palestine. The Committee considers furthermore that, upon the return of the Palestinians to their homes and property and with the establishment of an independent Palestinian entity, the Palestinian people will be able to exercise its rights to self-determination and to decide its form of government without external interference.

71. The Committee also feels that the United Nations has an historical duty and responsibility to render all assistance necessary to promote the economic development and prosperity of the Palestinian entity.

72. To those ends, the Committee recommends that:

(a) A timetable should be established by the Security Council for the complete withdrawal by Israeli occupation forces from those areas occupied in 1967; such withdrawal should be completed no later than 1 June 1977;

(b) The Security Council may need to provide temporary peace-keeping forces in order to facilitate the process of withdrawal;

(c) Israel should be requested by the Security Council to desist from the establishment of new settlements and to withdraw during this period from settlements established since 1967 in the occupied territories. Arab property and all essential services in those areas should be maintained intact;

(d) Israel should also be requested to abide scrupulously by the provisions of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, and to declare, pending its speedy withdrawal from those territories, its recognition of the applicability of that Convention;

(e) The evacuated territories, with all property and services intact, should be taken over by the United Nations, which, with the cooperation of the League of Arab States, will subsequently hand over those evacuated areas to the PLO as the representative of the Palestinian people;

(f) The United Nations should, if necessary, assist in establishing communications between Gaza and the West Bank;

(g) As soon as the independent Palestinian entity has been established, the United Nations, in cooperation with the States directly involved and the Palestinian entity, should, taking into account General Assembly resolution 3375 (XXX), make further arrangements for the full implementation of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, the resolution of outstanding problems and the establishment of a just and lasting peace in the region, in accordance with all relevant United Nations resolutions;

(h) The United Nations should provide the economic and technical assistance necessary for the consolidation of the Palestinian entity.

ANNEX II

Conclusions and recommendations adopted by the Twenty-eighth United Nations European Seminar on the Question of Palestine

(Madrid, 27 to 30 May 1991)

1. The Twenty-eighth United Nations Seminar on the Question of Palestine (Sixth European Seminar) was held at Madrid from 27 to 30 May 1991.
2. The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People was represented by a delegation comprising: Mrs. Absa Claude Diallo (Senegal), Chairman of the Committee and head of the delegation; Mr. Alexander Burg Olivier (Malta), Vice-Chairman and Rapporteur of the Seminar; Mr. Nana Sucrena (Indonesia), Vice-Chairman; Mr. René Juan Mujica Cantelar (Cuba); and Mr. Nasser Al-Kidwa (Palestine). From 29 May, Mr. Borg Olivier acted as Chairman of the Seminar.
3. A total of 7 meetings were held and 17 panelists presented papers on selected aspects of the question of Palestine. Representatives of 50 Governments, Palestine, three United Nations organs, one United Nations specialized agency, one intergovernmental organization, as well as 23 non-governmental organizations, as observers, attended the Seminar.
4. A welcoming address was made by Mr. Francisco Fernández Ordóñez, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Spain. A statement on behalf of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, was made by his representative, the Under-Secretary-General for Political and General Assembly Affairs and Secretariat Services, Mr. Ronald I. Spiers. Mrs. Diallo also addressed the meeting on behalf of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. Mr. Issam Kamel el Salem, the representative in Madrid of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), read out a message from Mr. Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the PLO.
5. The Seminar participants adopted conclusions and recommendations and a motion of thanks to the Government and people of Spain.
6. The two panels which were established and their panelists were as follows:
 1. "The intifadah; the safety and protection of the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territory":

Mr. Freih Abu-Midain (Palestinian); Mr. Roberto Mesa (Spain);
Mr. Mikko Lohikoski (Finland); Mr. Hans Peter Kotthaus (Germany);
Mr. Moshe Amirav* (Israel); and Mr. Chawki Armali (Palestinian).
 2. "The urgency of the implementation of the United Nations resolutions on the question of Palestine and the situation in the Middle East":

* These panelists informed the United Nations Secretariat that they were attending the Seminar as experts and not as participants.

Mr. Michele Achilli (Italy); Rabbi Balfour Brickner (United States of America); Mr. Rafael Estrella (Spain); Mr. Yilmaz Altug (Turkey); Mr. Leonard Doyle (United Kingdom); Mr. V. J. Gogitidze (USSR); Mr. Richard Murphy (United States); Mr. Viktor V. Pashiouk (Ukrainian SSR); Ms. Inger Lise Gjørsv (Norway); Mr. Izhar Beer* (Israel); and Mr. Saeb Erekat (Palestinian).

7. The report of the Seminar, including summaries of the proceedings, has been issued as a publication of the United Nations Division for Palestinian Rights.

8. The conclusions and recommendations adopted by the Seminar participants are as follows:

Conclusions and recommendations

(a) The participants noted that the Seminar was being held at a time when fundamental changes were taking place in the international political scene with increased international cooperation and greater respect for norms and principles of international law and morality, including the right of peoples to enjoy peace and their political, civil, social and economic rights;

(b) The participants considered that recent events in the Persian Gulf had heightened tensions and brought instability to an already troubled region and focused even more the attention of international public opinion on the urgent need for a peaceful settlement of the conflict in the Middle East, the core of which is the question of Palestine. A solution was urgently needed in the aftermath of the Gulf War, taking into account the new opportunities that now exist, on the basis of international law and in conformity with the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations and relevant United Nations resolutions, which must be applied in an even-handed manner;

(c) The participants urged the Security Council, particularly its permanent members, to undertake every effort to facilitate the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East under the auspices of the United Nations and with the participation of all parties concerned, including the Palestine Liberation Organization. In this regard, the participants expressed appreciation for all efforts being made to initiate the peace process;

(d) The participants stressed that the peace process and related negotiations must be based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), and the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people, primarily the right to self-determination. The participants expressed their conviction that the "land for peace" formula and the "two peoples, two States" principle adequately addressed the rights and concerns of both parties, Israelis and Palestinians, and their acceptance and implementation would result in a comprehensive and just peace in the region;

(e) Participants discussed the intifadah and the Palestine peace initiative of November 1988 and acknowledged these and other efforts by the Palestinian people in its struggle to obtain and exercise its inalienable rights. The participants expressed deep concern at the continued loss of life in the Palestinian and Arab territories occupied by Israel and at the

continued violations by Israel of the human rights of the civilian population in these territories. The international community had repeatedly deplored the Israeli policies and practices in the occupied Palestinian territory, which were in violation of its obligations as a party to the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War and contrary to United Nations resolutions and generally recognized norms of international law. The participants noted that the United Nations Security Council, in its resolution 681 (1990), urged the Government of Israel to accept the de jure applicability of the Fourth Geneva Convention, of 1949, to all the territories occupied by Israel since 1967 and to abide scrupulously by the provisions of the said Convention and asked the States parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention to ensure that Israel, as occupying Power, fulfilled its obligations under the Convention. The participants expressed full support of the Security Council's request to the Secretary-General, in cooperation with the International Committee of the Red Cross, to pursue the idea of convening a meeting of the States parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention in order to examine measures that might be taken by them under the Convention. They noted that the Secretary-General was requested to monitor and observe the situation regarding Palestinian civilians under Israeli occupation, and to make new efforts in this regard on an urgent basis, and to utilize and designate or draw upon the United Nations and other personnel and resources present there, in the area and elsewhere, needed to accomplish this task and to keep the Security Council regularly informed. Many participants appealed to the Security Council to assume and discharge its responsibilities and to take urgent measures, including the deployment of a United Nations force to ensure the physical protection and to guarantee the safety and security of the Palestinian people under Israeli occupation. The participants noted also the recent adoption by the Security Council of its resolution 694 (1991) on 24 May 1991, deploring, as it had done on previous occasions, Israel's deportation of Palestinians in violation of its international obligations;

(f) The participants deplored the process of Israeli colonization of the occupied Palestinian territory as manifested in the continued establishment of settlements and usurpation of land and water resources. They were alarmed at the recent establishment of additional settlements and condemned these actions as insensitive and provocative, which created yet another most serious obstacle to peace. The international community had vigorously opposed the Israeli policy of establishing settlements in the occupied Palestinian territory, which was in contravention of the Fourth Geneva Convention and Security Council resolutions which had declared these settlements to be illegal and that they had to be dismantled;

(g) The serious deterioration in the economic situation in the occupied territory was a source of great concern to the participants. They stressed that the United Nations has a duty and responsibility to render all assistance necessary to promote the social and economic development of the Palestinian people in the occupied territory in preparation for the full exercise of national sovereignty in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions;

(h) The participants, cognizant of the provisions of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which recognizes the right of freedom of movement and the right of everyone to leave any country and the right to return to one's own country, condemned the settlement of immigrants and

Israeli civilians in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and urged the Security Council to take appropriate measures to address this new and serious obstacle to peace;

(i) The participants expressed appreciation for the sustained efforts of the international community to promote a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine, in accordance with United Nations resolutions. They stressed the great importance of the valuable contribution which the European countries have made and could continue to make towards the achievement of an equitable settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict in the Middle East. The participants welcomed the steps already taken by the European countries in this regard and urged them to increase further their valuable assistance to the Palestinian people. In this connection, the participants noted with appreciation the doubling of the aid by the European Community to the occupied territory and the efforts for facilitating and increasing the trade between the territory and the Community, both decided by the Council of Ministers of the European Community. The participants expressed their appreciation for the position adopted by European Governments in response to the proclamation of the State of Palestine, the Palestinian Arab State, to exist side by side with the State of Israel, in conformity with the two-State principle, and in accordance with United Nations resolutions. The participants considered that the European Community could play a valuable role in the peace process and should be an active participant in this process;

(j) The participants took note with appreciation of new initiatives proposed recently by a number of European countries aimed at enhancing security and cooperation in the Mediterranean region;

(k) The participants appealed to all European Governments to support the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People in its efforts and urged the same Governments to give serious consideration to participation in the work of the Committee as members or observers. The participants considered that increased representation by European countries and the European Commission in the work of the Committee would broaden the scope of its deliberations and increase its effectiveness;

(l) The participants expressed appreciation for the Secretary-General's continuing endeavours to advance the peace process and to facilitate the convening of the International Peace Conference. The participants expressed deep appreciation to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) for the invaluable work being carried out under difficult circumstances for the benefit of the Palestine refugees. They appealed to Governments to increase their contribution to the UNRWA budget and to other organizations and potential donors to contribute generously to the activities of UNRWA. They took note with appreciation of the activities of the Division for Palestinian Rights of the United Nations Secretariat and of its commitment to work, under the guidance of and in consultation with the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, towards the attainment of a just, comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East in accordance with the resolutions of the United Nations;

(m) The participants noted with appreciation that the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People was intensifying its efforts to ensure that the United Nations regional seminars on the question of Palestine provided an opportunity for diverse points of view to be

expressed so that a real dialogue could be held among people of good will on all sides. In that context the participants expressed satisfaction that there had been a constructive and frank exchange at the Seminar between the Israeli and Palestinian participants. They acknowledged the efforts of the moderate elements within the Israeli community who are contributing constructively to the peace process and to a better informed public opinion in their country. The Seminar noted, however, that while Palestinians representing the PLO had participated in the Seminar, the official viewpoint of Israel had yet to be expressed;

(n) The participants in the Seminar took note with appreciation of the valuable support the Government of Spain had extended over the years to the just cause of the Palestinian people. The participants attributed particular significance to the fact that the Seminar was held in Madrid, the capital of Spain, a country which had, throughout its history, accommodated people of different faiths and cultures including Moslems, Christians and Jews who were able to coexist peacefully and in harmony. The participants expressed their profound gratitude to the Government and people of Spain for providing a venue for the European Seminar on the Question of Palestine, and for the excellent facilities and warm hospitality extended to them.

ANNEX III

Eighth United Nations North American Regional NGO Symposium on
the Question of Palestine

(Montreal, 28 to 30 June 1991)

1. The Eighth United Nations North American Regional NGO Symposium on the Question of Palestine was held in Montreal, Canada, from 28 to 30 June 1991.
2. The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People was represented by a delegation composed of Mrs. Absa Claude Diallo (Senegal), Committee Chairman and leader of the delegation, and Dr. Nasser Al-Kidwa (Palestine).
3. The Symposium was attended by 104 non-governmental organizations (64 participants and 40 observers); three non-governmental organization coordinating committees (North American, African, International); the Palestine Committee for non-governmental organizations; 19 Governments; one intergovernmental organization, and Palestine. The formal opening session was addressed by Mrs. Absa Claude Diallo on behalf of the Committee. A message was received from Mr. Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and was read out by the representative of Palestine in Canada. A statement was also made by Ms. Jeanne Butterfield, Chairperson of the NACC and moderator of the Symposium.
4. The theme of the Symposium was "Palestine - Protecting Lives and Promoting Peace - Impact of the Gulf War". The programme of work for the Symposium was composed of two panels and 20 workshops, as follows:

Panel I: "Palestine - Protecting Lives and Promoting Peace - Impact of the Gulf War":

Panelists: Ms. Hanan Mikhail Ashrawi (Palestinian);
Mr. Michel Warshawski (Israel);

Panel II: "Palestine: Responding to Current Developments":

Panelist: Ms. Louise Cainkar (United States of America).

The workshops were organized under three general sub-themes:

"Special Protection Needs": Palestinian children; prisoners; Palestinian women; Palestinians in the Middle East region; and Palestinian educational and cultural institutions;

"Critical Issues for NGO Work": land, settlements and immigration; ending Israeli occupation - suspending aid and imposing sanctions; strategies for raising the Palestine question in the context of grassroots initiatives for a resolution of the Gulf War; delegations (short and long-term); twinning/sister relations; and international law and strategies to encourage the United States and Canada to develop measures to ensure respect for the Fourth Geneva Convention;

"Organizing Strategies for Canadian and United States Constituencies for Protection and Peace": unions; religious communities - Christian, Jewish, Muslim; women; universities; educators - elementary and secondary; and Canadian-Arab and American-Arab communities.

5. Among the recommendations of the workshops, North American NGOs were urged to intensify their mobilization effort and continue to raise public awareness in the region to the desperate situation of the Palestinian children; to draw attention to the plight of the Palestinians in Kuwait; to work for the re-opening of Palestinian universities; to launch an offensive against human rights abuses, against Palestinian prisoners and the Palestinian population in general in the occupied Palestinian territory. Other proposals included sanctions against Israel; support for the Israeli peace movement; the creation of a permanent structure to lobby the United States and Canada to accept the two-State solution and the facilitating of a greater linkage between women in North America and Palestinian women.

6. A teach-in was also held on the general topic "The Israeli/Palestinian Conflict." Further, the Symposium elected a new 12-member NGO Coordinating Committee for the region composed of three members from Canada and nine members from the United States.

7. The report of the Symposium was issued as a publication of the Division for Palestinian Rights.

ANNEX IV

Declaration adopted by the Fifth United Nations Regional
NGO Symposium on the Question of Palestine

(Vienna, 26 to 27 August 1991)

1. The fifth United Nations Regional NGO Symposium on the Question of Palestine was held at Vienna, on 26 and 27 August 1991.
2. The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People was represented by a delegation composed of Mrs. Absa Claude Diallo (Senegal), Committee Chairman and head of delegation; Mr. Khodaidad Basharmal (Afghanistan), Committee Vice-Chairman; and Dr. Nasser Al-Kidwa (Palestine).
3. The Symposium was attended by 125 NGOs (50 participants and 75 observers); 21 member States, one non-member State, one special agency of the United Nations, two intergovernmental organizations, and the delegation of Palestine. The opening session was addressed by Mrs. Absa Claude Diallo on behalf of the Committee; by Mr. Mikko Lohikoski, Chairman of the European Coordinating Committee for NGOs on the Question of Palestine; and Ambassador Faisal Aweidah, head of the Palestine Mission to Austria and Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations Office and International Organizations at Vienna.
4. The Symposium had for its theme: "Time for Palestine - The role of Europe in securing Palestinian rights". Two panels were established, as follows:
 - Panel 1. "Implementation of United Nations resolutions on Palestine: European collective responsibility and strategies following the Gulf War":

Panelists:

Mr. Uri Avnery;
Mr. Hael El Fahoum;
 - Panel 2: "International protection of the Palestinian people: the responsibility of European States as co-signatories of the Fourth Geneva Convention":

Panelists:

Mr. Bernard Mills;
Ms. Khaled Muhammed Batrawi.
5. Seven workshops were also organized on the following topics:
 - (a) Effective lobby work in Europe: review of past experience and future initiatives;
 - (b) Mobilizing public opinion in Europe: end the occupation now;
 - (c) Contributing to fair and factual reporting on Palestinian issues in the mass media;
 - (d) New initiatives for securing international protection for the

Palestinian people; (e) Economic effects of the Gulf War on Palestinians: NGO actions; (f) Jewish immigration and its impact on Palestinian rights; responsibilities of European States and public opinion; and (g) Development projects on Palestine: how to cooperate with governmental and intergovernmental institutions.

6. The NGOs participating in the Symposium adopted a final declaration as well as action-oriented proposals emanating from the workshops, and elected a new European Coordinating Committee for NGOs on the Question of Palestine. The report of the Symposium, including summaries of the proceedings, will be issued as a publication of the Division for Palestinian Rights.

7. The NGOs participating in the Symposium adopted the following declaration:

Declaration

We, the non-governmental organizations, gathered at the Fifth United Nations European Regional NGO Symposium on the Question of Palestine, meeting at Vienna on 26 and 27 August 1991, are very conscious of meeting at a time when it is crucially important for the Governments of all European countries to play a much more active role in securing a settlement of the conflict in the Middle East. Such a settlement must be based on the exercise of Palestinian rights, including the right to return, to self-determination and to an independent Palestinian State on the currently and illegally occupied territories, including Jerusalem. We remind all European Governments that they have repeatedly supported Palestinian rights in words. We now call upon them to implement their words without further delay by action based on all existing United Nations resolutions.

We call upon all European Governments to support the International Peace Conference repeatedly called for in General Assembly resolutions since 1983 and supported by all European Governments. We affirm strongly that the Palestinian people must be represented in this and all conferences, whether international or regional under whatever auspices, by their chosen representative, the Palestine Liberation Organization. This meeting calls upon all concerned to support the Palestine Liberation Organization in participating in all regional and international forums on the Middle East with all parties to the conflict on an equal footing.

We are of the view that all European Governments should play a major role in this process towards the International Peace Conference under United Nations auspices. Since three European countries, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, France and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics are permanent members of the Security Council we call upon their Governments in particular to play a significant role in securing peace.

We note the proposal currently under discussion to hold a peace conference under the auspices of the United States of America and the Soviet Union. We regard this conference as one possibility to open the way to the peace conference under United Nations auspices, which we continue to see as the most effective means to achieve peace.

We reject the Israeli and all non-Palestinian attempts to decide which Palestinians should be involved in international gatherings concerned with peace. We call upon all European Governments to oppose and reject such attempts, reaffirming the right of the Palestine Liberation Organization to be present on an equal footing with all other parties.

We are appalled at the continuing repression of the Palestinian people by the Israeli Government and by its endless and accelerating violations of human rights, both in Israel and in occupied Palestine. We fully support the Palestinian struggle for self-determination expressed in the Intifadah. From the repeated statements of certain members of the Israeli Government, we recognize its ultimate policy to drive the Palestinians out of the West Bank and Gaza Strip and to replace them with settlers, including immigrants from the Soviet Union.

We call upon all European Governments to exercise effective political and economic measures upon Israel, to make it respect the rights of the Palestinian people and comply with its obligations under the Fourth Geneva Convention. We remind all European Governments of their obligations as High Contracting Parties to the Geneva Convention to take measures to ensure respect for the Convention. In that respect, we draw attention to the fact that the European Community is Israel's largest export market and that these exports are made on privileged terms not afforded to other countries. We, therefore, note that the European Community is in an especially strong position to exert pressure, as it has to a limited extent in the past, in support of Palestinian rights. We call for positive European Community actions. We also call for Security Council action to take active measures for the enforcement of all United Nations resolutions on the Middle East and on the question of Palestine.

Much of our work in this Symposium was conducted in workshops. Their conclusions and recommendations are appended to this declaration.

We urge the United Nations to convene a European Regional Symposium of NGOs in 1992. We request the Chairman of the United Nations Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People to convey this declaration to the General Assembly at its forty-sixth session as part of the Committee's report.

We warmly thank the Committee for convening this Symposium and we greatly appreciate the presence of the Committee Delegation. We thank the Division for Palestinian Rights and all others of the United Nations Secretariat, including the interpreters who so valuably assisted us. We express our appreciation to the distinguished experts who spoke here and added valuably to our deliberations. We express our strongest protest against the action of the Israeli Government in preventing the distinguished expert, Mr. Sa'eb Erakat of An-Najah University, from attending. We express our thanks to the Austrian Government for making available the Austria Centre for our Symposium.

ANNEX V

Declaration adopted by the Eighth United Nations International
NGO Meeting on the Question of Palestine

(Vienna, 28 to 30 August 1991)

1. The Eighth United Nations International NGO Meeting on the Question of Palestine was held at Vienna on 28 to 30 August 1991.

2. The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People was represented by a delegation composed of Mrs. Absa Claude Diallo (Senegal), Committee Chairman and head of delegation; Mr. Khodaïdâ Basharmal (Afghanistan), Committee Vice-Chairman; and Dr. Nasser Al-Kidwa (Palestine).

3. The Meeting was attended by 207 NGOs (143 participants and 64 observers); 28 member States, one non-member State, three agencies of the United Nations, two intergovernmental organizations, and the delegation of Palestine. The opening session was addressed by Professor Guido de Marco, President of the forty-fifth session of the General Assembly; Mr. Helmut Türk, Deputy Secretary-General and Legal Counsel of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Austria; Mr. Naseem Mirza, Chief of the Division for Palestinian Rights, on behalf of the Secretary-General of the United Nations; Mrs. Absa Claude Diallo, on behalf of the Committee; Mr. Don Betz, Chairman of the International Coordinating Committee for NGOs on the Question of Palestine; and Ambassador Faisal Aweidah, head of the Palestine Mission to Austria and Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations Office and International Organizations at Vienna, who read out a message from Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization.

4. The Meeting had for its theme: "Palestine Now!" Three panels were established, as follows:

Panel 1. "United Nations protection, United Nations resolutions: From the Gulf to Palestine":

Panelists:

Mr. Kadwan Abu-Ayyash;
Mr. Mattityahu Peled;

Panel 2. "Palestine Update":

Panelists:

Mr. Haim Baram;
Ms. Rana Nashashibi;
Ms. Rima Tarazi;
Mr. Nabeel Sha'ath;

Panel 3. "NGO Forum - A call to action. What have we accomplished? What remains to be done? How shall we proceed?":

Panelist:

Mr. Don Betz

5. The six workshops were also organized on the following topics: (a) The protection of the Palestinian people and its independent infrastructure in occupied Palestine: focus on education; (b) Human rights in the occupied territories: the reunification of Palestinian families; (c) Soviet Jewish immigration and its effect on Palestinian human and national rights; (d) NGO methods and strategies for lobbying Governments on behalf of Palestinian national rights and strategies for mobilization for the International Peace Conference; (e) Regional demilitarization and disarmament: establishment of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction; and (f) Land, water and settlements.

6. The NGOs participating in the Meeting adopted a final declaration as well as action-oriented proposals emanating from the workshops, and elected a new International Coordinating Committee for NGOs on the Question of Palestine. The report of the Meeting, including summaries of the proceedings, will be issued as a publication of the Division for Palestinian Rights.

7. The NGOs participating in the Meeting adopted the following declaration:

Declaration

We, the non-governmental organizations, gathered at the Eighth United Nations International NGO Meeting on the Question of Palestine, representing millions of people concerned with a peaceful resolution of that question, believe that the situation has acquired great urgency subsequent to the Gulf War. We are aware that we have convened at an historic moment of great challenge and great opportunity. We reaffirm our conviction that the conflict can only be solved through an international conference under United Nations auspices at which all parties to the conflict, including Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization on an equal footing, are represented. Such an international conference should be convened with the utmost urgency.

We unconditionally affirm the rights of self-determination, statehood and return of the Palestinian people as guaranteed by the Charter of the United Nations and all relevant United Nations resolutions.

We are motivated by the genuine desire to establish a durable and just peace in the Middle East on the basis of international legitimacy as provided by all relevant United Nations resolutions, and mutual recognition of the right of both the Palestinian and Israeli peoples for self-determination and the right to live in sovereign independent States alongside each other.

We note with utmost concern the continuous systematic policy of violating the rights of the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territories conducted by the Israeli occupation authorities. We deplore and denounce the continuation of the Israeli occupation of all Palestinian and Arab territories including East Jerusalem, the Golan Heights and southern Lebanon, and Israel's

brutal measures against the Palestinians, including the current policy designed to dismember the West Bank by restricting movement of Palestinian individuals and goods through the City of Jerusalem. We condemn the use of torture and brutality in the interrogation of Palestinian prisoners, including women and children.

We observe with great concern the simultaneous occurrence of the illegal colonizing settlement of Israelis in the occupied Palestinian territories with the escalation of the continuing process of the alienation of the indigenous Palestinians and the annexation of their land, and attempts to expel them out of their national homeland. We demand the immediate cessation of the construction and expansion of all Israeli settlements in occupied Palestine as a pre-condition to any peace process.

We draw attention to the fact that Jewish immigration poses a great threat to Palestinian survival on their land and is an obstacle to the resolution of the Palestinian problem due to the ensuing demographic changes. This is especially true while the Palestinians continue to be denied their right to return. We call upon new immigrants to Israel and all Israelis to refuse to settle in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, and thus contribute to the efforts for a just settlement of the question of Palestine. We furthermore call upon the Soviet Union to refrain from facilitating Jewish immigration to Israel.

We denounce the double standard of the United States Government, characterized by its attitude with respect to the Palestinian right of self-determination as compared to that of Israel. We also condemn the United States Government's attempt to evade the need to convene the International Conference on the Middle East under the auspices of the United Nations, and its reluctance to take the necessary measures in order to overcome Israel's refusal to accept the principle of "land for peace" and bring a halt to its settlement activities in the occupied territories of the Golan, West Bank, including East Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip.

We oppose the massive and unconditional aid to Israel provided by the United States and other States which underwrites the continuing occupation. We call upon all Governments to condition all aid, loans and guarantees to Israel on the cessation of Israeli settlement construction and expansion in the occupied Palestinian and Arab territories, including East Jerusalem, the Golan Heights and southern Lebanon. We call upon all Governments and the United Nations Security Council to institute sanctions against Israeli occupation.

We unanimously recognize and support the intifadah as a national liberation struggle for the achievement of the State of Palestine and the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.

We condemn the American and Israeli endeavours to bypass the Palestine Liberation Organization, the sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, in the proposed regional conference on the Arab-Israeli conflict. We insist that Palestinians as all other peoples have full right to choose their own political representatives in any peace process. It is unacceptable and illogical that Israel be permitted to choose both the Israeli and the Palestinian delegations. Israel should have no say in naming or

vetoing any representative chosen by the Palestinians - whether on the basis of his or her political views, place of birth, present whereabouts or for any other reason.

The issue of the status of Jerusalem should not be excluded from negotiations, nor should Palestinian residents of that city be excluded from participation in the negotiations.

We consider it most urgent that the United Nations provide immediate and sustained protection for the Palestinians under occupation, and that the United Nations Security Council establish in East Jerusalem an authority responsible for the monitoring of human rights violations in contradiction with the Fourth Geneva Convention. We urge the establishment of a subcommission of the Security Council to facilitate the exercise by the Palestinians of their inalienable rights. We call for the establishment of a United Nations force to protect the Palestinian nation and to stop Israel's attempts to destroy it.

We also observe that the Palestinians in Israel are subjected to a policy of legal and political discrimination. We further demand that Israel apply the principles of justice and individual and national equality to the Palestinians in Israel. We condemn the Israeli policy of continued confiscations of Arab lands and destruction of Arab homes for the purpose of settlement of Soviet immigrants inside Israel. We alert the NGO network to monitor and publicize these injustices.

We condemn the actions of the Government of Kuwait in forcibly relocating more than 300,000 Palestinians who had lived in Kuwait prior to 2 August 1990. We further condemn the collective punishment of an entire community based on the alleged actions of some of its members. Furthermore, we remain concerned about the fate of the 50,000 Palestinians still residing in Kuwait, especially the 25,000 who carry Egyptian refugee documents. It is incumbent upon the Government of Kuwait either to allow these Palestinians to stay and work in Kuwait and to cease treating them in a discriminatory manner, or to secure their admission to a country of their choice, including the country in which they or their families were born. We NGOs hereby notify the Government of Kuwait that we are monitoring its actions concerning these Palestinians and those still detained in Kuwaiti prisons and detention centres. We NGOs will bring violations of their rights to the immediate attention of the international community through all possible means.

We conducted work together in workshops and specific recommendations for actions are appended here. We consider these practical, action orientated proposals to be the central focus of our collective agenda for the coming year. To enhance our effectiveness we are organizing task forces among NGOs worldwide to concentrate our energies on specific projects. A number of special interest group meetings were also convened within the context of the international meeting and their proposals for actions are also appended. We believe that the implementation of these projects by NGOs worldwide is a step on the path to a just and realistic peace in the Middle East.

We express our strongest protest against the action of the Israeli Government in preventing the distinguished experts, Mr. Sa'eb Erakat of An-Najah University and Mr. Raji Sourani of Gaza, from attending. We know of

other Palestinians living under occupation who were denied the possibility of participating in this meeting by the Israeli Government, such as Ahmed Hatibbi and Rezeq Shuqeir, and we most forcefully denounce this action.

We warmly thank the Committee for convening this international meeting and we greatly appreciate the presence of the Committee delegation. We thank the Division for Palestinian Rights and all others of the United Nations Secretariat, including the interpreters who so valuably assisted us. We express our appreciation to the distinguished experts who spoke here and added valuable information to our deliberations. We express our thanks to the Austrian Government for making available the Austria Centre for our meeting. We wish to express a special note of thanks and appreciation to Mr. Guido de Marco, President of the General Assembly, for his important and insightful comments. We all consider his participation in our meeting to be a distinct honour.

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Report of the
Committee on the Exercise of
the Inalienable Rights
of the Palestinian People

General Assembly
Official Records • Forty-seventh Session
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CONTENTS

<u>Chapter</u>	<u>Paragraphs</u>	<u>Page</u>
LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL		v
I. INTRODUCTION	1 - 9	1
II. MANDATE OF THE COMMITTEE	10 - 12	3
III. ORGANIZATION OF WORK	13 - 18	4
A. Election of officers	13 - 15	4
B. Participation in the work of the Committee	16 - 17	4
C. Re-establishment of the Working Group	18	4
IV. ACTION TAKEN BY THE COMMITTEE	19 - 65	5
A. Action taken in accordance with General Assembly resolution 46/74 A	19 - 40	5
1. Review of the situation relating to the question of Palestine and efforts to implement the recommendations of the Committee	19 - 30	5
2. Reactions to developments affecting the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people .	31 - 35	8
3. Action taken by the Committee to promote the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East	36 - 38	9
4. Attendance at international conferences and meetings	39	10
5. Action taken by United Nations bodies, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and intergovernmental organizations	40	10
B. Action taken by the Committee and the Division for Palestinian Rights in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 46/74 A and B	41 - 65	12
1. Regional seminars	44 - 51	12
2. Cooperation with non-governmental organizations	52 - 59	14

CONTENTS (continued)

	<u>Paragraphs</u>	<u>Page</u>
3. Information activities	60 - 63	15
4. International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People	64	16
5. Computer-based information system	65	16
V. ACTION TAKEN BY THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INFORMATION IN ACCORDANCE WITH GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 46/74 C	66 - 84	17
VI. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COMMITTEE	85 - 94	21

Annexes

I. Recommendations of the Committee endorsed by the General Assembly at its thirty-first session		25
II. Conclusions and recommendations adopted by the Twenty-ninth United Nations Seminar on the Question of Palestine, Nicosia, 20 to 24 January 1992		29
III. Declaration adopted by the Fourth United Nations Asian Regional Non-Governmental Organization Symposium on the Question of Palestine, Nicosia, 20 to 24 January 1992		35
IV. Conclusions and recommendations adopted by the Thirtieth United Nations Seminar on the Question of Palestine, New York, 22 and 23 June 1992		39
V. Ninth United Nations North American Regional Non-Governmental Organization Symposium on the Question of Palestine, New York, 24 to 26 June 1992		42
VI. Conclusions and recommendations adopted by the Thirty-first United Nations Seminar on the Question of Palestine, Qawra, Malta, 27 to 29 July 1992		44
VII. Declaration adopted by the Sixth United Nations European Regional Non-Governmental Organization Symposium on the Question of Palestine, Geneva, 24 and 25 August 1992		49
VIII. Declaration adopted by the Ninth United Nations International Non-Governmental Organization Meeting on the Question of Palestine, Geneva, 26 to 28 August 1992		54

LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

5 November 1992

Sir,

I have the honour to enclose herewith the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for submission to the General Assembly in accordance with paragraph 4 of resolution 46/74 A of 11 December 1991.

Accept, Sir, the assurances of my highest consideration.

(Signed) Kéba Birane CISSE
Chairman of the Committee on the
Exercise of the Inalienable
Rights of the Palestinian People

His Excellency
Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali
Secretary-General of the United Nations

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People was established by the General Assembly in its resolution 3376 (XXX) of 10 November 1975, in which the Assembly requested the Committee to consider and recommend to it a programme designed to enable the Palestinian people to exercise its inalienable rights as recognized by the Assembly in resolution 3236 (XXIX) of 22 November 1974. During the reporting period, the Committee was composed of 23 Member States as follows: Afghanistan, Belarus, Cuba, Cyprus, Guinea, Guyana, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mali, Malta, Nigeria, Pakistan, Romania, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine and Yugoslavia.
2. The recommendations made by the Committee in its first report to the Assembly 1/ were first endorsed by the Assembly in resolution 31/20 of 24 November 1976 as a basis for the solution of the question of Palestine. Those recommendations were reaffirmed by the Committee in its subsequent reports 2/ and were endorsed by the Assembly with overwhelming support on each occasion. The Assembly also continued to renew and, as necessary, expand the mandate of the Committee.
3. Despite the repeated and urgent appeals of the Committee, the Security Council has not yet been able to act on or implement the recommendations of the Committee. The Committee is of the view that positive consideration and action by the Security Council on those recommendations would contribute to promoting a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict in the Middle East. The Committee has also continued to promote the convening of an International Peace Conference on the Middle East, in accordance with the guidelines and principles reaffirmed by the General Assembly in resolution 46/75 of 11 December 1991, which provides the most comprehensive, practical and universally accepted framework for peace.
4. The Committee believes that, with the fundamental changes in the international political scene, the shift from confrontation to cooperation in international affairs and the renewed determination to work towards the resolution of longstanding regional conflicts, it is of the utmost importance to intensify efforts to bring about a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict. In this regard, the Committee has continued to stress the importance of the application of the principles of international law and the implementation of relevant General Assembly and Security Council resolutions.
5. The Committee has welcomed the convening, under the sponsorship of the United States of America and the former Soviet Union, of the Peace Conference on the Middle East at Madrid, on 30 October 1991, and the subsequent bilateral and multilateral talks, as a significant step towards the establishment of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the region. The Committee noted that the peace process is based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) of 22 November 1967 and 338 (1973) of 22 October 1973 and on the land-for-peace formula, and expressed the hope that the role of the United Nations would be generally intensified in the process. The Committee called on the present Government in Israel to respond positively to the Palestinian peace initiative of 1988 and subsequent Palestinian proposals, and to recognize the inalienable

national rights of the Palestinian people, particularly the right to self-determination.

6. The Committee expressed its most serious concern at the continued deterioration of the situation in the occupied Palestinian territory and the imposition of repressive measures by the occupying Power, Israel, in violation of its obligations under the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War of 12 August 1949, 3/ and in disregard of ongoing peace efforts. The Committee decided to assign high priority to promoting the adoption of concrete measures by the High Contracting Parties to that Convention in order to ensure respect by Israel, the occupying Power, of the Convention in all circumstances, in conformity with their obligation under article 1.

7. In particular, the Committee strongly deplored Israel's continued reliance on military force to suppress the Palestinian uprising, the intifadah, now in its fifth year, and called for intensified international support for the Palestinian people at this time of great importance in their history. The Committee also condemned the intensification of land confiscation and of the settlements policy and practice pursued by Israel in the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, the continued imposition of curfews and collective punishment, and the increasing restrictions on freedom of movement and economic activity of Palestinians, which greatly jeopardized their livelihood and their development, and posed a serious threat to the chances for a just peace.

8. The Committee condemned the fact that the Israeli occupation had lasted for 25 years, despite international efforts to bring a comprehensive, just and lasting peace to the region, and called for the withdrawal of the Israeli armed forces from the occupied Palestinian and other Arab territories, including Jerusalem, in accordance with United Nations resolutions. The Committee reaffirmed that Israel's continued occupation of those territories and its denial of the exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including those to self-determination without external interference, to national independence and sovereignty, and to return to their homes and property, constituted the principal obstacle to the achievement of a just peace.

9. The Committee was greatly concerned that the lack of progress in the peace process, together with the continuation of repressive measures against the Palestinians living under occupation, the creeping annexation of the occupied Palestinian territory, and the worsening economic and other living conditions of Palestinians, would jeopardize the chances of achieving a just peace and lead to disastrous consequences for the Palestinian people as a whole. The Committee believed that a solution was urgently needed, taking into account the new opportunities that now exist, on the basis of international law and in conformity with the principles and purposes of the United Nations Charter and the relevant United Nations resolutions, which must be applied in an even-handed manner.

II. MANDATE OF THE COMMITTEE

10. The Committee's mandate for the year 1992 is contained in paragraphs 3 to 5 of General Assembly resolution 46/74 A of 11 December 1991, in which the Assembly:

(a) Requested "the Committee to continue to keep under review the situation relating to the question of Palestine as well as the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Achievement of Palestinian Rights 4/ and to report and make suggestions to the General Assembly or the Security Council, as appropriate";

(b) Authorized "the Committee to continue to exert all efforts to promote the implementation of its recommendations, including representation at conferences and meetings and the sending of delegations, to make such adjustments in its approved programme of seminars and symposia and meetings for non-governmental organizations as it may consider necessary, to give special emphasis to the need to mobilize public opinion in Europe and North America, and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its forty-seventh session and thereafter";

(c) Also requested "the Committee to continue to extend its cooperation to non-governmental organizations in their contribution towards heightening international awareness of the facts relating to the question of Palestine and creating a more favourable atmosphere for the full implementation of the recommendations of the Committee, and to take the necessary steps to expand its contacts with those organizations".

11. In its resolution 46/74 B, also of 11 December 1991, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General, inter alia, "to provide the Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat with the necessary resources, including a computer-based information system, and to ensure that it 'would continue' to discharge the tasks detailed in 'earlier resolutions', in consultation with the Committee ... and under its guidance".

12. In its resolution 46/74 C, of 11 December 1991, the General Assembly requested "the Department of Public Information, in full cooperation and coordination with the Committee ..., to continue ... its special information programme on the question of Palestine ..., with particular emphasis on public opinion in Europe and North America".

III. ORGANIZATION OF WORK

A. Election of officers

13. At its 185th meeting, on 15 January 1992, the Committee elected Mr. Kéba Birane Cissé (Senegal) as Chairman, re-elected Mr. Ricardo Alarcón de Quesada (Cuba) and Mr. Khodaidad Basharmal (Afghanistan) as Vice-Chairmen and Mr. Victor Camilleri (Malta) as Rapporteur.

14. At its 190th meeting, on 5 October 1992, the Committee elected Mr. Alcibiades J. Hidalgo Basulto (Cuba) as Vice-Chairman in place of Mr. Ricardo Alarcón de Quesada (Cuba).

15. At its 186th meeting, on 18 March 1992, the Committee adopted its programme of work for 1992 (A/AC.183/1992/CRP.1/Rev.1) in implementation of its mandate.

B. Participation in the work of the Committee

16. As in previous years, the Committee reconfirmed that all States Members of the United Nations and Permanent Observers to the United Nations desiring to participate in the work of the Committee as observers were welcome to do so. Accordingly, in a letter dated 6 April 1992, the Chairman of the Committee so informed the Secretary-General, who subsequently transmitted the letter, on 16 April 1992, to the States Members of the United Nations and members of the specialized agencies, and to intergovernmental organizations. In accordance with established practice, the Committee also invited Palestine, represented by the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), to participate in the work of the Committee as an observer, to attend all its meetings and to make observations and proposals for the consideration of the Committee.

17. During 1992, the Committee again welcomed as observers all the States and organizations that had participated in its work in the preceding year. 5/

C. Re-establishment of the Working Group

18. At its 185th meeting, the Committee re-established its Working Group to assist in the preparation and expedition of the work of the Committee on the understanding that any Committee member or observer could participate in its proceedings. 6/ The Working Group was constituted as before under the chairmanship of Mr. Victor Camilleri. Mr. Dinesh Kumar Jain (India) was re-elected Vice-Chairman of the Working Group.

IV. ACTION TAKEN BY THE COMMITTEE

A. Action taken in accordance with General Assembly resolution 46/74 A

1. Review of the situation relating to the question of Palestine and efforts to implement the recommendations of the Committee

19. In accordance with its mandate, the Committee continued to keep under review the situation relating to the question of Palestine and to exert all efforts to promote the implementation of its recommendations as repeatedly endorsed by the General Assembly.

20. In response to urgent developments affecting the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, the Chairman of the Committee, on a number of occasions, brought such developments to the attention of the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council, urging the adoption of appropriate measures in accordance with United Nations resolutions (see paras. 31 and 32 below).

21. The Committee, with the assistance of the Division for Palestinian Rights, continued to monitor the situation in the occupied Palestinian territory on an ongoing basis through the media, the reports of United Nations organs and organizations, and information collected by Governments, non-governmental organizations, individual experts and persons from Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory who participated in meetings held under the auspices of the Committee, and other sources.

22. In a letter dated 5 June 1992 from its Chairman to the Secretary-General (A/46/933-S/24045), and at a special meeting held on 17 June 1992, the Committee reviewed the effects of the Israeli occupation on the Palestinian people in the 25 years since the war of 1967. The Committee noted with deep concern that the Palestinian people have paid dearly for the occupation with loss of life, loss of land and natural resources, and severe restrictions on their political, civil, economic, social and cultural rights. The Israeli military operations of 1967 were accompanied by systematic and deliberate destruction of Palestinian villages and homes and the renewed dispersal of Palestinians, almost half a million of whom were displaced, one third of them becoming refugees for the second time since 1948. The Israeli authorities had continued to deny Palestinians their fundamental right to return and to refuse to allow the reunification of families, imposing ever more stringent and restrictive policies on Palestinian families, including summary deportation of women and children considered to be living "illegally" with their immediate families in the occupied territory.

23. The Committee recalled that, shortly after the war, Israel had annexed Jerusalem over the unanimous opposition of the international community, and had begun the confiscation of Palestinian land and the building of settlements in a process of gradual de facto annexation which had continued under subsequent Governments. The Committee noted that over 60 per cent of the West Bank and Gaza had been confiscated between 1967 and 1992 under various pretexts sanctioned by military orders. Some 230,000 Israeli citizens had

been moved permanently to about 212 settlements throughout the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem; an increase of 25 per cent had taken place in the year under review alone. Leaders of the Government of Israel had repeatedly voiced their intention to remain in permanent control of the occupied territory, for either ideological, strategic or security reasons. The Committee expressed particular concern at the continuous efforts since the beginning of the occupation to change the demographic composition of the old city of Jerusalem and its surroundings and to destroy its Palestinian identity. The Committee reaffirmed that those policies of Israel were in clear violation of article 49 of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, which the Security Council had declared to be applicable de jure to all the territories occupied by Israel since 1967, and of numerous Security Council resolutions.

24. The Committee was concerned that, through this illegal process of colonization, Palestinian towns, villages and agricultural areas were being increasingly encircled, their development restricted and the unity of the Palestinian homeland was being shattered. Regional land-use and road plans had been devised and implemented to serve the Israeli settlements and to tie them more closely to Israel, bypassing Palestinian towns and villages. The Committee noted with particular concern that the Israeli Housing Ministry had recently allocated vast funds to the so-called "Seven Stars Plan" linking metropolitan areas just inside the "green line" to settlements in the West Bank, thus aiming to erase the border between Israel and the occupied territory. The fragmentation of the West Bank was also being reinforced through travel restrictions which denied Palestinians free transit through annexed East Jerusalem.

25. The Committee further noted that Israel had continued to appropriate and control Palestinian water resources and drastically to restrict Palestinian use of water for farming and other needs. Moreover, discriminatory taxation and other administrative measures stifled the economic development of the occupied territory and made it more dependent on the economy of the occupying Power.

26. The Committee also noted that, since 1967, a dual legal system had been established which extended the protection of Israeli civilian law to the Jewish settlers, while imposing a separate harsh and discriminatory military law on the Palestinians. Every aspect of Palestinian life was controlled by the military authorities through some 2,000 military orders enacted during the 25 years of occupation. The Israeli authorities had also continued to use emergency powers to deny and restrict civil and political liberties.

27. The Committee noted with the greatest concern that the Israeli armed forces had continued to use unjustified force in suppressing the intifadah and exerting control over the Palestinian population living under occupation. Human rights organizations had reported that, from December 1987 to September 1992, at least 1,102 Palestinians were killed, most of them by shooting, and over 124,600 were injured by Israeli forces. They also reported that open-fire regulations for Israeli soldiers had been increasingly relaxed and that undercover units of the army had engaged in summary executions of Palestinian militants. Studies of conditions in Israeli prisons had documented systematic ill-treatment and torture of Palestinian prisoners, and the death of at least 32 Palestinians in detention since the beginning of the

intifadah. During the same period, over 17,300 Palestinians were placed under administrative detention for periods of up to six months without charges or trial; 12,000 political prisoners were reported to be held under appalling conditions as of September 1992. Moreover, in the period since 1987, 70 Palestinians were expelled for "security reasons" (more than 1,300 since June 1967). In the same period, towns and villages in the occupied Palestinian territory experienced a combined total of over 11,600 days of curfew, the demolition or sealing of approximately 2,300 homes, and the uprooting of approximately 146,300 trees.

28. The Committee noted that the fabric and well-being of Palestinian society had suffered great additional damage resulting from arbitrary mass arrests, prolonged school closings, disruption of the health care system, raids by troops and attacks by armed settlers, denial of freedom of movement, loss of employment opportunities in Israel and the like. The plight of the Palestinians had been further compounded by the repeated actions which the occupying forces had taken against the facilities and personnel of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), in disregard of the agency's humanitarian mandate. The Committee also noted that the Director-General of the International Labour Organisation (ILO), in his annual report on the situation of workers in the occupied territories, had concluded that the continuing state of military occupation rendered impossible a situation in which the ILO standards and principles could be fully respected.

29. The Committee noted that, in October 1991, Israel had ratified the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, and called on the relevant supervisory bodies to take all measures in their power to ensure that Israel abides by its obligations under those treaties.

30. Taking into account the continuing intolerable situation in the occupied Palestinian territory, the Committee wishes to draw once again the most urgent attention of the General Assembly and the Security Council to the policies and practices of Israel, the occupying Power, which are in violation of the aforementioned Fourth Geneva Convention. The Committee reiterates its most urgent appeal to the Security Council, to the High Contracting Parties to the Convention and to all concerned to take all necessary measures to ensure the safety and international protection of the Palestinians in the occupied Palestinian territory pending the withdrawal of Israeli forces and the achievement of a just settlement. The Committee further wishes to express appreciation to the Secretary-General for his efforts in this regard in accordance with Security Council resolution 681 (1990) of 20 December 1990. Above and beyond protective and emergency relief measures, the international community must take all possible measures to halt the rapid deterioration in the living conditions of the Palestinian people and to develop socio-economic structures that will lead to the genuine development of the occupied Palestinian territory in preparation for independent nationhood. The Committee noted that various United Nations organizations and bodies had undertaken the implementation of a number of development projects in the occupied Palestinian territory, and called for the intensification of efforts in this regard.

2. Reactions to developments affecting the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people

(a) Communications to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

31. The Chairman of the Committee on a number of occasions drew the attention of the Secretary-General and of the President of the Security Council to urgent developments in the occupied Palestinian territory. The Chairman condemned the resumption by Israel of its policy of deportations, as well as the indiscriminate shooting of demonstrators by the army, and the intensification and expansion of collective punishment such as the imposition of curfews and mass detention of Palestinian civilians, including minors. The Chairman pointed out that those policies and practices were in violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 12 August 1949 3/ and requested that Israel accept the de jure applicability of that Convention to all the territories occupied since 1967 and abide scrupulously by the provisions of that Convention and relevant Security Council resolutions. The Chairman appealed urgently to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council and to all parties concerned, in particular the High Contracting Parties to the Convention, to take all necessary measures for ensuring the safety and protection of the Palestinian civilians under occupation and to intensify all efforts towards the achievement of a peaceful settlement.

32. The following letters from the Chairman of the Committee to the Secretary-General were circulated as official documents of the General Assembly, under the agenda item entitled "Question of Palestine", and of the Security Council: (a) letter dated 16 December 1991 (A/46/788-S/23291); (b) letter dated 6 January 1992 (A/46/837-S/23374); (c) letter dated 11 February 1992 (A/46/875-S/23570); (d) letter dated 5 June 1992 (A/46/933-S/24045); (e) letter dated 16 July 1992 (A/46/947-S/24304); (f) letter dated 13 August 1992 (A/46/958-S/24436); and (g) letter dated 8 October 1992 (A/47/522-S/24648).

(b) Action taken within the Security Council

33. The Committee followed closely the activities of the Security Council on matters relating to the Committee's mandate and participated in Council debates as necessary.

34. At its 3026th meeting, on 6 January 1992, the Security Council adopted unanimously resolution 726 (1992), in which it strongly condemned the decision of Israel, the occupying Power, to resume deportations of Palestinian civilians; reaffirmed the applicability of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 12 August 1949 3/ to all the Palestinian territories occupied by Israel since 1967, including Jerusalem; requested Israel, the occupying Power, to refrain from deporting any Palestinian civilian from the occupied territories; also requested Israel, the occupying Power, to ensure the safe and immediate return to the occupied territories of all those deported; and decided to keep the matter under review.

35. At the 3065th meeting of the Security Council, on 4 April 1992, the President of the Council made a statement on behalf of the members of the Council (S/23783), expressing grave concern at the continued deterioration of

the situation in the Gaza Strip, especially at the serious situation in Rafah, in which several Palestinians had been killed and many more injured. The members of the Council condemned all those acts of violence at Rafah, and urged maximum restraint in order to bring the violence to an end. The members of the Council urged Israel to abide at all times by its obligations under the Fourth Geneva Convention and to respect and to act in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the Security Council. The members of the Council were concerned that any escalation of violence would have serious implications for the peace process, especially at a time when negotiations to achieve a comprehensive, just and lasting peace are under way. The members of the Council requested the Secretary-General to use his good offices, in accordance with Council resolution 681 (1990) of 20 December 1990, regarding this situation concerning Palestinian civilians under Israeli occupation.

3. Action taken by the Committee to promote the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East

36. The General Assembly, by its resolution 46/75, reaffirmed the urgent need to achieve a just and comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict, the core of which is the question of Palestine. It considered that the convening of an International Peace Conference on the Middle East, under the auspices of the United Nations, with the participation of all parties to the conflict, including the PLO, on an equal footing, and the five permanent members of the Security Council, based on Council resolutions 242 (1967) of 22 November 1967 and 338 (1973) of 22 October 1973 and the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people, primarily the right to self-determination, would contribute to the promotion of peace in the region. It reaffirmed the following principles for the achievement of comprehensive peace: the withdrawal of Israel from the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, and from the other occupied Arab territories; guaranteeing arrangements for security of all States in the region, including those named in General Assembly resolution 181 (II) of 29 November 1947, within secure and internationally recognized boundaries; resolving the problem of the Palestine refugees in conformity with Assembly resolution 194 (III) of 11 December 1948, and subsequent relevant resolutions; dismantling the Israeli settlements in the territories occupied since 1967; and guaranteeing freedom of access to Holy Places, religious buildings and sites. The Assembly also welcomed the convening at Madrid, on 30 October 1991, of the Peace Conference on the Middle East, which constituted a significant step towards the establishment of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the region. It noted the expressed desire and endeavours to place the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, under the supervision of the United Nations for a transitional period, as part of the peace process; and requested the Secretary-General to continue his efforts with the parties concerned, and in consultation with the Security Council, for the promotion of peace in the region, and to submit progress reports on developments in this matter.

37. In adopting its programme of work, the Committee, taking into account the ongoing efforts to advance the peace process, decided to continue to give the utmost priority to the promotion of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the region based on internationally recognized principles and United Nations resolutions, and the convening of an International Peace Conference on the Middle East under the auspices of the United Nations.

38. The Committee was greatly encouraged by the overwhelming international support for its objectives and by the intensification of efforts in the international community in this regard, as reflected in particular in decisions adopted by United Nations bodies and intergovernmental organizations, and recommendations adopted by the regional seminars and by meetings of non-governmental organizations on the question of Palestine organized under the Committee's auspices.

4. Attendance at international conferences and meetings

39. In accordance with its mandate, the Committee was represented at the following international meetings during the period since its previous report to the General Assembly:

(a) Sixth Islamic Summit Conference, held at Dakar from 9 to 11 December 1991;

(b) Ministerial Meeting of the Coordinating Bureau of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, held at Bali, Indonesia, from 14 to 16 May 1992;

(c) Fifty-sixth ordinary session of the Council of Ministers of the Organization of African Unity, held at Dakar from 22 to 28 June 1992, and twenty-eighth ordinary session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of that organization, held at Dakar from 29 June to 1 July 1992;

(d) Tenth Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries, held at Jakarta from 1 to 6 September 1992.

5. Action taken by United Nations bodies, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and intergovernmental organizations

40. The Committee continued to follow with great interest the activities relating to the question of Palestine of United Nations bodies, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and intergovernmental organizations. The Committee noted especially the support of the international community for the ongoing peace process and the hope that it would result in a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement in accordance with United Nations principles and resolutions. It also noted the great concern about the continuing violations of human rights by Israel, the occupying Power, and about its settlements policy, and the sense of urgency with which the international community addressed the need to ensure the safety and protection of the Palestinian people under occupation. The Committee took particular note of the following documents:

(a) Declaration of the European Council on the peace process in the Middle East, issued on 9 December 1991 (A/46/779, annex);

(b) Dakar Declaration, final communiqué and resolutions of the Sixth Islamic Summit Conference, held at Dakar from 9 to 11 December 1991 (A/47/88-S/23563, annexes I, II and III, and resolutions 1/6-P(IS), 2/6-P(IS) and 3/6-P(IS));

(c) Statement on the deportation of 12 Palestinians from the occupied territories issued by the European Community and its member States on 4 January 1992 (A/46/839-S/23381, annex);

(d) Resolutions adopted by the Commission on Human Rights at its forty-eighth session (resolutions 1992/2 A and B, 1992/3 and 1992/4 of 14 February 1992); 7/

(e) Statement by the Presidency of the European Community on the Middle East, issued at Lisbon on 17 February 1992 (A/47/110, annex);

(f) Resolution 5159 of the Council of the League of Arab States meeting in extraordinary session on 20 February 1992, concerning Israeli settlement activity in the occupied Arab territories (A/46/883, annex);

(g) Resolution adopted by the World Health Assembly at its forty-fifth session, held at Geneva on 14 May 1992, concerning health conditions of the Arab population in the occupied Arab territories, including Palestine (WHA 45.26);

(h) Press communiqué issued by the Ministerial Meeting of the Coordinating Bureau of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, held at Bali, Indonesia from 14 to 16 May 1992 (A/47/225-S/23998, annex, paras. 17 and 18);

(i) Resolution adopted at the Fifth Extraordinary Session of the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers, held at Istanbul on 17 and 18 June 1992, entitled, "The cause of Palestine and Al-Quds Al-Sharif and the Arab-Israeli conflict" (A/47/592-S/24718, annex);

(j) Resolutions adopted by the Council of Ministers of the Organization of African Unity at its fifty-sixth ordinary session, held at Dakar from 22 to 28 June 1992 (A/47/558, annex I, CM/Res.1393 (LVI) Rev.1 and 1394 (LVI) Rev.1);

(k) Final communiqué of the Annual Coordination Meeting of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, held at United Nations Headquarters on 23 September 1992 (A/47/483-S/24604, annex);

(l) Declaration of the European Council of Ministers of the European Economic Community on the Middle East peace process, issued at Lisbon on 25 June 1992 (A/47/309, annex);

(m) Resolutions adopted by the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 1992, held in New York from 29 June to 31 July (1992/16, 1992/57 and 1992/58);

(n) Communiqué adopted by the twenty-fifth Ministerial Meeting of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), held at Manila on 21 and 22 July 1992 (A/47/351-S/24357, annex, paras. 26 and 27);

(o) Final documents and the Jakarta Message adopted by the Tenth Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries, held at Jakarta from 1 to 6 September 1992 (see A/47/675-S/24816, annex);

(p) Statement issued by the Ministerial Council of the Gulf Cooperation Council at its forty-fourth session, held at Jeddah on 8 and 9 September 1992 (A/47/441-S/24559, annex).

B. Action taken by the Committee and the Division for Palestinian Rights in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 46/74 A and B

41. In adopting its programme of work for the year, the Committee decided to focus on the following priority issues:

(a) The imperative need to end human rights violations and to ensure the international protection of Palestinians in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, in accordance with the Fourth Geneva Convention and Security Council resolutions, and the promotion of measures to be taken by the High Contracting Parties to the Convention to ensure respect for its provisions;

(b) The adverse impact of Israel's settlement policy and practice on the exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and the achievement of a just settlement of the question of Palestine;

(c) The deteriorating economic situation of the Palestinian people and the urgent need for international assistance to promote the independent social and economic development of the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem;

(d) The promotion of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the region based on internationally recognized principles and United Nations resolutions, and the convening of an International Peace Conference on the Middle East under the auspices of the United Nations.

42. The Committee also decided to organize meetings focused on one theme in order to examine in depth those priority issues and to exert a direct and effective influence on the course of action of Governments and intergovernmental bodies in that regard.

43. The Committee and the Division for Palestinian Rights, pursuant to their respective mandates, organized a number of regional seminars, symposia and meetings for non-governmental organizations in 1992, as set out below.

1. Regional seminars

44. In accordance with the programme of work for 1992, Asian, North American and European regional seminars were included in the calendar of meetings to be held under the auspices of the Committee during the period under review.

(a) Asian Regional Seminar

45. The Asian Regional Seminar was held at Nicosia from 20 to 24 January 1992, jointly with the Asian Non-Governmental Organization Symposium. The Committee greatly appreciated the decision of the Government of Cyprus to provide the

venue for the Seminar and Symposium and to make a financial contribution thereto.

46. The Seminar considered the topics of three round tables: round table I, "A just settlement of the question of Palestine"; round table II, "Safety and protection of the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territory"; and round table III, "International and regional issues". Presentations were made by 20 eminent experts from Asia and the United States of America, as well as Palestinians and Israelis. The Committee noted that the participants had adopted conclusions and recommendations in which they expressed deep concern at the violations of Palestinian human rights by Israel and called for measures to be taken to ensure respect by the occupying Power for the Fourth Geneva Convention. The participants also welcomed the convening of the Peace Conference on the Middle East at Madrid on 30 October 1991 and the subsequent bilateral talks between the parties in Washington, D.C., and expressed their earnest hope that the talks would be successful in establishing a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the region. They noted in this connection that this process had the support of the parties concerned and had as its basis Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), which had long been recognized as the cornerstone of a comprehensive settlement. They stressed the essential need for an active role by the United Nations, the Secretary-General and the Security Council, for a successful outcome of the peace process. Further details on the Seminar and the text of the conclusions and recommendations adopted by the participants are set forth in annex II below.

(b) North American Regional Seminar

47. The North American Regional Seminar was held at United Nations Headquarters in New York on 22 and 23 June 1992. In accordance with the priorities established in its programme of work, the Committee decided to focus the Seminar on a single theme of particular urgency, namely, "Enforcing the Fourth Geneva Convention for ensuring the protection of the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem".

48. Seven eminent experts from North America, as well as Palestinians and Israelis, presented papers on this issue. In their conclusions and recommendations the participants reiterated that the Fourth Geneva Convention applied de jure to all the territories occupied by Israel since 1967 and noted with serious concern numerous and persistent violations of the Convention by Israel. They declared that it was the duty of the High Contracting Parties to the Convention to ensure respect by Israel for its obligations under the Convention. In order to use the mechanisms contained in the Convention itself, participants suggested that the High Contracting Parties should utilize their consular presence more fully and effectively for monitoring purposes, and that a United Nations monitoring organization should also be established. Participants recommended that the idea of seeking an advisory opinion from the International Court of Justice on the matter be developed further. Some details on the Seminar and the text of the conclusions and recommendations adopted by the participants set forth in annex IV below.

(c) European Regional Seminar

49. The European Regional Seminar was held at Qawra, Malta from 27 to 29 July 1991. The Committee was grateful to the Government of Malta for agreeing to provide the venue for this important Seminar.

50. The Seminar considered the topics of two round tables: round table I, "International action to ensure the safety and protection of the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territory", and round table II, "Efforts to promote the implementation of United Nations resolutions on the question of Palestine and the situation in the Middle East".

51. Fifteen prominent experts from Europe, as well as Israelis and Palestinians, presented papers at the Seminar. The Committee noted that the Seminar participants had adopted conclusions and recommendations expressing support for the implementation of United Nations resolutions on the question of Palestine and had also expressed deep concern at the violations of Palestinian human rights by Israel and had called for measures to be taken to ensure respect by the occupying Power for the Fourth Geneva Convention. Some details on the Seminar and the text of the conclusions and recommendations adopted by the participants are set forth in annex VI below.

2. Cooperation with non-governmental organizations

52. The Committee, in accordance with its mandate under General Assembly resolution 46/74 A, continued to extend its cooperation to non-governmental organizations active on the question of Palestine and to expand its contacts with them. The Division for Palestinian Rights, in consultation with the Committee and under its guidance, organized regional symposia and an international meeting for non-governmental organizations during 1992 in implementation of the Committee's objective. The Committee noted that non-governmental organizations had further intensified their activities to assist the Palestinian people and to promote a just and comprehensive peace.

(a) Asian Regional Non-Governmental Organization Symposium

53. The Asian Regional Non-Governmental Organization Symposium was held at Nicosia from 20 to 24 January 1992 together with the Asian Regional Seminar. The participants considered the topics of the three round tables mentioned above (para. 46) jointly with the Seminar participants. Three workshops were organized separately for the Symposium on the theme "Developing solidarity activities by Israeli and other organizations with Palestinian women, physicians, health workers and students". The Committee noted that the participating organizations had pledged to undertake new activities and to expand further the network of non-governmental organizations in the Asian region, and had elected a coordinating committee for that purpose. Some details on the Symposium and the text of the final declaration are set forth in annex III below.

(b) North American Regional Non-Governmental Organization Symposium

54. The North American Regional Non-Governmental Organization Symposium was held at United Nations Headquarters from 24 to 26 June 1992 immediately following the North American Regional Seminar, in accordance with the practice followed in previous years. The programme for the Symposium was elaborated in consultations between the Committee and the North American Coordinating Committee for Non-Governmental Organizations on the Question of Palestine within the framework of a preparatory meeting held in New York on 3 and 4 February 1992.

55. The programme for the Symposium provided for two main panels, on the themes "Twenty-five years of occupation: overcoming the obstacles" and "Preparing the way for Palestine". The programme also included a teach-in, a resource fair, eight workshops and four skills-training workshops. The Committee noted that the North American Symposium had adopted a variety of concrete proposals and action programmes to guide their future work, details of which are set forth in annex V below.

(c) European Regional Non-Governmental Organization Symposium

56. The European Non-Governmental Organization Symposium was held at Geneva on 24 and 25 August 1992, and was immediately followed by the International Non-Governmental Organization Meeting, which was held there from 26 to 28 August 1992.

57. The programmes for the Symposium and the Meeting were elaborated by the Committee in consultation with the European Coordinating Committee for Non-Governmental Organizations on the Question of Palestine and the International Coordinating Committee for Non-Governmental Organizations on the Question of Palestine within the framework of a preparatory meeting held at Geneva on 30 and 31 March 1992.

58. The theme for the European Symposium was "Working for peace: European coordination". The programme included two plenary sessions, which considered the responsibilities of European governmental and non-governmental bodies towards the Palestinian people, and the report of the members of the European Coordinating Committee on their Committee's activities during the period August 1991 to August 1992. Two workshops were also held. The Symposium heard three reports on ongoing projects by non-governmental organizations initiated at the 1991 Symposium. The Symposium adopted a declaration and reports of the workshops. Details on the Symposium and the text of the declaration are set forth in annex VII below.

(d) International Non-Governmental Organization Meeting

59. The theme for the International Non-Governmental Organization Meeting was "Protection and statehood". The programme consisted of three panels, which dealt with protection, statehood and the non-governmental organization process, respectively. Arrangements were also made for 12 action-oriented working groups and task forces. The Committee noted that the Meeting had adopted a declaration and action-oriented proposals emanating from the workshops. Further details on the Meeting and the text of the declaration are set forth in annex VIII below.

3. Information activities

60. The Committee noted with appreciation that the Division for Palestinian Rights, in accordance with its mandate, continued to respond to information requests and to prepare the following publications, under the guidance of the Committee, for dissemination:

(a) Monthly bulletins covering action by the Committee, other United Nations organs, and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations concerned with the question of Palestine;

(b) Monthly and bi-monthly reports on developments relating to the question of Palestine, monitored from the Arabic, English and Hebrew press for the use of the Committee;

(c) Compilations of relevant statements, declarations and proposals regarding the settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict and the question of Palestine;

(d) Reports of regional seminars, regional symposia and international meetings of non-governmental organizations.

61. The Committee noted that the Division had issued a study entitled "Water resources of the occupied Palestinian territory" updating an earlier brochure on the question of Palestine prepared in the late 1970s, and a compilation of papers presented by experts at seminars organized by the Committee, entitled "Question of Palestine: legal aspects". The Division was also preparing an updated version of a study entitled "Acquisition of land in Palestine".

62. An updated issue of the information note entitled "The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and the Division for Palestinian Rights" (May 1992) was prepared and was issued in the six official languages, as well as in German and Japanese.

63. The following documents were also issued by the Division during the period under review: resolutions and decisions of the General Assembly and the Security Council relating to the question of Palestine: 1991 (A/AC.183/L.2/Add.12), and a special bulletin on the commemoration of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

4. International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People

64. The International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People was observed on 29 November 1991 at United Nations Headquarters in New York and at the United Nations Offices at Geneva and Vienna. The Committee noted with appreciation that the International Day had also been commemorated in 1991 in many other cities throughout the world.

5. Computer-based information system

65. In its programme of work for 1992, the Committee stressed the importance it attached to the establishment in the Division for Palestinian Rights of a computer-based information system, as requested by the Committee in its programme of work for 1991 and approved by the General Assembly in resolution 46/74 B. The Committee noted that a feasibility study of the proposed system had been prepared by the Secretariat, initial hardware components of the system had been acquired and that development work for the system was proceeding.

V. ACTION TAKEN BY THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INFORMATION IN ACCORDANCE WITH GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 46/74 C

66. The Department of Public Information continued to provide press coverage of all meetings of relevant United Nations bodies, including the Security Council and the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. Press releases were issued on regional seminars and symposia organized by the Committee, including those held in Malta and New York.
67. Additional press releases were issued containing the texts of the Secretary-General's statements relating to the question of Palestine and the situation in the occupied Arab territories, and press releases issued by UNRWA on its activities were reissued and disseminated by the Department. A total of forty-seven press releases were issued on the question of Palestine.
68. All regional seminars and non-governmental organization symposia on the question of Palestine sponsored by the Committee were covered extensively in weekly regional magazines.
69. The magazine UN Chronicle continued to publish stories relating to Palestinian issues, including Security Council actions and results of special meetings and seminars.
70. The Public Inquiries Unit of the Department responded to 290 requests for information on Palestine. In addition, the subject was included in the presentation made to visitors taking the guided tour at United Nations Headquarters; for the first half of 1992, visitors numbered 230,623.
71. The Group Programme Unit of the Department arranged briefings on Palestine, given by Secretariat officials and delegation members, for 21 groups visiting Headquarters.
72. The Department continued to distribute its publications, including revised versions of the following booklets: The United Nations and the Question of Palestine; For the Rights of Palestinians: Work of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People; and Human Rights for the Palestinians: The Work of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Population of the Occupied Territories. A total of 14,639 of those publications were distributed in Arabic, English, French, German and Spanish.
73. The Department initiated the distribution of the following new publications: Prospects for Peace in the Middle East: an Israeli-Palestinian Dialogue, published in English and French, which reflects the debate which took place at the International Encounter for European Journalists on the Question of Palestine, organized by the Department at Helsinki in 1991; Life of the Palestinians under Israeli Occupation, which chronicles the plight of the Palestinian people since the beginning of the occupation, with particular emphasis on the years of the intifadah, issued in English and French (with other languages scheduled for a later date); and a poster by renowned French artist Michel Granger, which promotes the right of self-determination of the Palestinian people, published in various languages, including English, French and Arabic.

74. World Chronicle, the 30-minute panel discussion video programme, featured Ambassador Iltar Türkmen, Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). He spoke about the gradual adjustment of the Agency's programmes to meet the needs of refugees in a changing global political and economic climate, and also stressed the continued efforts of the Agency to care for more than 2 million refugees in the occupied Palestinian territory and in neighbouring Arab countries.

75. The Department covered various aspects of the question of Palestine and related issues in news bulletins and current affairs radio programmes in various languages. Some of the topics covered included: "Escalation of violence in the Middle East", "Deportation of Palestinian civilians from the occupied territories", "Proceedings of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People", "Promotion and safety of Palestinian civilians" and "New hospital for Palestinians in the Gaza Strip". In addition, the Department produced five radio feature programmes devoted exclusively to the question of Palestine, namely, "Expulsion of 12 Palestinians", "Palestinian question", "The situation in the occupied territories" and "A resolution revoking the General Assembly's determination that Zionism is a form of racism and racial discrimination". Those programmes were produced in Arabic, Bangla, Chinese, Dutch, English, French, Hindi, Indonesian, Turkish and Urdu for world-wide dissemination. In addition, a radio officer travelled to Cyprus to cover the five-day Asian regional seminar and non-governmental organization symposium on the question of Palestine. His reports were incorporated in the daily news bulletins and all regional magazines and feature programmes.

76. On 5 May 1991, at Dublin, the Department sponsored an encounter for Irish journalists on the question of Palestine. On the advice of the Government of Ireland, the encounter was hosted in cooperation with the Centre for European Economic and Public Affairs, University College, Dublin. The theme of the encounter was "Preparing for peace: the imperative for interim relief in the occupied Palestinian territory". Three panelists spoke on this theme: two Palestinians and an Israeli, as well as an expert on the Middle East from the Commission of the European Communities. A second Israeli panelist, who was not able to attend, submitted a paper, which was read to the encounter. The panelists, media representatives and other Irish experts held a substantive dialogue.

77. The panelists included the following: Afif Safieh, head of the PLO delegation to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland; Charles Anthony Shamas, member of the board of al-Haq, West Bank affiliate of the International Commission of Jurists and Director of the Mattin Centre for Production Development at Ramallah; and Arnold Spaer, partner in the law firm of Spaer, Sitton and Co. in Jerusalem, whose clients include Bir Zeit University in the West Bank, the Palestinian human rights association al-Haq and the Hebrew University. Absent was David Kretzmer, Chairman of the National Board of the Association for Civil Rights in Israel and Professor of Law at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. Representing the Commission of the European Communities was Bettina Muscheidt, from its Occupied Territories Desk. The encounter was moderated by the Chief of the Anti-Apartheid, Decolonization and Palestine Programmes Section of the Department of Public Information.

78. From 16 to 17 September 1992, at Lisbon, the Department sponsored, with the support of the Government of Portugal and the Portuguese newspaper Público, an international encounter for European journalists on the question of Palestine. It explored, from a European perspective, and, after reviewing the peace process launched on 30 October 1991 at Madrid, ways and means to build peace in the Middle East. During the meeting, a number of issues were recognized as important and various points of agreement were reached.

79. Three issues were repeatedly advanced during the discussions at Lisbon: the welcoming of Europe as a significant player, economically and politically, in the ongoing peace process; the renewed recognition of the United Nations role in constructive peace-building and the necessity of the consensus of the international community, as the ultimate legitimate framework for a successful outcome to the negotiations; and the evolution of dialogue between the parties to the conflict.

80. The following panelists attended the encounter: Jamil Hilal, Director of the Information Department of the PLO and member of the Palestine National Council (PNC); Hisham Mustapha, Department of Arab and International Affairs of the PLO and member of the PNC; Ziad Abu Zyyad, Adviser to the Palestinian Negotiating Team; Avraham Burg, Member of the Knesset, Israel; Naomi Chazan, Member of the Knesset, Israel; Walid Al-Sa'adi, Personal Representative of H.R.H. Crown Prince Hassan, Jordan; Hans Stercken, Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee of the Bundestag, Germany; Francisco Henriques da Silva, Director for Middle East and Maghreb Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Portugal; and William B. Quandt, Senior Fellow at the Brookings Institution, Washington, D.C. The encounter was moderated by the Director-General of the United Nations Office at Vienna. Fifty-two news organizations from Europe, Israel and Palestine were represented.

81. The Department prepared for a news mission to the Middle East, which will take place in early December 1992. The mission will provide European journalists an opportunity to acquaint themselves firsthand with the facts of the question of Palestine. To that end, meetings will be arranged with the leadership of the PLO, senior government officials of Egypt, Jordan, the Syrian Arab Republic and Tunisia, as well as individual Palestinians in the refugee camps. Twelve to 15 senior journalists from Europe will also participate in the mission.

82. Several United Nations information centres and information services undertook special publicity campaigns on the question of Palestine. The United Nations Information Centre in London assisted in the planning for the encounter for Irish journalists on the question of Palestine held at Dublin and helped secure the participation of 55 journalists and experts in the encounter. Additionally, numerous European information centres - especially that of Lisbon - assisted in the planning of the international encounter held there for European journalists on the question of Palestine. The United Nations Information Centre in Lisbon assisted with government and media liaison, and provided administrative support for the encounter. The information service at Geneva provided coverage, media liaison and administrative support for the Sixth United Nations European Regional Non-Governmental Organization Symposium. The United Nations Information Centre in Brussels reported on an exhibit of drawings by Palestinian and Israeli children, attended by over 200 people, including the Queen of Belgium,

the Belgian Foreign Minister and the representative of the PLO. The Department, both at Headquarters and through the relevant information centres, also publicized and assisted the 1992 mission to the Middle East of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories.

83. The network of information centres provides, on a continuous basis, coverage for United Nations activities on the subject of Palestine. The centres produce newsletters, send out press releases and fax news, and also brief media representatives on a regular basis. The staff organize film screenings and disseminate publications and posters produced both by the Department of Public Information and the Division of Palestinian Rights.

84. During this reporting period, 120 representatives of non-governmental organizations attended a briefing on the work of UNRWA given by the Director of the UNRWA Liaison Office in New York with the assistance of the Department. The briefing included a screening of "Partners in change", an UNRWA video about women. In addition, the Department featured and distributed United Nations information materials, documents and press releases to representatives of non-governmental organizations, including all documents disseminated by the Division for Palestinian Rights, the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories, the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and UNRWA. The Department also oversaw an active re-dissemination programme of United Nations information materials through non-governmental organizations such as the Presbyterian Church.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COMMITTEE

85. The year 1992 marked the twenty-fifth anniversary of the occupation by Israel of the Palestinian and other Arab territories, including Jerusalem. While welcoming the peace process initiated at Madrid in October 1991 and expressing the hope that it will lead to substantive results, the Committee draws once again the attention of the international community to the fact that the occupation continues, buttressed by harsh and repressive measures, causing serious suffering and hardship among Palestinians and an unending cycle of violence in the region. The Committee considers that the permanence of occupation and the denial of Palestinian rights, in particular the right to self-determination, are the major obstacles to the attainment of peace.

86. The Committee expresses its continued and full support for the intifadah, the courageous struggle of the Palestinian people, to end Israeli occupation and implement the proclamation of independence of November 1988. Through the intifadah, the Palestinian people has clearly expressed its determination to bring about the exercise of its inalienable national rights and has affirmed that the Palestine Liberation Organization is its sole legitimate representative. The Committee reaffirms the international consensus that the attainment and exercise of Palestinian rights, in accordance with United Nations resolutions, are indispensable for the settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict, the core of which is the question of Palestine. The Committee calls once again upon the international community as a whole to intensify further its efforts to bring about this essential objective.

87. The Committee recalls that the Peace Conference on the Middle East convened under the co-sponsorship of the United States and the former Soviet Union has the support of all the parties and has for its frame of reference Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and the principle of land for peace. The Committee expresses its earnest hope that this process will bring about a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement to the question of Palestine based on internationally recognized principles and United Nations resolutions. The Committee stresses the essential need for an active role by the United Nations, the Security Council and the Secretary-General, for a successful outcome of the peace process.

88. The Committee reaffirms that the United Nations has a permanent responsibility with respect to the question of Palestine until the question is resolved in all its aspects in a satisfactory manner in accordance with international legitimacy.

89. The Committee recalls that an international consensus has been reached over the years on the essential principles for the achievement of comprehensive peace, as recommended initially by the Committee (see annex I) and subsequently elaborated by the International Conference on the Question of Palestine, held at Geneva in 1983, and relevant General Assembly resolutions, the latest of which was resolution 46/75 of 11 December 1991. The Committee reaffirms that these principles include the withdrawal of Israel from the occupied Palestinian and other Arab territories, including Jerusalem; respect for the right of all States in the region to live in peace within secure and internationally recognized boundaries; and the recognition and exercise of the inalienable national rights of the Palestinian people, primarily the right to self-determination.

90. The Committee considers that, in the recent elections, a majority of the Israeli public has voted for peace and expresses the earnest hope that the new Israeli Government will recognize and respect the national aspirations and rights of the Palestinian people, in particular the right to self-determination, and institute radical changes in Israel's policies in favour of peace. The Committee urges the Government to take immediate measures for the restoration of the fundamental human rights and freedoms of Palestinians living under occupation, in accordance with Israel's obligations under international law. The Committee notes with concern reports from various sources that initial goodwill statements and measures by the new Government have failed to improve the situation in the occupied Palestinian territory, and have been followed by increased repression of demonstrations during the prisoners' hunger strike in October 1992. The Committee calls on the Government to act immediately to end extrajudicial killings; to cease all land confiscation and settlement activities; to release political prisoners; to end deportations, administrative detention, ill-treatment and torture of prisoners; to restore freedom of movement and other civil liberties; and to repeal the military orders through which it controls every area of Palestinian daily life. The Committee calls once again on Israel to recognize the applicability of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War to the occupied Palestinian territory and to implement its provisions and those of the various human rights instruments to which it is a party. The Committee considers that the fact that a peace process is under way does not detract in any way from Israel's obligations in this regard.

91. Pending progress towards a political settlement, the Committee considers it is of the utmost urgency that all necessary measures be taken to protect the Palestinian people in the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, in accordance with the provisions of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, and numerous resolutions of the Security Council and the General Assembly. The Committee considers that it is now all the more urgent for the High Contracting Parties to the Geneva Convention and for the United Nations system as a whole to take action to ensure that Israel abides by its obligations as the occupying Power, in accordance with Security Council resolution 681 (1990) of 20 December 1990. The Committee draws attention in this regard to the relevant recommendations made by the participants in the North American Regional Seminar, the theme of which was "Enforcing the Fourth Geneva Convention for ensuring the protection of the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem" (see annex IV below).

92. The Committee wishes to reaffirm that the United Nations has a duty and responsibility to render all assistance necessary to promote the social and economic development of the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, in preparation for the full exercise of national sovereignty in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions. The Committee accordingly reiterates its call upon the organizations of the United Nations system, as well as on Governments and on intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, to sustain and increase their economic and social assistance to the Palestinian people, in close cooperation with the Palestine Liberation Organization. Mindful of the importance of this issue and of the need to increase its own efforts to promote international action, the Committee has decided to devote its 1993 European Seminar to the question of assistance to the Palestinian people, in accordance with the proposal made by the Economic and Social Council in resolution 1992/58 of 31 July 1992.

93. The Committee notes with satisfaction the increased international support for the attainment of a comprehensive, just and lasting solution of the question of Palestine in accordance with international principles and United Nations resolutions in the year under review. The Committee believes that its programme of regional seminars, non-governmental organization meetings and other informational activities has played a valuable role in this process and it will continue to strive to achieve maximum effectiveness in the implementation of its mandate. The Committee will continue and intensify its efforts to ensure that those meetings provide a useful forum for promoting a constructive debate and a concrete and action-oriented analysis of the most important issues relating to the question of Palestine. The Committee once again extends an invitation to all Governments, including those of the United States of America and Israel, to participate in its work and in the events organized under its auspices.

94. The Committee considers that the programme of research, studies and publications of the Division for Palestinian Rights is an essential resource for information, analysis and promotion of international action, and calls for its strengthening through the establishment of an adequately staffed and equipped computerized system.

Notes

1/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-first Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/31/35).

2/ Ibid., Thirty-second Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/32/35); ibid., Thirty-third Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/33/35); ibid., Thirty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/34/35 and Corr.1); ibid., Thirty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/35/35); ibid., Thirty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/36/35); ibid., Thirty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/37/35 and Corr.1); ibid., Thirty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/38/35); ibid., Thirty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/39/35); ibid., Fortieth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/40/35); ibid., Forty-first Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/41/35); ibid., Forty-second Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/42/35); ibid., Forty-third Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/43/35); ibid., Forty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/44/35); ibid., Forty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/45/35), and ibid., Forty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/46/35).

3/ Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War of 12 August 1949 (United Nations, Treaty Series, vol. 75, No. 973).

4/ Report of the International Conference on the Question of Palestine, Geneva, 29 August-7 September 1983 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.83.I.21), chap. I, sect. B.

5/ The observers at the Committee meetings were as follows: Algeria, Bangladesh, Bulgaria, China, Czechoslovakia, Ecuador, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Mauritania, Morocco, Nicaragua, Niger, Qatar, Sri Lanka, Syrian Arab Republic, United Arab Emirates, Viet Nam, the League of Arab States and the Organization of the Islamic Conference. Palestine, represented by the Palestine Liberation Organization, as the

Notes (continued)

representative of the Palestinian people, the principal party to the question of Palestine, was also an observer.

6/ The membership of the Working Group was as follows: Afghanistan, Belarus, Cuba, Guinea, Guyana, India, Malta, Pakistan, Senegal, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine and Palestine, represented by the Palestine Liberation Organization, as the representative of the people directly concerned.

7/ See Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1992, Supplement No. 2 (E/1992/22), chap. II.

Recommendations of the Committee endorsed by the General
Assembly at its thirty-first session a/

"I. Basic considerations and guidelines

"59. The question of Palestine is at the heart of the Middle East problem, and consequently, the Committee stresses its belief that no solution in the Middle East can be envisaged which does not fully take into account the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people.

"60. The legitimate and inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to return to their homes and property and to achieve self-determination, national independence and sovereignty are endorsed by the Committee in the conviction that the full implementation of those rights will contribute decisively to a comprehensive and final settlement of the Middle East crisis.

"61. The participation of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), the representative of the Palestinian people, on an equal footing with other parties, on the basis of General Assembly resolutions 3236 (XXIX) and 3375 (XXX) is indispensable in all efforts, deliberations and conferences on the Middle East which are held under the auspices of the United Nations.

"62. The Committee recalls the fundamental principle of the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force and stresses the consequent obligation for complete and speedy evacuation of any territory so occupied.

"63. The Committee considers that it is the duty and responsibility of all concerned to enable the Palestinians to exercise their inalienable rights.

"64. The Committee recommends an expanded and more influential role by the United Nations and its organs in promoting a just solution to the question of Palestine and in the implementation of such a solution. The Security Council, in particular, should take appropriate action to facilitate the exercise by the Palestinians of their right to return to their homes, lands and property. The Committee, furthermore, urges the Security Council to promote action towards a just solution, taking into account all the powers conferred on it by the Charter of the United Nations.

"65. It is with this perspective in view and on the basis of the numerous resolutions of the United Nations, after due consideration of all the facts, proposals and suggestions advanced in the course of its deliberations, that the Committee submits its recommendations on the modalities for the implementation of the exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.

"II. The right of return

"66. The natural and inalienable right of Palestinians to return to their homes is recognized by resolution 194 (III), which the General Assembly has reaffirmed almost every year since its adoption. This right was also unanimously recognized by the Security Council in its resolution 237 (1967); the time for the urgent implementation of these resolutions is long overdue.

"67. Without prejudice to the right of all Palestinians to return to their homes, lands and property, the Committee considers that the programme of implementation of the exercise of this right may be carried out in two phases:

"Phase one

"68. The first phase involves the return to their homes of the Palestinians displaced as a result of the war of June 1967. The Committee recommends that:

"(a) The Security Council should request the immediate implementation of its resolution 237 (1967) and that such implementation should not be related to any other condition;

"(b) The resources of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and/or of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, suitably financed and mandated, may be employed to assist in the solution of any logistical problems involved in the resettlement of those returning to their homes. These agencies could also assist, in cooperation with the host countries and the Palestine Liberation Organization, in the identification of the displaced Palestinians;

"Phase two

"69. The second phase deals with the return to their homes of the Palestinians displaced between 1948 and 1967. The Committee recommends that:

"(a) While the first phase is being implemented, the United Nations, in cooperation with the States directly involved, and the Palestine Liberation Organization as the interim representative of the Palestinian entity, should proceed to make the necessary arrangements to enable Palestinians displaced between 1948 and 1967 to exercise their right to return to their homes and property, in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions, particularly General Assembly resolution 194 (III);

"(b) Palestinians choosing not to return to their homes should be paid just and equitable compensation as provided for in resolution 194 (III).

"III. The right to self-determination, national independence and sovereignty

"70. The Palestinian people has the inherent right to self-determination, national independence and sovereignty in Palestine. The Committee considers that the evacuation of the territories occupied by force and in violation of the principles of the Charter and relevant resolutions of the United Nations is a conditio sine qua non for the exercise by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights in Palestine. The Committee considers, furthermore, that, upon the return of the Palestinians to their homes and property and with the establishment of an independent Palestinian entity, the Palestinian people will be able to exercise its rights to self-determination and to decide its form of government without external interference.

"71. The Committee also feels that the United Nations has an historical duty and responsibility to render all assistance necessary to promote the economic development and prosperity of the Palestinian entity.

"72. To those ends, the Committee recommends that:

"(a) A timetable should be established by the Security Council for the complete withdrawal by Israeli occupation forces from those areas occupied in 1967; such withdrawal should be completed no later than 1 June 1977;

"(b) The Security Council may need to provide temporary peace-keeping forces in order to facilitate the process of withdrawal;

"(c) Israel should be requested by the Security Council to desist from the establishment of new settlements and to withdraw during this period from settlements established since 1967 in the occupied territories. Arab property and all essential services in those areas should be maintained intact;

"(d) Israel should also be requested to abide scrupulously by the provisions of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, and to declare, pending its speedy withdrawal from those territories, its recognition of the applicability of that Convention;

"(e) The evacuated territories, with all property and services intact, should be taken over by the United Nations, which, with the cooperation of the League of Arab States, will subsequently hand over those evacuated areas to the Palestine Liberation Organization as the representative of the Palestinian people;

"(f) The United Nations should, if necessary, assist in establishing communications between Gaza and the West Bank;

"(g) As soon as the independent Palestinian entity has been established, the United Nations, in cooperation with the States directly involved and the Palestinian entity, should, taking into account General Assembly resolution 3375 (XXX), make further arrangements for the full

implementation of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, the resolution of outstanding problems and the establishment of a just and lasting peace in the region, in accordance with all relevant United Nations resolutions;

"(h) The United Nations should provide the economic and technical assistance necessary for the consolidation of the Palestinian entity."

Notes

a/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-first Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/31/35), paras. 59-72.

ANNEX II

Conclusions and recommendations adopted by the Twenty-ninth United Nations Seminar on the Question of Palestine

(Nicosia, 20 to 24 January 1992)

1. The Sixth United Nations Asian Regional Seminar (Twenty-ninth United Nations Seminar) on the Question of Palestine and the Fourth United Nations Asian Regional NGO Symposium on the Question of Palestine were held at the Cyprus International Conference Centre, Nicosia, from 20 to 24 January 1992, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 46/74 B of 11 December 1991. The Seminar and NGO Symposium took place for the most part as a combined event.

2. The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People was represented by a delegation comprising Mr. Kéba Birane Cissé (Senegal), Chairman of the Committee and Chairman of the Seminar; Mr. Victor Camilleri (Malta), Rapporteur of the Committee, Vice-Chairman and Rapporteur of the Seminar; Mr. Andreas Mavrommatis (Cyprus), Vice-Chairman of the Seminar; Mr. Dinesh Kumar Jain (India); and Mr. Nasser Al-Kidwa (Palestine).

3. A total of nine plenary meetings were held and 20 experts presented papers on various aspects of the question of Palestine. Representatives of 22 Governments, Palestine, 1 specialized agency, 3 United Nations organs, 1 intergovernmental organization and 48 non-governmental organizations attended the Seminar and NGO Symposium.

4. The Seminar adopted conclusions, recommendations and a motion of thanks to the Government and people of Cyprus.

5. At the opening meeting of the Seminar and NGO Symposium statements were made by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cyprus, the representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, the representative of Palestine, who read out a message from the Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization, and by the representative of the Asian Coordinating Committee for Non-Governmental Organizations on the Question of Palestine.

6. Three round tables were established. The topics addressed and the panelists were as follows:

(a) Round table I. A just settlement of the question of Palestine

(i) The inalienable rights of the Palestinian people

Mr. Muhammad Hallaj (Palestinian)

Mr. He Yafei (China)

Mr. Don Betz (United States of America)

(ii) Israeli withdrawal from the occupied Palestinian territory

Mr. Hashim Mahamid (Israel)

(iii) Israeli settlements

Mr. Ian S. Lustick (United States of America)

(iv) Palestinian refugees

Mr. Ron Macintyre (New Zealand)

(v) Jerusalem

Mr. Moshe Amirav (Israel)

Mr. Albert Aghazarian (Palestinian)

(vi) Security arrangements in the region

Mr. Mattityahu Peled (Israel)

Mr. Yezid Sayigh (Palestinian)

(vii) Presentations on the round table as a whole

Mr. Radwan Abu-Ayyash (Palestinian)

Ms. Yael Dayan (Israel)

(b) Round table II. Safety and protection of the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territory

The current situation in the occupied Palestinian territory as regards the need for humanitarian assistance to the Palestinian people

Dr. Ahmad Yaziji (Palestinian)

(c) Round table III. International and regional issues

(i) International responsibility for advancing the peace process

Mr. A. H. Rizavi (India)

(ii) Nuclear and conventional armament in the region

Mr. Omran El-Shafie (Egypt)

(iii) International economic assistance to the Palestinian people and to the region

Mr. Ryoji Tateyama (Japan)

Mr. Vassos Lyssarides (Cyprus)

Mr. Mohamad Amerah (Jordan)

(iv) Jewish immigration

Dr. Muhammad Hallaj (Palestinian)

Mr. Ian S. Lustick (United States of America)

7. The summary of the proceedings has been issued as a publication of the Division for Palestinian Rights of the United Nations Secretariat.

Conclusions and recommendations

8. The following conclusions and recommendations were adopted by the Seminar participants:

"(a) The participants welcomed the convening of the Asian Seminar and NGO Symposium as an important contribution to continuing efforts to bring about a just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine. They emphasized the significance of the role that the Asian region had to play, and could continue to play, towards this objective. They particularly welcomed the holding of the meeting in Cyprus because of its traditional friendly ties with the peoples in the region and its geographical proximity to the Middle East.

"(b) The participants noted that the fundamental changes in the international political scene created fresh opportunities for renewed efforts to resolve outstanding problems. In this connection they stressed the importance of equal applicability of the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter and the norms of international law.

"(c) The participants expressed their appreciation to the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and the Division for Palestinian Rights for having once again provided a forum for an in-depth exchange of views on key aspects of the Palestine question. They reaffirmed their determination to continue to work for a just and peaceful settlement. They felt that their discussions had been useful and constructive and had covered a wide range of topics, thereby contributing to better understanding of the positions of the parties to the conflict, and helping to identify important issues for further discussion.

"(d) The participants reiterated the essential elements of a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine which include: withdrawal of Israeli forces from the Palestinian territory occupied since June 1967, including Jerusalem, and other occupied Arab territories; respect for the right of all States in the region to live in peace within secure and internationally recognized boundaries; and the recognition and exercise of the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people, primarily the right to self-determination, in accordance with the pertinent resolutions of the United Nations.

"(e) The participants welcomed the convening of the Peace Conference on the Middle East at Madrid on 30 October 1991 and the subsequent bilateral talks between the parties in Washington, D.C., and expressed their earnest hope that the talks would be successful in establishing a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the region. They noted in this connection that this process had the support of the parties concerned and had as its basis Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973),

which had long been recognized as the cornerstone of a comprehensive settlement. They stressed the essential need for an active role by the United Nations, the Secretary-General and the Security Council, for a successful outcome of the peace process.

"(f) The participants expressed the utmost concern at the continuing settlement activity and land confiscation in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, which had come to pose an existential threat to the Palestinian community never experienced by previous generations. They stressed the illegal nature of those settlements and the imperative need for the immediate halt of settlement activity for the success of the peace process. Furthermore, they expressed concern at the provocative actions of Israeli settlers against Palestinian civilians. They underlined the obligation of Israel to respect fully the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention and relevant Security Council resolutions. They urged the peace forces in Israel to strengthen their activities in opposition to further settlements and in favour of withdrawal. The participants expressed the view that economic assistance to Israel should be made conditional upon the termination of the settlement policy.

"(g) The participants condemned the settlement of immigrants and Israeli citizens in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and urged the Security Council and other relevant international bodies to take appropriate measures to address this serious problem.

"(h) The participants stressed the fundamental linkage between an overall political settlement based on the principle of Palestinian self-determination and a solution of the continuing plight of the Palestinian refugees in accordance with relevant United Nations resolutions, in particular General Assembly resolution 194 (III). They pointed out that such a solution would greatly contribute to the achievement of peace and stability and economic development in the region. They expressed deep appreciation to UNRWA for its work carried out under difficult circumstances, and called on all Governments to contribute generously to its activities and to the activities of other United Nations agencies active in the region.

"(i) The participants expressed the most serious concern at the continued threat of a wider conflict in the region, which was aggravated by the increasing arms race. They stressed that arms control measures in both conventional arms and weapons of mass destruction can only be effective if they are structured as an integral part of a political and territorial settlement to the Arab-Israeli conflict. They also emphasized the necessity for the Governments in the region to consider seriously the establishment of a nuclear-arms free zone in the region as requested by the General Assembly of the United Nations in its various resolutions.

"(j) The participants recognized that the intifadah is the expression of the national will of the Palestinian people and of its determination to remain on its land and to attain its inalienable national rights. They reaffirmed the right of the Palestinian people to

choose its own leadership, the Palestine Liberation Organization. They voiced deep concern that, in its efforts to repress the intifadah, Israel continued to violate the fundamental human rights of Palestinians, in violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention and generally recognized norms of international law, as well as numerous United Nations resolutions. The Security Council, in resolution 681 (1990) had urged once again the Government of Israel to accept the de jure applicability of that convention and had asked the High Contracting Parties to ensure that Israel fulfilled its obligations as the occupying Power. The participants stressed that Israel be required to abide fully with international law in its treatment of tens of thousands of Palestinian prisoners and detainees. Participants appealed to the Security Council to persevere in its responsibility to ensure the physical protection and to guarantee the safety and security of all Palestinian people living under Israeli occupation by, inter alia, strengthening the United Nations presence in the occupied territory. They noted that the Security Council in resolution 726 (1992) of 6 January 1992 had strongly condemned Israel's deportation of Palestinians, and called for an end to that policy and the return of all those deported.

"(k) The participants expressed great concern at the negligence and indifference of the Israeli authorities to public health in the occupied territory, particularly with regard to water supply and quality, sanitation, and the provision of medical care. They condemned reported abuses by Israeli forces of Palestinian patients. They called on the international community as a whole to intensify its assistance to meet the health needs in the occupied territory, and called for the cessation of measures shutting down educational institutions as a form of collective punishment. They also emphasized the need for protection of Palestinian trade union organizations and their activities.

"(l) The participants noted with great concern that the current situation in the occupied Palestinian territory was characterized by economic collapse and massive and dangerous levels of poverty. The participants strongly deplored the continued constraints imposed by Israel on Palestinian economic development and recognized the important interconnections between economic advancement and the promotion of peace. They called for long-term developmental measures to liberate the Palestinian economy from its subordination to, and dependence on, the Israeli economy, as well as for short-term immediate humanitarian assistance to the Palestinian people. They stressed that the international community has a duty and responsibility to render all assistance necessary to promote the social and economic development of the Palestinian people in the occupied territory in preparation for the full exercise of national sovereignty, and called on all United Nations organizations concerned to intensify their efforts in this regard.

"(m) The participants expressed their appreciation to the Secretary-General of the United Nations for his constant efforts to bring about a peaceful settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict, and for his support for the programme of work of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and the Division for Palestinian Rights. They expressed confidence that the Committee and the Division would continue and increase their activities to promote a

constructive debate and a concrete and action-oriented analysis of the most important issues relating to the question of Palestine.

"(n) The participants expressed their warm appreciation to the Government and the people of Cyprus for providing a venue for the Asian Seminar and NGO Symposium on the question of Palestine and for the excellent facilities, courtesies and warm hospitality extended to them."

ANNEX III

Declaration adopted by the Fourth United Nations Asian
Regional Non-Governmental Organization Symposium on
the Question of Palestine

(Nicosia, 20 to 24 January 1992)

1. The Fourth United Nations Asian Regional Non-Governmental Organization Symposium on the Question of Palestine was held in accordance with General Assembly resolution 46/74 B of 11 December 1991, under the auspices of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. The Symposium was held from 20 to 24 January 1992, in part together with the Twenty-ninth United Nations Seminar on the Question of Palestine (Sixth Asian Regional Seminar).
2. The Symposium was attended by the representatives of 43 non-governmental organizations as participants and five such organizations as observers. Governments, United Nations bodies and intergovernmental organizations also attended as observers.
3. In addition to the round tables held jointly with the Seminar, three workshops specifically related to non-governmental organization activities were established to consider the following topics: Developing solidarity activities by Israeli and other organizations with:
 - (a) Palestinian women

Ms. Zahira Kamal (Palestinian)
Ms. Hanna Knaz (Israel);
 - (b) Physicians, health workers, health services

Dr. Ahmad Yaziji (Palestinian)
Dr. Ruchama Marton (Israel);
 - (c) Educational institutions, students

Mr. Albert Aghazarian (Palestinian).
4. The non-governmental organizations participating in the Symposium adopted a declaration and action-oriented proposals emanating from the workshops, and elected an Asian Coordinating Committee for Non-Governmental Organizations on the Question of Palestine. The report of the Symposium has been issued as a special bulletin of the Division for Palestinian Rights, together with that of the Seminar.
5. The declaration adopted by the participants reads as follows:

Declaration

We, the non-governmental organizations gathered at the United Nations Asian Regional Seminar and NGO Symposium on the Question of Palestine, representing millions of people concerned with a peaceful solution of that question, believe that the situation has acquired great urgency following the Gulf war. We totally uphold the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. We recognize and uphold the historic proclamation of the State of Palestine made on 15 November 1988. We recognize the proclamation as the expression of the continuous struggle of the heroic Palestinian people culminating in the intifadah. We unconditionally affirm the rights of self-determination, statehood and return of the Palestinian people as guaranteed by the Charter of the United Nations and all relevant United Nations resolutions. We call on all Governments of Asia and the Pacific region which have not already done so to recognize the State of Palestine in unequivocal terms and without delay.

We are motivated by the genuine desire to establish a durable and just peace in the Middle East on the basis of international legitimacy as provided by all relevant United Nations resolutions, and mutual recognition of the right of both the Palestinian and Israeli people to self-determination and the right to live in sovereign independent States alongside each other.

We draw attention to the peace process initiated by the Palestine National Council in compliance with all relevant United Nations resolutions. We note and welcome the resolutions of the Council to the effect that any international peace conference be based on the implementation of all United Nations resolutions and the right of the Palestine Liberation Organization as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. We fully support the objectives of the Palestine Liberation Organization in the peace process, and therefore urge all Governments to follow suit.

We note with utmost concern the continuous systematic policy of violating the rights of the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territories conducted by the Israeli occupation authorities. We deplore and denounce the continuation of the Israeli occupation of all Palestinian and Arab territories, including East Jerusalem, the Golan Heights and southern Lebanon, and Israel's brutal measures against the Palestinians, including the current policy designed to dismember the West Bank by restricting movement of Palestinian individuals and goods through the City of Jerusalem. We condemn the conditions of Palestinian prisoners in the administrative detention camps and the use of torture and brutality during their interrogation, including women and children. Furthermore, we condemn the Government of Israel's policy of the systematic expulsion of Palestinians from the national homeland as a clear violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention, a/ and affirm Security Council resolution 726 (1992), in which the Council strongly condemned the decision of Israel to resume the deportation of Palestinians.

Therefore, we call upon all Israeli authorities to permit the return of all deportees to their homeland.

We observe with great concern the illegal colonization by Israel of the occupied Palestinian territory. We demand the immediate cessation of the construction and expansion of all Israeli settlements in occupied Palestine, which undermine the current peace process.

We draw attention to the fact that Jewish immigration poses a great threat to the Palestinian survival on their land and is an obstacle to the resolution of the Palestinian problem, owing to the ensuing demographic changes. This is especially true while Palestinians continue to be denied their right of return. We call upon new immigrants to Israel and all Israelis to refuse to settle in the occupied Palestinian territories. We also call upon the international community to mobilize in all ways for the return of the Palestinians to their homeland, thus contributing to the efforts for a just settlement of the question of Palestine.

We call upon the United States to recognize the right to self-determination of the Palestinian people as they have done in the case of Israel. We also call upon the United States to apply pressure upon Israel to comply with all relevant United Nations resolutions.

We oppose the massive and unconditional aid to Israel provided by the United States and other States which underwrite the continuing occupation. We call upon all Governments to condition all aid, loans and guarantees to Israel on the cessation of Israeli settlement construction and expansion in the occupied Palestinian and Arab territories, including East Jerusalem, the Golan Heights and southern Lebanon. We call on all Governments and the Security Council to institute sanctions against Israeli occupation.

We unanimously recognize and support the intifadah as a national liberation struggle for the achievement of the State of Palestine and the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.

We condemn the American and Israeli endeavours to bypass the Palestine Liberation Organization, the sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, in the current peace talks. We call upon the American administration to re-establish dialogue with the PLO. We insist that Palestinians, as do all other peoples, have full right to choose their own political representatives in any peace process. We call for direct participation of the PLO and the effective participation of the United Nations in the peace process.

The issue of the status of Jerusalem should not be excluded from negotiations, nor should Palestinian residents of that city be excluded from participation in the negotiations currently under way.

We consider it most urgent that the United Nations provide immediate and sustained protection for the Palestinians under occupation, and that the Security Council establish in East Jerusalem an authority responsible for the monitoring of human rights violations in contravention of the Fourth Geneva Convention. We urge the Security Council to take all necessary measures to facilitate the exercise by the Palestinians of their inalienable rights. We call for the establishment of a United Nations force to protect the Palestinian people and to stop Israel's attempts at uprooting and destroying it.

We observe that Palestinians in Israel are subjected to a policy of legal and political discrimination and demand that Israel apply the principles of justice and equality to Israeli Palestinians in accordance with their status as a national minority in Israel. We condemn the Israeli policy of continued confiscations of Palestinian lands and destruction of Palestinian homes for the purpose of settlements of immigrants inside Israel.

We express our strongest protest against the action of the Israeli Government in preventing the distinguished expert, Mr. Omar Abdel-Razeq, of Al-Najah University, from attending this Seminar and Symposium.

We call upon all non-governmental organizations to establish contacts with and extend support to fellow non-governmental organizations in occupied Palestine, especially those related to human rights, women, health, labour, children and education. Furthermore, we call upon all Asian non-governmental organizations to monitor the relationships among Asian governmental and private institutions and Israeli governmental and private institutions. We urge non-governmental organizations to publicize those linkages and to take collective action against them, including organizing boycotts of Israeli products regardless of the exporting or intermediary country.

We request all Asian Governments to support the important role of non-governmental organizations in Asia in mobilizing public opinion and to extend financial and other assistance to those organizations so that they can more effectively support the struggle of the Palestinian people.

We warmly thank the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for convening this Asian Seminar and Non-Governmental Organization Symposium on the Question of Palestine. We greatly appreciate the presence of the Committee delegation and its guidance at this meeting. We wish to convey our deep appreciation to the Secretary-General of the United Nations for his message, which was read by the Under-Secretary-General for Political and General Assembly Affairs and Secretariat Services, whose presence at our meeting was most highly appreciated. We thank the Division for Palestinian Rights and all others of the United Nations Secretariat, including the interpreters, who made such a valuable contribution to our deliberations. We express our heartfelt appreciation to the Government of Cyprus for being our gracious host and for all the excellent facilities so generously provided. We particularly wish to express our gratitude to the Acting President of the Republic of Cyprus, Mr. Vassos Lyssarides, for his presence at our meeting. We also extend our appreciation to Mrs. Androulla Vassiliou, the First Lady of the Republic of Cyprus, for her very inspiring message. In addition, we extend our appreciation to Mr. George Iacovou, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cyprus, for addressing the opening session. We also wish to express our appreciation to President Yasser Arafat for his message.

Notes

a/ Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949 (United Nations, Treaty Series, vol. 75, No. 973.

ANNEX IV

Conclusions and recommendations adopted by the Thirtieth United Nations Seminar on the Question of Palestine

(New York, 22 and 23 June 1992)

1. The Eighth United Nations North American Regional Seminar (Thirtieth United Nations Seminar) on the Question of Palestine, on the theme "Enforcing the Fourth Geneva Convention for ensuring the protection of the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem", was held at United Nations Headquarters on 22 and 23 June 1992. The Seminar had been mandated by General Assembly resolution 46/74 B of 11 December 1991.
2. Mr. Victor Camilleri (Malta), Rapporteur of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, was Chairman and Rapporteur of the Seminar.
3. Four meetings were held and seven experts presented papers on the theme of the Seminar. Representatives of 51 Governments, 9 specialized agencies and United Nations bodies, 3 intergovernmental organizations and 14 non-governmental organizations attended the meeting.
4. The invited experts were: Mr. Haider Abdel Shafi (Palestinian), Ms. Jeanne A. Butterfield (United States of America), Mr. Tom Farer (United States of America), Mrs. Felicia Langer (Israel), Mr. John Quigley (United States of America), Mr. Charles Shamas (Palestinian) and Mr. Raji Sourani (Palestinian).
5. The full text of the proceedings will be published in due course as a publication of the United Nations Division for Palestinian Rights.

Conclusions and recommendations

6. The conclusions and recommendations adopted by the Seminar participants are as follows:
 - (a) Participants took note with serious concern of numerous and persistent violations of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, which the Security Council has declared to be applicable de jure to all the territories occupied by Israel since 1967, including Jerusalem. Such violations included the unlawful use of deadly force, including selective summary executions; punitive beatings; torture; deportation; unlawful destruction of property; collective punishments, including the demolition of houses; curfews; and the closing of educational institutions and other measures proscribed under international humanitarian law.
 - (b) Participants expressed their utmost concern at the continuing and intensified illegal settlement activity and land confiscation in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, which posed a threat to the very existence of the Palestinian community. This policy was in clear violation of article 49 of the Fourth Geneva Convention and threatened the peace process.

They stressed the imperative need for the immediate halting of such activities. Participants also expressed grave concern at the failure of the Israeli authorities to protect the Palestinian population against the unlawful violent actions of Israeli nationals in the occupied Palestinian territories.

(c) Participants expressed the view that the Government of Israel, by rejecting its international accountability over its practices in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, had unilaterally and illegally denied the Palestinian people living under military occupation for over 25 years the status of protected persons under the Fourth Geneva Convention and had denied them the protection of customary and conventional international law.

(d) Participants declared that it was the duty of the international community, in particular the High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention, to ensure respect by Israel, the occupying Power, for its obligations under the Convention. They stressed that the Convention's provisions were minimum standards, and that falling below them was a breach of international law.

(e) Participants appealed to all High Contracting Parties to the Convention to fulfil their own responsibilities under the Convention. They emphasized the importance of article 1 of the Convention, which requires the High Contracting Parties to respect and to ensure respect for the Convention in all circumstances. They drew particular attention to article 146 of the Convention, under which the High Contracting Parties undertook to seek out and prosecute persons accused of being involved in the perpetration of grave breaches.

(f) The participants welcomed the suggestion made by the Secretary-General in his report submitted in accordance with Security Council resolution 672 (1990) to convene a special meeting of the High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention. They noted that the Security Council, in its resolution 681 (1990), had requested the Secretary-General, in cooperation with the International Committee of the Red Cross, to develop further the idea of convening such a meeting, and had also requested the Secretary-General to monitor and observe the situation regarding Palestinian civilians under Israeli occupation, and to report periodically. The participants urged further action pursuant to the provisions of that resolution. Such a meeting would facilitate an exchange of views with the focus on measures outlined in the Convention, such as the appointment of a Protecting Power (article 9), conciliation (article 12) and the inquiry procedure (article 149). They expressed the hope that such a meeting would take place at an early date.

(g) Participants drew attention to the fact that the mechanisms of the Convention itself, which was designed to be enforced by a system of Protecting Powers and formally appointed substitutes, had never been implemented. However, in accordance with the Convention, the High Contracting Parties could nominate either an intergovernmental or a non-governmental organization to monitor the situation in the territory under occupation. They suggested that High Contracting Parties to the Convention should utilize their consular presence more fully and effectively for monitoring purposes. A United Nations monitoring organization should be established through which High Contracting Parties would carry out their responsibilities under article 1 of the

Convention. They expressed their deep appreciation for the efforts of the International Committee of the Red Cross to implement the Convention and called upon Israel to cooperate with it.

(h) The plight of the Palestinian people under occupation had been compounded by the repeated action which the Israeli occupying forces had taken against the personnel of UNRWA engaged in the discharge of that Agency's mandate to provide humanitarian assistance to the Palestinian people under occupation. Participants expressed their appreciation to UNRWA for its invaluable work being carried out under difficult circumstances for the benefit of the Palestine refugees and Palestinians under Israeli occupation and called for the expansion of the scope and mandate of the UNRWA Refugee Affairs Officer programme.

(i) Participants recommended that, in the light of previous experience, the General Assembly or the Security Council should seek an advisory opinion from the International Court of Justice with regard to the policies and practices of Israel, the occupying Power, in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem. On this matter a suggestion was made to convene a seminar for the further development of this idea.

(j) Participants considered that it was imperative for all concerned to take necessary measures to ensure the physical protection and the safety and security of the Palestinian people in the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem. They appealed in particular to the Security Council to help achieve this objective by, inter alia, strengthening the United Nations presence in the occupied Palestinian territory. The Security Council should take all possible action to ensure respect by Israel, the occupying Power, for its relevant resolutions.

(k) Participants further recommended that the international community of non-governmental organizations should support activities to ensure protection by increasing and expanding its efforts at public education, advocacy and direct involvement to provide protection. Such efforts could include actions of non-governmental organizations to promote concrete international measures aimed at ending unlawful policies and practices and to provide civilian volunteer observers and monitors who could, by their very presence, provide a certain measure of protection.

(l) Participants expressed appreciation for the opportunity to have a full and candid discussion of the aspects of the application of the Fourth Geneva Convention to the occupied Palestinian territories, including Jerusalem, during the Seminar under the auspices of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. They hoped that the Seminar would result in effective action by the United Nations and the international community to ensure the protection of the Palestinian people under occupation and that it would pave the way for the achievement of a just, comprehensive and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine.

Ninth United Nations North American Regional Non-Governmental
Organization Symposium on the Question of Palestine

(New York, 24 to 26 June 1992)

1. The Ninth United Nations North American Regional Non-Governmental Organization Symposium on the Question of Palestine was held at United Nations Headquarters from 24 to 26 June 1992, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 46/74 B of 11 December 1991, under the auspices of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People.

2. The Symposium was attended by the representatives of 87 non-governmental organizations from Canada and the United States of America, and 21 such organizations participated as observers. Six panelists and 32 workshop facilitators and resource persons made presentations. Representatives of several Governments, United Nations bodies and intergovernmental organizations also attended the Symposium as observers. Mr. Victor Camilleri (Malta), Acting Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, chaired the opening and closing sessions of the Symposium. The opening session was also addressed by the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations, who read out a message from Mr. Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization, and by Ms. Jeanne Butterfield, Chairman of the North American Coordinating Committee for Non-Governmental Organizations on the Question of Palestine, who served as Moderator of the Symposium. The Reverend Ibrahim Ayyad, President of the Palestine Committee for Non-Governmental Organizations, addressed the closing session of the Symposium.

3. The programme for the Symposium, on the theme "Peace is the fruit of justice: twenty-five years of occupation - overcoming the obstacles, preparing the way for Palestine", was drawn up by the Committee in consultation with the North American Coordinating Committee as follows:

(a) Panel 1. Twenty-five years of occupation: overcoming the obstacles

Mr. Haider Abdel Shafi (Palestinian)
Mr. Raji Sourani (Palestinian)
Mrs. Michal Schwartz (Israel)
Mr. Richard Curtiss (United States of America)

(b) Panel 2. Preparing the way for Palestine

Mr. Elia Zureik (Canada)
Dr. Ruchama Marton (Israel)

4. Eight workshops and four skills training workshops were organized. The workshops were organized under the following general sub-themes:

(a) "Overcoming obstacles, providing protection": defining human rights; children, prisoners, expellees; ending United States aid for occupation; land, water and settlements; and misinformation and disinformation;

(b) "Preparing the way for Palestine": supporting Palestinian institution-building; supporting Israeli peace projects; Gulf war aftermath: needs of Palestinians in hardship areas; and implementing United Nations resolutions.

5. The four skills-training workshops considered lobbying; letter-writing; media; fund-raising and educating the public.

6. A teach-in was held under the general theme of the Symposium during which panels 1 and 2 were discussed. Further, the Symposium elected a new 12-member Non-Governmental Organization Coordinating Committee for the region composed of three members from Canada and nine members from the United States.

7. The report of the Symposium will be issued as a publication of the Division for Palestinian Rights.

Conclusions and recommendations adopted by the Thirty-first
United Nations Seminar on the Question of Palestine

(Qawra, Malta, 27 to 29 July 1992)

1. The Seventh United Nations European Regional Seminar (Thirty-first United Nations Seminar) on the Question of Palestine was held at the Conference Centre of the New Dolmen Hotel, Qawra, Malta, from 27 to 29 July 1992, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 46/74 B of 11 December 1991.

2. The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People was represented by a delegation comprising Mr. Kéba Birane Cissé (Senegal), Chairman of the Committee and Chairman of the Seminar; Mr. Victor Camilleri (Malta), Rapporteur of the Committee, Vice-Chairman and Rapporteur of the Seminar; Mr. Victor Batiouk (Ukraine), Vice-Chairman of the Seminar; and Mr. Nasser Al-Kidwa (Palestine).

3. A total of six plenary meetings were held and 15 experts presented papers on various aspects of the question of Palestine. One United Nations organ, one specialized agency, one intergovernmental organization and nine non-governmental organizations attended the Seminar as observers.

4. Two round tables were established and their panelists were as follows:

(a) Round table I. International action to ensure the safety and protection of the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territory

(i) Measures that could be taken by the High Contracting Parties to ensure respect for the Fourth Geneva Convention

Mr. Victor Nagaychuk (Ukraine), Head of Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

(ii) Action by the international community and non-governmental organizations

Mr. Pol Marck (Belgium), Member of the European Parliament
Mr. Bernard Mills (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland), Chairman, European Coordinating Committee for Non-Governmental Organizations on the Question of Palestine

(iii) Measures to alleviate the suffering and to promote the independent economic development of the occupied Palestinian territory: the role of Europe

Mr. Gunter Weiss, Ambassador and Representative of the Commission of the European Communities to Malta

- (iv) Presentation on the panel as a whole

Monsignor Hilarion Capucci (Palestinian), Archbishop of the Melkite Catholic Church of Jerusalem

Mrs. Amina Hass (Israel), journalist

- (b) Round table II. Efforts to promote the implementation of United Nations resolutions on the question of Palestine and the situation in the Middle East

- (i) The current peace process

Mrs. Helene Cobban (United States of America), Research Director of the initiative for peace and cooperation in the Middle East, columnist

Mr. V. Y. Gogitidze (Russian Federation), Chief of Section, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

- (ii) The role of the United Nations

Mr. Evarist V. Saliba (Malta), Ambassador, Advisor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs

- (iii) The role of Europe

Mr. Patrick Cooney (Ireland), Member of the European Parliament and former Defence Minister

Mr. Richard Balfe (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland), Member of the European Parliament

Mr. Jean-Michel Dumont (Belgium), Secretary-General, Parliamentary Association for Euro-Arab Cooperation

- (iv) The problems posed by Israel's settlement policy and Jewish immigration

Mr. Hanna Ibrahim (Israel), Spokesman of the Arab Democratic Party, editor

- (v) Presentation on the panel as a whole

Mr. Abdulatif Abu Hejla, Director-General of the Political Department, Palestine Liberation Organization

Mr. Gadi Yatsiv (Israel), Former Knesset member

5. The expert members of the panels agreed on summaries of the presentations and the discussion of the two topics. The full text of the proceedings will be published in due course as a publication of the Division for Palestinian Rights.

6. The Seminar adopted conclusions and recommendations as well as a motion of thanks to the Government and people of Malta.

Conclusions and recommendations

7. The conclusions and recommendations adopted by the Seminar participants are as follows:

"(a) The participants in the Seventh United Nations European Regional Seminar on the Question of Palestine welcomed the convening of the Seminar as an important contribution to continuing efforts to bring about a just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict in the Middle East. They emphasized that the European countries had played, and could continue to play, a constructive and active role towards that objective. They particularly welcomed the holding of the meeting in Malta, whose steadfast and consistent support for the Palestinian national struggle and whose geographical location and active involvement in Mediterranean and European affairs made it an ideal venue for deliberations on how Europe can further contribute to the ongoing peace efforts.

"(b) The participants noted that the fundamental changes in the international political scene, the shift from confrontation towards cooperation in international affairs, had brought the possibility of meaningful interaction of the international community in the search for efficient ways of resolving the Middle East conflict. They stressed that those opportunities should not be missed for lack of goodwill or inaction and warned of the persistent dangers of continued instability and of the resulting unabated arms race in the region, which threatened not only the peoples of the Middle East, but also neighbouring Europe.

"(c) The participants reiterated that there was a European as well as an international consensus concerning the essential elements of a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine, which include: withdrawal of Israeli forces from the Palestinian territory occupied since June 1967, including Jerusalem, and other occupied Arab territories; respect for the right of all States in the region to live in peace within secure and internationally recognized boundaries; and the recognition and exercise of the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people, primarily the right to self-determination, in accordance with the pertinent resolutions of the United Nations.

"(d) The participants, noting that the Peace Conference on the Middle East, convened at Madrid on 30 October 1991, was entering into a particularly significant stage, expressed their earnest hope that the talks soon to be resumed would be serious and productive and would be crucial for establishing a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the region. They noted in that connection that the process had the support of the parties concerned and had as its basis Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), which had long been recognized as the cornerstone of a comprehensive settlement. The participants stressed the essential need for an active role by the United Nations, the Security Council and the Secretary-General, for a successful outcome of the peace process. They were of the opinion that a more active European contribution to the peace conference on the Middle East was welcomed.

"(e) The participants considered that, in the recent elections, a majority of the Israeli public had voted for peace and expressed the earnest hope that the new Government of Israel would institute radical changes in its policies in favour of peace. The participants called on the new Government to declare its agreement with the principle of 'land for peace', to comply with the United Nations resolutions, including Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), and to acknowledge the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination. They also called on the Government to take immediate measures for the restoration of the fundamental human rights and freedoms of Palestinians living in the occupied territories, including Jerusalem, in accordance with Israel's obligations under international law.

"(f) The participants stressed that, while the peace process is taking place, it is of the utmost importance to ensure the safety and protection of the Palestinian people living under occupation, and that measures in this regard would help create an environment more conducive to peace and co-existence between the Israeli and Palestinian peoples. In particular, they called for the immediate cessation of all settlement activity, land and water confiscation in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, which posed a threat to the very existence of the Palestinian community and which were in clear violation of article 49 of the Fourth Geneva Convention and were detrimental to the peace process under way.

"(g) The participants recognized that the intifadah is an expression of the national will of the Palestinian people for liberation, of its resistance to the occupation and of its determination to remain on its land and to attain its inalienable national rights. They reaffirmed the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and national independence. They also reaffirmed that the Palestine Liberation Organization is the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. They welcomed free democratic elections in the Palestinian occupied territories under effective international supervision. They voiced deep concern that the military occupation had now lasted for over 25 years and that Israel had continued to reject the applicability of the Fourth Geneva Convention to the occupied territory and to violate its provisions. They called for appropriate measures to be taken to implement Security Council resolutions 672 (1990) and 681 (1990), in which the Council asked for action by the High Contracting Parties and by the Secretary-General to ensure observance of the Convention. The participants considered that the fact that a peace process was under way did not detract in any way from Israel's obligations to respect the Fourth Geneva Convention and to abide by the relevant Security Council resolutions. They called on the High Contracting Parties to the Convention, on the Security Council and on the United Nations system as a whole to take all necessary measures to ensure that Israel abides by its obligations as the occupying Power.

"(h) The participants noted in this connection that the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People had given priority to the promotion of measures for the protection of the Palestinian people living under Israeli occupation. The participants also recalled that the European Community had taken measures which had

been successful in ensuring the reopening of Palestinian schools and the export of Palestinian agricultural commodities, and called on the Community and on European non-governmental organizations to continue to devise means of applying pressure on Israel in order to restore respect for Palestinian human rights, including tying all agreements to human rights considerations. They also called on the Community and European non-governmental organizations to insist that Israel abide by its duty to ensure fair and equal treatment for Palestinian workers. They urged the Government of Israel to terminate all military and administrative obstacles to the employment of Palestinians, as well as their efforts to develop an independent economy of their own.

"(i) The participants further recommended that the European and international non-governmental organization community continue and intensify its activities to ensure protection such as public education, health and information, campaigns on specific issues, visiting missions to the occupied territory and others. They called on non-governmental organizations to continue to press upon their respective Governments their duty to secure the compliance of the Government of Israel with the provisions of the Convention. They recommended that non-governmental organizations present in the occupied territory as witnesses to the behaviour of the occupying Power should report infringements to their embassies and consulates-general, thus drawing their Governments' attention to the situation in a very real way. Participants also recommended that European non-governmental organizations should seek to support, strengthen and coordinate the work of non-governmental organizations active in promoting the independent development of the occupied territory.

"(j) The participants expressed their appreciation to the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and to the Secretary-General for their constant efforts in promoting a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the Palestine question. They expressed confidence that the Committee and the Division for Palestinian Rights would adapt their programmes to meet the current situation and continue to increase their activities to promote a constructive debate and a concrete and action-oriented analysis of the most important issues relating to the question of Palestine.

"(k) The participants expressed their warm appreciation to the Government and the people of Malta for providing a venue for the European Seminar and for the excellent facilities, courtesies and generous hospitality extended to them."

ANNEX VII

Declaration adopted by the Sixth United Nations European
Regional Non-Governmental Organization Symposium on the
Question of Palestine

(Geneva, 24 and 25 August 1992)

1. The Sixth United Nations European Regional Non-Governmental Organization Symposium on the Question of Palestine was held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on 24 and 25 August 1992.
2. The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People was represented by a delegation composed of Mr. Kéba Birane Cissé (Senegal), Committee Chairman and head of delegation; Mr. Victor Camilleri (Malta), Committee Rapporteur; Mr. Victor H. Batiouk (Ukraine); and Mr. Nasser Al-Kidwa (Palestine), Permanent Observer for Palestine to the United Nations.
3. The Symposium was held in pursuance of General Assembly resolution 46/74 B of 11 December 1991, under the auspices of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People.
4. The Symposium was attended by the representatives of 99 non-governmental organizations (47 as participants and 52 as observers). A number of representatives from Governments, United Nations bodies and intergovernmental organizations also attended the Symposium as observers. The opening session was addressed by Mr. Kéba Birane Cissé (Senegal) on behalf of the Committee, by the Chairman of the European Coordinating Committee for Non-Governmental Organizations on the Question of Palestine, Mr. Bernard Mills, and by Mr. Nasser Al-Kidwa.
5. The Symposium had for its theme: "Working for peace: European coordination". Eight panelists and resource persons made presentations at the Symposium. There were two plenary sessions, as follows:
 - (a) Plenary session 1. The responsibilities of European and non-governmental bodies towards the Palestinian people

Radwan Abu Ayyash (Palestinian)
Maria Gazi (Greece)
Meir Pail (Israel)
Roger Stott, M.P. (United Kingdom)
 - (b) Plenary session 2. Report by the members of the European Coordinating Committee on their Committee's activities during the period August 1991 to August 1992.

Hans Nebel (Denmark)
Blandine Destremeau (France)
6. Two workshops were also organized on the following topics:
 - (a) Lobbying of Governments and parliamentarians;

(b) Raising of public awareness of the Palestine issue by European non-governmental organizations.

7. The Symposium heard three reports on ongoing projects by non-governmental organizations initiated at the 1991 Symposium, on olive trees, Palestinian family reunification, and protection of Palestinian children.

8. The non-governmental organizations participating in the Symposium adopted a final declaration, as well as action-oriented proposals emanating from the workshops. The report of the Symposium, including the summaries of the proceedings, will be issued as a publication of the Division for Palestinian Rights.

9. The declaration adopted by the participants is set forth below.

Declaration

We, the non-governmental organizations participating in the Sixth United Nations European Regional Non-Governmental Organization Symposium on the Question of Palestine, held at the Palais des Nations at Geneva on 24 and 25 August 1992, reaffirm our commitment to a just, comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East and to support the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, right of return and the right to a Palestinian State.

At the same time, we are conscious that we are meeting at a time when the Arab-Israeli conflict, the core of which is the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, has entered a new phase owing to two significant events: the peace talks, which have been going on since October 1991, and the recent Israeli elections, which have brought to government the Labour Party.

We note with dismay that, although 10 months have passed since the peace process was initiated at Madrid, no concrete progress has been made, not least because of the then Israeli Government's intransigence and stalling tactics, during both the bilateral and the multilateral talks. We are furthermore concerned even about the position of the present Government of Israel on settlements. On this very day when we are meeting here the talks are being resumed in Washington. The current Israeli delegation is under obligation to the Palestinians and the whole international community to show its good faith in negotiating on the basis of all United Nations resolutions, including Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), the specific terms of reference contained in the letters of invitation to the Peace Conference.

We consider the current peace talks to be a step towards the settlement of the Middle East issue. We are dissatisfied with the marginalization of Europe and the United Nations during the peace process and stress the need for active participation by the United Nations and European countries. We believe that the official participation of the Palestine Liberation Organization as the sole legitimate representative and guarantee of the unity of the Palestinian people in the present peace process is essential. We believe that, in the end, a just, comprehensive and lasting peace can be fully achieved through the convening of the International Peace Conference, as stated in relevant resolutions adopted by the General Assembly. We request the Palestine Liberation Organization to continue to provide relevant

information on the current negotiations to help alert and mobilize European public opinion.

We welcome the declaration of intent of the Government of Israel, on the eve of the present Washington talks, to release 800 prisoners and to stop (for the time being) deportation of Palestinians from the occupied territories. At the same time, however, we point out that the policy of arbitrary arrest and detention without trial and of deportation of individuals from the occupied territories has not been abrogated, and is contrary to human rights and the specific prohibitions of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949. We deplore the continuing repression of the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territories. The killing and injuring of civilians, collective punishment and the sealing and demolition of houses, arbitrary arrest, detention and imprisonment without trial, expropriation of land and water resources, curfews, and restrictions on the free movement of Palestinians are not in line with the spirit of any peaceful solution. Such practices can only continue to create a climate of frustration and pessimism instead of one of confidence-building. We once more strongly voice the need for international protection of the Palestinian people and request our respective Governments to initiate action now. The Security Council cannot continue to ignore its responsibility in this matter, particularly after the recent decisions taken concerning other areas in the world. The violation by Israel of principles of the Charter of the United Nations must be handled in a comparable way. The protection of the population in the occupied Palestinian territories obviously demands the sending of United Nations monitors and the replacement of the Israeli army of occupation with a United Nations peace-keeping force. We shall press our Governments to promote such a decision in the United Nations. It is the prime duty of the High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention which, under article 1, are required to ensure that there is compliance therewith.

We denounce the Israeli settlement policy in the West Bank and Gaza and the increased settlement activities in East Jerusalem as illegal and in violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 and, specifically, of Security Council resolution 465 (1980) of 1 March 1980. We strongly protest against the United States Administration's decision to grant Israel the \$10 billion housing loan guarantees without, apparently, any pledge from the Government of Israel that it will cease building settlements in the occupied Palestinian territories, including East Jerusalem. All settlements are illegal under the Geneva Convention. These actions by the Governments of the United States and of Israel, particularly during the current peace talks, represent a serious challenge to the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and to the international community, which reject all attempts at demographic change and the transfer of population by the occupying Power to the territory it occupies. We call upon European Governments not to donate or pledge any financial or other support to Israel until it officially pledges to cease all settlement activities in the occupied Palestinian territories, Jerusalem included.

We invite all non-governmental organizations to campaign for a just solution of the Palestinian refugee problem based on the right to return, the principles of which are embodied in General Assembly resolution 194 (III) of 11 December 1948, which derives its force from the consensus behind it, since even the United States voted in favour at the time. Moreover, Israel was admitted to the United Nations only after having accepted resolutions 181 (II) of 29 November 1947, concerning the partition of Palestine, and 194 (III). In

the latter resolution, the General Assembly resolved that the refugees wishing to return to their homes and live at peace with their neighbours should be permitted to do so at the earliest practicable date, and that compensation should be paid for the property of those choosing not to return. At the recent multilateral talks at Ottawa even the United States reaffirmed its agreement on this.

We are concerned about the concentration of weapons in the region, including chemical and nuclear weapons, and deplore the lack of progress made in the first multilateral meeting on security in the Middle East, where Israel's nuclear potential was not even addressed. We express our resolute support to the Israeli peace forces who are fighting for the dismantling of nuclear weaponry in their country. We urge all European non-governmental organizations to support and assist all Israeli non-governmental organizations in favour of a Palestinian State beside Israel.

In concentrating on the occupied Palestinian territories, we at the same time call attention to the ongoing discrimination against Arab Israelis. Present practices of the State of Israel deprive them of their full human and civil rights.

We wish to reaffirm our stand and proposals regarding all aspects of the Palestinian issue as expressed in the final declarations of our five previous symposia, and express our frustration that, during the 25 years of Israeli occupation, few concrete measures have been taken by the European Governments to address this issue, despite the numerous activities of European non-governmental organizations which contributed to creating a greater awareness of the situation and to mobilizing indispensable support for the Palestinian cause.

While we commend the activities and initiatives undertaken since last year's Symposium by the European Coordinating Committee on the Question of Palestine and its secretariat at Brussels, we consider that it needs stronger moral and material support from all European non-governmental organizations in order to carry out its work with more success during the second year of its mandate. We also call upon the United Nations to offer every possible assistance to the Coordinating Committee and its secretariat.

We are firmly convinced that actions are stronger than words, thus, on returning to our countries, we shall disseminate this declaration in the widest way possible, but, most importantly, we shall present it to the competent people in our own Governments and request them to take effective and concrete measures for the implementation of our proposals. Today more than ever before the Palestinian people need our support and we shall spare no efforts to meet their aspirations through concerted and coordinated actions between our non-governmental organizations. Immediately after the end of the Brussels Conference on Palestine: Development for Peace, the European Coordinating Committee will submit another project to the Commission of the European Communities concerning the establishment of a database in our office at Brussels. We believe that such a project will facilitate the receiving and dissemination of information in an up-to-date and professional way, with the aim of better monitoring the situation in the occupied Palestinian territories and coordinating common action.

We deeply regret that, in spite of various declarations issued by the European Economic Community in favour of a just settlement of the Palestinian issue, no move has been made towards the recognition of the Palestinian state. Such a move would give a boost to the peace process and allow Europe to carry out a policy other than that of the United States. We urge all European Governments to put pressure to bear on the Government of Israel to comply with all United Nations resolutions relevant to the Arab-Israeli conflict. We also urge them to support the transitional arrangements presented by the Palestinian side in Washington on 3 March 1992. Israel's dependence on the European markets and European assistance can make such pressure effective. Such a policy would serve the interests of both the European Governments and the European peoples.

We thank the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for convening this Symposium and we extend a warm welcome to Mr. Kéba Birane Cissé as the new Chairman of the Committee. We seize this opportunity to pay a tribute to the hard work of his predecessor, Mrs. Absa Claude Diallo (Senegal), and wish her full success in her new endeavour. We thank the Division for Palestinian Rights, the United Nations Secretariat and the interpreters for having contributed to the success of our meeting.

We request the Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People to convey this Declaration to the General Assembly at its forty-seventh session as part of the Committee's report. We also urge the Committee to convene the next European Regional Non-Governmental Organization Symposium in the first week of September 1993.

ANNEX VIII

Declaration adopted by the Ninth United Nations International
Non-Governmental Organization Meeting on the Question of
Palestine

(Geneva, 26 to 28 August 1992)

1. The Ninth United Nations International Non-Governmental Organization Meeting on the Question of Palestine was held under the auspices of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People at the United Nations Office at Geneva from 26 to 28 August 1992. The Meeting was convened in response to General Assembly resolution 46/74 B of 11 December 1991.
2. The Committee was represented by a delegation composed of Mr. Kéba Birane Cissé (Senegal), Committee Chairman and head of delegation; Mr. Victor Camilleri (Malta), Committee Rapporteur; Mr. Victor H. Batiouk (Ukraine); Mr. Mohamed Ennaceur (Tunisia); and Mr. Nasser Al-Kidwa (Palestine).
3. The Meeting was attended by 235 non-governmental organizations (176 participants and 59 observers) and representatives of 41 Governments, 6 United Nations bodies and 3 intergovernmental organizations.
4. At the opening session, the Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva made a statement on behalf of the Secretary-General. Mr. Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization, and Mr. Oliver R. Tambo, National Chairman of the African National Congress of South Africa, addressed the opening session. Other opening statements were made by Mr. Kéba Birane Cissé and by Mr. Don Betz, Chairman of the International Coordinating Committee for NGOs on the Question of Palestine.
5. The programme for the Meeting was prepared by the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People in consultation with the Coordinating Committee. The overall theme was "Protection and statehood". Twenty-eight panelists and resource persons made presentations on the panels and in the workshops. The programme consisted of three panels which dealt with protection, statehood and the non-governmental organization process, as follows:

(a) Panel 1. Protection

Mr. Albert Aghazarian (Palestinian)
Mr. Mohammed Fa'eq (Egypt)
Mr. Meir Pail (Israel)

(b) Panel 2. Statehood

Mr. Radwan Abu Ayyash (Palestinian)
Mr. Samih Al Qassem (Israel)
Mr. Michael Lanegan (Ireland)
Mr. Abdul Kaujum Nashter (India)
Mr. Abie Nathan (Israel)

(c) Panel 3. The non-governmental organization process

Ms. Jeanne Butterfield (United States of America)

Mr. Don Betz (United States of America)

6. Arrangements were made for 12 working groups and task forces, which considered the following questions: land, water and settlements; protection needs of children; human rights (especially deportations); family reunification campaign; protection needs of women; arts and culture; supporting education; demilitarization and regional security; mobilizing United Nations support; housing rights; water planning; and Jerusalem. A number of special interest groups were also organized by the participating non-governmental organizations.

7. The participating non-governmental organizations adopted a final declaration, and action-oriented proposals emanating from the workshops. The report, including summaries of the proceedings, will be issued as a publication of the Division for Palestinian Rights.

8. The declaration adopted by the participants reads as follows:

Declaration

We, the non-governmental organizations gathered at the Ninth United Nations International Non-Governmental Organization Meeting on the Question of Palestine, are aware that we have convened at a moment of great challenge and great opportunity.

We unconditionally affirm the rights of self-determination, statehood and return of the Palestinian people as guaranteed by the United Nations Charter and all relevant United Nations resolutions, especially General Assembly resolutions 181 (II) and 194 (III).

We express our full support for the ongoing intifadah, the struggle of the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territories for self-determination, freedom and independence, which has already played a vital role in underlining the urgency of the need to reach a just and peaceful solution in the region.

We are motivated by the genuine desire to establish a just and lasting peace in the Middle East on the basis of international legitimacy, as provided by all relevant United Nations resolutions. We call upon the Israeli people to recognize the rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination, to return, and to a sovereign and independent State, so that a mutual recognition for the rights of both peoples can be achieved. We demand the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of Israeli forces from all Palestinian and Arab territories, including East Jerusalem, the Golan Heights and southern Lebanon.

We reaffirm that general principles of international law offer a sound and appropriate basis for any long-term, comprehensive solution to the conflict in the region. The Government of Israel is obligated to the Palestinians and the whole international community to negotiate on the basis of all United Nations resolutions, including Security Council resolutions

237 (1967), 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), the specific terms of reference contained in the letters of invitation to the Peace Conference, which embody the principle of land for peace.

While we are meeting at Geneva, peace negotiations are being resumed in Washington, D.C. We note with dismay that, although 10 months have passed since this peace process was initiated at Madrid, no concrete progress has been made in securing the protection of the Palestinian people and their legitimate national rights. We reiterate that we believe that an international conference under the auspices of the United Nations, at which all parties to the conflict, including Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization on an equal footing, are represented, is the best guarantee for the implementation of a just peace. The Palestine Liberation Organization is the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people and the guarantor of Palestinian unity. We call for its official participation in the entire peace process.

We consider it most urgent that the United Nations provide immediate and sustained protection for the Palestinians under occupation. We call for the establishment of a United Nations force to protect the Palestinians. We shall urge our Governments to promote such a decision in the United Nations. It is the prime duty of the High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 which, under article I, are required to ensure adherence to its precepts. Further, non-governmental organizations concerned with protection for the Palestinians should establish permanent monitoring and witness groups in the occupied territories in order to enhance public awareness and to pressure Governments to urge Israel to end the occupation.

We call upon Israel, as an important "confidence-building measure", to recognize immediately the de jure applicability of the Fourth Geneva Convention, to all the territories occupied in 1967, including Jerusalem. The protections and guarantees of the Convention must be recognized and implemented without delay.

We denounce the Government of Israel's settlement policy in the West Bank and Gaza and the increased settlement activities in East Jerusalem. Those settlements are illegal and in violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention, Security Council resolution 465 (1980) and other relevant Security Council resolutions and should be dismantled. We strongly protest against the United States Administration's decision to grant Israel \$10 billion in loan guarantees without any pledge from the Government of Israel that it will cease building settlements which are illegal in the occupied Palestinian territories, including East Jerusalem. We do not accept the distinction between political and strategic settlements offered by this Government of Israel as it appears to be a tactic to avoid returning all the Palestinian territories occupied in 1967, and remains an obstacle to peace. We call upon all Governments not to donate or pledge any financial or other support to Israel until it officially pledges to cease all settlement activities in the occupied Palestinian territories, including East Jerusalem, and in the occupied Syrian Golan Heights.

We demand an end to the Israeli policy of arbitrary arrest, detention without trial and expulsion, and urge the return of all deportees, including those whose permits expired while they were outside their homeland. We

further call for an immediate halt to all summary deportations and transfer of Palestinians without residence rights, for the immediate provision for Palestinian re-entry into occupied Palestinian territories, and for the immediate granting of residence status to all members of Palestinian families.

We also call upon Israel to recognize the rights of Palestinians in Israel to full equality, rights for which they have been fighting since 1948. We denounce the ongoing discrimination against Palestinian citizens of Israel. We condemn the Israeli confiscation of their lands which has recently accelerated. Their national and human rights must be considered in any further comprehensive solution of the Palestinian problem.

We strongly condemn the continuing Israeli policy of systematic iron-fist repression against the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territories. We point out that, in spite of Israel's announced intention to release 800 administrative detainees, at least 14,000 Palestinians remain imprisoned. We note that, in spite of the cancellation of deportation orders against 11 Palestinians, those orders have been changed to an additional six months' imprisonment under new administrative detention orders. We call on Israeli authorities to stop the killing and injuring of civilians, collective punishment, the sealing and demolition of houses, detention, torture and imprisonment without trial, expropriation of land and water resources, the closing of educational institutions, and curfews and restrictions on the free movement of Palestinians. Those measures must end immediately.

We call upon Israel to stop immediately using the British Emergency Defence Regulations of 1945, under which major human rights violations, such as expulsions and sealings, extended curfews and other collective punishments, are perpetrated.

We call upon Israel to rescind all standing military orders that have codified human rights abuses and legalized them, particularly military orders that sanction administrative detention, restrictions of fundamental freedoms and rights, such as free speech, freedom of assembly and association, freedom of movement and travel, academic freedom, excessive taxation and other severe restrictions on the free development of the economy and the society of the occupied Palestinian territories.

We demand that all operations, as well as all standing orders and regulations relating to the undercover army units, called "samson" and "cherry", among others, be cancelled and that the so-called "special units" be disbanded immediately in order to put a stop to summary executions in the occupied Palestinian territories.

We believe that massive Jewish immigration to Israel continues to pose a great threat to Palestinians' survival on their land and is an obstacle to the resolution of the Palestinian problem, owing to the ensuing demographic changes. We point out that this immigration is being supported, funded and encouraged even as 90 per cent of the 370,000 Palestinians deported from Kuwait (as well as other Palestinians from the Gulf) continue to be denied re-entry to their homeland; while thousands of Palestinian families continue to be forcibly separated and their members administratively deported; while thousands of Palestinian children continue to be born, even inside the occupied territories, with no legal status or right to residence; and while

the Palestinian right to return is still denied. We call upon new immigrants to Israel and all Israelis to refuse to settle in the occupied Palestinian territories, and thus contribute to the efforts for a just settlement on the question of Palestine. We call upon all States to facilitate immigration of Jews who wish to move to countries other than Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories.

We expect each and every State party to the Geneva Conventions and every Member of the United Nations to do all in their power, pursuing all legal means at their disposal, including sanctions, to bring Israeli practices and law in the occupied Palestinian territories into compliance with international law and standards as a matter of legal contractual obligations by Israel as a State party to the Geneva Conventions and other applicable conventions and instruments of international law. Each non-governmental organization accepts its responsibilities to exert pressure on its own Government on this matter.

We demand the extension of the protection of life and human rights to the Palestinians in neighbouring countries, especially Lebanon. The creation and expansion of Palestinian non-governmental organizations in Jordan, Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic should be integrated with the work of the international non-governmental organization movement.

We support comprehensive measures to control and eliminate weapons of mass destruction worldwide, but especially in the Middle East. The international community should strongly urge Israel to sign and ratify the nuclear non-proliferation treaty. In this context non-governmental organizations are urged to support the campaign for Mordechai Vanunu's immediate release from the brutal and inhumane confinement he is suffering for alerting the world to the Israeli nuclear threat.

We conducted some of our deliberations in workshops, each devoted to a relevant issue. The reports of those workshops include suggested strategies and actions for the non-governmental organization network to coordinate and pursue over the next year.

We warmly thank the Committee for convening this international meeting and we greatly appreciate the presence of the Committee delegation. We extend a warm welcome to Mr. Kéba Birane Cissé as the new Chairman of the Committee. We also pay tribute to the excellent work of Mrs. Absa Claude Diallo, his predecessor, and wish her full success in her new endeavour. We thank the Division for Palestinian Rights and all others of the United Nations Secretariat, including the interpreters, who assisted us in such a valuable way. We express our appreciation to the distinguished experts who spoke here and added to our deliberations. We request, in keeping with recent practice, that the 1993 Non-Governmental Organization Symposium be convened at Vienna.

We wish to express a special note of thanks and appreciation to Mr. Yasser Arafat, President of the State of Palestine, and Mr. Oliver Tambo, leader of the African National Congress of South Africa, for their important and insightful comments. We all consider their participation in our meeting to be a distinct honour.

We request the Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People to convey this declaration to the General Assembly at its forty-seventh session as part of the Committee's report.



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REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE EXERCISE OF THE
INALIENABLE RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE*

* The present document is a mimeographed version of the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, which will be issued in final form as Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/48/35).

CONTENTS

	<u>Paragraphs</u>	<u>Page</u>
LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL		4
I. INTRODUCTION	1 - 8	5
II. MANDATE OF THE COMMITTEE	9 - 11	6
III. ORGANIZATION OF WORK	12 - 17	7
A. Election of officers	12 - 14	7
B. Participation in the work of the Committee	15 - 16	7
C. Re-establishment of the Working Group	17	7
IV. ACTION TAKEN BY THE COMMITTEE	18 - 70	8
A. Action taken in accordance with General Assembly resolution 47/64 A	18 - 45	8
1. Review of the situation relating to the question of Palestine and efforts to implement the recommendations of the Committee	18 - 31	8
2. Reaction to developments affecting the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people .	32 - 38	11
3. Action taken by the Committee to promote a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement in accordance with United Nations resolutions ...	39 - 43	12
4. Attendance at international conferences and meetings	44	14
5. Action taken by United Nations bodies, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, and intergovernmental organizations	45	14
B. Action taken by the Committee and the Division for Palestinian Rights in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 47/64 A and B	46 - 70	16
1. Seminars	47 - 56	16
2. Cooperation with non-governmental organizations	57 - 65	18
3. Research, monitoring and publications	66 - 68	20
4. United Nations information system on the Question of Palestine (UNISPAL)	69	21
5. International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People	70	21

CONTENTS (continued)

	<u>Paragraphs</u>	<u>Page</u>
V. ACTION TAKEN BY THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INFORMATION IN ACCORDANCE WITH GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 47/64 C	71 - 84	21
VI. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COMMITTEE	85 - 96	24
<u>Annexes</u>		
I. Recommendations of the Committee endorsed by the General Assembly at its thirty-first session		29
II. United Nations Seminar on Assistance to the Palestinian People, UNESCO headquarters, Paris, 26 to 29 April 1993		32
III. Ninth United Nations North American Seminar on the Question of Palestine, New York, 28 to 29 June 1993		36
IV. Tenth United Nations North American Regional Non-Governmental Organizations Symposium on the Question of Palestine, New York, 30 June to 2 July 1993		38
V. Seventh United Nations European Regional Non-Governmental Organizations Symposium on the Question of Palestine, Vienna, 23 and 24 August 1993		40
VI. Tenth United Nations International Non-Governmental Organizations Meeting on the Question of Palestine, Vienna, 25 to 27 August 1993		44
VII. United Nations African Seminar and Non-Governmental Organizations Symposium on the Question of Palestine, Dakar, Senegal, 30 August to 3 September 1993		49

LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

18 November 1993

Sir,

I have the honour to enclose herewith the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for submission to the General Assembly in accordance with paragraph 4 of its resolution 47/64 A of 11 December 1992.

Accept, Sir, the assurances of my highest consideration.

(Signed) Kéba Birane CISSE
Chairman of the Committee on the
Exercise of the Inalienable
Rights of the Palestinian People

His Excellency
Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali
Secretary-General of the United Nations

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People was established by the General Assembly in its resolution 3376 (XXX) of 10 November 1975, in which the Assembly requested the Committee to consider and recommend to it a programme designed to enable the Palestinian people to exercise its inalienable rights as recognized by the Assembly in resolution 3236 (XXIX) of 22 November 1974. During the reporting period, the Committee continued to be composed of 23 Member States as follows: Afghanistan, Belarus, Cuba, Cyprus, Guinea, Guyana, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mali, Malta, Nigeria, Pakistan, Romania, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine and Yugoslavia. 1/

2. The recommendations made by the Committee in its first report to the General Assembly 2/ were first endorsed by the Assembly in resolution 31/20 of 24 November 1976 as a basis for the solution of the question of Palestine. In its subsequent reports 3/ the Committee has continued to stress that a comprehensive, just and lasting solution of the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict in the Middle East, must be based on the relevant United Nations resolutions and the following essential principles: withdrawal of Israel from the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem; respect for the right of all States in the region to live in peace within secure and internationally recognized boundaries; and the recognition and exercise of the inalienable national rights of the Palestinian people, primarily the right to self-determination. Each year, the Assembly has endorsed the Committee's recommendations with overwhelming support and has renewed its mandate and expanded it as necessary.

3. The Committee considers that the principled position adopted by the international community with regard to the question of Palestine is beginning to bear fruit at this time of fundamental changes on the international political scene which have brought about a shift from confrontation to cooperation and a renewed determination to resolve long-standing regional conflicts.

4. Having welcomed the peace process initiated at Madrid in 1991, and having followed the subsequent rounds of talks in the year under review, the Committee continued to express concern at the prolonged stalemate and to stress that progress in the negotiations could only be achieved within the framework of respect for international law and the relevant United Nations resolutions.

5. In September 1993, the Committee welcomed the exchange of letters of mutual recognition between the Government of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), and the subsequent signing by representatives of the two sides of the "Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements", providing for initial steps towards Palestinian self-government, the withdrawal of Israeli forces from Jericho and the Gaza Strip and a framework for negotiations leading to a permanent settlement based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). The Committee considers this evolution to be an important step towards the attainment of a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement. It is also the beginning of a difficult transition process which will necessitate the continued vigilance and support of the international community as a whole, and the United Nations in particular, in order to ensure that it will lead to the exercise of the inalienable national rights of the Palestinian people, in line with the Committee's recommendations.

6. At the same time, the Committee remained greatly concerned at the continued grave situation in the occupied Palestinian territory and called on Israel, the occupying Power, to recognize henceforth the applicability of the Fourth Geneva

Convention to the occupied Palestinian territory and to take immediate measures to implement the provisions of the Convention and to restore respect for human rights. The Committee called in particular on Israel to end the shooting of unarmed demonstrators by the Israeli Defense Force and its undercover activities, which have resulted in summary executions; to release all political prisoners and detainees; and to end all imposition of collective punishments such as curfews, closure of the occupied territory, the destruction or sealing of houses, and deportation of Palestinian civilians; and called for the return of all those deported since 1967.

7. The Committee further called on Israel, pending complete withdrawal from the occupied territory, including Jerusalem, to end immediately its confiscation of Palestinian land and settlement activities, including the building of roads and control over water resources, and to repeal military orders restricting political, social and economic activity by Palestinians. The Committee called upon the High Contracting Parties to the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, 4/ and upon the United Nations system as a whole, to ensure that Israel abides by the provisions of the Convention and of relevant United Nations resolutions in this regard.

8. The Committee firmly believes that the United Nations has a permanent responsibility with respect to the question of Palestine until it is resolved in all its aspects in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions and calls on the United Nations and the international community as a whole to intensify its efforts to assist the Palestinian people in building the foundations for the exercise of national sovereignty and thereby ensure a successful outcome of the agreements that have been reached. For its part, as the United Nations organ specifically mandated to promote the attainment of the exercise by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights, the Committee intends to further strengthen its own efforts in this regard.

II. MANDATE OF THE COMMITTEE

9. The mandate of the Committee for the year 1993 is contained in paragraphs 3 to 5 of General Assembly resolution 47/64 A of 11 December 1992, in which the Assembly:

(a) Requested the Committee to continue to keep under review the situation relating to the question of Palestine, as well as the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Achievement of Palestinian Rights 5/ and to report and make suggestions to the General Assembly or the Security Council, as appropriate;

(b) Authorized the Committee to continue to exert all efforts to promote the implementation of its recommendations, including representation at conferences and meetings and the sending of delegations, to make such adjustments in its approved programme of work as it may consider appropriate and necessary, to give special emphasis to the need to mobilize public opinion in Europe and North America, and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its forty-eighth session and thereafter;

(c) Also requested the Committee to continue to extend its cooperation to non-governmental organizations in their contribution towards heightening international awareness of the facts relating to the question of Palestine and creating a more favourable atmosphere for the full implementation of the recommendations of the Committee, and to take the necessary steps to expand its contacts with those organizations.

10. In its resolution 47/64 B, also of 11 December 1992, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General, inter alia, to provide the Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat with the necessary resources to strengthen its programme of research, studies and publications, through the establishment of an adequately staffed and equipped computer-based information system on the question of Palestine, and to ensure that it continues to discharge its tasks, as detailed in previous resolutions, in consultation with the Committee and under its guidance.

11. In its resolution 47/64 C, of 11 December 1992, the General Assembly requested the Department of Public Information, in full cooperation and coordination with the Committee, to continue, with the necessary flexibility as may be required by developments affecting the question of Palestine, its special information programme on the question of Palestine for the biennium 1992-1993, with particular emphasis on public opinion in Europe and North America.

III. ORGANIZATION OF WORK

A. Election of officers

12. At its 195th meeting, on 27 January 1993, the Committee re-elected Mr. Kéba Birane Cissé (Senegal) as Chairman, Mr. Alcibiades J. Hidalgo Basulto (Cuba) as Vice-Chairman and Mr. Victor Camilleri (Malta) as Rapporteur.

13. At its 199th meeting, on 26 July 1993, the Committee elected Mr. Ravan Farhadi (Afghanistan) as Vice-Chairman and Mr. Joseph Cassar (Malta) as Rapporteur following the departure of Mr. Camilleri.

14. At its 196th meeting, on 3 March 1993, the Committee adopted its programme of work for 1993 (A/AC.183/1993/CRP.1) in implementation of its mandate.

B. Participation in the work of the Committee

15. As in previous years, the Committee reconfirmed that all States Members of the United Nations and Permanent Observers to the United Nations desiring to participate in the work of the Committee as observers were welcome to do so. Accordingly, in a letter dated 15 March 1993, the Chairman of the Committee so informed the Secretary-General, who subsequently transmitted the letter, on 26 March 1993, to the States Members of the United Nations and members of the specialized agencies, and to intergovernmental organizations. In accordance with established practice, the Committee also invited Palestine, represented by the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), to participate in the work of the Committee as an observer, to attend all its meetings and to make observations and proposals for consideration by the Committee.

16. In 1993, the Committee again welcomed as observers all the States and organizations that had participated in its work in the preceding year. 6/

C. Re-establishment of the Working Group

17. At its 195th meeting, the Committee re-established its Working Group in order to assist in the preparation and expedition of the work of the Committee, on the understanding that any Committee member or observer could participate in

its deliberations. 7/ The Working Group was constituted as before under the chairmanship of Mr. Victor Camilleri and later Mr. Joseph Cassar. Mrs. Mitra Visisht (India) was elected Vice-Chairman of the Working Group.

IV. ACTION TAKEN BY THE COMMITTEE

A. Action taken in accordance with General Assembly resolution 47/64 A

1. Review of the situation relating to the question of Palestine and efforts to implement the recommendations of the Committee

18. In accordance with its mandate, the Committee continued to keep under review the situation relating to the question of Palestine and to exert all efforts to promote the implementation of its recommendations as repeatedly endorsed by the General Assembly.

19. In response to urgent developments affecting the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, the Chairman of the Committee, on a number of occasions, brought such developments to the attention of the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council, urging appropriate action in keeping with United Nations resolutions (see paras. 32-38 below).

20. Assisted by the Division for Palestinian Rights, the Committee continued to monitor the situation in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, through the media, the reports of United Nations organs and organizations, as well as through information collected by Governments, non-governmental organizations, individual experts from Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory who participated in meetings held under the auspices of the Committee and other sources.

21. The Committee noted with serious concern that the situation in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, which had been previously reported as grave and volatile, continued to deteriorate alarmingly during the period under review. The reports reaching the Committee left no doubt that the continuation of the occupation, buttressed by armed force, increasingly endangered the very fabric of the Palestinian society and of its livelihood, and resulted in grave human rights violations. In that regard, the Committee welcomed the appointment by the Commission on Human Rights of a Special Rapporteur mandated to investigate Israel's violations of the principles and bases of international law, international humanitarian law and the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, in the occupied Palestinian territory.

22. Reports reaching the Committee detailed the continuation in the reporting period of harsh repressive measures by the occupation forces and armed settlers, despite the hopes initially engendered by the continuation of the peace process and the election of a new Government in Israel in 1992. The Committee was greatly concerned that the number of Palestinians killed through actions of the armed forces or their agents had risen sharply in the year under review, following attacks in which Israelis had been killed. Since the beginning of the intifadah the total number of Palestinian casualties by shooting, beating or tear gas had risen to 1,240 by August 1993, and the total number injured to an

estimated 130,000. Approximately one fourth of the fatalities continued to be children under 16.

23. The Committee also noted with concern that approximately 14,000 Palestinian political prisoners were still being held in Israeli prisons and detention camps, many of them in administrative detention without having been brought to trial. There continued to be reports of inhuman conditions in the jails and mistreatment of prisoners, including beatings and torture. The Committee noted with alarm that 14 Palestinians had died in custody since the beginning of the intifadah, six of them in Gaza Central Prison.

24. The Committee noted reports that in the period under review there had been an intensification of the previous Government's campaign to pursue persons declared as "wanted" by the authorities, primarily through increased harassment of their families; an increased use of large-scale military operations which utilize excessive force; the use of Military Order No. 1076, issued in April 1992, which permits a seven-year prison term without trial for failure to respond to a summons; and the widespread use of undercover units which have engaged in extra-judicial killings. Military assaults against the homes of fugitives, using large-calibre machine-gun ammunition, anti-tank missiles and dynamite took place in February and April 1993 in the Gaza Strip, rendering hundreds of Palestinians homeless. The Committee deplored the fact that in early October 1993, after the signing of the Declaration of Principles, another similar attack took place, in which the homes of another 18 families in the Gaza Strip were destroyed. Human rights organizations reported that from the beginning of the intifadah to August 1993, over 2,400 homes had been demolished or sealed, over 166,000 trees uprooted, and curfews had been imposed in over 12,000 instances.

25. The Committee has been extremely concerned by the deportation, on 17 December 1992, of over 400 Palestinian civilians from the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem. In a statement adopted on 21 January 1993, the Committee strongly condemned this action by the occupying Power as contrary to the Fourth Geneva Convention and numerous Security Council resolutions. Having taken note of the fact that the Israeli Government allowed some of the deportees to return to their homes, the Committee remains of the view that Israel has yet to implement Security Council resolution 799 (1992) in its entirety.

26. The Committee was also alarmed by the fact that in July 1993 the persistent Israeli air, navy and ground artillery assaults against vast areas in Lebanon caused the displacement of and high number of casualties and suffering among the Palestinians living in refugee camps of Beddawi and Nahr el-Bared in northern Lebanon, and Ein el-Hilweh, Mieh Mieh and Rashidieh in southern Lebanon.

27. The Committee noted that the settlement activity in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, had continued. In an important policy change, the Government had made an effort to prioritize settlement objectives with respect to some areas in the occupied territory. Construction in the critical region of Greater Jerusalem, however, proceeded apace, with ambitious plans considered by the Government to link the city centre with the southern bloc of settlements. It was reported that among those plans is the completion of construction of the Jerusalem-Efrat highway, an estimated \$42 million project, intended to link the Jerusalem suburb of Gilo with the Etzion bloc of settlements and benefit the economic development of the so-called "bedroom suburbs" of Jerusalem. In this regard, the Committee reaffirmed that

the settlement policies and practices of the occupying Power are in violation of article 49 of the Fourth Geneva Convention and resolutions of the Security Council, which have declared the settlements illegal and have called for an end to such activities.

28. Further, the Committee noted with concern that the closure, in March 1993, of the West Bank, including Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip had a particularly negative effect on the Palestinian residents of East Jerusalem, who became almost totally isolated and deprived of any freedom of movement. This measure has also divided the occupied Palestinian territory into four parts, separating the southern and northern parts of the West Bank and isolating the Gaza Strip and Jerusalem. In some areas, road blocks have created enclaves, depriving the Palestinians living in them of access to their families, places of work, schools, medical care facilities, places of worship in Jerusalem and utility services.

29. The Committee also noted with the greatest concern the rapid worsening of the environmental situation in the occupied Palestinian territory. The ecological problems of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip stem mostly from the over-exploitation by the Israeli authorities and the settlers of the available water resources, the lack of adequate waste management system and the destruction of thousands of olive and fruit trees. The contamination and degradation of the environment is especially severe in the Gaza Strip, where the environmental problem has acquired crisis dimensions. It has been described as representing a direct health threat to the population, the children in particular. In addition, the poor condition of water distribution networks, and considerable water losses hindered the economic development of the Palestinian households and affected their livelihood.

30. The economic and social situation in the occupied territory has been a source of great concern to the Committee. The Palestinian economy, which has witnessed significant structural changes over 26 years of Israeli occupation, was made dependent on and inferior to the highly capitalized and technologically advanced Israeli economy. The Committee noted that continued human rights violations by the Israeli authorities in the occupied territory, control of water resources, the demolition of houses and other property, and the destruction of olive trees and crops have further exacerbated the living conditions of the Palestinian population.

31. The Committee noted the economic assistance and development programmes and projects undertaken by the organizations and agencies of the United Nations system. These endeavours are acquiring special significance in the anticipation of a full-fledged Palestinian statehood. With a view to contributing to ongoing efforts, the Committee organized a Seminar on Assistance to the Palestinian people. The Committee wishes to draw particular attention to the report and recommendations of the Seminar (see paras. 48-50). The Committee is of the view that the international assistance programme would be enhanced by greater and more effective coordination among the organizations of the United Nations system and between them and other donors, as well as by the elaboration of an overall strategy framework to guide their work. In this connection, the Committee welcomed the statement made by the Secretary-General, on 1 September 1993, that the United Nations is prepared to offer the parties every assistance within the context of the agreement between them with the aim of contributing to the establishment of peace in the Middle East in accordance with United Nations resolutions, as well as the subsequent appointment of a high-level task force to focus on the economic and social development of Jericho and the Gaza Strip and

to prepare proposals for the Secretary-General before the start of the forty-eighth session of the General Assembly. The Committee welcomed the recent pledging conference that took place on 1 October 1993 in Washington, D.C., on assistance to the Palestinian people, and stressed the importance of an effective role by the United Nations in this regard. The report of the task force, entitled "Supporting the transition: an immediate response of the United Nations to the interim period in the West Bank and Gaza Strip" was made available to participants at this meeting.

2. Reactions to developments affecting the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people

(a) Communications to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

32. The Chairman of the Committee on a number of occasions drew the attention of the Secretary-General and of the President of the Security Council to urgent developments in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem. The Chairman condemned the mass deportations and the indiscriminate shooting of demonstrators by the army, as well as the intensification and expansion of collective punishment such as the imposition of curfews, the closure of the occupied territory and mass detentions of Palestinian civilians, including minors. The Chairman pointed out that those policies and practices were in violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention, and requested that Israel accept the de jure applicability of the Convention to all the territories occupied since 1967 and abide scrupulously by the provisions of that Convention and relevant Security Council resolutions. The Chairman appealed urgently to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council and to all parties concerned, in particular the High Contracting Parties to the Convention, to take all necessary measures for ensuring the safety and protection of the Palestinian civilians under occupation and to intensify all efforts towards the achievement of a peaceful settlement.

33. The following letters from the Chairman of the Committee to the Secretary-General were circulated as official documents of the General Assembly, under the agenda item entitled "Question of Palestine", and of the Security Council:

(a) letter dated 17 December 1992 (A/47/793-S/24974); (b) letter dated 21 January 1993 (A/47/874-S/25136); (c) letter dated 18 February 1993 (A/47/893-S/25311); (d) letter dated 23 March 1993 (A/47/911-S/25464); and letter dated 28 May 1993 (A/47/959-S/25862).

(b) Action taken within the Security Council

34. The Committee followed closely the activities of the Security Council on matters pertaining to the Committee's mandate and participated in Council deliberations as necessary.

35. In his letter dated 18 December 1992, the Permanent Representative of Lebanon to the United Nations requested a meeting of the Security Council to discuss the grave situation, which had occurred as a result of the deportation of more than 400 Palestinians into Lebanese territory. Following this request, at its 3151st meeting, on 18 December 1992, the Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 799 (1992), in which, inter alia, it strongly condemned the action taken by Israel, the occupying Power, to deport hundreds of Palestinian civilians, and expressed its firm opposition to any such deportation by Israel;

reaffirmed the applicability of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 12 August 1949 to all the Palestinian territories occupied by Israel since 1967, including Jerusalem, and affirmed that deportation of civilians constitutes a contravention of its obligations under the Convention; demanded that Israel, the occupying Power, ensure the safe and immediate return to the occupied territories of all those deported; and requested the Secretary-General to consider dispatching a representative to the area to follow up with the Israeli Government with regard to this serious situation and to report to the Security Council.

36. Pursuant to the request contained in Security Council resolution 799 (1992), the Secretary-General, on 25 January 1993, submitted a report to the Council, 8/ outlining his efforts in that regard, including three missions to the region by his special representatives, Mr. James O. C. Jonah and Mr. Chinmaya Rajaninath Gharekhan, aimed at achieving a solution of the situation with respect to the Palestinian deportees. As the efforts were inconclusive and Israel refused to ensure the safe and immediate return of the deportees as demanded in resolution 799 (1992), the Secretary-General recommended that the Council take whatever measures were required to ensure that its unanimous decision, as set out in the resolution, was respected.

37. Following the issuance by the Secretary-General of the aforementioned report, the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations, in a letter dated 9 February 1993 addressed to the President of the Security Council, outlined the decision taken by the Government of Israel, at a special session of the Cabinet held on 1 February 1993, regarding the Palestinian deportees. 9/

38. In a letter dated 22 March 1993 addressed to the President of the Council, the Permanent Representative of Egypt to the United Nations in his capacity as Chairman of the Arab Group and on behalf of its members requested a meeting of the Council to consider the serious situation in the occupied Palestinian territories, including Jerusalem. 10/ In view of the lack of action by the Security Council on the Secretary-General's report, the Bureau of the Committee felt compelled to take action to register their concern and met with the President of the Council on 24 March 1993. The Committee noted that concern in this regard was also expressed by, inter alia, the Group of Arab States, the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries. These requests, however, did not result in a meeting of the Council.

3. Action taken by the Committee to promote a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement in accordance with United Nations resolutions

39. By its resolution 47/64 D of 11 December 1992, the General Assembly reaffirmed the urgent need to achieve a just and comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict, the core of which is the question of Palestine. It welcomed the ongoing peace process, which started at Madrid in October 1991, and expressed the hope that it would lead to the establishment of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the region. The Assembly also expressed the need for the United Nations to play a more active and expanded role in the current peace process. It considered that the convening, at a certain stage, of an International Peace Conference on the Middle East, under the auspices of the United Nations, with the participation of all parties to the conflict, including the Palestine Liberation Organization, on an equal footing, and the five permanent members of the Security Council, based on Council resolutions

242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people, primarily the right to self-determination, would contribute to the promotion of peace in the region. The Assembly reaffirmed the following principles for the achievement of comprehensive peace: the withdrawal of Israel from the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, and from the other occupied Arab territories; guaranteeing arrangements for peace and security of all States in the region, including those named in resolution 181 (II) of 29 November 1947, within secure and internationally recognized boundaries; resolving the problem of the Palestine refugees in conformity with General Assembly resolution 194 (III) of 11 December 1948 and subsequent relevant resolutions; dismantling the Israeli settlements in the territories occupied since 1967; and guaranteeing freedom of access to Holy Places, religious buildings and sites. It noted the expressed desire and endeavours to place the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, under the supervision of the United Nations for a transitional period or, alternatively, to provide international protection for the Palestinian people there, as part of the peace process; and requested the Secretary-General to continue his efforts with the parties concerned, and in consultation with the Security Council, for the promotion of peace in the region, and to submit progress reports on developments in this matter.

40. Taking into consideration that resolution, the Committee, in adopting its programme of work for 1993, decided to continue to give priority to the promotion of a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict, the core of which is the question of Palestine, including the convening, at a certain stage, of an international peace conference on the Middle East, under the auspices of the United Nations.

41. During the period under review, the Committee continued to express support for the Arab-Israeli negotiations within the framework of the Madrid peace process and to call on the parties concerned to intensify their efforts to overcome the obstacles and achieve positive results. The Committee reiterated that the United Nations has a role to play in the process, as those negotiations are based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), which have long been regarded as cornerstones for a comprehensive settlement in the Middle East. The Committee noted that the United Nations had been invited by the sponsors of the Madrid process to participate in the multilateral negotiations on Middle East regional issues and that the Secretary-General had appointed a special representative. The Committee expressed its appreciation to the Secretary-General for his efforts to make a concrete contribution to those negotiations.

42. On 16 September 1993, as it was completing its programme of work for the year, the Committee was apprised of the new developments culminating in the signing of a declaration of principles by representatives of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization, providing for initial steps towards Palestinian self-government, the withdrawal of Israeli forces from Jericho and the Gaza Strip and a framework for negotiations leading to a permanent settlement based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) (see A/48/486-S/26560, annex, signed by the United States, the Russian Federation, Israel and the Permanent Observer of Palestine). The Committee welcomed and supported this evolution as an important first step towards a just and comprehensive peace in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions and pledged to intensify its efforts in that direction in the coming year. The Committee also welcomed other significant and concrete steps, including the

Israeli-Palestinian negotiations in Taba and Cairo, Egypt, and the recent partial release by the Israeli Government of Palestinian political prisoners.

43. The Committee was encouraged by the continued international support for its position and objectives, as reflected in decisions adopted by United Nations bodies, other intergovernmental organizations, and in the documents adopted at United Nations seminars and meetings of non-governmental organizations on the question of Palestine held under the auspices of the Committee.

4. Attendance at international conferences and meetings

44. In accordance with its mandate, the Committee was represented at the following international meetings during the period since its previous report to the General Assembly:

(a) Twenty-first Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers, held at Karachi, Pakistan, from 24 to 29 April 1993;

(b) Fifty-eighth ordinary session of the Council of Ministers of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), held at Cairo from 21 to 26 June 1993, and the twenty-ninth ordinary session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of OAU, held at Cairo from 28 to 30 June 1993.

5. Action taken by the United Nations bodies, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and intergovernmental organizations

45. The Committee continued to follow with great interest the activities relating to the question of Palestine of United Nations bodies, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and intergovernmental organizations. The Committee noted especially the support of the international community for the ongoing peace process and for the declaration of principles of September 1993, and the hope that it would result in a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement in accordance with United Nations principles and resolutions. The Committee also noted the great concern about the continuing violations of human rights by Israel, the occupying Power, and about its settlements policy, and the sense of urgency with which the international community addressed the need to support the Palestinian people in the difficult transition period ahead and to provide the necessary financial and other assistance for the exercise of Palestinian national sovereignty. The Committee took particular note of the following documents:

(a) Final communiqué of the sixth extraordinary session of the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers, held at Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, on 1 and 2 December 1992 (A/47/765-S/24930, annex);

(b) Declaration on the Middle East Peace Process, adopted by the Council of Ministers of the European Communities at its meeting held at Edinburgh on 11 and 12 December 1992 (A/47/790-S/24968, annex);

(c) Statement on the situation in Israel and the occupied territories, issued by the European Community and its member States on 18 December 1992 (A/47/841-S/25005, annex);

(d) Final communiqué adopted by the Supreme Council of the Gulf Cooperation Council at its thirteenth session, held at Abu Dhabi from 21 to 23 December 1992 (A/47/845-S/25020, annex);

(e) Final declaration adopted at the Arab Coordination Meeting, held at Cairo, on 24 December 1992 (S/25018);

(f) Statement adopted by the Committee on Palestine of the Organization of the Islamic Conference at its meeting held in New York on 30 December 1992 (A/47/850-S/25043, annex);

(g) Final declaration adopted by the Bureau of the Sixth Islamic Summit enlarged to the Chairmen of the Standing Committees at its meeting held at Dakar on 11 January 1993 (A/47/866-S/25096, annex, paras. 1-16);

(h) Resolutions adopted by the Commission on Human Rights at its forty-ninth session (resolutions 1993/2 A and B, 1993/3, and 1993/4); 11/

(i) Final communiqué and resolutions adopted by the 21st Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers held at Karachi, Pakistan, from 25 to 29 April 1993;

(j) Declaration adopted by the Committee on Palestine of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries at ministerial level on 12 May 1993 at Bali, Indonesia (A/47/957-S/25858, annex);

(k) Statement of the Ministerial Council of the Gulf Cooperation Council at its forty-seventh session, held at Riyadh on 7 and 8 June 1993 (A/48/205-S/25923, annex);

(l) Resolutions adopted by the Council of Ministers of the Organization of African Unity at its fifty-eighth ordinary session, held at Cairo from 21 to 26 June 1993 (A/48/322, annex I, CM/Res. 1452 (LVIII) and 1453 (LVIII));

(m) Resolutions and decisions adopted by the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 1993, held at Geneva from 28 June to 30 July 1993 (resolutions 1993/15, 1993/52 and 1993/78 and decision 1993/253);

(n) Statement issued on 13 September 1993 by the Presidency of the European Community on the peace process in the Middle East (A/47/1019-S/26447, annex);

(o) Communiqué issued by the Chairman of the Sixth Summit of the Organization of the Islamic Conference and President of Senegal (A/47/1017, annex);

(p) Communiqué adopted by the Ministerial Council of the League of Arab States at its second regular session, held at Cairo from 19 to 21 September 1993;

(q) Statement of the Committee on Palestine of the Non-Aligned Movement at its Ministerial Meeting, held at New York on 28 September 1993 (A/48/455-S/26502, annex);

(r) Final communiqué adopted by the annual Coordination Meeting of the Organization of the Islamic Conference at the ministerial level, held in New York, on 29 September 1993.

B. Action taken by the Committee and the Division for Palestinian Rights in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 47/64 A and B

46. In its programme of work for the year 1993, the Committee decided to continue organizing regional seminars and symposia and meetings of non-governmental organizations and its programme of studies and publications in accordance with existing mandates and budgetary provisions. The Committee, as in the past, decided to invite Palestinian and Israeli personalities to participate in all events organized under its auspices with a view to promoting a constructive debate, mutual understanding and a concrete and action-oriented analysis of the most important issues relating to the question of Palestine. The Committee also decided to focus on the following priority issues:

(a) The urgency of promoting measures by the Security Council, the High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention and all other parties concerned to ensure the full implementation of Security Council resolution 799 (1992);

(b) The imperative need to end human rights violations and ensure the safety and international protection of Palestinian civilians in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, in accordance with the Fourth Geneva Convention and Security Council resolutions, in particular resolution 681 (1990);

(c) The adverse impact of Israel's confiscation of Palestinian land and settlement activities in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, on the achievement of Palestinian rights and of a just settlement of the question of Palestine, and the urgent need to take measures in this regard;

(d) The deteriorating economic situation of the Palestinian people and the need for international assistance to promote the independent social and economic development of the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, in preparation for the full exercise of national sovereignty in accordance with relevant United Nations resolutions;

(e) The promotion of a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict, the core of which is the question of Palestine, including the convening, at a certain stage, of an international peace conference on the Middle East, under the auspices of the United Nations in accordance with General Assembly resolution 47/64 D of 11 December 1992.

1. Seminars

47. Regional seminars in Europe, North America, Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean were included in the calendar of meetings to be organized under the auspices of the Committee. For reasons beyond its control, the Committee was unable to hold an event for the Latin American and Caribbean region in the period under review.

(a) United Nations Seminar on Assistance to the Palestinian People

48. The Committee decided to devote its Seminar for the European region to the theme of "Assistance to the Palestinian People", in response to the request made by the General Assembly in its resolution 47/170 of 22 December 1992. The Seminar was held at United Nations, Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Headquarters in Paris from 26 to 29 April 1993.

49. The Seminar considered five topics: (a) Assistance to the Palestinian people: priorities and needs; (b) The role and experience of the United Nations system; (c) The role and experience of regional organizations; (d) The role and experience of countries involved in assistance projects in the occupied Palestinian territory; and (e) The role and experience of Palestinian and international non-governmental organizations. Presentations were made by experts and representatives of organizations of the United Nations system, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and donor countries.

50. The Committee noted that the participants in the Seminar were of the view that a comprehensive Palestinian national development plan would be a major factor in achieving the independent development of the Palestinian people. They stressed the importance of undertaking coordination between the various donors and organizations and agencies of the United Nations system, and the Palestinian central authority. They were of the view that the international assistance programmes would be enhanced, among other things, by the elaboration of an overall strategy framework to guide their work. They were also of the view that international assistance should be targeted and delivered so as to meet Palestinian priorities, to help loosen the grip of the occupation and to promote the independent development of the Palestinian people. Participants stressed that the question of coordination of international assistance needed to be discussed urgently by all concerned and requested the Committee to convey to the Secretary-General their recommendation that he convene a meeting of organizations of the United Nations system, together with PLO officials, to consider appropriate mechanisms to coordinate and channel assistance and to decide on priorities. The request was conveyed by the Chairman in a letter transmitting the report of the Seminar, which was issued as a document of the General Assembly and of the Economic and Social Council (A/48/168-E/1993/62). Further details on the Seminar are contained in annex II.

(b) North American Regional Seminar

51. The North American Regional Seminar was held at United Nations Headquarters in New York on 28 and 29 June 1993. Mindful of the need to intensify the role of the United Nations in the various aspects of the question of Palestine, the Committee decided to devote the Seminar to the general theme "Priorities for United Nations action".

52. The participants in the Seminar discussed three topics: (a) The United Nations and the implementation of international human rights instruments and relevant Security Council resolutions; (b) The United Nations and the promotion of the economic development of the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem; and (c) The United Nations and the peace process.

53. The Committee noted that Seminar participants deplored the fact that Israel, the occupying Power, continued to reject the jurisdiction of the international community with regard to its treatment of Palestinian civilians. The Seminar also addressed the current and future economic needs of the occupied

territory. The participants exchanged views on the current economic situation in the occupied territory, as well as on ways of promoting sustainable development in the course of and after the transitional period. Special emphasis was laid on the importance of an active role of the United Nations, the Security Council and the Secretary-General in ensuring a successful outcome of the peace process. Further details on the Seminar are contained in annex III.

(c) The African Regional Seminar

54. The African Regional Seminar was held at Dakar, Senegal, from 30 August to 3 September 1993, jointly with the African Non-Governmental Organization Symposium. The Committee expressed its deep appreciation to the Government of Senegal for having provided the venue for these important events and for its unstinting support for the work of the Committee.

55. The theme of the Seminar was "Africa, the Middle East, and the Question of Palestine". The participants in the Seminar discussed the following four topics: (a) Towards a just solution of the question of Palestine; (b) Building peace in Jerusalem - the Holy City of three religions; (c) Towards self-determination and statehood; and (d) The need to revive the economy in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem.

56. Participants were apprised of the turning point in the peace process, which took place while the meeting was in progress, and accordingly devoted considerable discussion to analysing the situation on the ground in light of new developments and to making recommendations for the difficult transition process ahead. They expressed concern at the Israeli policy of annexation and judaization of Jerusalem and its separation in recent months from the rest of the occupied territory, and stressed that a solution to the problem of Jerusalem was essential for the achievement of a lasting peace. The participants emphasized that a revival of the Palestinian economy and its independent development were essential underpinnings for the full exercise of the right to self-determination of the Palestinian people and the building of an independent State. They stressed the need for the creation of an appropriate mechanism to undertake coordination between various donors and the United Nations system organizations and agencies, and the PLO. It was suggested that the Committee organize under its auspices round-tables on economic revitalization of the occupied Palestinian territory, which would be of particular importance in the transitional period. The participants also reaffirmed the permanent responsibility of the United Nations towards a just and comprehensive solution of the question of Palestine and stressed the essential role of the Committee. Details on the Seminar and its Conclusions and recommendations are contained in annex VII.

2. Cooperation with non-governmental organizations

57. The Committee, in accordance with its mandate under General Assembly resolution 47/64 A, continued to cooperate and expand contacts with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) active on the question of Palestine. During 1993, the Division for Palestinian Rights, in consultation with the Committee and under its guidance, organized regional non-governmental organization symposia in North America, Africa and Europe, and an international meeting of non-governmental organizations. The Committee noted that non-governmental organizations had continued their efforts to provide assistance and support to the Palestinian people under occupation and to promote a just and

comprehensive peace. The Committee affirmed the importance of the contribution by the NGO community to international efforts on behalf of the Palestinian people and considered that their support would become even more necessary during the future transition period.

(a) North American Regional Non-Governmental Organization Symposium

58. The North American Regional Non-Governmental Organization Symposium was held at United Nations Headquarters in New York from 30 June to 2 July 1993, immediately following the North American Regional Seminar, in accordance with the practice established by the Committee in previous years. The programme for the Symposium was elaborated in consultations between the Committee and the North American Coordinating Committee for Non-Governmental Organizations on the Question of Palestine at a preparatory meeting held at United Nations Headquarters in New York, on 25 and 26 January 1993.

59. The theme of the Symposium was "Building for peace and Palestine: priorities for the second decade of the NGO movement". The programme included four panels: "Building for peace and Palestine: priorities for the second decade of the NGO movement"; "Rights, resources, refugees: the need for protection"; "Ending the occupation: a prelude to peace and security"; and "NGO priorities for the second decade". The programme also included several workshops.

60. The Committee noted that the North American non-governmental organizations had taken steps to strengthen the organizational framework for their activity and that six Standing Committees had been created and had met to discuss ways and means for coordinating the efforts of NGOs in the coming year. The Standing Committees had drawn up programmes of action to serve as guidelines for the future and to be brought to the next annual symposium for evaluation. Additional details on the Symposium are contained in annex IV.

(b) European Regional Non-Governmental Organization Symposium

61. The European Regional Non-Governmental Organization Symposium was held at Vienna, on 23 and 24 August 1993 and was followed by the International Non-Governmental Organization Meeting, which was held from 25 to 27 August 1993. The Committee expressed its appreciation to the Government of Austria for having provided the facilities of the Austria Centre for the two meetings and for the important contribution it had made to the successful holding of these events.

62. The programmes for the Symposium and the Meeting were elaborated by the Committee in consultation with the European Coordinating Committee for Non-Governmental Organizations on the Question of Palestine and the International Coordinating Committee for Non-Governmental Organizations on the Question of Palestine at a preparatory meeting held at the United Nations Office at Geneva on 5 and 6 April 1993.

63. The Symposium had for its theme "The Middle East peace process: Palestinian rights and development - a challenge to Europe". The topic of the plenary session was "Palestine - the current situation". Two workshops were organized, one dealing with Palestinian national and human rights, and the other with Palestinian development. Details on the Symposium and the Declaration adopted are contained in annex V.

(c) International Non-Governmental Organization Meeting

64. The theme of the International NGO Meeting was "Renewing the United Nations NGO commitment to Palestinian national and human rights". The participants focused on five topics: (a) Political update: obstacles to peace; (b) Urgent quest for independence: protection and end of occupation; (c) Back to the future - a decade of United Nations/NGO networking; (d) NGO forum: who is doing what?; and (e) Future strategies and the role of NGOs. Further details on the Meeting and the Declaration adopted are contained in annex VI.

(d) African Regional Non-Governmental Organization Symposium

65. The African Regional NGO Symposium was held at Dakar, Senegal, from 30 August to 3 September 1993, together with the Seminar (see para. 58) and shared with it the main theme "Africa, the Middle East and the Question of Palestine", the round-table discussions and the adoption of the final concluding document. Additionally, the following two workshops were organized for non-governmental organizations: "Action by African non-governmental organizations to promote efforts to put an end to Israel's violation of human rights of the Palestinian people" and "Mobilization and networking by non-governmental organizations to promote a just, comprehensive and lasting solution to the question of Palestine". The Committee noted that the participating non-governmental organizations had taken steps to strengthen their regional coordination. Further details on the symposium are contained in annex VII.

3. Research, monitoring, and publications

66. The Committee noted with appreciation that the Division for Palestinian Rights, in accordance with its mandate, continued to respond to information requests and to prepare and disseminate the following publications:

(a) Monthly bulletins covering action by the Committee, other United Nations organs, organizations and agencies, as well as intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations concerned with the question of Palestine;

(b) Monthly monitoring reports on developments relating to the question of Palestine, as reflected in the Arabic, English, and Hebrew press, for the use of the Committee;

(c) Reports of seminars, regional NGO symposia and the international NGO meetings;

(d) Compilations of statements, declarations, documents and other material regarding the settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict and the question of Palestine, for the use of the Committee.

67. The Committee noted that the Division was working on updating a 1980 publication entitled "Acquisition of land in Palestine". The Division was also updating a 1979 publication on the observance of the Fourth Geneva Convention.

68. The following publications were also issued by the Division: Resolutions and decisions of the General Assembly and the Security Council relating to the question of Palestine: 1992 (A/AC.183/L.2/Add.13) and a special bulletin on the

commemoration of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People in 1992.

4. United Nations information system on the question of Palestine (UNISPAL)

69. During 1993, in order to strengthen its programme of research, monitoring and publications, the Division, in cooperation with relevant technical services of the Secretariat, continued the work on the establishment of a computer-based information system on the question of Palestine (UNISPAL), as requested by the Committee and endorsed by the General Assembly in resolution 47/64 B of 11 December 1992. The Committee noted with appreciation that the initial equipment and technical staff would be available in the Division by mid-October and called for intensified efforts to make the system operational as soon as possible. The Committee also requested that necessary provision for the further development of the system be made in the 1994-95 budget. The Committee stressed the importance and usefulness of UNISPAL for the work of the Committee and of the United Nations, as well as of other members of the international community.

5. International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People

70. The International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People was observed on 29 November 1992 at United Nations Headquarters in New York and at the United Nations Offices at Geneva and Vienna. The Committee noted with appreciation that the International Day had also been observed in 1992 in many other cities throughout the world.

V. ACTION TAKEN BY THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INFORMATION IN ACCORDANCE WITH GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 47/64 C

71. The Department of Public Information continued to provide press coverage of all meetings of relevant United Nations bodies, including the Security Council and the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. Additional press releases were issued containing the texts of the Secretary-General's statements relating to the question of Palestine and the situation in the occupied Arab territories. A total of 47 English and 43 French press releases were issued on the subject.

72. The UN Chronicle quarterly magazine continued to publish stories relating to Palestinian issues, including Security Council actions and results of special meetings and seminars.

73. The Department's Public Inquiries Unit responded to 324 requests for information on Palestine. In addition, the subject was included in the presentation made to visitors taking the guided tour of Headquarters. From January through August 1993, visitors numbered 330,000. The Group Programmes and Community Liaison Unit of the Department arranged briefings on Palestine by Secretariat officials and delegations members for groups visiting Headquarters.

74. The Department continued to distribute its publications, including Building for Peace in the Middle East: An Israeli-Palestinian Dialogue, a booklet based on the proceedings of the International Encounter for European Journalists on the Question of Palestine, organized by the Department at Lisbon, in

September 1992; and a revised edition of For the Rights of the Palestinians: The Work of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. In the first eight months of the year, the Department distributed a total of 17,994 copies of these and other publications on the question of Palestine in Arabic, English, French, German, Russian and Spanish.

75. The Department initiated the production of several new publications: Jerusalem: Visions of Reconciliation, resulting from the Athens Encounter for Greek Journalists (April 1993); Promoting a Culture for Peace in the Middle East, based on the London International Encounter for European Journalists (June 1993); and a UN Focus on the above-mentioned London Encounter.

76. The Department cooperated with Point du Jour, a French production company, in producing a two-hour video documentary on the history of Palestine from the end of the Ottoman Empire to the present time. The Department is currently producing a 30-minute version of that documentary to highlight United Nations involvement in the question of Palestine as well as the struggle of the Palestinian people to achieve its rights.

77. The Department covered various aspects of the question of Palestine and related issues in weekly radio news magazines and feature programmes. Highlights of topics covered included the deportation of 400 Palestinians, on 17 December 1992, from the occupied Palestinian territory and related action by the Security Council and the Secretary-General, as well as initiatives taken by Arab States and non-aligned countries in that respect. Other programmes covered appeals by the Chairman of the Committee on the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for protection of the population in the occupied territories and the debate of the Human Rights Commission on Israel's decision to deport the Palestinians. The Department also produced a number of feature programmes devoted to the question of Palestine, including: "Assistance to the Palestinian People"; "International Protection of Palestinian Refugees"; and "An Arab Position for the 1994 World Conference on Population and Development: What about Women?". These programmes were produced in Arabic, Bangla, English, French, Hindi, Indonesian, Kiswahili, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish and Urdu.

78. In cooperation with the Government of Greece, the Department sponsored an Encounter for Greek Journalists, held at Athens from 27 to 28 April. The theme was "Jerusalem: visions of reconciliation". The issues of sovereignty over the city of Jerusalem, municipal responsibilities and tangible confidence-building measures were addressed. The dialogue was part of ongoing efforts of the international community to achieve a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East. The Encounter was opened by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Greece and moderated by the Chief of the Anti-Apartheid, Decolonization and Palestine Programmes Section of the Department.

79. The Athens Encounter brought together 11 international expert panellists. The Palestinian and Israeli panellists were: Sami Musallam, Director of the Office of the Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO); Yael Dayan, member of the Israeli Knesset; Moshe Amirav, member of the City Council of Jerusalem; Sari Nusseibeh, member of the Steering Committee of the Palestinian Negotiating Team of Jerusalem; Albert Aghazarian, adviser to the Palestinian Negotiating Team and Director of Public Relations, Bir Zeit University, Ramallah, West Bank; Hanna Seniora, publisher of Al Fajr, Jerusalem; Ruth Lapidoth, Professor of International Law, Hebrew University of Jerusalem; and Idith Zertal, Columnist, Ha'aretz Network. Attending the Encounter were some 60 representatives of Greek media organizations and the

Athens-based foreign corps, as well as 20 expert observers and members of the diplomatic corps.

80. In cooperation with the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and with the support of The Guardian, the Department sponsored an International Encounter for European Journalists on the Question of Palestine, held in London from 9 to 11 June 1993. The theme of the Encounter was "promoting a culture for peace in the Middle East". Issues related to cultural obstacles to peace, the role of national authorities, the media and intellectuals in promoting mutual recognition and respect and confidence-building measures were explored. The Encounter was opened by the Minister of State at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and moderated by the Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva. Prominent Palestinian and Israeli personalities and European and other experts served as panellists.

81. The Palestinian and Israeli panellists participating in the London Encounter were: Avigdor Feldman, Member of the Board of Directors of Betsalem, a human rights advocacy group in Israel; Major-General Shlomo Gazit, former Director of Israeli Military Intelligence and Senior Fellow at the Jaffee Centre for Strategic Studies; Khalil Hindi, Palestinian representative at the Multilateral Negotiations on Economic Development and Professor of Economics at Manchester University, United Kingdom; Asa Kasher, Professor of Philosophy, Tel Aviv University; Yossi Olmert, former Director of the Israeli Government Press Office; Afif Safieh, Head of the PLO Delegation in the United Kingdom; Hanna Seniora, Publisher of Al-Fajr, Jerusalem; Nabeel Shaath, Adviser to the Chairman of the Executive Committee of the PLO; and Ephraim Sneh, Member of the Israeli Knesset. Joining in the discussion were senior journalists and other media representatives from the United Kingdom, Europe, and the Middle East. Taking place on the eve of the resumption, in Washington, D.C., of the tenth round of the Middle East peace talks, which opened on 15 June 1993, the encounter received extensive international press coverage.

82. Coverage of United Nations activities related to the question of Palestine was provided on an ongoing basis by the network of United Nations information centres (UNICs). The centres produced and distributed newsletters, press releases and television news programmes, and regularly briefed media representatives. The staff organized film screenings, gave lectures and translated and disseminated publications and posters produced both by the Department of Public Information and the Division for Palestinian Rights. Several United Nations information centres and services organized seminars, commemorative meetings and round-tables on the question of Palestine. The information centre at Manila, in cooperation with the Embassy of Palestine at Manila, formed a special organizational committee for the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, which decided, among other things, to hold a national art competition on Palestinian rights. The information centre in Paris assisted the Division for Palestinian Rights in organizing a seminar on assistance to the Palestinian people. The information centres in London and Athens provided full support services to the Department of Public Information for the above-mentioned Encounters.

83. The Department continued to feature and distribute United Nations information materials, documents and press releases on the question of Palestine to representatives of non-governmental organizations. These included all documents disseminated by the Division for Palestinian Rights, the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the

Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories, the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA).

84. Additionally, and as foreseen in paragraph 31.13 of the programme budget for the biennium 1992-1993, 12/ preparations were under way for a Fact-Finding News Mission for Journalists to the Middle East and an Encounter for Journalists, designed to reinforce the Secretary-General's efforts to support the momentum in the Middle East peace process.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COMMITTEE

85. The Committee welcomed the peace process started at Madrid in October 1991. In September 1993, the Committee welcomed the exchange of letters of mutual recognition between the Government of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), and the subsequent signing by representatives of the two sides of the "Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements", as an important step towards the attainment of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in accordance with Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and other relevant United Nations resolutions. The Committee calls for intensified support and assistance by the international community to the Palestinian people under its recognized leadership, the Palestine Liberation Organization, in order to ensure the successful implementation of the agreements reached.

86. The Committee reaffirms once again the permanent responsibility of the United Nations with respect to the question of Palestine until it is resolved in all its aspects. The Committee believes that the United Nations, which is playing a central and increasing role in helping to solve many of the world's conflicts, has an essential contribution to make to building peace in the Middle East region. The Committee stresses the need for the full engagement of the United Nations in the peace process and in the process of building the forthcoming Palestinian National Authority as well as in providing broad assistance to the Palestinian people in all needed fields.

87. As the organ of the General Assembly dealing with the question of Palestine, the Committee believes that it can make a valuable and positive contribution to United Nations endeavours during the transitional period by mobilizing international opinion and action for its successful outcome and in support of the Palestinian people until a final settlement is achieved. The Committee, accordingly, proposes to devote a major part of its future programme of work to making a concrete contribution in this regard with the assistance of the Division for Palestinian Rights. The Committee calls on the General Assembly to express its support for the work of the Committee and the Division in order to facilitate their task, and would welcome a consensus in this regard.

88. The Committee considers that a broadening of its membership to include countries that support its objectives but have not hitherto participated in its work, would greatly enhance the contribution of the General Assembly to the efforts to promote peace at this important stage.

89. The Committee considers that the following priority tasks require immediate and sustained attention in its programme of work for the coming year:

(a) Promoting support for the ongoing peace process and for the "Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-government Arrangements", and following closely the developments and monitoring the situation on the ground in order to promote the effective implementation of the agreements reached and the full realization of Palestinian rights;

(b) Promoting intensified assistance to the Palestinian people by the United Nations system as a whole, as well as other donors, for immediate relief and for nation-building;

(c) Encouraging constructive consideration and debate of the major issues to be negotiated at a later stage with a view to promoting a final settlement based on international legitimacy in accordance with Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and other relevant United Nations resolutions.

90. The Committee believes that the collection, exchange and dissemination of accurate and timely information are of great importance in these endeavours, and reaffirms the essential role of the Division for Palestinian Rights as a focal point in this regard. The Committee welcomes the initial establishment in the Division of the computer-based United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine (UNISPAL) and attaches great importance to the early and effective implementation of the system in all its aspects and its further development to meet evolving needs. The Committee requests the Division to include in the system all relevant documentary, analytical and statistical information and to cooperate with other users and sources of information with a view to making the system as comprehensive and useful as possible.

91. The Committee considers that non-governmental organizations have played a significant and constructive role over the years in solidarity with the Palestinian national struggle and in support of the work of the Committee. The Committee attaches the greatest importance to the continued and intensified mobilization of NGOs throughout the transitional period in order to monitor the relevant developments, to promote the full exercise of Palestinian rights in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions and to provide the needed economic and other assistance for institution-building. The Committee will seek to encourage participation in these endeavours by additional non-governmental organizations, particularly those active in the general fields of development and human rights. In consultation with the Division for Palestinian Rights and the non-governmental organization coordinating committees, the Committee will explore ways to enhance the effectiveness and impact of United Nations-sponsored non-governmental organization meetings and to promote intensified action by the non-governmental organization network.

92. The Committee is of the view that its programme of regional seminars and non-governmental organization meetings has provided a useful forum for a concrete and constructive analysis and debate of the most important issues concerning the question of Palestine, in particular thanks to the regular participation of Palestinian and Israeli personalities, together with experts, political and religious figures, media representatives and others, and has helped in educating public opinion and facilitating dialogue. The Committee intends to continue this programme in the light of the new situation, and considers that in the period ahead these meetings can provide a useful mechanism for in-depth consideration of the most important issues relevant to the process of transition of powers. Attention will be paid to structuring the format of the meetings for maximum usefulness, including the possibility of co-sponsoring

them with academic institutions, non-governmental organizations or others. The Committee is also of the view that as soon as conditions permit, one such meeting could be held in Gaza or Jericho. The Committee has also taken note of the proposal that it consider convening a seminar on Palestinian needs in the light of the new developments, and will organize such a seminar as soon as possible at an appropriate venue.

93. The Committee considers that the publications and studies prepared by the Division for Palestinian Rights have performed a valuable function by providing accurate information on the various aspects of the question of Palestine and a record of the activities sponsored by the Committee. The Committee considers that this aspect of the programme of work will be enhanced by the establishment of UNISPAL and will be of great usefulness to the Committee and to other users in the time ahead. In particular, the Committee considers that the bulletins of the Division should be expanded and restructured as follows:

(a) The monthly bulletin on activities of the United Nations system, intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations will be enhanced to provide a comprehensive coverage of all relevant resolutions, statements and decisions, as well as summaries of the most significant activities;

(b) The bulletin entitled "Approaches towards the settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict and the question of Palestine" will contain a compilation of statements, reports and developments related to the ongoing bilateral and multilateral peace negotiations;

(c) The bulletin monitoring developments in the occupied Palestinian territory will become a chronology, in summary form, of all relevant developments in the occupied territory and outside, based on press reports.

94. The Committee also considers that the studies, information notes, reports and other material published by the Division should focus specifically on the main issues to be addressed by the Committee in order to enhance their usefulness at this important stage.

95. The Committee also considers that the Special Information Programme on the Question of Palestine of the Department of Public Information has been useful in raising the awareness of the international community concerning the complexities of the question and the situation in the Middle East in general. The Committee believes that the Programme has also contributed to an atmosphere conducive to dialogue and supportive of the peace process. As the road to the establishment of a just, comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East remains a long one, the Committee believes that the work of the United Nations in the field of information related to the Question of Palestine will become even more important. The Programme should follow and reflect realities related to the new experiences of the Palestinian people, provide assistance in the field of Palestinian media development and continue to disseminate information about the just cause of the Palestinian people, in addition to continuing its support of dialogue in the effort to build peace. During its forty-seventh session, the General Assembly adopted resolution 47/64 C by an overwhelming majority. It is the Committee's hope that this year, in the light of the new situation, the Assembly will be able to adopt the resolution on the Special Information Programme on the Question of Palestine by consensus.

96. The Committee will continue to strive to achieve maximum effectiveness in the implementation of its mandate and to adjust its work programme in the light of developments, in order to contribute, to the extent possible, to the realization of the common United Nations objective of achieving a just and lasting solution of the question of Palestine.

Notes

1/ Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 47/1 of 22 September 1992, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) did not participate in the work of the Committee.

2/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-first Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/31/35).

3/ Ibid., Thirty-second Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/32/35); ibid., Thirty-third Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/33/35); ibid., Thirty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/34/35 and Corr.1); ibid., Thirty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/35/35); ibid., Thirty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/36/35); ibid., Thirty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/37/35 and Corr.1); ibid., Thirty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/38/35); ibid., Thirty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/39/35); ibid., Fortieth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/40/35); ibid., Forty-first Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/41/35); ibid., Forty-second Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/42/35); ibid., Forty-third Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/43/35); ibid., Forty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/44/35); ibid., Forty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/45/35); ibid., Forty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/46/35); and ibid., Forty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/47/35).

4/ Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, United Nations Treaty Series, vol. 75, No. 973.

5/ Report of the International Conference on the Question of Palestine, Geneva, 29 August-7 September 1983 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.83.I.21), chap. I, sect. B.

6/ The observers at the Committee meetings were as follows: Algeria, Bangladesh, Bulgaria, China, Czechoslovakia*, Ecuador, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Mauritania, Morocco, Nicaragua, Niger, Qatar, Sri Lanka, Syrian Arab Republic, United Arab Emirates, Viet Nam, the League of Arab States, and the Organization of the Islamic Conference. Palestine, represented by the Palestine Liberation Organization, as the representative of the Palestinian people, was also an observer.

* Czechoslovakia (or the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic), an observer at the Committee meetings, ceased to exist on 31 December 1992. As of 1 January 1993, the membership of Czechoslovakia in the United Nations, including its subsidiary organs, ceased as well.

7/ The membership of the Working Group was as follows: Afghanistan, Belarus, Cuba, Guinea, Guyana, India, Malta, Pakistan, Senegal, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine, and Palestine, represented by the Palestine Liberation Organization, as the representative of the people directly concerned.

8/ S/25149.

9/ S/25258.

10/ S/25460.

11/ See Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1993, Supplement No. 2 (E/1993/22), chap. II.

12/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 6 (A/48/6), vol. II.

ANNEX I

Recommendations of the Committee endorsed by the General
Assembly at its thirty-first session*

I. Basic considerations and guidelines

59. The question of Palestine is at the heart of the Middle East problem, and consequently, the Committee stresses its belief that no solution in the Middle East can be envisaged which does not fully take into account the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people.

60. The legitimate and inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to return to their homes and property and to achieve self-determination, national independence and sovereignty are endorsed by the Committee in the conviction that the full implementation of those rights will contribute decisively to a comprehensive and final settlement of the Middle East crisis.

61. The participation of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), the representative of the Palestinian people, on an equal footing with other parties, on the basis of General Assembly resolutions 3236 (XXIX) and 3375 (XXX), is indispensable in all efforts, deliberations and conferences on the Middle East which are held under the auspices of the United Nations.

62. The Committee recalls the fundamental principle of the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force and stresses the consequent obligation for complete and speedy evacuation of any territory so occupied.

63. The Committee considers that it is the duty and responsibility of all concerned to enable the Palestinians to exercise their inalienable rights.

64. The Committee recommends an expanded and more influential role by the United Nations and its organs in promoting a just solution to the question of Palestine and in the implementation of such a solution. The Security Council, in particular, should take appropriate action to facilitate the exercise by the Palestinians of their right to return to their homes, lands and property. The Committee, furthermore, urges the Security Council to promote action towards a just solution, taking into account all the powers conferred on it by the Charter of the United Nations.

65. It is with this perspective in view and on the basis of the numerous resolutions of the United Nations, after due consideration of all the facts, proposals and suggestions advanced in the course of its deliberations, that the Committee submits its recommendations on the modalities for the implementation of the exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.

II. The right of return

66. The natural and inalienable right of Palestinians to return to their homes is recognized by resolution 194 (III), which the General Assembly has reaffirmed almost every year since its adoption. This right was also unanimously

* Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-first Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/31/35), paras. 59-72.

recognized by the Security Council in its resolution 237 (1967); the time for the urgent implementation of these regulations is long overdue.

67. Without prejudice to the right of all Palestinians to return to their homes, lands and property, the Committee considers that the programme of implementation of the exercise of this right may be carried out in two phases.

Phase one

68. The first phase involves the return to their homes of the Palestinians displaced as a result of the war of June 1967. The Committee recommends that:

(a) The Security Council should request the immediate implementation of its resolution 237 (1967) and that such implementation should not be related to any other condition;

(b) The resources of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and/or of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, suitably financed and mandated, may be employed to assist in returning to their homes. These agencies could also assist, in cooperation with the host countries and the PLO, in the identification of the displaced Palestinians.

Phase two

69. The second phase deals with the return to their homes of the Palestinians displaced between 1948 and 1967. The Committee recommends that:

(a) While the first phase is being implemented, the United Nations, in cooperation with the States directly involved, and the PLO as the interim representative of the Palestinian entity, should proceed to make the necessary arrangements to enable Palestinians displaced between 1948 and 1967 to exercise their right to return to their homes and property, in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions, particularly General Assembly resolution 194 (III);

(b) Palestinians choosing not to return to their homes should be paid just and equitable compensation as provided for in resolution 194 (III).

III. The right to self-determination, national independence and sovereignty

70. The Palestinian people has the inherent right to self-determination, national independence and sovereignty in Palestine. The Committee considers that the evacuation of the territories occupied by force and in violation of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and relevant resolutions of the United Nations is a condition sine qua non for the exercise by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights in Palestine. The Committee considers furthermore that, upon the return of the Palestinians to their homes and property and with the establishment of an independent Palestinian entity, the Palestinian people will be able to exercise its rights to self-determination and to decide its form of government without external interference.

71. The Committee also feels that the United Nations has an historical duty and responsibility to render all assistance necessary to promote the economic development and prosperity of the Palestinian entity.

72. To those ends, the Committee recommends that:

(a) A timetable should be established by the Security Council for the complete withdrawal by Israeli occupation forces from those areas occupied in 1967; such withdrawal should be completed no later than 1 June 1977;

(b) The Security Council may need to provide temporary peace-keeping forces in order to facilitate the process of withdrawal;

(c) Israel should be requested by the Security Council to desist from the establishment of new settlements and to withdraw during this period from settlements established since 1967 in the occupied territories. Arab property and all essential services in those areas should be maintained intact;

(d) Israel should also be requested to abide scrupulously by the provisions of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, and to declare, pending its speedy withdrawal from those territories, its recognition of the applicability of that Convention;

(e) The evacuated territories, with all property and services intact, should be taken over by the United Nations, which, with the cooperation of the League of Arab States, will subsequently hand over those evacuated areas to the PLO as the representative of the Palestinian people;

(f) The United Nations should, if necessary, assist in establishing communications between Gaza and the West Bank;

(g) As soon as the independent Palestinian entity has been established, the United Nations, in cooperation with the States directly involved and the Palestinian entity, should, taking into account General Assembly resolution 3375 (XXX), make further arrangements for the full implementation of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, the resolution of outstanding problems and the establishment of a just and lasting peace in the region, in accordance with all relevant United Nations resolutions;

(h) The United Nations should provide the economic and technical assistance necessary for the consolidation of the Palestinian entity.

ANNEX II

United Nations Seminar on Assistance to the Palestinian People

(UNESCO headquarters, Paris, 26 to 29 April 1993)

1. The United Nations Seminar on Assistance to the Palestinian People was held at UNESCO headquarters, Paris, from 26 to 29 April 1993 in response to the request made to the Committee by the General Assembly in its resolution 47/170 of 22 December 1992.

2. The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People was represented by a delegation comprising: Mr. Kéba Birane Cissé (Senegal), Chairman of the Committee and head of delegation, who acted as Seminar Chairman; Mr. Alcibiades J. Hidalgo Basulto (Cuba), Vice-Chairman of the Committee and of the Seminar; Mr. Victor Camilleri (Malta), Rapporteur of the Committee and Vice-Chairman and Rapporteur of the Seminar; and Dr. Nasser Al-Kidwa, Permanent Observer for Palestine to the United Nations.

3. A total of eight meetings were held. Representatives of 67 Governments, including a number of donor countries, 17 United Nations bodies, organs and programmes involved in the programme of assistance to the Palestinian people, as well as 15 experts, accepted the Committee's invitation to participate in the Seminar, as did 19 non-governmental organizations as observers.

4. At the opening session, a statement was made on behalf of the Director-General of UNESCO, by Mr. K. Nhouyvanisvong, Assistant Director-General, a.i., for External Relations. A message from the Secretary-General of the United Nations was read by his representative, Mr. Hassen M. Fodha, Director of the United Nations Information Centre, Paris. Statements were also made by Mr. Kéba Birane Cissé, Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People; and by Mr. Ahmed Abu Ala, Director-General of the Department of Economic Affairs and Planning of the Palestine Liberation Organization. Statements were also made by representatives of intergovernmental organizations.

5. In the plenary sessions, the general themes addressed and the experts that took part were as follows:

(a) Assistance to the Palestinian people - priorities and needs:

(i) Programme for development of the Palestinian national economy for the years 1994-2000:

Mr. Yusif Sayigh (Palestinian)

(ii) The current situation in the occupied Palestinian territory:

Mr. Mahmoud Okashah (Palestinian)

Mr. Mohamed Shtayyeh (Palestinian)

(b) The role and experience of the United Nations system:

Mr. Samir Abdullah Saleh (Palestinian)

(c) The role and experience of regional organizations:

Mrs. Roselyne Bachelet (France)
Mrs. Ingbritt Irhammer (Sweden)

(d) The role and experience of countries involved in assistance projects in the occupied Palestinian territory:

Mr. Ibrahim Dakkak (Palestinian)
Mrs. Sarah Roy (United States of America)
Mrs. Suzette Verhoeven (Belgium)

(e) The role and experience of Palestinian and international non-governmental organizations:

Mr. Khaled Haidar Abdel Shafi (Palestinian)
Mr. Fritz Fröhlich (Austria)
Mr. Moath Al-Nabulsi (Palestinian)
Mr. Yousef Mahmoud Najem (Palestinian)

6. The report of the Seminar was issued in United Nations document A/48/168-E/1993/62 on 14 May 1993. The full text of the proceedings will be published in due course as a publication of the Division for Palestinian Rights.

7. The highlights of the discussions were summarized in the following concluding points circulated on the last day of the meeting:

(a) Participants commended the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for convening the Seminar on Assistance to the Palestinian People at a time of great importance for their future. They expressed their firm desire to make a concrete and useful contribution to helping the Palestinian people exercise its right to self-determination and development and to achieve a just peace. They considered that the wide and constructive participation in the Seminar by Governments, United Nations system organizations and agencies and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and agencies had greatly contributed to its success;

(b) It was felt that the Seminar had been useful in identifying the nature and extent of existing assistance programmes. Appreciation was expressed for the efforts already made by Governments, intergovernmental and regional organizations, United Nations system organizations and agencies, as well as non-governmental organizations in this regard, and for their readiness to continue and increase their financial and technical assistance in the fields of emergency, relief and development programmes;

(c) It was also felt that the Seminar had been useful for discussing the current and future needs of the Palestinian people, as articulated by the Palestinian representatives themselves, and for highlighting the importance of continued and increased assistance to the Palestinian people by the international community as a whole. Appreciation was expressed for the opportunity offered by the Seminar for a candid and constructive analysis of the experience of various donors and United Nations system organizations and agencies and of the problems encountered on the ground;

(d) Deliberations showed a growing expectation by the international community that a threshold had been reached in the long history of the Palestine question, and that the Palestinian people would soon be able to take charge of its own future and to exercise its economic, as well as political, decision-

making. Participants were of the view that a comprehensive Palestinian national development plan would be a major factor in achieving the independent development of the Palestinian people. They felt the need for undertaking coordination between various donors and United Nations system organizations and agencies and the Palestinian central authority. In this connection they welcomed the introduction of the Palestine Development Programme prepared by the Department of Economic Affairs and Planning of the PLO and the explanations given about it;

(e) Serious concern was expressed about the grave and deteriorating economic and social situation in the occupied Palestinian territory as a consequence of recent developments. Participants underlined that Israeli policies were principally responsible for the current situation. Israel, the occupying Power, had an obligation to respect the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention, Security Council resolutions and international human rights instruments which it had ratified;

(f) It was pointed out that the Israeli economic policy towards the occupied Palestinian territory had resulted in its underdevelopment and dependence on the Israeli economy. It was also stated that Israel had used its control over the occupied territory to prevent, or put obstacles in the way of, assistance projects aimed at promoting the independent development of the Palestinian people;

(g) Participants called on the international community as a whole to press Israel to lift the current siege in the occupied territory, to remove all barriers to development and to permit the free operation on the ground of United Nations system organizations and agencies and others delivering assistance to the Palestinian people;

(h) Participants were of the view that the international assistance programmes would be enhanced by greater and more effective coordination among United Nations system organizations and agencies and between them and other donors, and by elaboration of an overall strategy framework to guide their work;

(i) Participants discussed various courses of action that should be followed by the international community in order to make its contribution more effective. The view was expressed that international assistance should be targeted and delivered so as to meet Palestinian priorities and to help loosen the grip of the occupation and promote the independent development of the Palestinian people. It was noted with appreciation that certain Governments and organizations had been successful in delivering their assistance outside of Israeli control;

(j) The Seminar participants noted the experience of various organizations in the area of coordination and suggestions as to possible mechanisms made by speakers. There was general agreement that this question needed urgently to be discussed further at an appropriate level by all concerned in order to develop ways of using the limited resources of the international community as efficiently as possible. The Committee was therefore asked to recommend to the Secretary-General the convening of a meeting of representatives of United Nations system organizations and agencies and PLO officials to consider appropriate mechanisms to coordinate and channel assistance and to decide on priorities;

(k) Participants called for urgent action by the international community to meet the emergency needs of the Palestinian people living under occupation and identified a number of specific areas requiring such action, particularly in

the Gaza Strip, as the current grave conditions threatened to exacerbate tension and violence in the area;

(1) It was also stressed that significant assistance projects that could help promote Palestinian development could and should be undertaken immediately, particularly in areas relating to development of production, employment generation and training, in the light of the strategies and priorities established in the Palestine Development Programme as explained in the course of the seminar. A call was made for increased assistance by the international community in order to enable the Palestinian people to achieve self-determination and self-reliance and thereby promote a just peace in the region.

ANNEX III

Ninth United Nations North American Seminar on the Question
of Palestine

(New York, 28 and 29 June 1993)

1. The Ninth United Nations North American Seminar on the Question of Palestine, on the theme "Priorities for United Nations action", was held at United Nations Headquarters on 28 and 29 June 1993. The Seminar had been mandated by the General Assembly in its resolution 46/74 B of 11 December 1991.

2. Mr. Alcibiades Hidalgo Basulto (Cuba), Vice-Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, was Chairman and Rapporteur of the Seminar.

3. Three meetings were held, chaired by 3 moderators, and 10 experts presented papers on the theme of the Seminar. Representatives of 43 Governments, 7 United Nations specialized agencies and bodies, 2 intergovernmental organizations, as well as 10 non-governmental organizations, attended the meeting.

4. At the opening session, a statement was made by the Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Chinmaya R. Gharekhan, Under-Secretary-General and Special Political Adviser to the Secretary-General. Mr. Alcibiades Hidalgo Basulto, Vice-Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and Chairman of the Seminar, also made a statement. A message from Mr. Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), was read out by Dr. Nasser M. Al-Kidwa, Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations.

5. Three panels were established. The panels, their moderators and panellists were as follows:

- (a) Panel I. The United Nations and the implementation of international human rights instruments and relevant Security Council resolutions

Moderator: Mr. Andrew Whitley (United States)

Panellists: Ms. Daphna Golan (Israel)
Mr. Muhammad Hallaj (Palestinian)
Ms. Lynn Welchmann (United Kingdom)

- (b) Panel II. The United Nations and the promotion of the economic development of the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem

Moderator: Mr. S. Kazemi (UNCTAD)

Panellists: Mr. Alcibiades Hidalgo Basulto
(Committee on the Exercise of the
Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian
People)
Mr. Roger Guarda (UNDP)
Ms. Lee O'Brien (UNRWA)
Mr. Ephraim Ahiram (Israel)
Mr. Fadle Naqib (Palestinian)

(c) Panel III. The United Nations and the peace process

Moderator: Mr. Richard Curtiss (United States of America)

Panellists: Mr. Johan Nordenfelt (United Nations)
Mr. Richard Curtiss (United States of
America)
Dr. Nabil A. Elaraby (Egypt)
Mr. Nabil Qassis (Palestinian)
Mr. Shibley Telhami (United States of
America)

6. The report summarizing the papers and the discussion will be published in due course as a publication of the Division for Palestinian Rights.

ANNEX IV

Tenth United Nations North American Regional Non-Governmental
Organizations Symposium on the Question of Palestine

(New York, 30 June to 2 July 1993)

1. The Tenth United Nations North American Regional Non-Governmental Organizations Symposium on the Question of Palestine was held at United Nations Headquarters from 30 June to 2 July 1993 in accordance with General Assembly resolution 46/74 B, under the auspices of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People.

2. The Symposium was attended by representatives of 56 non-governmental organizations from Canada and the United States of America, and 7 such organizations participated as observers. Nine panellists and 20 workshop facilitators and resource persons made presentations. Representatives of several Governments, United Nations bodies and intergovernmental organizations also attended the Symposium as observers. Mr. Alcibiades Hidalgo Basulto (Cuba), Vice-Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, chaired the opening and closing sessions of the Symposium. The opening session was also addressed by the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations, who read out a message from Mr. Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization. Mr. Larry Ekin, Chairman of the North American Coordinating Committee for NGOs on the Question of Palestine served as moderator of the Symposium. The Reverend Ibrahim Ayyad, President of the Palestine Committee for NGOs, addressed the closing session of the Symposium.

3. The programme for the Symposium, on the theme "Building for peace and Palestine: priorities for the second decade of the NGO movement", was drawn up by the Committee in consultation with the North American Coordinating Committee as follows:

- (a) Panel 1. Building for peace and Palestine: priorities for the second decade of the NGO movement

Mr. Don Betz (United States of America)
Mr. Paul Findley (United States of America)
Mr. Asmi Bishara (Palestinian)

- (b) Panel 2. Rights, resources, refugees: the need for protection

Mr. Jonathan Kuttab (Palestinian)
Mr. Mohammad Hallaj (Palestinian)
Mr. Atif Kubursi (Canada)

- (c) Panel 3. Ending the occupation: a prelude to peace and security

Ms. Roni Ben Efrat (Israel)
Mr. Mohammad Hallaj (Palestinian)

- (d) Panel 4. NGO priorities for the second decade

Mr. Don Betz (United States of America)
Ms. Mia Adjali (United States of America)
Mr. Jim Graff (Canada)

4. Seven standing committees of non-governmental organizations were organized to develop NGO networking and action on the following issues: government and public policy; human rights and international law; material aid and economic development; media and public education; mobilizing religious organizations; mobilizing labour; and mobilizing women's organizations.

5. Five workshops were held on the following themes: Media: skills and stereotypes; The Clinton Administration and the U.S. Congress: assessing the new opportunities; Assuring protection: United Nations resolutions and the Fourth Geneva Convention; Seeds of a new society: the welfare of women and children under occupation; and Exiles, refugees and "invisible transfers".

6. The report of the Symposium will be issued as a publication of the Division for Palestinian Rights.

ANNEX V

Seventh United Nations European Regional Non-Governmental
Organizations Symposium on the Question of Palestine

(Vienna, 23 and 24 August 1993)

1. The Seventh United Nations European Regional Non-Governmental Organizations Symposium on the Question of Palestine was held at the Austria Centre, Vienna, on 23 and 24 August 1993 in accordance with General Assembly resolution 46/74 B, under the auspices of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People.

2. The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People was represented by a delegation comprising Mr. Kéba Birane Cissé (Senegal), Chairman of the Committee and head of delegation; Mr. Alcibiades Hidalgo Basulto (Cuba), Vice-Chairman; Mr. Ravan A. G. Farhadi (Afghanistan), Vice-Chairman; Mr. Joseph Cassar (Malta), Rapporteur of the Committee; and Dr. M. Nasser Al-Kidwa (Palestine).

3. The Symposium was attended by the representatives of 38 non-governmental organizations from the European region, and 15 such organizations participated as observers. Eight panellists and workshop resource persons made presentations. Representatives of a number of Governments, United Nations bodies and intergovernmental organizations also attended the Symposium as observers. Mr. Kéba Birane Cissé (Senegal), Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, chaired the opening and closing sessions of the Symposium. The opening session was also addressed by the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations at Vienna, Mr. Faisal Aweidah, who read out a message from Mr. Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization, and by Mr. Bernard Mills, Chairman of the European Coordinating Committee for NGOs on the Question of Palestine, who served as moderator of the Symposium.

4. The programme for the Symposium, on the theme "The Middle East peace process: Palestinian rights and development - a challenge to Europe", was drawn up by the Committee in consultation with the European Coordinating Committee as follows:

Plenary Session. Palestine - the current situation

Dr. Haider Abdel Shafi (Palestinian)
Mrs. Naomi Chazan (Israel)
Mr. Johan Nordenfelt (United Nations)

5. Two workshops were held on the following topics:

(a) Palestinian national and human rights

Mr. Fateh Azzam (Palestinian)
Mrs. Luisa Sirvent (Spain)
Mrs. Maria Gazi (Greece)

(b) Palestinian development

Mr. Khalil Hindi (Palestinian)
Rev. Paul Hoffman (Germany)

6. The non-governmental organizations participating in the Symposium adopted a final declaration as well as action-oriented proposals and elected a new 11-member European Coordinating Committee for NGOs on the Question of Palestine and one honorary member. The report of the Symposium will be issued as a publication of the Division for Palestinian Rights.

7. The non-governmental organizations participating in the Symposium adopted the following declaration:

Declaration

We, the representatives of the non-governmental organizations participating in the Seventh United Nations European Regional Non-Governmental Organizations Symposium, held at the Austria Centre at Vienna on 23 and 24 August 1993, reaffirm our support to the Palestinian people and their courageous intifadah and their just and incessant struggle for self-determination and the establishment of their own independent sovereign State of Palestine.

The experience of the two years that have passed since the launching at Madrid of talks between Arabs and Israelis has reinforced our conviction that peace will not come until the Palestinian people, through their representative, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), are enabled to determine their own future. Serious negotiations have yet to begin and the terms of reference of these talks, particularly Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), have yet to be honoured.

Worse, despite the ongoing peace talks, the situation has further deteriorated in the occupied Palestinian territory. This has been documented in the reports and papers presented by eminent panellists and resource persons.

(a) From the beginning of the peace talks to this day an ever-growing number of civilians is being killed and injured by the Israeli occupying military forces and undercover units;

(b) The continuing arrests and torture of Palestinians exacerbate the already intolerable human rights situation in the occupied Palestinian territories;

(c) In December 1992, 415 Palestinians were deported to the Israeli-Lebanese border, and, in spite of the world-wide outcry, Israel has refused to comply with Security Council resolution 799 (1992) calling for their immediate return, and 396 deportees are still encamped on the Lebanese border as we are meeting;

(d) The recent closure of the territories is the latest manifestation of illegal collective punishment. It has divided Palestine into four parts, separating the south and the north of the West Bank, isolating the Gaza Strip and Jerusalem, and severely restricting the movement of the Palestinian population of 2 million people. The road blocks have created enclaves, depriving the people living in them of access to family, work, schools and medical care. This has been the most damaging and disruptive policy of the occupying Power since 1967;

(e) In spite of the Israeli Government's announcement of a settlement freeze, there are at the moment more than 19,500 housing units under

construction, and highways and roads are continuously being built to link settlements with one another and with the State of Israel;

(f) House demolitions have increased; in the Gaza Strip more than 50 houses have been blown up by anti-tank rockets.

We condemn all the above-mentioned Israeli policies and practices which violate the Fourth Geneva Convention. We urge the Secretary-General of the United Nations to convene the High Contracting Parties to the Convention to decide ways and means to ensure Israel's compliance with the aforesaid Convention, in accordance with Security Council resolution 681 (1990) of 20 December 1990.

We call upon the European Governments and the European Community to take all necessary political and economic measures in order to impose on Israel the respect of the Fourth Geneva Convention. We demand that the European Community freeze all economic and scientific protocols and preferential agreements with Israel until it complies.

We are deeply concerned about the stalemate in the Palestinian-Israeli talks. Without Palestinian-Israeli agreement, there can be no real movement in either the bilateral or multilateral talks. We note that concessions to facilitate negotiations have been made by the Palestinians with no meaningful response from the Israelis.

We note with dismay the biased attitude of the current Administration of the United States of America, which came into the open during the ninth and tenth rounds of talks. We believe the United States has a responsibility, now that it is effectively the only sponsor, to respect the terms of reference of the Madrid process, which require full implementation of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973).

We support the call in successive United Nations resolutions for an international peace conference with the participation of the five permanent members of the Security Council and all parties to the conflict, including the Palestine Liberation Organization on an equal footing and with equal rights in order to achieve a comprehensive and lasting peace in the region.

We reiterate our support for all Israeli non-governmental organizations and peace forces, which have undertaken the hard task of raising the awareness of Israeli society in support of Palestinian national and human rights.

At the same time, we call attention to the ongoing discrimination by the Israeli Government and local authorities against the Palestinian citizens of Israel.

We strongly condemn Israel's military raids against Lebanese villages and Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon, which have caused the death of 150 civilians and the injury of hundreds, and made thousands homeless. We urge the Security Council to ensure that Israel fully complies with Security Council resolution 425 (1978) of 19 March 1978, which provides for the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of Israeli forces from Lebanon.

We, as European non-governmental organizations, call upon our Governments, and particularly upon the European members of the Security Council, to lend their full support to efforts aimed at achieving a just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East and to take action to end a situation which perpetuates injustice and threatens the security of Europe.

Peace cannot prevail in the area until Israel complies with all United Nations resolutions and withdraws from the occupied Palestinian territories, Lebanon and the Golan Heights.

We, European non-governmental organizations, welcome the Palestine Development Plan and pledge ourselves to sustain and encourage all Palestinian efforts in the field of development. We shall urge European and other Governments, United Nations bodies, etc., through all channels and all levels to respond to Palestinian needs.

We, European non-governmental organizations, aware of the urgency of the situation, pledge to intensify our concerted efforts for the achievement of our objectives as outlined in this declaration.

We express our appreciation to the International Coordinating Committee for Non-Governmental Organizations on the Question of Palestine and the North American Coordinating Committee for Non-Governmental Organizations on the Question of Palestine for their Peace Conference Information Project; to the Coordinating Committee of International Non-Governmental Organizations in the Occupied Palestinian Territories for their reports on the human rights situation in the occupied Palestinian territories, and for the services rendered by the Network for European Non-Governmental Organizations in the Occupied Territories in the field of development. All these information services have facilitated the work of the European Coordinating Committee for Non-Governmental Organizations on the Question of Palestine and individual non-governmental organizations.

We warmly thank the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for convening this Symposium and for its relentless and continuous efforts to enable the Palestinian people to achieve their inalienable rights. We request its chairman Mr. Kéba Birane Cissé to convey this declaration to the General Assembly at its forty-eighth session as part of the Committee's report and we request the convening of a European Symposium in 1994.

We extend our thanks to the Division of Palestinian Rights, its secretariat, the various departments and offices of the United Nations Office at Vienna and the interpreters who assisted us.

We wish to thank the Austrian Government for hosting this Symposium at Vienna and making available the Austria Centre for our deliberations.

ANNEX VI

Tenth United Nations International Non-Governmental Organizations
Meeting on the Question of Palestine

(Vienna, 25 to 27 August 1993)

1. The Tenth United Nations International Non-Governmental Organizations Meeting on the Question of Palestine was held at the Austria Centre, Vienna, from 25 to 27 August 1993 in accordance with General Assembly resolution 46/74 B, under the auspices of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People.

2. The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People was represented by a delegation comprising Mr. Kéba Birane Cissé (Senegal), Chairman of the Committee and head of delegation; Mr. Alcibiades Hidalgo Basulto (Cuba), Vice-Chairman; Mr. Ravan A. G. Farhadi (Afghanistan), Vice-Chairman; Mr. Joseph Cassar (Malta), Rapporteur of the Committee; and Dr. M. Nasser Al-Kidwa (Palestine).

3. The Meeting was attended by representatives of 79 non-governmental organizations from all regions of the world, and 6 such organizations participated as observers. Nineteen panellists made presentations. Representatives of a number of Governments, United Nations bodies and intergovernmental organizations, as well as the representatives of the regional coordinating committees, also attended the Meeting as observers.

4. Mr. Kéba Birane Cissé, Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, chaired the opening and closing sessions of the Meeting. The opening session was also addressed by Mr. Wolfgang Wolte, Deputy-Secretary-General and Director-General for European Integration and Economic Policy in the Austrian Ministry for Foreign Affairs. Mr. Don Betz, Chairman of the International Coordinating Committee of Non-Governmental Organizations on the Question of Palestine, acted as moderator of the Meeting.

5. The programme for the Meeting, on the theme "Renewing the United Nations - NGO commitment to Palestinian national and human rights", was drawn up by the Committee in consultation with the International Coordinating Committee as follows:

(a) Panel 1. Political update: obstacles to peace

Dr. Haider Abdel Shafi (Palestinian)
Mrs. Naomi Chazan (Israel)
Mr. Naseer Aruri (United States)

(b) Panel 2. Urgent quest for independence: protection and end of occupation

Mr. Pablo de la Vega (Ecuador)
Mr. Raji Sourani (Palestinian)
Mr. Avigdor Feldman (Israel)
Mr. Mohammed Ali Taha (Palestinian)
Mr. Hussein Abu Hussein (Israel)

- (c) Panel 3. Back to the future - a decade of United Nations/NGO networking

Mr. Jean Marie Lambert (France)
Ms. Adrien Wing (United States of America)
Mr. Hans-Peter Kotthaus (UNRWA)
Mr. Romesh Chandra (India)
Mr. Akira Uriu (UNIDO);

- (d) Panel 4. NGO Forum: who is doing what?

Mrs. Samiha Khalil (Palestinian)
Mr. Fritz Froelich (Austria)
Mrs. Ruth Cohen (Israel)
Mr. Jim Graff (Canada);

- (e) Panel 5. Future strategies and the role of NGOs

Mr. Don Betz (United States of America)
Mr. Zehdi L. Terzi (Palestinian)

6. The non-governmental organizations participating in the Meeting adopted a final Declaration, as well as action-oriented proposals, and elected a new International Coordinating Committee for Non-Governmental Organizations on the Question of Palestine. The report of the Meeting will be issued as a publication of the Division for Palestinian Rights.

7. The Declaration adopted by participant non-governmental organizations reads as follows:

Declaration

We, the Non-Governmental Organizations gathered at the Tenth United Nations International Non-Governmental Organizations Meeting on the Question of Palestine are aware that we have convened at a critical moment in the struggle of the Palestinian people for freedom and statehood.

We unconditionally affirm the right of the Palestinian people to return, self-determination and statehood. We affirm our conviction that the establishment of an independent Palestinian State alongside Israel is the most suitable means for securing a just and lasting peace in the Middle East.

We call upon the Israeli Government and people to recognize the rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination, statehood, and security within their homeland, and the right of Palestinian refugees to return, thereby assuring the mutual recognition of the equal rights of both peoples. We demand the withdrawal of Israel from the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem, and other occupied Arab territories.

We support the peace process which began at Madrid in 1991 under the sponsorship of the United States of America and the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics as an attempt to reach a just and comprehensive settlement in the Middle East on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and the principle of land for peace. However, many obstacles have inhibited the success of this process. We affirm that any negotiating process leading to peace requires not only the recognition

of the principles found in these resolutions as the basis for negotiation, but also the direct participation of the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, the effective participation of the United Nations and the inclusion of the European Community as co-sponsor. It is our conviction that the principles embodied in the call for the United Nations Peace Conference on the Middle East must be honoured in order to establish a just and lasting peace. We believe the lack of progress to date of the peace process is the direct responsibility of the Government of Israel with the support of the United States.

We consider it most urgent that the United Nations provide immediate and sustained protection for the Palestinians under occupation. We call upon Israel immediately to recognize the de jure applicability of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 to all the territories occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem. The protections and guarantees of the Convention must be recognized and implemented without delay. We call upon the High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention to apply sanctions to ensure Israel's compliance with provisions of that Convention.

We express our full support for the ongoing intifadah, which constitutes the Palestinian people's inherent right to resist colonization and military occupation. Consequently, Israel's efforts to suppress the intifadah are illegitimate:

(a) Further, we urge that non-governmental organizations concerned with protection for the Palestinians should establish permanent monitoring and witness groups in the occupied territories in order to enhance public awareness and to pressure governments to urge Israel to end the occupation.

(b) We condemn Israel's occupation and colonization of the Golan Heights, its continuing brutal occupation of southern Lebanon and its flagrant violations of the Fourth Geneva Convention in those regions.

We denounce the settlements policy of the Government of Israel in the West Bank, Gaza and Golan Heights and the increased settlement activities in occupied East Jerusalem. These settlements are illegal and in violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949, Security Council resolution 465 (1980) and other relevant Security Council resolutions and should be dismantled. We strongly protest against the decision of the United States Administration to grant Israel 10 billion dollars in loan guarantees without any pledge from the Israeli Government that it will cease building settlements which are illegal in the occupied territories, including East Jerusalem. We do not accept the distinction between political and security settlements offered by the Israeli Government, as it appears to be a tactic to avoid returning all the Palestinian territories occupied in 1967 and remains an obstacle to peace. We call upon all Governments not to donate or pledge any financial or other support to Israel until it officially pledges to cease all settlement activities in the occupied Palestinian territories, including East Jerusalem, and in the occupied Syrian Golan Heights.

We demand the implementation of the right of the Palestinians displaced since 1967 to return to their homes. In this context, we affirm the right of families to be reunited and to remain together in their homeland. We also call for the immediate return of all Palestinian deportees.

We note that in spite of Security Council resolution 799 (1992), the expellees of December 1992 remain in exile in Lebanon. We condemn this

arrogant refusal to observe this demand by the Security Council for their return. We call upon the Security Council to implement this resolution by taking all necessary measures to ensure the immediate and safe return of the expellees and their protection against arbitrary arrest and detention.

We also call upon Israel to recognize the rights of Palestinians who are citizens of Israel to full equality, rights for which they have been struggling since 1948. We denounce the ongoing discrimination against Palestinians who are citizens of Israel. We condemn the Israeli confiscation of their lands, which has recently accelerated, and the denial of legal municipal recognition to many Palestinian villages and communities in Israel. The national and human rights of the Palestinians who are citizens of Israel must be considered in any further comprehensive solution to the Palestinian problem.

We express our solidarity with Israeli peace forces struggling for the equality of all citizens of Israel and for an end to Israeli occupation of Gaza and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and for the realization of the right of self-determination for the Palestinian people.

We strongly condemn the continuing Israeli policy of systematic iron-fist repression against the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territory. We point out that at least 14,000 Palestinians remain imprisoned, although some have fully served the terms of their sentences.

We condemn the summary executions carried out by the undercover army units in the occupied Palestinian territory. We demand that all operations, as well as all standing orders and regulations relating to the undercover army units, be cancelled and that the so-called "special units" be disbanded immediately.

We demand that Israel rescind all standing military orders that have codified human rights abuses and legalized them, particularly military orders that sanction administrative detention, restrictions of fundamental freedoms and rights such as free speech, freedom of assembly and association, freedom of movement and travel, academic freedom, excessive taxation and other severe restrictions on the free development of the economy and the society of the occupied Palestinian territories:

(a) We demand that Israeli authorities stop the killing and injuring of civilians, collective punishment, the sealing and demolition of houses, detention, torture and imprisonment without trial, expropriation of land and water resources, the closing of educational institutions, curfews and restrictions on the free movement of Palestinians;

(b) We further call upon Israel to rescind its illegal closures of the occupied Palestinian territory and to permit the freedom of movement of Palestinians within those territories with free access to occupied East Jerusalem. We call for the support of all believers for whom Jerusalem is a living centre of their faiths to protect the presence of Muslims and Christians against Israeli efforts to annex Arab East Jerusalem.

We condemn Israel's recent massive aggression against Lebanon. We deplore the failure of the international community to take appropriate actions to protect the Lebanese and Palestinian civilians subjected to massive bombardment, displacement and dispossession. We call upon the Security Council to implement its resolution 425 (1978) requiring Israel's withdrawal from Lebanon.

We support comprehensive measures to control and eliminate weapons of mass destruction worldwide, especially in the Middle East. The international community should strongly urge Israel to sign and ratify the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. We are concerned about the risks to the natural environment which Israel's continued nuclear weapons programme poses. In this context, non-governmental organizations are urged to support the campaign for Mordechai Vanunu's immediate release from the brutal and inhumane confinement he is suffering for alerting the world to the Israeli nuclear threat.

We address a call to all the countries, especially the Gulf countries, that have drastically reduced their support to Palestinian organizations to re-examine their position and renew their support to the Palestinian people and its sole legitimate representative, the PLO.

We warmly thank the Committee for convening this international meeting, and we greatly appreciate the presence of the Committee delegation. We extend a warm thanks to Mr. Kéba Birane Cissé, Chairman of the Committee. We thank the Division for Palestinian Rights and all others of the United Nations Secretariat, including the interpreters, who so valuably assisted us. We express our appreciation to the distinguished experts who spoke here and added to our deliberations. We also address our appreciation to the Government of Austria for having generously hosted this Meeting.

We request the Chairman of the United Nations Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People to convey this Declaration to the General Assembly at its forty-eighth session as part of the Committee's report.

ANNEX VII

African Seminar and Non-Governmental Organizations Symposium
on the Question of Palestine

(Dakar, Senegal, 30 August to 3 September 1993)

1. The Seventh United Nations African Seminar on the Question of Palestine (Thirty-fourth United Nations Seminar) and the Fourth United Nations African Non-Governmental Organizations Symposium on the Question of Palestine were held at Dakar, Senegal, from 30 August to 3 September 1993, in accordance with the provisions of General Assembly resolution 46/74 B of 11 December 1991. The Seminar and the NGO Symposium took place for the most part as a combined event.

2. The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People was represented by a delegation comprising Mr. Kéba Birane Cissé (Senegal), Chairman of the Committee and Chairman of the Seminar; Mr. Joseph Cassar (Malta), Rapporteur of the Committee and Vice-Chairman and Rapporteur of the Seminar; Mr. Nouhoum Samassekou (Mali), Vice-Chairman of the Seminar; Mr. Utoyo Yamtomo, Ambassador of Indonesia to Senegal; and Dr. Nasser Al-Kidwa, Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations.

3. At the opening of the Seminar and NGO Symposium a statement was made by Mr. Ousmane Tanor Dieng, Minister of State and Minister for Presidential Affairs and Services of Senegal. Statements were also made by Joseph Verner Reed, representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations; the Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People; the representative of Palestine to Senegal, who read out a message from the Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization; and the representative of the African Coordinating Committee for NGOs on the Question of Palestine.

4. A total of nine plenary meetings were held, and 19 experts from the African continent, as well as Palestinians and Israelis, presented papers on various aspects of the question of Palestine. Representatives of 23 Governments, 6 United Nations specialized agencies and intergovernmental organizations, as well as 18 non-governmental organizations, attended the Seminar and NGO Symposium.

5. Four panels were established. The panels and their experts were as follows:

(a) Panel I. Towards a just solution of the question of Palestine

- (i) The current situation in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem

Dr. Ahmad Yaziji (Palestinian)
Mr. Eitan Felner (Israel)

- (ii) The role of Africa in promoting a just, comprehensive and lasting solution of the question of Palestine

Mr. Hedi Ben Nasr (Tunisia)
Mr. Chitsaka Chipaziwa (Zimbabwe)
Mr. Dianguina dit Yaya Doucouré (Mali)
Mr. Latyr Kamara (Senegal)
Mr. K. B. S. Simpson (Ghana)

- (iii) Regional organizations and the political, economic and human rights dimension of the question of Palestine

Mr. Khaled Mohammed Khaled (League of Arab States)

- (b) Panel II. Building peace in Jerusalem - the Holy City of three religions

Rev. Father Bishara Al-Lahham (Palestinian)
Sheikh Ekrema Sabri (Palestinian)
Rabbi David Forman (Israel)

- (c) Panel III. Towards self-determination and statehood

- (i) Palestine - dynamics of State-building

Mr. Latif Dori (Israel)
Mr. Essa Moosa (South Africa)
Mr. O. R. Kaakunga (Namibia)

- (ii) The role of the media and public opinion in nation-building

Mr. Bara Diouf (Senegal)
Mr. Mohamed Larbi Messari (Morocco)

- (d) Panel IV. The need to revive the economy in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem

- (i) Mobilization of international assistance to promote self-reliance and sustainable development

Mr. Ibrahim Dakkak (Palestinian)
Ms. Kathy Bergen (Canada)

6. In addition to the panels held jointly with the Seminar, two workshops specifically related to non-governmental organizations activities were established to consider the following topics:

- (a) Actions by African non-governmental organizations to promote efforts to put an end to Israel's violations of human rights of the Palestinian people

Mr. Ousmane Camara (Guinea)

- (b) Mobilization and networking by non-governmental organizations to promote a just, comprehensive and lasting solution of the question of Palestine

Ms. Kathy Bergen (Canada)

The NGO participants adopted action-oriented proposals emanating from the workshops. They also decided to extend the term of office of the African Coordinating Committee for Non-Governmental Organizations on the Question of Palestine until the next African Regional Symposium on the Question of Palestine and to increase its membership.

7. The Seminar and NGO Symposium adopted conclusions and recommendations as well as a motion of thanks to the Government and people of Senegal. The report

containing the summaries of the presentations will be published in due course as a publication of the Division for Palestinian Rights.

Conclusions and recommendations

8. In accordance with its mandate, the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People convened the African Seminar and NGO Symposium on the Question of Palestine at Dakar, Senegal, from 30 August to 3 September 1993. A number of African, Palestinian and Israeli experts, as well as representatives from Governments, intergovernmental organizations and non-organizations, were invited to participate. The Seminar and NGO Symposium had for its main theme "Africa, the Middle East and the question of Palestine", and met in various panels relating to: a just solution of the question of Palestine; Jerusalem; self-determination and statehood; and the need to revive the economy of the occupied territory. Non-governmental organization workshops were also held to promote action by African non-governmental organizations on the question of Palestine. During the meeting, participants were also informed of new developments relating to the peace process and held an exchange of views thereon.

9. Participants reviewed the current situation in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem. They expressed grave concern at the continuing human rights abuses in violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War. They called on Israel, the occupying Power, to recognise the de jure applicability of the Convention to the occupied territory and to implement it immediately and fully. They considered that this was a fundamental obligation under international law and the relevant Security Council resolutions. They called upon the international community, and the High Contracting Parties in particular, to assume their obligations under the Convention to ensure respect for its provisions in all circumstances and to provide international protection for the Palestinians until the end of the occupation.

10. Participants called on the Israeli Government to take a number of immediate measures as a step towards peace and reconciliation between the two peoples, in particular the release of all political prisoners and administrative detainees, the return of deportees, an end to the activities of undercover units and other repressive actions of the military forces and an end to the destruction of houses; as well as to take other measures to restore respect for human rights and lighten the burden of occupation during the transition period.

11. Grave concern was expressed at the continued closure of the occupied territory and the separation of East Jerusalem from the West Bank, which had resulted in dividing the occupied territory into four separate areas. Furthermore, this had caused loss of employment and hardships for large numbers of Palestinian workers and had drastically limited access by Palestinians to places of worship, schools, health care facilities, and utility services. Participants were especially alarmed at reports of the dramatic situation in Gaza, in particular the grave aggravation in the health condition of the population, the environmental deterioration and the lack of water. The participants called for closer cooperation between non-governmental organizations and the Palestine Health Council to identify needs and assistance programmes. Israel was urgently called upon to end the blockade of the occupied territory and to restore full access to Jerusalem.

12. Participants engaged in a frank and constructive debate on the role of Africa in promoting a just, comprehensive and lasting solution of the question of Palestine, as well as the role of regional organizations in this respect.

13. It was pointed out that African countries, which were still for the most part under colonial rule at the time of the partition of Palestine in 1947, felt a fundamental kinship with the Palestinian people. Their solidarity was rooted in a moral and ethical position and a clear understanding of the historical and political situation. Following their independence and the establishment of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the African countries had been able to lend increasingly concerted and coordinated support to the Palestinian struggle at the United Nations and in other international forums. Participants acknowledged Africa's continued principled position and steadfast support for the achievement of Palestinian rights.

14. Past experience and future possibilities in the relations between African and Arab countries were also reviewed. It was stressed that it was of the greatest importance to strengthen cooperation, economic and otherwise, between African and Arab countries, in order to stimulate mutually beneficial development.

15. Participants appreciated and affirmed the continuing work and involvement of the African and international non-governmental organizations working on the question of Palestine. The importance of consolidating active channels of communication between Palestinian and African organizations was emphasized.

16. Participants examined the problem of how to build peace in Jerusalem, Holy City of three religions and of great spiritual value, without monopoly by any quarter. The Israeli policy of annexation and judaization of Jerusalem, its encirclement with Jewish settlements and its separation from the rest of the occupied territories in recent months, caused the most serious concern. Participants stressed that a just solution regarding Jerusalem was indispensable for a settlement of the question of Palestine and called for an end to the policy of settlement, the reopening of the city, freedom of access to the holy places and respect for religious liberties, pending negotiations on a final settlement. Support was expressed in this regard for the work of the Al-Quds Committee of the Organization of the Islamic Conference. Calls were also made for an effective involvement by leaders from the three religions in promoting a peaceful solution to the problem of Jerusalem.

17. Participants discussed the achievement of the right to self-determination and independence of the Palestinian people and the dynamics of State and nation-building, including the role of the media and public opinion. It was emphasized that the right to self-determination was an inalienable right recognized in international law. Participants expressed support for the intifadah, through which the Palestinian people had expressed its national consensus in rejection of the occupation and for the establishment of a Palestinian State. The intifadah had also helped strengthen the institutional mechanisms and the social and political foundations for future statehood, under the leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organization.

18. It was pointed out that there were many parallels between the struggle of the Palestinian people and that of the oppressed people of South Africa and that use could be made of their experience. The importance of providing information and mobilizing international sympathy and support for the Palestinian cause was stressed in this regard.

19. It was also emphasized that the Palestinian information media, both in the occupied territories, and in the diaspora, were playing an indispensable role in expressing the concerns and national personality of the Palestinian people and in keeping the national consciousness alive. The occupying Power was called upon to cease all harassment of Palestinian journalists and foreign journalists attempting to provide information on the situation in the occupied territory to

the outside public. It was suggested that the Committee organize a seminar with the participation of mass media from the African and other regions and representatives of the Palestinian media to discuss strategies and means of practical cooperation in order to advance the cause of the Palestinian people.

20. Participants emphasized that a revival of the Palestinian economy and its independent development were essential underpinnings for the full exercise of the right to self-determination of the Palestinian people and the building of an independent State. Israel was called upon to end its policy of control and subordination of the Palestinian economy and resources, in particular water resources and land, and to remove the obstacles to development projects of non-governmental organizations and other international donors. It was concluded that while immediate and substantial economic and financial assistance was desirable, only the end of occupation and the restoration to the Palestinian people of complete control over its national resources would ensure the realization of self-reliant and sustainable development.

21. Participants called for unimpeded access of United Nations bodies and specialized agencies to the occupied Palestinian territory in order to carry out their programmes and studies. The need was felt for the creation of an appropriate mechanism to undertake coordination between various donors and United Nations system organizations and agencies and the Palestine Liberation Organization. It was suggested that the Committee organize, under its auspices, round-tables on economic revitalization of the occupied Palestinian territory, which would be of particular importance in the transitional period. Various practical measures to assist the Palestinian people living in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, were suggested, such as twinning of towns and institutions like universities, hospitals and others, to provide for exchange of staff, students, teachers and various technical assistance. Participants called upon the international community, particularly the industrial countries, to increase their contribution to the budget of UNRWA to enable it to fulfil its responsibility towards the Palestinian people.

22. Participants were apprised of the turning point in the peace process which took place while the meeting was in progress, and the draft declaration of principles by Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization providing for initial steps towards Palestinian self-government, the withdrawal of Israeli forces from Jericho and the Gaza Strip and a framework for negotiations leading to a permanent settlement. In welcoming and supporting this evolution, they considered that courage and leadership were required at this crucial stage in the peace process. This development was viewed as a first step to a just and comprehensive peace based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), and the realization of the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people, including the right to self-determination.

23. They stressed that it was essential for the international community as a whole to intensify further its support for the Palestinian people and its legitimate representative, the PLO, during the difficult transition process ahead. They called for effective help to be given to the Palestinian people in constructing its future institutions and rebuilding its social infrastructure and economy, which were indispensable foundations for the full exercise of its inalienable rights.

24. Participants reaffirmed the permanent responsibility of the United Nations towards a just and comprehensive solution of the question of Palestine. In this regard, they stressed the importance of the role of the United Nations in providing every assistance with the aim of contributing to the establishment of peace in the Middle East.

CONTENTS

	<u>Paragraphs</u>	<u>Page</u>
LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL		v
I. INTRODUCTION	1 - 6	1
II. MANDATE OF THE COMMITTEE	7 - 10	3
III. ORGANIZATION OF WORK	11 - 15	5
A. Election of officers	11 - 12	5
B. Participation in the work of the Committee	13 - 14	5
C. Re-establishment of the Working Group	15	5
IV. REVIEW OF THE SITUATION RELATING TO THE QUESTION OF PALESTINE AND EFFORTS TO IMPLEMENT THE COMMITTEE'S MANDATE	16 - 28	6
V. ACTION TAKEN BY THE COMMITTEE	29 - 69	10
A. Action taken in accordance with General Assembly resolution 48/158 A	29 - 34	10
1. Reaction to developments affecting the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people .	29 - 32	10
2. Attendance at international conferences and meetings	33	11
3. Action taken by United Nations bodies, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and intergovernmental organizations	34	11
B. Action taken by the Committee and the Division for Palestinian Rights in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 48/158 A and B	35 - 37	13
1. Seminars	38 - 44	14
2. Cooperation with non-governmental organizations	45 - 64	15
3. Research, monitoring and publications	65 - 66	20
4. United Nations information system on the question of Palestine	67	20
5. International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People	68 - 69	21

CONTENTS (continued)

	<u>Paragraphs</u>	<u>Page</u>
VI. ACTION TAKEN BY THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INFORMATION IN ACCORDANCE WITH GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 48/158 C	70 - 83	22
VII. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COMMITTEE	84 - 92	26

LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

15 November 1994

Sir,

I have the honour to enclose herewith the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for submission to the General Assembly in accordance with paragraph 5 of its resolution 48/158 A of 20 December 1993.

Accept, Sir, the assurances of my highest consideration.

(Signed) Kéba Birane CISSÉ
Chairman of the Committee on the
Exercise of the Inalienable Rights
of the Palestinian People

His Excellency
Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali
Secretary-General of the United Nations

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People was established by the General Assembly in its resolution 3376 (XXX) of 10 November 1975, in which the Assembly requested the Committee to consider and recommend to it a programme designed to enable the Palestinian people to exercise its inalienable rights as recognized by the Assembly in resolution 3236 (XXIX) of 22 November 1974. During the reporting period the Committee continued to be composed of 23 Member States, as follows: Afghanistan, Belarus, Cuba, Cyprus, Guinea, Guyana, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mali, Malta, Nigeria, Pakistan, Romania, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine and Yugoslavia. 1/

2. The recommendations made by the Committee in its first report to the General Assembly 2/ were endorsed by the Assembly in its resolution 31/20 of 24 November 1976 as a basis for the solution of the question of Palestine. In its subsequent reports 3/ the Committee has continued to stress that a comprehensive, just and lasting solution of the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, must be based on the relevant United Nations resolutions and the following essential principles: the withdrawal of Israel from the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, and from the other occupied Arab territories; respect for the right of all States in the region to live in peace within secure and internationally recognized boundaries; and the recognition and exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, primarily the right to self-determination. In its 1993 report to the Assembly at its forty-eighth session, 4/ the Committee welcomed the signing of the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements on 13 September 1993 in Washington, D.C. (A/48/486-S/26560, annex) by Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) as an important step towards the achievement of a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement and the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. The Committee stated that it would continue to strengthen its efforts to promote the attainment of those rights and the full implementation of the Declaration of Principles and mobilize international assistance to the Palestinian people during the transitional period. Each year, the Assembly has endorsed the Committee's recommendations with overwhelming support and has renewed its mandate and expanded it as necessary.

3. During the year under review, the Committee noted with great hope the further development of the peace process initiated at Madrid in October 1991, despite the repeated delays and the violent incidents in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem. The Committee welcomed the signing at Cairo on 4 May 1994 of the Agreement on the Gaza Strip and the Jericho Area and the subsequent withdrawal of Israeli troops from those areas, the deployment of Palestinian police, the return of Mr. Yasser Arafat, chairman of the Executive Committee of the PLO, and other Palestinian leaders to Gaza, the establishment of the Palestinian Authority and the partial release of prisoners by Israel (see A/49/180-S/1994/727, annex). The Committee was also pleased to note the signing of the Agreement on Preparatory Transfer of Powers and Responsibilities at Erez on 29 August 1994. The Committee considered that these were steps of major significance in the implementation of the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements and expressed the hope that negotiations would proceed speedily and successfully for its full implementation. The Committee also noted the conclusion of the Washington Declaration on 25 July 1994 by Israel and Jordan (A/49/300-S/1994/939, annex) and the signing of the Treaty of Peace between the State of Israel and the

Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan on 26 October 1994, and expressed the hope that it would lead to rapid progress in the negotiations with the other parties to the conflict.

4. Notwithstanding these encouraging developments, the Committee remained greatly concerned at the continuation of repressive activities by Israeli troops and attacks by armed settlers, exemplified most tragically by the massacre of Palestinian worshippers at the Ibrahimi Mosque in Hebron in February 1994. The Committee reaffirmed that Israel's continuing occupation constituted the principal obstacle to the achievement of peace. The Committee also expressed concern at the continued Israeli policy of settlement and land confiscation and stressed that during the transitional period Israel remains duty-bound, as the occupying Power under the Fourth Geneva Convention, 5/ to respect the provisions of the Convention in the occupied Palestinian and other Arab territories, including Jerusalem.

5. The Committee affirmed once again the permanent responsibility of the United Nations with respect to the question of Palestine until it was resolved in all its aspects. It stressed the need for the full engagement of the United Nations in the peace process and in the process of building the Palestinian Authority as well as in providing broad assistance to the Palestinian people in all needed fields. Expressing concern over the deteriorating economic situation in the occupied Palestinian territory and the overwhelming problems of poverty, unemployment and ruined infrastructure faced by the Palestinian Authority, the Committee called for the urgent provision of international assistance to help build the foundations for peace.

6. The Committee firmly believes that as the organ of the General Assembly dealing with the question of Palestine, it can make a valuable and positive contribution to United Nations endeavours during the transitional period by continuing to mobilize international opinion and action for its successful outcome and in support of the Palestinian people until a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement is achieved. The Committee intends to continue to devote a major part of its programme of work to this objective.

II. MANDATE OF THE COMMITTEE

7. The mandate of the Committee for the year 1994 is contained in paragraphs 2 to 6 of General Assembly resolution 48/158 A of 20 December 1993, in which the Assembly:

(a) Considered that the Committee could make a valuable and positive contribution to international efforts to promote the effective implementation of the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements and to mobilize international support and assistance to the Palestinian people during the transitional period, endorsed the Committee's recommendations and requested it to continue to keep under review the situation relating to the question of Palestine, and to report and make suggestions to the Assembly or the Security Council, as appropriate;

(b) Authorized the Committee to continue to exert all efforts to promote the exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, to make such adjustments in its approved programme of work as it might consider appropriate and necessary in light of developments, to give special emphasis to the need to mobilize support and assistance for the Palestinian people and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session and thereafter;

(c) Requested the Committee to continue to extend its cooperation to non-governmental organizations in their contribution towards heightening international awareness of the facts relating to the question of Palestine and promoting support and assistance to meet the needs of the Palestinian people, and to take the necessary steps to involve additional non-governmental organizations in its work.

8. In its resolution 48/158 B, also of 20 December 1993, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to provide the Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat with the resources required, including the continuing development of the computer-based information system on the question of Palestine, and to ensure that it continues to discharge the tasks detailed in the pertinent Assembly resolutions, in consultation with the Committee and under its guidance.

9. In its resolution 48/158 C, of 20 December 1994, the General Assembly requested the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat, in full cooperation and coordination with the Committee, to continue, with the necessary flexibility as might be required by developments affecting the question of Palestine, its special information programme on the question of Palestine for the biennium 1994-1995, with particular emphasis on public opinion in Europe and North America.

10. In carrying out its programme of work, the Committee also took into account General Assembly resolution 48/158 D of 20 December 1993 in which the Assembly reaffirmed the need to achieve a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, in all its aspects. The Assembly expressed its support for the ongoing peace process, which had begun at Madrid, and the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements, and expressed the hope that the process would lead to the establishment of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East. The Assembly stressed the need for the United Nations to play a more active and expanded role in the current peace process and in the implementation of the Declaration of Principles. It urged Member States to provide economic and

technical assistance to the Palestinian people. The Assembly also stressed the upcoming negotiations on the final settlement, and reaffirmed a number of principles for the achievement of a final settlement and comprehensive peace.

III. ORGANIZATION OF WORK

A. Election of officers

11. At its 204th meeting, on 27 January 1994, the Committee re-elected Mr. Kéba Birane Cissé (Senegal) as Chairman, Mr. Fernando Ramirez de Estenoz Barciela (Cuba) and Mr. Ravan A. G. Farhadi (Afghanistan) as Vice-Chairmen and Mr. Joseph Cassar (Malta) as Rapporteur.

12. At its 205th meeting, on 23 March 1994, the Committee adopted its programme of work for 1994 in implementation of its mandate.

B. Participation in the work of the Committee

13. As in previous years, the Committee reconfirmed that all States Members of the United Nations and Permanent Observers to the United Nations desiring to participate in the work of the Committee as observers were welcome to do so. Accordingly, in a letter dated 18 April 1994, the Chairman of the Committee informed the Secretary-General, who subsequently transmitted the letter, on 27 April 1994, to the States Members of the United Nations and members of the specialized agencies and to intergovernmental organizations. In accordance with established practice, the Committee also invited Palestine, represented by the PLO, to participate in the work of the Committee as an observer, to attend all its meetings and to make observations and proposals for consideration by the Committee.

14. In 1994, the Committee again welcomed as observers all the States and organizations that had participated in its work in the preceding year. 6/

C. Re-establishment of the Working Group

15. At its 204th meeting, the Committee re-established its Working Group in order to assist in the preparation and expedition of the work of the Committee on the understanding that any Committee member or observer could participate in its deliberations. 7/ The Working Group was constituted as before under the chairmanship of Mr. Joseph Cassar (Malta) and Mrs. Mitra Vasisht (India) as Vice-Chairman.

IV. REVIEW OF THE SITUATION RELATING TO THE QUESTION OF PALESTINE
AND EFFORTS TO IMPLEMENT THE COMMITTEE'S MANDATE

16. In accordance with its mandate, the Committee continued to keep under review the situation relating to the question of Palestine in the light of the new significant developments that have taken place and to exert all efforts to promote the exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. The Committee endeavoured to contribute to international efforts to promote the effective implementation of the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements and to mobilize international support and assistance to the Palestinian people.

17. The Committee noted the signing by Israel and the PLO, as the representative of the Palestinian people, of a series of important bilateral agreements in implementation of the Declaration of Principles. In the Protocol on Economic Relations between the Government of the State of Israel and the PLO, Representing the Palestinian People, of 29 April 1994, the parties considered the economic domain as one of the important factors in their relations with a view to enhancing their interest in the achievement of a just, lasting and comprehensive peace. The parties undertook to cooperate in that field in order to establish a sound economic base for those relations, to be governed by the principles of mutual respect of each other's economic interests, reciprocity, equity and fairness. The Protocol laid the groundwork for strengthening the economic base of the Palestinian side and for its exercising its right of economic decision-making in accordance with its own development plan and priorities. The Protocol was subsequently incorporated into the Agreement on the Gaza Strip and the Jericho Area. 5/

18. On 27 May 1994, the Permanent Representatives of the Russian Federation and the United States of America to the United Nations, as well as the Permanent Representative of Israel and the Permanent Observer of Palestine, transmitted the Agreement on the Gaza Strip and the Jericho Area, with its annexes and maps, to the Secretary-General. In the Agreement the parties reaffirmed their determination to live in peaceful coexistence, mutual dignity and security, while recognizing their mutual legitimate and political rights; and they reaffirmed their desire to achieve a just, lasting and comprehensive peace settlement through the agreed political process and their adherence to the mutual recognition and commitments of 9 September 1993. They reaffirmed their understanding that the interim self-government arrangements contained in the Agreement were an integral part of the whole peace process and that the negotiations on the permanent status would lead to the implementation of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) of 22 November 1967 and 338 (1973) of 22 October 1973. They expressed their desire to put into effect the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements, and agreed on a number of arrangements regarding the Gaza Strip and the Jericho Area. These included the scheduled withdrawal of Israeli military forces, the establishment of the Palestinian Authority and the transfer to it of various areas of authority specified in the Agreement, arrangements for security and public order, including the establishment of a strong Palestinian police force, provisions for safe passage between the Gaza Strip and the Jericho Area and for the international crossings at the Egyptian and Jordanian borders, as well as confidence-building measures, in particular the release by Israel of 5,000 Palestinian prisoners and detainees, and other provisions for cooperation between Israel and the PLO.

19. The Committee noted with satisfaction that the nature of the Israeli occupation of the Gaza Strip had dramatically changed as the agreement for the transfer of authority had begun to be implemented. As at 18 May 1994, the Israeli occupying forces had completed their withdrawal from the Gaza Strip, home to almost 1 million Palestinians. An estimated 4,000 to 4,500 Israeli soldiers remained in the Gaza Strip in the areas of Israeli settlements, military installations and in security zones. The Committee noted reports that 6,000 to 7,000 Palestinian police had been deployed as of early September 1994, many of them former exiles. The Committee was pleased at reports that the transfer of internal security arrangements had had an immediate positive effect on the safety of the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip and that the number of casualties had dropped substantially.

20. The Committee welcomed the return of Mr. Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the PLO, to the Gaza Strip to assume the leadership of the Palestinian Authority, and noted with satisfaction that a number of other well-known Palestinian leaders and longstanding deportees had been allowed to return. The Committee noted that the popular reception they had received reflected the popular support for the peace process and the Palestinian leadership. The Committee noted that the Palestinian Authority had been established and was functioning in a normal manner and was increasing its activities and programmes on a daily basis, and it sought to involve the Authority's members in the meetings organized under the Committee's auspices.

21. The Committee further noted that, on 29 August 1994, Israel and the PLO had signed the Agreement on Preparatory Transfer of Powers and Responsibilities regarding the West Bank. The Agreement provides for assumption by the Palestinian Authority of powers and responsibilities from the Israeli military Government and its Civil Administration in the following spheres: education and culture, health, social welfare, tourism, direct taxation and value added tax on local production. The parties also undertook to explore the possible expansion of the transfer of powers and responsibilities to other spheres. The Committee also noted the start of negotiations between Israel and the PLO on the issue of Palestinian elections and on the extension of the self-government arrangements to the rest of the West Bank.

22. While welcoming these positive developments and expressing the earnest hope that the agreements reached would be fully and effectively implemented, the Committee considered that the situation on the ground remained a matter of serious concern. In particular, the Committee was seriously concerned at the delay in the implementation of the agreements reached thus far, as well as the lack of compliance with the provisions of these agreements. The Committee was also alarmed by reports of the continued Israeli settlement activities in the occupied territory and in particular in and around Jerusalem.

23. The Committee was particularly alarmed by the killing, on 25 February 1994, by an armed Jewish settler of over 50 Palestinian worshippers at Ibrahimi Mosque in Hebron. At least 100 Palestinians had been wounded as a result of that act. The Committee condemned the massacre in the strongest terms and expressed concern at reports of subsequent shootings by Israeli soldiers of Palestinian demonstrators elsewhere in the occupied territory. Following the adoption by the Security Council of resolution 904 (1994) of 18 March 1994, the Committee noted that, on 2 May 1994, a Memorandum of Understanding on the establishment of a temporary international presence in Hebron had been agreed by Israel and the PLO at Copenhagen and signed by representatives of Denmark, Italy and Norway, the contributing countries. Observers were subsequently deployed in Hebron from May to July 1994. The Committee is of the view that resolution 904 (1994)

should be implemented in full, especially in the light of reports of continuing tension with the settlers in the area, including the uncovering and arrests of an underground network ready to carry out attacks against Palestinians.

24. Further, the Committee expressed concern at the fact that Israel was still holding thousands of Palestinian prisoners inside Israel, in violation of international law. While noting that in implementation of the Agreement on the Gaza Strip and the Jericho Area a number of Palestinian prisoners had been released, the Committee noted that this release was partial and conditional. The Committee was particularly alarmed by continued reports of systematic ill-treatment and torture by Israeli interrogators of Palestinian detainees. The Committee was also concerned at reports that, despite the redeployment from populated areas, Israeli patrols had carried out operations in the self-rule areas which had resulted in injury to Palestinians.

25. The Committee was particularly concerned by the continued settlement activities, by the Israeli Government's plans to expand a series of settlements in and around Jerusalem and in and around the town of Qalqilya in the West Bank, as well as by the large-scale housing development by the Israeli authorities in the area in and around Jerusalem. Also, declarations by Israeli officials with respect to the eastward expansion of the Jerusalem settlements remained a cause for serious concern of the Committee.

26. The Committee noted with concern the Israeli Government policy with regard to the closures of the city of Jerusalem and of the Gaza Strip, for security reasons, denying its inhabitants freedom of movement to other areas of the occupied territory, preventing worshippers from travelling to Jerusalem, denying patients essential medical care and preventing students from resuming their studies. The strict controls imposed on Palestinian workers from the Gaza Strip entering Israel, combined with catastrophic unemployment at home and the disastrous state of the economy after 27 years of occupation, had caused a dramatic increase in tension. The Committee deplored the use of lethal force by Israeli troops against Palestinian workers at the Erez checkpoint in July 1994 and warned that urgent measures were needed to improve Palestinian living conditions.

27. The Committee believes that for the Declaration of Principles and subsequent Israeli-Palestinian agreements to succeed, it is absolutely essential to promote economic and social development in the occupied Palestinian territory, and has repeatedly called for the urgent provision of the necessary funding by the international community. In this regard, the Committee noted the declaration issued at Oslo on 13 September 1994 by Mr. Yasser Arafat and the Foreign Ministers of Norway and Israel, in which a number of principles and needs were agreed to. The Committee welcomed the concerted effort undertaken by the organizations and agencies of the United Nations system in providing the much-needed economic, technical, and development assistance to the Palestinian people. The Committee noted that agreements in that regard had been reached between the Palestine Liberation Organization, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and other agencies.

28. The Committee also took note with appreciation of the important and timely steps taken in that regard by the Secretary-General, in particular the appointment of a Special Coordinator in the occupied territory, to act as focal point for all United Nations economic, social and other assistance to the Palestinians in the occupied territory, and to provide guidance to and facilitate coordination among the United Nations programmes and agencies

operating there. The Committee stressed that the activities of the United Nations as well as the activities of the Special Coordinator should normally be extended to the whole occupied territory, and expressed its readiness to contribute to those important endeavours. With that objective in mind, the Committee organized at UNESCO headquarters in Paris, in June 1994, a seminar on Palestinian trade and investment needs. It also continued to address related issues in the various meetings of non-governmental organizations organized under its auspices.

V. ACTION TAKEN BY THE COMMITTEE

A. Action taken in accordance with General Assembly resolution 48/158 A

1. Reaction to developments affecting the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people

Communication to the Secretary-General

29. In a letter dated 25 February 1994, the Chairman of the Committee drew the attention of the Secretary-General to the massacre of Palestinian worshippers by an Israeli settler at the Ibrahimi Mosque in Hebron (A/48/883-S/1994/220).

Action taken within the Security Council

30. The Chairman also participated in the meeting of the Security Council on this issue convened at the request of the Permanent Representative of Egypt to the United Nations, on behalf of the members of the Arab Group of States, and the Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the United Nations, on behalf of the States members of the Organization of the Islamic Conference. 8/

31. In his statement on behalf of the Committee at the 3342nd meeting, on 2 March 1994, the Chairman strongly condemned the massacre in Hebron. He stated that the Committee wished to remind the international community that as long as Israeli forces occupy the Palestinian territory, Israel bore full responsibility for the protection of Palestinians, as the occupying Power, in accordance with the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949. The Committee, therefore, fully supported the Palestinian requests for an international presence to be established in the occupied territory and for measures aimed at disarming the settlers and limiting their presence and activities in Palestinian towns and villages. The Committee urged the Security Council to take the necessary measures in that regard.

32. At its 3351st meeting, on 18 March 1994, the Security Council, without a vote, adopted resolution 904 (1994), in which, inter alia, it strongly condemned the massacre in Hebron and its aftermath which took the lives of more than 50 Palestinian civilians and injured several hundred others; called upon Israel, the occupying Power, to continue to take and implement measures, including, inter alia, confiscation of arms, with the aim of preventing illegal acts of violence by Israeli settlers; called for measures to be taken to guarantee the safety and protection of the Palestinian civilians throughout the occupied territory, including, inter alia, a temporary international or foreign presence, which was provided for in the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements, within the context of the ongoing peace process; requested the co-sponsors of the peace process, the United States of America and the Russian Federation, to continue their efforts to invigorate the peace process, and to undertake the necessary support for the implementation of the above-mentioned measures; reaffirmed its support for the peace process currently under way, and called for the implementation of the Declaration of Principles without delay.

2. Attendance at international conferences and meetings

33. In accordance with its mandate, the Committee was represented by its Chairman at the following international meetings during the period since its previous report to the General Assembly:

(a) Conference on the Prospects for an Arab-Israeli Peace, organized by the Wilton Park Conferences at Steyning, West Sussex, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, from 3 to 7 May 1994;

(b) Eleventh Ministerial Conference of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries held at Cairo from 31 May to 3 June 1994;

(c) Sixtieth ordinary session of the Council of Ministers and the thirtieth session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity held at Tunis from 6 to 11 and 13 to 15 June 1994, respectively.

3. Action taken by United Nations bodies, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and intergovernmental organizations

34. The Committee continued to follow with great interest the activities of United Nations bodies, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and intergovernmental organizations relating to the question of Palestine. The Committee noted especially the support of the international community for the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements and for its implementation, as important steps towards a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement in accordance with United Nations resolutions. The Committee also noted the great concern about the human rights situation in the occupied Palestinian territory, and the sense of urgency with which the international community had addressed the need to provide assistance to the Palestinian people in the difficult transition period ahead. The Committee took particular note of the following documents:

(a) Communiqué issued at the meeting of Ministers for Foreign Affairs and Heads of Delegation of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries to the General Assembly at its forty-eighth session, held at United Nations Headquarters on 4 October 1993 (A/48/484-S/26552, annex, para. 3);

(b) Declaration of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Group of 77 adopted at its seventeenth annual meeting, held in New York on 5 October 1993 (A/48/485, annex, paras. 74 and 75);

(c) Communiqué adopted at the meeting of the Heads of Government of the Countries of the Commonwealth, held at Limassol, Cyprus, from 21 to 25 October 1993 (A/48/564, annex);

(d) Final Communiqué adopted by the Supreme Council of the Gulf Cooperation Council at its fourteenth session, held at Riyadh from 20 to 22 December 1993 (A/49/56-S/26926, annex);

(e) Resolutions CM/Res.1491 (LIX) on the situation in the Middle East and CM/Res.1492 (LIX) on the Palestine question, adopted by the Council of Ministers of the Organization of African Unity at its fifty-ninth ordinary session, held at Addis Ababa from 31 January to 4 February 1994;

(f) Commission on Human Rights resolutions 1994/1 to 1994/5 of 18 February 1994; 9/

(g) Statement issued on 25 February 1994 by the President of the Sixth Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (A/48/890-S/1994/242, annex);

(h) Statement adopted by the States members of the Organization of the Islamic Conference in New York on 25 February 1994; 8/

(i) Resolution No. 5362 adopted by the League of Arab States at its emergency meeting, held at Cairo on 27 February 1994, concerning the Israeli massacre of Palestinians in the Ibrahimi Mosque in Hebron; 10/

(j) Declaration issued on 28 February 1994 by the European Union on the events in Hebron (A/48/886-S/1994/231, annex);

(k) Communiqué of the Committee on Palestine of the non-aligned movement adopted on 1 March 1994 in New York; 11/

(l) Statement adopted by the States members of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, held in New York on 7 March 1994, regarding the situation in the occupied Palestinian territory; 12/

(m) Statement issued by the Arab Group on 25 March 1994 in New York on the voting on Security Council resolution 904 (1994) (A/48/910-S/1994/353);

(n) Resolution 5366 (CI) of 27 March 1994 on the situation in the City of Jerusalem, adopted by the Council of the League of Arab States at its one hundred and first regular session, held at Cairo (A/48/923-S/1994/403, annex);

(o) Communiqué issued at Riyadh on 3 April 1994 by the Ministerial Council of the Gulf Cooperation Council (A/49/125-S/1994/434, annex);

(p) Decision 1994/R.2/7 of 29 April 1994 on assistance to Palestinian children and women adopted by the Executive Board of the United Nations Children's Fund at its second regular session, held in New York; 13/

(q) Resolution WHA47.30 of 12 May 1994 adopted by the forty-seventh World Health Assembly on health conditions of the Arab populations in the occupied Arab territories, including Palestine;

(r) Final document adopted at the Eleventh Ministerial Conference of the Movement of the Non-Aligned Countries held at Cairo from 31 May to 3 June 1994 (A/49/287-S/1994/894, annex);

(s) Resolutions CM/Res.1523 (LX) and CM/Res.1522 (LX) adopted by the Council of Ministers of the Organization of African Unity at its sixtieth ordinary session, held at Tunis from 6 to 11 June 1994;

(t) Economic and Social Council resolutions 1994/29 of 27 July 1994 and 1994/44 and 1994/45 of 29 July 1994;

(u) Declaration by the European Union issued on 11 July 1994 concerning the visit by Chairman Arafat to the Gaza Strip and the Jericho area (A/49/230-S/1994/822, annex);

(v) Concluding observations adopted by the Committee on Elimination of Racial Discrimination at its forty-fifth session, held at Geneva from 1 to 19 August 1994 (CERD/C/45/Misc.14/Rev.1);

(w) Resolution adopted by the Subcommission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities at its forty-sixth session, held at Geneva from 1 to 26 August 1994 (1994/13);

(x) Resolution adopted at the seventh extraordinary session of the Foreign Ministers of the Islamic Conference, held at Islamabad from 7 to 9 September 1994 (A/49/448, annex II);

(y) Final Communiqué issued by the Ministerial Council of the Gulf Cooperation Council at its fifty-second ordinary session, held at Riyadh on 17 September 1994 (A/49/412-S/1994/1078, annex);

(z) Statement issued on 29 September 1994 by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the five permanent members of the Security Council (S/1994/1122, annex);

(aa) Declaration adopted at the eighteenth annual meeting of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Group of 77, held in New York on 30 September 1994 (A/49/462, annex);

(bb) Declaration adopted at the Middle East/North Africa Economic Summit, held at Casablanca, Morocco, from 30 October to 1 November 1994 (A/49/645, annex).

B. Action taken by the Committee and the Division for Palestinian Rights in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 48/158 A and B

35. In its programme of work for the year 1994, the Committee decided to continue organizing regional seminars and meetings of non-governmental organizations and preparing studies and publications in accordance with existing mandates and budgetary provisions. The Committee, as in the past, decided to invite Palestinian and Israeli personalities to participate in all events organized under its auspices with a view to promoting a constructive debate, mutual understanding and a concrete and action-oriented analysis of the most important issues relating to the question of Palestine and the peace process.

36. The Committee considered that the following priority tasks required immediate and sustained attention in its programme of work for 1994:

(a) Promoting support for the ongoing peace process and for the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements, and following closely the developments and monitoring the situation on the ground, in order to promote the effective implementation of the agreements reached and the full realization of Palestinian rights;

(b) Promoting intensified assistance to the Palestinian people by the United Nations system as a whole, as well as other donors, for immediate relief and for nation-building;

(c) Encouraging constructive consideration and debate of the major issues to be negotiated at a later stage with a view to promoting a final settlement

based on international legitimacy in accordance with Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and other relevant United Nations resolutions.

37. In view of the massacre that was committed on 25 February 1994 against Palestinian worshippers in the Ibrahimi Mosque at Hebron, the Committee decided to intensify its efforts to promote international action to provide for the protection of Palestinian civilians in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem. In this regard, the Committee also considered that the full implementation of Security Council resolution 904 (1994) would be an important step in that direction.

1. Seminars

38. Regional seminars in Europe and Latin America and the Caribbean were included in the calendar of meetings to be organized under the auspices of the Committee in the year under review. The Committee acknowledged with appreciation the offer of the Government of Brazil to host the Latin American and Caribbean seminar, together with a symposium of non-governmental organizations, in the first quarter of 1995.

39. The Committee decided to devote its Seminar in the European region to the theme "Palestinian trade and investment needs", in accordance with its mandate to mobilize international support and assistance to the Palestinian people during the transitional period, and taking into consideration the suggestion made by the General Assembly in its resolution 48/213 of 21 December 1993, entitled "Assistance to the Palestinian people". The seminar was held at UNESCO headquarters in Paris from 20 to 22 June 1994.

40. The Committee was represented by a delegation comprising H.E. Mr. Kéba Birane Cissé (Senegal), Chairman of the Committee and head of delegation and Mr. Joseph Cassar (Malta), Rapporteur of the Committee, who served as Chairman and Rapporteur of the Seminar, respectively; and Mr. M. Nasser Al-Kidwa (Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations).

41. The seminar was attended by 16 experts, representatives of 39 Governments, nine organizations of the United Nations system, as well as representatives from 10 non-governmental organizations. A delegation of Palestine and a representative of the League of Arab States also took part in the seminar.

42. The programme for the seminar began with a plenary session on the theme "Building a Palestinian economy - challenges and prospects". Statements were made by donor countries and other Governments, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and organizations of the United Nations system.

43. Subsequently, three round-table discussions, moderated by experts, were conducted, as follows:

(a) "Laying the foundation for Palestinian economic development": Ms. Irene Jillson, President of Policy Research Inc. of Bethesda, Maryland, United States of America (Moderator); Mr. Hisham Awartani, Professor, Al-Najah University; Mr. George Abed, Economist and senior staff member, International Monetary Fund (IMF); Mr. Kamal Kassouneh, entrepreneur from Jerusalem; Mr. Antoine Zahlan, member of the Palestine Economic Council for Development and Reconstruction; and Mr. Tayseer Abdel Jaber, Director of the Arab Consulting Centre at Amman, Jordan.

(b) "Investment for development: Palestinian needs and policy options": Mr. George Abed, Economist and senior staff member, IMF (Moderator); Mr. Ibrahim Dakkak, member of the Palestinian Economic Council for Development and Reconstruction; Ms. I. Jillson, President of Policy Research Inc. of Bethesda, Maryland; Ms. Hind Salman, Associate Professor at Bethlehem University; Mr. Bassim Khoury, owner of a West Bank pharmaceutical company; Mr. Hussam Hijawi, member of the Nablus Chamber of Commerce; Mr. Stephen Day, Council for the Advancement of Arab-British Understanding and Chairman of the European Coordinating Committee for NGOs on the Question of Palestine; and Mr. Simcha Bahiri, Israel-Palestine Centre for Research and Information.

(c) "Trade for development: Palestinian needs and policy options": Mr. Tayseer Abdel Jaber, Director for the Arab Consulting Centre at Amman (Moderator); Mr. Hazem el Beblawi, Chairman of the Export Development Bank of Egypt; Mr. Ala'edeen Shawa, Director of the Development Resource Centre, Gaza; and Mr. Ezra Sadan, Agricultural Research Organization, Israel.

44. Participants in the seminar engaged in an analysis and discussion of the recent developments and the prospects for peace in the area, as well as of the current economic situation and the imperative necessity of its rapid amelioration in order to provide a solid foundation for peace efforts. The experts gave a serious analysis of current and future needs in the fields of trade and investment and constructive proposals were made to meet the current emergency situation and to promote sustainable development of the Palestinian economy during and after the transitional period. The final report of the Seminar was submitted to the President of the Economic and Social Council in a letter from the Chairman of the Committee for circulation to the members. 14/ It has also been issued as a publication of the Division for Palestinian Rights.

2. Cooperation with non-governmental organizations

45. In accordance with its mandate under General Assembly resolution 48/158 A, the Committee continued to cooperate and expand contacts with interested non-governmental organizations. During 1994, a regional non-governmental organization symposium for North America and a combined meeting for European and international non-governmental organizations were held. The Committee noted that non-governmental organizations had continued their efforts to provide assistance and support to the Palestinian people in light of the new situation following signing of the Declaration of Principles and Interim Self-Government Arrangements and subsequent agreements. The Committee affirmed the importance of the contribution by non-governmental organizations to international efforts on behalf of the Palestinian people and considered that their support would continue to be essential during the transitional period.

46. The Eleventh United Nations North American NGO Symposium on the Question of Palestine was held at Toronto, Canada, from 6 to 8 July 1994 in cooperation with the North American Coordinating Committee for Non-Governmental Organizations on the Question of Palestine and in accordance with a programme elaborated in consultation with it at a preparatory meeting held in New York on 31 January and 1 February 1994. The Committee expressed its appreciation to the Government of Canada for having provided the venue for the Symposium and for its active participation in its deliberations.

47. The Committee was represented by a delegation comprising Mr. Kéba Birane Cissé (Senegal), Chairman of the Committee and head of delegation; Mr. Ravan Farhadi (Afghanistan), Vice-Chairman of the Committee;

Mr. Fernando Ramirez de Estenoz Barciela (Cuba), Vice-Chairman of the Committee; Mr. Joseph Cassar (Malta), Rapporteur of the Committee; and Mr. M. Nasser Al-Kidwa (Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations). The Government of Canada was represented by Mr. Mac Harb, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade; other high-level officials participated in the Symposium deliberations.

48. The Symposium was attended by representatives of 58 non-governmental organizations and 15 Governments. In four plenary sessions, 19 experts presented papers and statements on the reconstruction and nation-building process during the transition period in the light of the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements and subsequent agreements. Six workshops were held with twenty experts discussing issues relevant to the question of Palestine.

49. The theme of the Symposium was "Palestine - towards a just and lasting peace: focus on support by non-governmental organizations for cooperation and development". The expert panels were as follows:

(a) "The Declaration of Principles: taking stock of the situation": Mr. Nasser Al-Kidwa, Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations; Mr. Mervyn Dymally, retired United States Congressman; and Mr. Aaron Back, B'Tselem, Israeli Centre for Human Rights In the Occupied Territories;

(b) "The Declaration of Principles: United Nations involvement and the North American non-governmental organization movement": Mr. Jawad Squili, Chairman of the Board, Centre d'études arabes pour le développement; Mr. Anis Al-Qaq, Director, Health Services Council and Chairman of the Palestinian Theatre; Ms. Phyllis Bennis, Journalist; and Mr. Larry Ekin, Chairman of the North American Coordinating Committee for Non-Governmental Organizations on the Question of Palestine;

(c) (i) "Strengthening civil and social structures": Mr. Eyad El Sarraj, Director, Gaza Community Mental Health Programme; Ms. Zahira Kamal, Coordinator for Women's Affairs Technical Committee; and Mr. Norman Cook, Director of Non-Governmental Organizations, Canadian Partnership Branch, Canadian International Development Agency;

(ii) "Development and the United Nations system": Ms. Janice Abu Shakrah, Director of the Palestine Human Rights Information Centre, Jerusalem; and Ms. Zahira Kamal, Coordinator for Women's Affairs Technical Committee;

(d) "Looking ahead: key issues": Ms. Janice Abu Shakrah, Director, Palestine Human Rights Information Centre, Jerusalem; Ms. Sarah Kaminer, Planning Consultant for neighbourhood organizations in West and East Jerusalem; Mr. Naseer Aruri, Professor of Political Science at the University of Massachusetts, Dartmouth, Massachusetts; and Mr. Marc Perron, Assistant Deputy Minister, Ministry of External Relations of Canada.

50. The workshops addressed the following topics: economic development; health and educational needs; promoting coexistence (citizen to citizen diplomacy); defending human rights; working with the media; and the Palestinian women's experience in development.

51. The Symposium was marked by intensive and fruitful discussions and served as an occasion for non-governmental organizations in North America to coordinate

and intensify its efforts and activities aimed at assisting the Palestinian people in the political, social and economic spheres. At the final session, the participating non-governmental organizations elected a new Coordinating Committee for the North American region to follow up on the decisions taken and to assure cooperation with the Committee and the Division for Palestinian Rights.

52. The United Nations International NGO Meeting and European NGO Symposium on the Question of Palestine was held as a combined event at Geneva from 29 August to 1 September 1993. The theme of the meeting was "Building on the Declaration of Principles towards the independent State of Palestine".

53. The Committee was represented by a delegation composed of Mr. Kéba Birane Cissé (Senegal), Chairman of the Committee and head of the delegation; Mr. Ravan A. G. Farhadi (Afghanistan), Vice-Chairman; Mr. Joseph Cassar (Malta), Rapporteur of the Committee; and Mr. M. Nasser Al-Kidwa, Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations.

54. The meeting was attended by the representatives of 100 non-governmental organizations, 15 of them as observers. It was also attended by 30 Governments, 8 United Nations agencies and bodies, 4 intergovernmental and other organizations, 5 non-governmental organization coordinating committees, a delegation of Palestine and 27 panelists and workshop leaders.

55. The programme for the meeting was formulated by the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People in consultation with the International Coordinating Committee for Non-Governmental Organizations on the Question of Palestine and the European Coordinating Committee for Non-Governmental Organizations on the Question of Palestine at a preparatory meeting held at Geneva on 21 and 22 February 1994.

56. Mr. Kéba Birane Cissé (Senegal) chaired the opening and closing sessions of the meeting. Mr. Ibrahima Fall, Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights, read a message from the Secretary-General. Mr. Zehdi L. Terzi, Senior Advisor on International Organizations to Mr. Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization, made a statement on his behalf. Other opening statements were made by Mr. Stephen Day, Chairman of the European Coordinating Committee for Non-Governmental Organizations on the Question of Palestine and Don Betz, Chairman of the International Coordinating Committee for Non-Governmental Organizations on the Question of Palestine.

57. The following panelists made presentations in the six panels:

(a) "Implementation of the Declaration of Principles":
Mr. Zehdi L. Terzi, Senior Advisor on International Organizations to Mr. Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the Executive Committee for the PLO;
Mr. Stephen Day, Director, Council for the Advancement of Arab-British Understanding and Chairman of the European Coordinating Committee for Non-Governmental Organizations on the Question of Palestine; and
Mr. Romesh Chandra, President of Honour of the World Peace Council;

(b) "Elements of the final Settlement":

(i) "Jerusalem": Mr. Ibrahim Shaaban, Director, Palestinian Housing Council;

- (ii) "Refugees": Mr. Muhammad Hallaj, Executive Director, Centre for Policy Analysis on Palestine;
- (iii) "Settlements": Mr. Khader Shkirat, Director, Land and Water Establishment, West Bank;
- (c) (i) "The Palestinian people's reality today":
 - "In the occupied Palestinian Territory": Mrs. Maha Shawa, Economist, Head of the International Cooperation Division, Health Department, Palestinian Authority; Mr. Marai Abdelrahman, Secretary-General, Palestine Committee for Non-Governmental Organizations; and Mr. Victor M. Kashkoush, Director-General, Welfare Association;
- (ii) a. "Israeli society and the peaceful settlement with the Palestinian People": Mr. Peretz Kidron, freelance journalist and writer;
- b. "Role of the Israeli peace forces in support of the Palestinian people": Mr. Dan Leon, Managing Editor, Palestine Israel Journal;
- c. "Arab societies in the Middle East and the Declaration of Principles": Mr. Nouri Abdul Razzak, Secretary-General, Afro-Asian People's Solidarity Organization;
- (d) (i) "Social and Economic Development of Palestine": Mr. Samir Othman Houlaileh, Palestinian Economic Council for Development and Reconstruction; and Mr. Ahmed Saad, economist, writer, researcher and manager of the Emil Tuma Institute (Haifa);
- (ii) "The role of non-governmental organizations in the social and economic development of Palestine": Mr. Stephen Day, Executive Director of the Council for the Advancement of Arab-British Understanding and Chairman of the European Coordinating Committee for Non-Governmental Organizations on the Question of Palestine; Mr. Fritz Froehlich, Society for Austro-Arab Relations; Dr. Anis Al Qaq, Health Services Council, West Bank; and Mr. Bruce Stanley, representative, Association for International Development Agencies;
- (e) "The role of non-governmental organizations in supporting the work of the United Nations": Dr. Anis Al Qaq, Health Services Council, West Bank; Mr. Larry Ekin, Chairman, North American Coordinating Committee for Non-Governmental Organizations on the Question of Palestine; Mrs. Elaine Hesse Steel, Director, World Young Women's Christian Association (Geneva); Mrs. Maria Gazi, Greek Committee for International Democratic Solidarity; and Mr. Don Betz, Chairman, International Coordinating Committee for Non-Governmental Organizations on the Question of Palestine.
- (f) "Campaigning for Palestinian National and Human Rights: how to campaign; and evaluation of the campaign on the release of Palestinian prisoners, re-launching of the campaigns on refugees, rights of return, and settlements in the light of recent developments": Mrs. Janice Abu Shakrah, Director, Palestine Human Rights Information Centre, Jerusalem; Mr. Larry Ekin, Chairman, North American Coordinating Committee for Non-Governmental Organizations on the Question of Palestine; and Mr. Ilan Halevi, Special Advisor to the Chairman of the Executive Committee of the PLO.

58. The following topics were discussed in the workshops: health, women, and education.

59. The non-governmental organizations participating in the meeting adopted a final communiqué in which they expressed the view that the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements was a turning-point opening a new chapter in Middle East relations and an avenue to a just and lasting peace. They also stated that the unequivocal support of the non-governmental organizations for the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and the establishment of an independent Palestinian State in accordance with all relevant United Nations resolutions remained at the centre of the non-governmental organizations' commitment. Further, they considered that the United Nations continues to have a role in reaching a negotiated settlement on the question of Palestine and is the most appropriate body that could guarantee a just, comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East.

60. The non-governmental organizations noted that the information presented at the meeting and the discussion that followed confirmed that the peace process was in its initial stages. The implementation of the initial stages of the Palestinian interim self-government was an important achievement, but must not be permitted to obscure the reality that, during the transitional period, Israel, as the occupying power, remained obligated to observe the Geneva Conventions until such time as the Palestinian people achieved full sovereignty.

61. They considered that although resolution of the questions related to Jerusalem, Israeli settlements and the right of return had been deferred to the permanent status negotiations, their importance demanded a clear and constant affirmation from the non-governmental organization movement. Of immediate and major concern to them was the continued Israeli imprisonment of Palestinian political prisoners and detainees. The non-governmental organizations called for their unconditional release in compliance with the Agreement on the Gaza Strip and the Jericho Area signed at Cairo.

62. They confirmed that under occupation, local and international non-governmental organizations had played crucial roles in the development of the Palestinian economy and society. They anticipated that non-governmental organizations would continue to play those roles and that support should be provided based upon their competence and quality of service. They sought ways to increase the involvement of non-governmental organizations, including those involved in economic and social development and in humanitarian service and looked forward to, and encouraged cooperation between non-governmental organizations and the Palestinian Authority.

63. In consultations between the representatives of the international and European coordinating committees for non-governmental organizations and the delegation of the Committee, it was agreed that a "task force" of seven to nine representatives would be appointed from within the International Coordinating Committee for Non-Governmental Organizations on the Question of Palestine in order to ensure more cost-effective and incisive cooperation between the non-governmental organization coordinating structures, the Committee and the Division.

64. In order to encourage a wider and more active participation by non-governmental organizations in the activities and meetings under its auspices, in particular those whose work encompasses humanitarian ends and programmes, including development, benefiting the Palestinian people, the

Committee, at its 206th meeting, established a revised set of criteria for such participation.

3. Research, monitoring and publications

65. The Committee noted with appreciation that the Division for Palestinian Rights, in accordance with its mandate, continued to respond to information requests and to prepare and disseminate the following publications:

(a) Monthly bulletins covering action by the Committee, other United Nations organs, organizations and agencies, as well as intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations concerned with the question of Palestine;

(b) Monthly chronological review of events relating to the question of Palestine, as reflected in the Arabic, English and Hebrew media, for the use of the Committee;

(c) Reports of seminars and non-governmental organization meetings;

(d) Periodic compilations of statements, declarations, documents and other material generated by the peace process;

(e) A compilation of the resolutions and decisions of the General Assembly and the Security Council relating to the question of Palestine adopted in 1993); 15/

(f) A special bulletin on the commemoration of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People in 1993.

66. The Committee also noted that the Division continued its programme of research and preparation of studies and information notes, in close cooperation with the Bureau of the Committee.

4. United Nations information system on the question of Palestine

67. The Committee noted that the Division, in cooperation with relevant technical services of the Secretariat, had completed the initial stage of the establishment of a United Nations computer-based information system on the question of Palestine (UNISPAL), as requested by the Committee and endorsed by the General Assembly. The Committee noted that on a trial basis, Committee members and observers and other relevant users within the United Nations Secretariat and organizations of the United Nations system, as well as coordinating committees for non-governmental organizations, had been given access through a Bulletin Board Service, to selected United Nations documents and reports on the question of Palestine, both current and historical. The Committee stressed the importance and usefulness of UNISPAL for the work of the Committee and of the United Nations, as well as of other members of the international community, and called for intensified efforts to advance towards full operation of the system and its further expansion as needed.

5. International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People

68. The International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People was observed on 29 November 1993 at United Nations Headquarters in New York and at the United Nations Offices at Geneva and Vienna. The Committee noted with appreciation that the International Day had also been observed in 1993 in many other cities throughout the world. Details on the observance are contained in the special bulletin issued by the Division.

69. On the occasion of the observance of the Day an exhibit of Palestinian traditional costumes, entitled "Palestine: a glimpse of the past, an inspiration for the future" was provided by the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations and presented under the auspices of the Committee.

VI. ACTION TAKEN BY THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INFORMATION IN
ACCORDANCE WITH GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 48/158 C

70. The Department of Public Information continued to provide press coverage of all meetings of United Nations bodies dealing with Palestinian issues, including the Security Council and the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, and all meetings, seminars and symposia of the latter body convened away from Headquarters. Additional press releases were issued containing the texts of the Secretary-General's statements relating to the question of Palestine and on the activities of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). A total of 90 press releases were issued on the subject in English and French.

71. The Department cooperated at United Nations Headquarters with the Division for Palestinian Rights in media promotion and other arrangements for the Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. The event was covered by a broad spectrum of media, including CNN, World Television News, Reuters, American Middle Eastern Television, United Press International and publications including Academic File, American Craft and Magazine Antiques.

72. The quarterly magazine UN Chronicle continued to publish stories relating to Palestinian issues, including Security Council actions and results of special meetings and seminars. Special coverage in 1994 reflected the historic agreements on self-government.

73. The Department's Public Inquiries Unit responded to 165 requests for information on the Middle East and/or the question of Palestine in the year under review. The Group Programmes Unit arranged a total of 15 briefing programmes by Secretariat officials during the same period on the question of Palestine. In addition, the subject was included in the presentation made to visitors taking guided tours of United Nations Headquarters.

74. The Department continued to distribute its publications, including Promoting a Culture for Peace in the Middle East: An Israeli-Palestinian Dialogue, based on the proceedings of the International Encounter for Journalists on the Question of Palestine, organized by the Department in London in June 1993, as well as the new, revised edition of The United Nations and the Question of Palestine, published in October 1994. The Department also undertook the preparation of a new publication based on the proceedings of the International Encounter for Journalists on the Question of Palestine, on the subject "Prerequisites for peace in the Middle East", held at Elsinore, Denmark, from 15 to 17 June 1994, and distributed a "United Nations focus" feature on the same topic.

75. In the first seven months of the year the Dissemination and Communications Unit of the Department's Information Centres Service distributed electronically 17 materials on the Palestine issue to 114 recipients around the world, including Internet and four other public electronic networks as well as Reuters and the Federal News Service agencies. The materials were comprised of the Secretary-General's statements and messages, press releases on encounters, seminars and symposia in Elsinore, Paris, Toronto, etc., and were disseminated in the English and Arabic languages. During the same period, the Unit distributed 11,267 copies of the Department's publications, such as Jerusalem: Visions of Reconciliation and other United Nations documents relating to the question of Palestine in Arabic, English, French, German,

Spanish and Russian, and to 750 recipients-redisseminators of the United Nations information.

76. A 30-minute historical documentary entitled Palestine 1890s to 1990s, based on a two-hour Point du Jour production, was produced by the Media Division of the Department and distributed in English and French versions to all United Nations information centres and services and UNDP libraries. Spanish and Arabic versions will be completed by November. Additionally, several UN in action pieces on topics such as water resource management, citrus processing and the Palestinian police force were videotaped during the fall.

77. The Radio and Video Service of the Department covered various aspects of the question of Palestine and related items in news and current affairs radio programmes in official and non-official languages. Some of the topics included the Israeli-Palestine accord, violation of human rights in the occupied territories, the massacre in Hebron, the Secretary-General's meeting with the Chairman of the Executive Committee of the PLO, Yasser Arafat, summaries of the United Nations regional seminars and symposia of non-governmental organizations on the question of Palestine and the deteriorating economic and social situation in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. In addition, the Service produced a number of feature programmes exclusively devoted to the question of Palestine, such as "Palestinian refugees: caring for them and planning for change", adapted into Arabic, French, Hindi, Indonesian, Kiswahili, Turkish and Urdu and distributed to more than 350 radio stations worldwide; "The situation of Palestinian women", also produced for world-wide distribution; and "International protection of Palestinian refugees" and "The Palestinian refugees and United Nations humanitarian assistance", produced in French. Five features, entitled "The Palestinian-Israeli agreement: is it a first step toward peace?", "Assistance to the Palestinian people", "Palestinian women and the right to self-determination", "The Palestinian refugees: future prospects" and "Will the Palestinians be protected at last?", were also produced in Arabic. World Chronicle, the 30-minute panel discussion video programme featured Timothy Rothermel, Director of the UNDP Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. He discussed issues crucial for economic development in the Palestinian territories of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

78. The NGO Section held an expanded briefing for the non-governmental organization community entitled "The United Nations and the Middle East peace process", featuring presentations by Mr. Arie Tenne of the Permanent Mission of Israel to the United Nations, Mr. Muin Shreim of the Permanent Observer Mission of Palestine to the United Nations and Mr. Mame Balla Sy of the Permanent Mission of Senegal to the United Nations, representing the view of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. Prior to the briefing, a 30-minute video of the Washington ceremonies was screened.

79. Coverage of United Nations activities related to the question of Palestine was provided on an ongoing basis by the global network of United Nations information centres. The centres produced and distributed newsletters, press releases and television news programmes and regularly briefed media representatives. The staff organized film screenings, gave lectures and translated and disseminated publications and posters produced both by the Department of Public Information and the Division for Palestinian Rights. The United Nations information centre in Paris helped organize the United Nations Seminar on Palestinian Trade and Investment Needs. The centres in London, Athens and Copenhagen provided full support services to the Department of Public Information for encounters on the question of Palestine. Many centres marked

the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People with special activities. These included distribution of background notes produced by the Department and United Nations publications; translation of the Department's materials into local languages (Arabic, Bahasa Indonesian, Italian); organizing special media seminars and student round-tables; placing relevant films produced by the Department and United Nations radio presentations on local television and radio programmes; providing radio and television interviews, and disseminating widely the statements of the Secretary-General on the question. Additionally, the centre at Manila, in cooperation with the Embassy of Palestine at Manila, promoted a national art competition on Palestinian rights. The centre at Athens helped to organize a round-table on "New perspectives of Palestinian people after the peace agreement". The centre at Jakarta hosted a week-long exhibition on the work of UNRWA. The centre at New Delhi organized a ceremony to commemorate the International Day. The centre at Rio de Janeiro participated in a television co-production on Peace in the Middle East. The centre at Rome helped to organize a seminar on "The occupied territories: economic cooperation and interdependence to build peace in the Middle East". The centre at Windhoek arranged for the question of Palestine to be discussed on a popular radio programme.

80. In cooperation with the Government of Denmark, the Department sponsored an International Encounter for Journalists on the Question of Palestine, held at Elsinore, Denmark, from 15 to 17 June 1994. The meeting brought together prominent Arabs, Israelis and Middle East experts to exchange views with a group of senior international media representatives on the Encounter's theme "Prerequisites to peace in the Middle East". Issues discussed included security, development, democratization and outstanding problems such as the status of Jerusalem and the future of Israeli settlements in the West Bank and Gaza. Some 130 people, including 26 members of the diplomatic corps, attended the meeting.

81. The Encounter was opened by Mr. Niels Helveg Petersen, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Denmark. The Palestinian and Israeli panellists were: Mr. Samir Abdallah, Chief of the Department of Economic Policies and Project Selection, Palestinian Economic Council for Development and Reconstruction; Mr. Haider Abdel Shafi, President of the Red Crescent Society at Gaza; Mr. M. Nasser Al-Kidwa, Permanent Observer for Palestine to the United Nations; Mr. Mark Heller, Senior Research Associate, Jaffee Centre for Strategic Studies, Tel Aviv; Mr. Yossi Katz, Member of the Israeli Knesset; Mr. Ron Pundik, Senior Fellow, Truman Institute for the Advancement of Peace, Tel Aviv; and Mr. Emmanuel Sharon, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Hapoalim Bank, Tel Aviv.

82. The Department sponsored a Fact-Finding News Mission for European and Japanese Journalists to the Middle East, which was organized in accordance with General Assembly resolutions on the question of Palestine. The primary goal of the Mission, which included visits to Tunis, Damascus and Amman, was to examine the momentum in support of the peace process in the Middle East. The journalists also investigated the economic and social needs of the Palestinian people. The group met with senior government officials, the leadership of the PLO and Palestinians living in refugee camps. The group of 15 journalists represented the following media organizations: Belga News Agency (Belgium); Berlingske Tidende (Denmark); Suomen Kuvalehti (Finland); Le Figaro (France); Die Zeit (Germany); Eleftherotypia (Greece); Il Messaggero (Italy); Japan Broadcast Corporation (NHK), Mainichi Shimbun, and Sankei Shimbun (Japan); Algemeen Dagblad (Netherlands); Arbeiderbladet (Norway); Radio Nacional de

España (Spain); Svenska Dagbladet (Sweden); and The Independent (United Kingdom).

83. The Department has begun preparations for a "Seminar on assistance to the Palestinian people in the field of media development", which it is sponsoring at Madrid from 29 to 31 March 1995. The seminar will be supported by, among others, the Spanish Foreign Ministry and UNESCO.

VII. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COMMITTEE

84. Over a year has elapsed since the mutual recognition between the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Government of Israel and the signing of the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements, which created a dramatic turning-point in the search for peace in the Middle East. The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People has welcomed these developments and expressed its commitment to support the Palestinian people and its leadership during the difficult transition process. The Committee congratulates the parties on the well-deserved recognition, through the Nobel Peace Prize, of their courageous efforts in the name of peace. The Committee is aware that the road to peace is still long and fraught with obstacles but is encouraged by the stated commitment of the parties to pursue negotiations despite repeated acts of violence aimed at derailing the peace process.

85. The Committee reaffirms that the United Nations has a permanent responsibility with respect to the question of Palestine until a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement is reached. The Committee reiterates that the involvement of the United Nations in the peace process, both as the guardian of international legitimacy and in the mobilization and provision of international assistance, is essential for the successful outcome of the peace efforts. As the organ of the General Assembly established to deal with the question of Palestine, the Committee believes that its own role continues to be useful and necessary during the transitional period and until a satisfactory final settlement is achieved.

86. The Committee reaffirms that such a settlement must be based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), the withdrawal of Israel from the Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and other Arab territories occupied since 1967, and the exercise by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights, in particular the right to self-determination. The Committee also insists that, during the interim period, Israel must recognize and respect its obligations as the occupying Power under the Fourth Geneva Convention. While remaining firm on this position of principle, the Committee has continued to make adjustments in its approach and programme of work in order to make a concrete contribution to promoting the implementation of the agreements reached and to mobilize international assistance to the Palestinian people. The Committee invites the General Assembly once again to recognize the importance of its role and to reconfirm its mandate with overwhelming support.

87. The Committee wishes to express its great appreciation to those States which have supported its work and facilitated the organization of events held under the Committee's auspices by providing venues and participating in the debates. The Committee believes that, in the light of the new situation and the responsive position of the Committee reflected in its programme of work, the time has come for all States to recognize the valuable contribution that it can make as a forum for dialogue, analysis, exchange of expertise, mobilization of public opinion and action in support of the peace efforts and the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, as well as their socio-economic development. The Committee considers that a broadening of its membership, to include countries that support its objectives but have not hitherto participated in its work, would greatly enhance the contribution of the General Assembly to promote peace at this important stage.

88. The Committee considers that its seminars on economic and social issues confronting Palestinians in the occupied territories have been particularly useful in bringing together experts in the relevant fields, including Palestinians and Israelis, as well as donor countries, United Nations departments, agencies and organizations, non-governmental organizations active in the field and others. In this regard, the Committee has noted the suggestion made by the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 1994/29 of 27 July 1994 regarding the convening of a seminar on Palestinian administrative, managerial and financial needs and challenges in the light of the new developments. Also, in the light of the new situation created on the ground by the signing of the Israeli-PLO Declaration of Principles and Interim Self-Government Arrangements and the subsequent implementation agreements, and noting the recognized need for continued United Nations involvement in the question of Palestine, the Committee is of the view that consideration should be given to the holding of an event in the territory under the Palestinian Authority to address aspects of the transition period.

89. The Committee also stresses the value of its role as a catalyst in bringing together and developing a network of non-governmental organizations interested in the question of Palestine and in promoting solidarity activities, as well as concrete assistance. The Committee intends to continue to promote the positive contribution of the non-governmental organization constituency to meet the humanitarian and development needs of the Palestinian people during the transitional period, in cooperation with the Palestinian Authority. Noting with appreciation the increasing interest and participation of Governments, particularly donor countries, and United Nations organizations and agencies in non-governmental organization events organized under its auspices, the Committee intends to continue its programme of meetings in the various regions in the coming year. The Committee will continue to seek to structure these meetings for maximum usefulness and to cooperate with coordinating committees for non-governmental organizations with a view to developing effective follow-up mechanisms. In order to encourage a wider and more active participation by non-governmental organizations in the activities and meetings under its auspices, in particular those whose work encompasses humanitarian ends and programmes, including development, benefiting the Palestinian people, the Committee established a revised set of criteria for such participation.

90. The Committee emphasizes the essential contribution of the Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat as a centre for research, monitoring, the preparation of studies and the collection and dissemination of information on all issues related to the question of Palestine. The Committee requests the Division to continue its programme of publications, in consultation with the Committee, and to pay particular attention to preparing studies or updating existing ones, on the various issues which are subject to final status negotiations. The Committee notes that the United Nations computer-based information system on the question of Palestine (UNISPAL) being established in the Division will store information on the relevant activities of the United Nations system and the non-governmental organization network, as well as other information material, including documents related to the peace process. The Committee further notes the positive interest and response generated by the establishment of UNISPAL and calls for the provision of the necessary resources by the Secretary-General and for cooperation by all concerned with the Division for Palestinian Rights in order to make the system fully operational and to maximize its usefulness to all users.

91. The Committee continues to consider that the Special Information Programme on the Question of Palestine of the Department of Public Information is very

useful in raising the awareness of the international community concerning the complexities of the question and the situation in the Middle East in general. The Committee believes that the Programme is contributing effectively to an atmosphere conducive to dialogue and supportive of the peace process. The Programme should continue along this path until a just solution to the question of Palestine is achieved in accordance with international legality. The Programme should follow and reflect realities related to the new experiences of the Palestinian people, provide assistance in the field of Palestinian media development and continue to disseminate information about the just cause of the Palestinian people, in addition to continuing its support of dialogue in the effort to build peace. During its forty-eighth session, the General Assembly adopted resolution 48/158 C by an overwhelming majority. It is the Committee's hope that this year, in the light of the new situation, the Assembly will be able to adopt the resolution on the Special Information Programme on the Question of Palestine by consensus.

92. The Committee will continue to strive to achieve maximum effectiveness in the implementation of its mandate and to adjust its work programme in the light of developments, in order to continue to contribute, to the extent possible, to the realization of the common United Nations objective of achieving a just and lasting solution of the question of Palestine.

Notes

1/ Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 47/1 of 22 September 1992, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) did not participate in the work of the Committee.

2/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-first Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/31/35).

3/ Ibid., Thirty-second Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/32/35); ibid., Thirty-third Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/33/35); ibid., Thirty-fourth Session Supplement No. 35 (A/34/35 and Corr.1); ibid., Thirty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/35/35); ibid., Thirty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/36/35); ibid., Thirty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/37/35 and Corr.1); ibid., Thirty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/38/35); ibid., Thirty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/39/35); ibid., Fortieth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/40/35); ibid., Forty-first Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/41/35); ibid., Forty-second Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/42/35); ibid., Forty-third Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/43/35); ibid., Forty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/44/35); ibid., Forty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/45/35); ibid., Forty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/46/35); ibid., Forty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/47/35); and ibid., Forty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/48/35).

4/ Ibid., Forty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/48/35), paras. 5-8.

5/ Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, United Nations, Treaty Series, vol. 75, No. 973.

6/ The observers at the Committee meetings were as follows: Algeria, Bangladesh, Bulgaria, China, Ecuador, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Mauritania, Morocco, Nicaragua, Niger, Qatar, Sri Lanka, Syrian Arab Republic, United Arab Emirates, Viet Nam, the League of Arab States and the Organization of the Islamic Conference. Palestine, represented by the

Palestine Liberation Organization, as the representative of the Palestinian people, was also an observer.

7/ The membership of the Working Group was as follows: Afghanistan, Belarus, Cuba, Guinea, Guyana, India, Malta, Pakistan, Senegal, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine and Palestine, represented by the Palestine Liberation Organization, as the representative of the people directly concerned.

8/ S/1994/223, annex.

9/ Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1994, Supplement No. 4 (E/1994/24), chap. II, sect. A.

10/ S/1994/233, annex.

11/ S/1994/239, annex.

12/ S/1994/275, annex.

13/ E/1994/34 (Part II)-E/ICEF/1994/13.

14/ See E/1994/96.

15/ A/AC.183/L.2/Add.14.



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REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE EXERCISE OF THE
INALIENABLE RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE*

* The present document is a mimeographed version of the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, which will be issued in final form as Official Records of the General Assembly, Fiftieth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/50/35).

CONTENTS

	<u>Paragraphs</u>	<u>Page</u>
LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL		3
I. INTRODUCTION	1 - 8	4
II. MANDATE OF THE COMMITTEE	9 - 12	6
III. ORGANIZATION OF WORK	13 - 17	8
A. Election of officers	13 - 14	8
B. Participation in the work of the Committee	15 - 16	8
C. Re-establishment of the Working Group	17	8
IV. REVIEW OF THE SITUATION RELATING TO THE QUESTION OF PALESTINE	18 - 28	9
V. ACTION TAKEN BY THE COMMITTEE	29 - 101	12
A. Action taken in accordance with General Assembly resolution 49/62 A	29 - 42	12
1. Reaction to developments affecting the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people .	29 - 40	12
2. Attendance at international conferences and meetings	41	13
3. Action taken by United Nations bodies, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and intergovernmental organizations	42	14
B. Action taken by the Committee and the Division for Palestinian Rights in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 49/62 A and B	43 - 101	15
1. Seminars	45 - 67	16
2. Cooperation with non-governmental organizations	68 - 94	21
3. Research, monitoring and publications	95 - 98	26
4. United Nations information system on the question of Palestine	99	27
5. International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People	100 - 101	27
VI. ACTION TAKEN BY THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INFORMATION IN ACCORDANCE WITH GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 49/62 C	102 - 114	28
VII. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COMMITTEE	115 - 124	30

LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

15 November 1995

Sir,

I have the honour to enclose herewith the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for submission to the General Assembly in accordance with paragraph 5 of its resolution 49/62 A of 14 December 1994.

Accept, Sir, the assurances of my highest consideration.

(Signed) Kéba Birane CISSÉ
Chairman of the Committee on the
Exercise of the Inalienable Rights
of the Palestinian People

His Excellency
Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali
Secretary-General of the United Nations

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People was established by the General Assembly in its resolution 3376 (XXX) of 10 November 1975, in which the Assembly requested the Committee to consider and recommend to it a programme designed to enable the Palestinian people to exercise its inalienable rights as recognized by the Assembly in resolution 3236 (XXIX) of 22 November 1974. During the reporting period the Committee continued to be composed of 23 Member States, as follows: Afghanistan, Belarus, Cuba, Cyprus, Guinea, Guyana, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mali, Malta, Nigeria, Pakistan, Romania, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine and Yugoslavia. 1/

2. The recommendations made by the Committee in its first report to the General Assembly 2/ were endorsed by the Assembly in resolution 31/20 of 24 November 1976 as a basis for the solution of the question of Palestine. In its subsequent reports 3/ the Committee has continued to stress that a comprehensive, just and lasting solution of the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, must be based on the relevant United Nations resolutions and the following essential principles: the withdrawal of Israel from the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, and from the other occupied Arab territories; respect for the right of all States in the region to live in peace within secure and internationally recognized boundaries; and the recognition and exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, primarily the right to self-determination.

3. The Committee has welcomed the signing in September 1993 of the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements by Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) (A/48/486-S/26560, annex) as well as the Gaza-Jericho Agreement of May 1994 (A/49/180-S/1994/727, annex) and other implementation agreements, as important steps towards the achievement of a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. The Committee has stated that it will continue to strengthen its efforts to promote the attainment of those rights and the full implementation of the Declaration of Principles and the subsequent agreements and to mobilize international assistance to the Palestinian people during the transitional period. Each year, the General Assembly has endorsed the Committee's recommendations with overwhelming support and has renewed its mandate and expanded it, as necessary.

4. During the year under review, the Committee noted with satisfaction that the peace process initiated at Madrid in October 1991 had continued despite many difficulties and that the parties had affirmed its irreversibility and their determination to maintain, sustain and continue that process. The Committee welcomed as an important further step in the process the signing, on 28 September 1995, in Washington, D.C., of the Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, which supersedes the earlier implementing agreements and provides for the establishment of Palestinian interim self-government arrangements in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The Committee emphasized that the transitional period had reached a crucial stage, which required the full and effective implementation of the agreements reached, as well as confidence-building measures and in particular an end to the policy of settlements, land confiscation and closures, as well as an end to acts of violence aimed at jeopardizing the peace process. The Committee expressed the

hope that further progress would soon be achieved in the other negotiating tracks.

5. On 6 November 1995, the Bureau of the Committee condemned the assassination of the Prime Minister of Israel, Yitzhak Rabin, and expressed its hope that that criminal act would not have an adverse effect on the Middle East peace process to which Israel and the PLO had committed themselves.

6. The Committee affirmed once again the permanent responsibility of the United Nations with respect to the question of Palestine until it is resolved in all its aspects. It emphasized the need for the full engagement of the United Nations in the peace process and in the process of building the Palestinian self-government institutions, as well as in providing varied assistance to the Palestinian people in all needed fields.

7. Expressing concern at the continued deterioration of the Palestinian economy and the problems of poverty, unemployment and lack of adequate infrastructure faced by the Palestinian Authority, the Committee urged Member States to expedite the provision of economic, technical and development assistance to the Palestinian people in order to help build solid foundations for peace.

8. The Committee firmly believes that, as the organ of the General Assembly dealing with the question of Palestine, it can make a valuable and positive contribution to United Nations endeavours during the transitional period by continuing to promote dialogue and to educate and mobilize international opinion and action for the successful outcome of the agreements reached by the parties and in solidarity with the Palestinian people until a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement is achieved. The Committee intends to continue to devote a major part of its programme of work to this objective.

II. MANDATE OF THE COMMITTEE

9. The mandate of the Committee for the year 1995 is contained in paragraphs 2 to 6 of General Assembly resolution 49/62 A of 14 December 1994, in which the Assembly:

(a) Considered that the Committee could continue to make a valuable and positive contribution to international efforts to promote the effective implementation of the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements and to mobilize international support for and assistance to the Palestinian people during the transitional period; and endorsed the recommendations of the Committee and requested it to continue to keep under review the situation relating to the question of Palestine and to report and make suggestions to the Assembly or the Security Council, as appropriate;

(b) Authorized the Committee to continue to exert all efforts to promote the exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, to make such adjustments in its approved programme of work as it might consider appropriate and necessary in the light of developments, to give special emphasis to the need to mobilize support and assistance for the Palestinian people, and to report thereon to the Assembly at its fiftieth session and thereafter.

(c) Also requested the Committee to continue to extend its cooperation to non-governmental organizations in their contribution towards heightening international awareness of the facts relating to the question of Palestine and promoting support and assistance to meet the needs of the Palestinian people, and to take the necessary steps to involve additional non-governmental organizations in its work.

10. In its resolution 49/62 B, also of 14 December 1994, the General Assembly considered that the Division for Palestinian Rights continued to make a useful and constructive contribution through the organization of seminars and meetings of non-governmental organizations, as well as through its research, monitoring and publication activities, and the collection and dissemination of information in printed and electronic form on all issues pertaining to the question of Palestine. The Assembly requested the Secretary-General to continue to provide the Division with the necessary resources, including the further development of the United Nations information system on the question of Palestine, and to ensure that it continued to discharge the tasks detailed in the pertinent resolutions of the Assembly, in consultation with the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and under its guidance.

11. In its resolution 49/62 C, of 14 December 1994, the General Assembly requested the Department of Public Information, in full cooperation and coordination with the Committee, to continue, with the necessary flexibility as may be required by developments affecting the question of Palestine, its special information programme on the question of Palestine for the biennium 1994-1995, with particular emphasis on public opinion in Europe and North America.

12. In carrying out its programme of work, the Committee also took into account General Assembly resolution 49/62 D, in which the Assembly reaffirmed the necessity of achieving a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, in all its aspects; expressed its full support for the ongoing peace process, which began at Madrid, and the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements, as well as subsequent implementation agreements, and expressed the hope that the process

would lead to the establishment of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East; called for the timely and scrupulous implementation of the agreements reached between the parties towards the negotiation of the final settlement; urged Member States to expedite the provision of economic and technical assistance to the Palestinian people during this critical period; and emphasized the importance for the United Nations to play a more active and expanded role in the current peace process and in the implementation of the Declaration of Principles.

III. ORGANIZATION OF WORK

A. Election of officers

13. At its 212th meeting, on 3 February 1995, the Committee re-elected Mr. Kéba Birane Cissé (Senegal) as Chairman, Mr. Ravan Farhadi (Afghanistan) as Vice-Chairman and Mr. Joseph Cassar (Malta) as Rapporteur. At its 215th meeting, on 17 May 1995, the Committee elected Mr. Bruno Eduardo Rodriguez Parrilla (Cuba) as Vice-Chairman of the Committee.

14. At its 213th meeting, on 22 February 1995, the Committee adopted its programme of work for 1995 4/ in implementation of its mandate.

B. Participation in the work of the Committee

15. As in previous years, the Committee reconfirmed that all States Members and Permanent Observers to the United Nations desiring to participate in the work of the Committee as observers were welcome to do so. Accordingly, in a letter dated 13 April 1995, the Chairman of the Committee informed the Secretary-General, who subsequently transmitted the letter, on 18 April 1995, to the States Members of the United Nations and members of the specialized agencies, and to intergovernmental organizations. In accordance with established practice, the Committee also invited Palestine, represented by the PLO, to participate in the work of the Committee as an observer, to attend all its meetings and to make observations and proposals for consideration by the Committee.

16. In 1995, the Committee again welcomed as observers all the States and organizations that had participated in its work in the preceding year. 5/

C. Re-establishment of the Working Group

17. At its 212th meeting, the Committee re-established its Working Group in order to assist in the preparation and expedition of the work of the Committee on the understanding that any Committee member or observer could participate in its deliberations. 6/ The Working Group was constituted as before under the chairmanship of Mr. Joseph Cassar (Malta) and Mr. Sujan R. Chinoy (India) as Vice-Chairman.

IV. REVIEW OF THE SITUATION RELATING TO THE QUESTION
OF PALESTINE

18. In accordance with its mandate, the Committee continued to keep under review the developments relating to the question of Palestine and to exert all efforts to promote the exercise by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights. The Committee also continued to contribute to international efforts to promote the effective implementation of the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements and to mobilize international support for and assistance to the Palestinian people.

19. The Committee was encouraged that during the previous year the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations had proceeded despite repeated delays and acts of violence, which had taken many innocent victims on both sides and aroused the concern and condemnation of the international community. On 27 August 1995, the parties signed, at Cairo, the Protocol on Further Transfer of Powers and Responsibilities. In a breakthrough, on 28 September 1995, the parties signed, in Washington, D.C., the Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement on the West Bank and Gaza Strip, which supersedes all earlier agreements in implementation of the Declaration of Principles. The Agreement reaffirms the parties' understanding that the interim self-government arrangements provided therein are an integral part of the whole peace process and that the negotiations on the permanent status, which will start no later than 4 May 1996, will lead to the implementation of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). The Agreement provides for the dissolution of the Civil Administration, the withdrawal of the Israeli military government and a scheduled transfer of powers and responsibilities to the Palestinian Interim Self-Governing Authority. The Palestinian Interim Self-Governing Agreement, which will replace the Palestinian Authority established under the Gaza-Jericho Agreement, will be composed of an 82-member Council and the Head (Ra'ees) of its Executive Authority, both elected for a transitional period until May 1999 at the latest. The Agreement further contains modalities for participation in the elections by the Palestinian people of the West Bank, Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip; and makes provision for international observation of the election process.

20. The Agreement further provides for a timetable for redeployment of Israeli military forces, firstly from six cities (Jenin, Nablus, Tulkarm, Kalkiliya, Ramallah and Bethlehem) and from 450 towns, villages, refugee camps and hamlets, to be completed prior to the holding of elections. Redeployment of the Israeli military forces will also take place in Hebron, with special security arrangements, including a temporary international presence. The Agreement provides for a gradual assumption of civil powers and responsibilities by the Palestinian Council. Further Israeli military redeployments are to take place at 6-month intervals (for a period of 18 months) following the Council's inauguration, with concomitant extensions of the territorial jurisdiction of the Council except for areas subject to final status negotiations. The Agreement further sets out arrangements for the transfer of agreed upon civil powers and responsibilities from the Israeli Civil Administration to the Council; the establishment of a Palestinian Police Force; and other provisions regarding legal matters, religious sites, human rights, water, a phased release of Palestinian detainees and prisoners, and cooperation in the areas of environment, economics, technology and science, and in fostering dialogue and mutual understanding.

21. The Committee considered that the new Agreement provided an opportunity for the Palestinian people to build on the achievements of the past year and to

proceed further in the construction of its State. It was pleased to note that, with the assistance and support of the international community and through the committed efforts of the Palestinian population, the Palestinian Authority had gradually established its administration and had taken a number of measures to ensure public order and to normalize Palestinian political, social, economic and cultural life, as well as to improve living conditions. The Committee noted that a number of countries had established relations with the Authority and recognized the Palestinian passports, and urged other States to do so as soon as possible.

22. Despite these positive developments, the Committee noted that the situation in the areas still under Israeli occupation gave reason for concern and continued to create facts on the ground that had potential negative effects for the future exercise of Palestinian rights and the peace process itself. Of utmost importance was the issue of land confiscation and settlements, including in East Jerusalem. The Committee noted, in particular, plans for the construction of additional settler housing as well as for the construction of roads linking settlements and leading to the fragmentation of the West Bank and the isolation of East Jerusalem. These developments were discussed twice by the Security Council, first in February and then in May 1995 (see paras. 30-40 below). In that regard, the Committee took note of the positive decision by Israel, in May 1995, to suspend the planned confiscation of Palestinian land in East Jerusalem. The Committee reaffirmed that the settlement policy was in contradiction with Israel's obligations as the occupying Power under the Fourth Geneva Convention and called on the Government to end that policy once and for all.

23. The Committee also noted with concern that the presence of large numbers of armed Israeli settlers in the immediate vicinity of densely populated Palestinian areas generated tension often resulting in acts of violence. The situation remained particularly tense and volatile in Hebron. The campaign launched by the settlers in opposition to the new agreements added to the sense of insecurity and lack of protection felt by Palestinians living near the settlements and was also a cause for concern.

24. During the year under review, the Committee expressed profound concern at the repeated closures, for security reasons, of the occupied territory and the self-rule areas and at the isolation of East Jerusalem. The closures had a devastating effect on the overall livelihood of the Palestinian population in an economy much intertwined with that of Israel, as well as on Palestinian education and health. They also affected trade between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip in particular in agricultural products, a main source of income for thousands of Palestinian households.

25. The Committee was also concerned that thousands of Palestinian prisoners and detainees remained in Israeli prisons, under conditions that had been repeatedly decried by human rights organizations. It called on Israel to implement the planned releases speedily and to work to ameliorate conditions of detention.

26. The Committee paid particular attention to issues related to Palestinian socio-economic development and reconstruction during the transitional period. The Committee took note of the continued multilateral effort, which culminated in the Middle East/North Africa Economic Summit, held at Casablanca, Morocco, from 30 October to 1 November 1994, and the adoption of the Declaration of Casablanca (A/49/645, annex). The conference became an important first step towards integrating the Palestinian economy into a wider regional economic

framework. The Committee is of the view that promoting and fostering Palestinian economic development is particularly crucial as a dynamic economy and prosperity are important underpinnings of peace and stability in the region. These ideas were reaffirmed in a joint communiqué issued on 12 February 1995 at Blair House, Washington, D.C., by the United States of America, Egypt, Israel, Jordan and the Palestinian Authority. The Committee welcomed the convening of the Second Middle East/North Africa Economic Summit, held at Amman from 29 to 31 October 1995, which will facilitate the expansion of investment in the region and enhance regional cooperation and development, thereby promoting stability and an atmosphere conducive to peace.

27. The Committee voiced its concern at the continued deterioration of the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and, in particular, the Gaza Strip. It stressed that the destruction of the Palestinian economic infrastructure as a result of the prolonged occupation required the urgent attention of the international community. In that regard, the Committee noted with satisfaction that a coordination mechanism for international assistance had been established and a plan of action elaborated. The Committee called on the international donor community to provide and increase assistance as a matter of high priority and urgency. The Committee noted with appreciation the contribution of funds by donor countries and the European Union (EU) to the Palestinian Police as well as to various needed development projects.

28. The Committee took note of the diversified assistance to the Palestinian people provided by the organizations, agencies and programmes of the United Nations system. Over the year, there has been a significant increase in United Nations involvement in assistance projects and programmes for the Palestinians. The Committee expressed appreciation for the efforts aimed at mobilizing and coordinating such assistance made at this critical stage by the United Nations Special Coordinator in the Occupied Territories. It continued to give priority to promoting international assistance to the Palestinian people in order to meet their socio-economic and development needs and to support the Palestinian Authority in its institution-building efforts. The Committee structured its programme of regional meetings so as to contribute to the debate on relevant issues. To that end, it convened at UNESCO headquarters, Paris, in June 1995, a seminar dealing with Palestinian administrative, managerial and financial needs and challenges (see below, paras. 62-67).

V. ACTION TAKEN BY THE COMMITTEE

A. Action taken in accordance with General Assembly resolution 49/62 A

1. Reaction to developments affecting the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people

(a) Communication to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

29. In a letter dated 17 January 1995 (A/49/831-S/1995/50), the Chairman of the Committee drew the attention of the Secretary-General and of the President of the Security Council to the expansion and consolidation by the Government of Israel of settlements in the occupied territory.

(b) Action taken within the Security Council

30. At the request of the Permanent Representative of Djibouti, in his capacity as Chairman of the Arab Group of States for the month of February 1995, 7/ an urgent meeting of the Security Council was held on 28 February 1995 to consider the question of the establishment of Israeli settlements in the territories occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, and the dangerous consequences of those activities on the Palestinian people and on the Middle East peace process.

31. The Chairman of the Committee participated in the debate on this issue on 28 February 1995 in the Security Council. In his statement on behalf of the Committee, 8/ he stated that Israel, the occupying Power, continued to implement the unlawful policy of establishing settlements in occupied Palestinian territory and authorized more and more Israeli settlers to move into them, in the most direct and serious contravention of article 49 of the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, and also in violation of Security Council resolutions, including resolutions 446 (1979), 452 (1979) and 465 (1980).

32. Land confiscation and settlement expansion were taking place, in particular in and around the occupied city of East Jerusalem. Since September 1994, several announcements by high-level Israeli officials had indicated a toughening of Israel's position on this key issue and Israeli policies in this regard had caused serious friction.

33. The Chairman noted that the Israeli decision came at a time when the implementation of the second stage of the 13 September 1993 Declaration of Principles had been delayed for seven months, including the redeployment of the Israeli forces away from populated areas in the West Bank and the election of the Palestinian Council. Clearly, the decision further undermined the current peace process and exacerbated the already fragile, tense and dangerous atmosphere in the occupied territory.

34. The Security Council concluded its general debate without adopting any specific measures with respect to the item under consideration on 28 February 1995.

35. In a letter dated 8 May 1995 from the Permanent Representatives of Morocco and the United Arab Emirates to the United Nations, 9/ and also a letter dated 8 May 1995 from the Permanent Representative of Morocco in his capacity as

Chairman of the Islamic Group for the month of May 1995, 10/ an urgent meeting of the Security Council was requested to discuss the situation in the occupied Arab territories, as well as to take the necessary measures for revocation of the Israeli confiscation orders in respect of Palestinian land situated in the area of East Jerusalem. The Council met between 12 and 17 May 1995.

36. The Acting Chairman of the Committee took part in the debate and stated that the main issue at stake was Israel's continued illegal construction and expansion of settlements on Palestinian land and its allowing more Israeli settlers to move there, which is a direct and serious violation of international law, the Fourth Geneva Convention and the relevant General Assembly and Security Council resolutions.

37. This action by Israel also flagrantly violated the spirit and the letter of the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements signed on 13 September 1993 by the Government of Israel and the PLO.

38. The Acting Chairman stated that in the Declaration of Principles it was agreed that negotiations on the final status of Jerusalem and on other issues would begin not later than the third year of the interim period. The recent decision by the Government of Israel to confiscate Palestinian land in East Jerusalem seriously undermined the peace process at a time when the implementation of the second stage of the Declaration of Principles had been deferred.

39. The Committee considered that the confiscation of land in East Jerusalem and the increasing expansion and consolidation of settlements created a de facto situation inconsistent with Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), which the current peace process sought to implement, and seriously compromised the agreements between Israel and the PLO.

40. At the 3538th meeting of the Security Council, a draft resolution calling upon the Government of Israel to rescind the expropriation orders and to refrain from such actions in the future, and expressing its full support for the Middle East peace process and its achievements, including the Declaration of Principles, as well as the subsequent implementation agreements, 11/ was not adopted due to the negative vote of a permanent member of the Security Council.

2. Attendance at international conferences and meetings

41. In accordance with its mandate, the Committee was represented by its Chairman at the following international meetings during the period since its previous report to the General Assembly:

(a) Twenty-second Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers and Seventh Islamic Summit Conference, held at Casablanca, Morocco, from 10 to 11 and from 13 to 15 December 1994, respectively;

(b) International Seminar on the City of Al-Quds Al-Sharif, convened by the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) and the League of Arab States (LAS) at Cairo from 12 to 14 March 1995;

(c) Commemoration of the fortieth anniversary of the Asia-Africa Conference, 24 April 1995, and Ministerial Meeting of the Coordinating Bureau of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, held at Bandung, Indonesia, from 25 to 27 April 1995;

(d) Eleventh Conference of Heads of State and Government of the Non-Aligned Countries, held at Cartagena de Indias, Colombia, from 14 to 20 October 1995.

3. Action taken by United Nations bodies, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and intergovernmental organizations

42. The Committee continued to follow with great interest the activities relating to the question of Palestine of United Nations bodies, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and intergovernmental organizations. The Committee noted in particular the support of the international community for the ongoing peace process, as well as the Declaration of Principles and the subsequent implementation agreements, as important steps leading towards a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement in accordance with United Nations resolutions. The Committee also expressed continued concern at the human rights situation in the occupied Palestinian territory, and noted the sense of urgency with which the international community addressed the need to provide assistance to the Palestinian people in the difficult transition period. The Committee took particular note of the following documents:

(a) Statement issued by EU on aid to the Palestinian people on 28 November 1994 (A/49/751, annex);

(b) Declaration and resolutions adopted by the Seventh Islamic Summit Conference of OIC held at Casablanca, Morocco, from 13 to 15 December 1994 (A/50/85-S/1995/152, annexes II-VII);

(c) Excerpts from the final report adopted by the Fifteenth Session of the Supreme Council of the Gulf Cooperation Council, held at Manamah, Bahrain, from 19 to 21 December 1994 (A/49/815-S/1994/1446, annex);

(d) Resolution 5451 adopted by LAS at a special session on 5 January 1995, concerning settlements in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and other Arab territories (A/49/823-S/1995/11, annex);

(e) Final communiqué and recommendations of the fifteenth session of the Al-Quds Committee of OIC, held at Ifrane, Morocco, on 16 and 17 January 1995 (A/50/82-S/1995/135, annex);

(f) Resolutions 1995/1 to 1995/6, on the question of Palestine, adopted by the Commission on Human Rights at its fifty-first session, held at Geneva from 30 January to 10 March 1995;

(g) Appeal by the World Health Organization (WHO) for the Palestinian health sector launched on 28 February 1995; 12/

(h) Resolution 39/3, on the integration of women in the Middle East peace process, adopted by the Commission on the Status of Women at its thirty-ninth session, held in New York from 15 March to 7 April 1995;

(i) Final communiqué of the International Seminar on the City of Al-Quds Al-Sharif, convened by OIC and LAS at Cairo from 12 to 14 March 1995;

(j) Communiqué adopted at the fifty-fourth session of the Ministerial Council of the Gulf Cooperation Council, held at Riyadh on 19 and 20 March 1995 (A/50/123-S/1995/228, annex);

(k) Communiqué adopted at the Ministerial Meeting of the Coordinating Bureau of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, held at Bandung, Indonesia, from 25 to 27 April 1995 (A/49/920-S/1995/489, annex I);

(l) Press release issued by the Ministerial Council of the Gulf Cooperation Council at its fifty-fifth session, held at Riyadh on 10 and 11 June 1995 (A/50/255-S/1995/504, annex);

(m) Statement adopted at the G-7 Summit, held at Halifax, Canada, from 15 to 17 June 1995 (A/50/254-S/1995/501, annex II);

(n) Resolutions CM/Res.1590 (LXII) and CM/Res.1591 (LXII), on the question of Palestine and the situation in the Middle East, adopted by the Council of Ministers of OAU at its sixty-second session, held at Addis Ababa from 21 to 23 June 1995;

(o) Resolutions 1995/45 and 1995/52, adopted by the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session, held from 26 June to 28 July 1995;

(p) Communiqué issued by the Ministerial Council of the Gulf Cooperation Council at its fifty-sixth session, held at Riyadh on 18 and 19 September 1995 (A/50/466-S/1995/817, annex);

(q) Final document adopted by the Conference of Heads of State and Government of the Non-Aligned Countries, held at Cartagena de Indias, Colombia, from 14 to 20 October 1995.

B. Action taken by the Committee and the Division
for Palestinian Rights in accordance with
General Assembly resolutions 49/62 A and B

43. In its programme of work for the year 1995, the Committee decided to continue organizing regional seminars and meetings of non-governmental organizations and sponsoring the preparation of studies and publications in accordance with existing mandates and budgetary provisions. The Committee, as in the past, decided to invite Palestinian and Israeli personalities to participate in all events organized under its auspices with a view to promoting a constructive debate, mutual understanding and a concrete and action-oriented analysis of the most important issues relating to the question of Palestine, the transition period and the peace process.

44. The Committee considered that the following priority tasks required immediate and sustained attention in its programme of work for 1995:

(a) Promoting support for the ongoing peace process and for the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements and subsequent implementation agreements, and following closely the developments and monitoring the situation on the ground, in order to promote the effective implementation of the agreements reached and the full realization of Palestinian rights;

(b) The mobilization and promotion of international assistance to the Palestinian people by the United Nations system as a whole, as well as by other donors, for immediate relief and for nation-building;

(c) Encouraging constructive consideration and debate of the major issues to be negotiated at a later stage with a view to promoting a final settlement based on international legitimacy in accordance with Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and other relevant United Nations resolutions.

1. Seminars

45. In the programme budget for the biennium 1994-1995, provision was made for the organization of regional seminars in Latin America and the Caribbean, Europe, North America, Asia and Africa in 1995. In establishing its programme of work for the year, the Committee decided not to hold the North American seminar and to devote some of the resulting savings to the North American non-governmental organization symposium. It also decided to devote the resources earmarked for a European seminar to a seminar on Palestinian administrative, managerial and financial needs and challenges. The Committee also initiated consultations with regard to identifying a venue for the holding of an Asian seminar and non-governmental organization symposium. This event and an event in Africa, however, could not be held during the year under review.

(a) Latin American and Caribbean Regional Seminar

46. The Latin American and Caribbean Regional Seminar was held at Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, from 20 to 23 March 1995, jointly with the Latin American and Caribbean NGO Symposium. The Committee greatly appreciated the decision of the Government of Brazil to provide the venue for the Seminar and Symposium.

47. The Committee was represented by a delegation comprising Mr. Kéba Birane Cissé (Senegal), Chairman of the Committee and head of delegation, who acted as Chairman of the meeting; Mr. İnal Batu (Turkey) and Mr. Anatoli Maximovich Zlenko (Ukraine), who acted as Vice-Chairmen; Mr. Joseph Cassar (Malta), Rapporteur of the Committee, who acted as Rapporteur of the meeting; and Mr. M. Nasser Al-Kidwa (Palestine).

48. The Seminar and NGO Symposium were attended by 17 panellists from Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as Palestinians and Israelis, representatives of 17 Governments, 3 United Nations organs and intergovernmental organizations and 16 non-governmental organizations. A number of media representatives and faculty and students of universities and institutes also participated in the meeting.

49. At the opening session, Mr. Adhemar Gabriel Bahadian, Chief of Staff of the Acting Minister for External Relations of Brazil, made a statement. A message from the Secretary-General of the United Nations was read by his representative, Mrs. Laura Reanda, Chief of the Division for Palestinian Rights. A statement was made by Mr. Kéba Birane Cissé, Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. Mr. Musa Oudeh, Special Envoy of Palestine, read a message from Mr. Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the PLO.

50. The theme of the Seminar and Symposium was "Supporting the Peace Process - The Contribution of Latin America and the Caribbean".

51. Three panels were organized. The topics addressed and the panellists were as follows:

Panel I. New developments since the signing of the Declaration of Principles

Mr. Nabil Amr, Member of the Central Council of the PLO, Editor of Al-Hayat Al-Jadidah

Mr. Ran Cohen, Member of the Knesset, Chairperson of the Meretz faction

Mr. Hanna Safieh, Professor at Federal University, Natal, Brazil, Member of the Palestine National Council

Mr. Uri Avnery, Israeli journalist, writer, peace activist

Statement by Mr. Saeb Erakat, Member of the Palestinian Authority (read by Mr. Ibrahim Al Zeben, Chargé d'affaires a.i., Delegation of Palestine to Brazil)

Panel II. The Palestinian self-government - challenges and prospects for nation-building

Mr. Sari Nusseibeh, Member of the Palestinian Economic Council for Development and Reconstruction, Chairperson, Palestine Consultancy Group

Mr. Luis Mesa Delmonte, Director, Centre for Africa and Middle East Studies, Cuba

Mr. Ivan Moreira, Member of the Chilean Parliament

Panel III. New opportunities for action by Latin American and Caribbean countries and organizations

(a) Economic assistance and cooperation: the new environment for Governments and private groups

Mr. Pedro Paulo Pinto Assumpção, Ambassador, Head, Middle East Department, Ministry of External Relations, Brazil

Mr. Gustavo Marcelo Marquez, businessman, Member of the Argentino-Arab Chamber of Commerce

Mr. Jaber Omar, Professor of Economics, University of Pelotas, Brazil

(b) Cooperation of non-governmental organizations with their Palestinian counterparts

Mr. Hussein Abdelkhalek, Representative of Palestine in Chile

Mr. Carlos Etchegoyhen, medical doctor and psychoanalyst, Uruguay, visiting scholar at the University of North Dakota

Mr. José Félix Ferreyra, Chairman, NGO Coordinating Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean, Argentina

(c) The contribution of diaspora Palestinians

Mr. José Elias, President, Federation of Palestinian Organizations in Chile; President, University of San Andrés, Chile

Mr. Juan Abugattas, Professor of Philosophy, University of San Marcos, Peru

Ms. Tilda Rabi, President, Federation of Palestinian Organizations in Argentina

(d) Culture and the media: new possibilities for cooperation

Mr. Juan José Salinas, journalist with the TELAM news agency, Argentina

52. In the conclusions and recommendations adopted by the Seminar and NGO Symposium, the participants welcomed the positive developments in the Middle East peace process and the agreements reached between Israel and the PLO since September 1993, as well as the consequent developments. They considered that the Declaration of Principles was a historical breakthrough that had required great courage by the parties concerned and that with perseverance and the strong support of the international community as a whole a just and lasting peace could be achieved. It was noted that the Latin American and Caribbean countries had a significant contribution to make in that regard.

53. Participants, however, expressed great concern at the repeated delays in the implementation of the agreements reached, which generated insecurity and could disrupt the peace process. They called on the Government of Israel to cease all settlement construction and expansion activities and land confiscation in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, to end the closure of the territory, to release all Palestinian prisoners and to move quickly towards the prompt implementation of the second phase of the Declaration of Principles, including the redeployment in the rest of the West Bank and Palestinian elections. The Government of Israel was also called upon to respect fully its obligations as the occupying Power under the Fourth Geneva Convention.

54. Condemnation was expressed of all acts of violence, of whatever form or whatever source, aimed at derailing the peace process, which had resulted in many casualties among both Palestinians and Israelis.

55. The meeting was apprised of the great challenges posed by the gradual transfer of responsibilities to the Palestinian Authority, aggravated by the present political and economic difficulties. It was stressed that international support for the Palestinian people and its leadership in all fields - political, economic and social - was of paramount importance for the attainment of peace in the region.

56. Participants appealed to the donor countries and the World Bank to accelerate the delivery of the aid promised as an essential stimulus for development and an ideal means of promoting peace. They commended the efforts of the Secretary-General and his Special Coordinator in the Occupied Territories, and welcomed the decision by the Secretary-General to transfer the headquarters of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) from Vienna to Gaza.

57. Participants encouraged those governments in Latin America which have not yet done so to establish official relations with the PLO and to extend

diplomatic recognition to its offices in their countries in order to streamline and facilitate the desired cooperation.

58. Participants suggested that the traditionally harmonious relations between the Palestinian and Jewish communities in Latin America could provide the foundation for joint activities aimed at improving mutual understanding and tackling difficult issues in a spirit of cooperation. They recommended that meetings of representatives of the two communities in Latin America and their non-governmental organizations be organized to consider common concerns, including sensitive issues such as the Palestinian right of return and requested the Committee to consider organizing such a meeting.

59. Non-governmental organizations in the Latin American and Caribbean region were called upon to define action strategies responsive to Palestinian needs and to use their positive influence on Governments in that regard. It was recommended that direct links should be forged between the Palestinian Authority and Latin American and Caribbean organizations in all fields of non-governmental organization competence, and that non-governmental organizations assist their Palestinian counterparts in their efforts to build a civil society.

60. Non-governmental organizations were called upon to disseminate reliable information on the realities of the Palestinian people and the status of the peace process, including through the Internet and through the establishment of a Latin American segment of a possible Middle East news agency, which should include participation by Palestinian and Israeli journalists.

61. The report of this event has been issued as a publication of the Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat.

(b) Seminar on Palestinian Administrative, Managerial and Financial Needs and Challenges

62. The Seminar was held at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris from 28 to 30 June 1995. The Committee expressed its appreciation to the Director-General of UNESCO for the facilities put at its disposal and for his cooperation in the holding of the Seminar.

63. The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People was represented by a delegation consisting of Mr. Kéba Birane Cissé (Senegal), Chairman; Mr. Ravan A. G. Farhadi (Afghanistan), Vice-Chairman; Mr. Joseph Cassar (Malta), Rapporteur; Mr. Alimamy Bangura (Sierra Leone); and Mr. M. Nasser Al-Kidwa (Palestine). The officers of the Committee served as officers of the Seminar in their respective capacities.

64. The Seminar was attended by 20 panellists and by representatives of 50 Governments, and 9 United Nations organs and 4 intergovernmental organizations.

65. The programme for the seminar began with a plenary session on "Palestinian administrative, managerial and financial needs and challenges". Statements were made by donor countries and other Governments, intergovernmental organizations and United Nations departments, bodies and agencies.

66. Subsequently, four round-table discussions, moderated by experts, were conducted as follows:

- (a) The Palestinian Authority - needs and challenges of administration: the needs of the public sector for reconstruction and development; enhancing the Palestinian Authority's institutional capability; building a legal framework; organization of the administration at the central and local levels; mobilizing resources effectively

Mr. Shibley Telhami, The Brookings Institution, Washington, D.C.
(Moderator)

Mr. Ibrahim Al Daghma, Chief, Legal Advice and Legislation Department,
Palestinian Authority

Mr. Samir Huleileh, Palestinian Economic Council for Development and
Reconstruction

Mr. Yair Hirschfeld, Director-General, Economic Cooperation Foundation,
Senior Lecturer, University of Haifa

Mr. Alfons Calderon Riera, Assistant Professor, Escuela Superior de
Administración y dirección de Empresas, Barcelona

Mr. Amin Baidoun, Director-General for International Cooperation,
Palestinian Authority

- (b) Laying the foundation for a public financial management: building budgeting, accounting and auditing; developing an efficient internal revenue system; building public financial investment system; building a social security system; and establishing conditions for transparency and accountability

Mr. Stephen B. Peterson, Research Associate, Harvard Institute for
International Development, Harvard University (Moderator)

Mr. Fouad H. Beseiso, Head, Palestinian Monetary Authority

Mr. Atef Alawneh, Deputy Head, Finance Department, Palestinian Authority

Mr. Stephen B. Peterson, Research Associate, Harvard Institute for
International Development, Harvard University

Ms. Muna H. Jawhary, economist-consultant, London/Jerusalem

Mr. Georges Capdeboscq, Counsellor, French National Audit Court, Paris

Mr. Gilles Johanet, Counsellor, French National Audit Court, Paris

Mr. Abdel Hamid Bouab, Officer-in-Charge, Public Finance and Enterprise
Management Branch, Department for Development Support and Management
Services, United Nations

- (c) Supporting the development of the Palestinian municipalities and public utilities: Improving public services and infrastructure: health, education, communication, energy, water, public transport; improving conditions for public service delivery

Mr. Francis Dubois (Moderator)

Mr. Mustafa Abdel Nabi Natshe, Mayor of Hebron

Mr. Ghassan El-Shakah, Mayor of Nablus

Mr. Hussein Al-A'raj, Deputy Head, Local Government Department, Palestinian Authority

Mr. Sameer A. Abu-Eisheh, Dean, Faculty of Engineering, Al-Najah University, Nablus

- (d) Human resources development and management – building institutional capacity: building public personnel system and structures (including the legal framework for public service); enhancing training capacities for all levels of administration; Promoting participation of women at all management levels

Mr. Robin Poppe, Programme Officer, National Capacity Building, ILO International Training Centre, Turin (Moderator)

Mr. Shibley Telhami, The Brookings Institution, Washington, D.C.

Mr. Bishara A. Bahbah, Associate Director, Institute for Social and Economic Policy in the Middle East, Harvard University

Mr. Musa D. Ghosheh, Head, Employee's Bureau, West Bank

Mr. Alain Claisse, Professor of Public Law, University of Paris

Mr. George Jadoun, Technical Programme Manager, Training Focal Point for Palestine, ILO International Training Centre, Turin

67. Participants in the seminar engaged in an analysis and discussion of the recent developments and the prospects for peace in the area, as well as of the current economic situation and the imperative necessity of its rapid amelioration in order to provide a solid foundation for peace efforts. The experts gave a serious analysis of current and future needs in the fields concerned and constructive proposals were made to meet the current situation and to promote sustainable development of the Palestinian economy during and after the transitional period. The final report of the Seminar was submitted to the President of the Economic and Social Council in a letter from the Chairman of the Committee for circulation to the members of the Council (A/50/278-E/1995/114). It will also be issued as a publication of the Division for Palestinian Rights.

2. Cooperation with non-governmental organizations

68. The Committee, in accordance with its mandate under General Assembly resolution 49/62 A, continued to cooperate and expand contacts with interested non-governmental organizations in all regions. During 1995, a Latin American and Caribbean NGO symposium was held jointly with the seminar, as well as an NGO Symposium for the North American region and a combined meeting for European and international non-governmental organizations. The Committee noted that non-governmental organizations had continued their efforts to provide assistance and support to the Palestinian people in view of the new situation following the Declaration of Principles and subsequent implementation agreements. The Committee affirmed the importance of the contribution by the non-governmental

organizations to the international efforts on behalf of the Palestinian people and considered that their support would continue to be essential during the transitional period.

(a) Latin American and Caribbean Regional NGO Symposium

69. The Latin American and Caribbean NGO Symposium on the question of Palestine was held at Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, from 20 to 23 March 1995, together with the Seminar (see paras. 46-61), and shared with it the main theme "Supporting the peace process - the contribution of Latin America and the Caribbean", the round-table discussions and the adoption of the final document.

70. In addition, two workshops were held specifically for non-governmental organizations on the following topics: "Mobilization of and networking by non-governmental organizations in Latin America and the Caribbean to promote assistance to the Palestinian people" and "non-governmental organization activities to mobilize public opinion for a just and lasting solution of the question of Palestine - review of actions taken since the first Latin American and Caribbean Symposium in 1990 and future activities". The Committee noted that the participating non-governmental organizations had taken steps to strengthen their regional coordination and had elected a new coordinating committee.

(b) North American Regional NGO Symposium

71. The twelfth United Nations North American NGO Symposium on the Question of Palestine was held at New York from 19 to 21 June 1995 in cooperation with the North American Coordinating Committee for Non-Governmental Organizations on the Question of Palestine and in accordance with the programme elaborated at the preparatory meeting for the United Nations International NGO Meeting/European NGO Symposium and the North American NGO Symposium on the Question of Palestine, held at New York from 27 to 28 February 1995.

72. The Committee was represented by a delegation consisting of Mr. Kéba Birane Cissé (Senegal), Chairman of the Committee and head of delegation; Mr. Bruno E. Rodriguez Parrilla (Cuba) and Mr. Ravan Farhadi (Afghanistan), Vice-Chairmen of the Committee; Mr. Joseph Cassar (Malta), Rapporteur of the Committee; and Mr. M. Nasser Al-Kidwa (Palestine).

73. The Symposium was attended by representatives of 73 non-governmental organizations, 23 of them as observers, 18 panellists and workshop leaders, 11 Governments and 2 intergovernmental organizations.

74. The theme of the Symposium was "The United Nations on its fiftieth anniversary and the question of Palestine". The panel topics and experts taking part in the plenary sessions were as follows:

(a) Challenges to peace: obstacles and opportunities

- (i) Jerusalem and settlements: Rev. Alex Awad, Lecturer, Bethlehem Bible College, and Pastor, East Jerusalem Baptist Church

Mr. Michael Warshawski, founder and Director, Alternative Information Center, Jerusalem

(ii) The situation of the refugees

Ms. Leila Zachariah, Executive Director, Najdeh Association, Beirut

(iii) Securing respect for international humanitarian law

Mr. Avigdor Feldman, Lawyer, human rights activist and one of the founders of B'Tselem;

(b) Working towards self-determination, promoting civil society

(i) Building civil society

Mr. Raja Sourani, lawyer and human rights activist

(ii) Advancing women's concerns

Ms. Suha Hindiyeh-Mani, Director and one of the founders of the Women's Studies Center, East Jerusalem

(iii) Promoting social development

Mr. Shafiq Masalha, clinical psychologist and Acting Director, Palestinian Counselling Center, East Jerusalem

(c) Continuing commitment of non-governmental organizations on the question of Palestine

Dr. Haider Abdel Shafi, President, Red Crescent Society

Mr. Larry Ekin, Chairman, North American Coordinating Committee for NGOs on the Question of Palestine

Ms. Maria Gazi, Vice-Chairman, European Coordinating Committee for NGOs on the Question of Palestine

75. The workshops addressed the following topics: refugees and the displaced; settlements; the status of Jerusalem; securing respect for international humanitarian law; Palestinian women mobilize; promoting civil society; development: putting people first; and labour in transition.

76. The Symposium held successful debates and discussions and offered an opportunity for the non-governmental organizations in North America to coordinate their endeavours and activities in order to assist the Palestinian people in various fields. The participating non-governmental organizations elected a new coordinating committee for the North American region to follow up on the decisions that were taken and to assure future cooperation with the Committee and the Division for Palestinian Rights. The report of the Symposium will be issued as a publication of the Division.

(c) European NGO Symposium and International NGO Meeting on the Question of Palestine

77. The twelfth United Nations International NGO Meeting and Ninth European NGO Symposium on the Question of Palestine were held as a combined event at the Vienna International Centre from 29 August to 1 September 1995.

78. The meeting was attended by 26 panellists and workshop leaders, and by the representatives of 51 non-governmental organizations, 21 of them as observers. It was also attended by representatives of 37 Governments, 10 United Nations agencies and bodies, 3 intergovernmental organizations, 5 non-governmental organization coordinating committees and a delegation from Palestine.

79. The Committee was represented by a delegation composed of Mr. Kéba Birane Cissé (Senegal), Chairman of the Committee and head of delegation; Mr. Ravan A. G. Farhadi (Afghanistan), Vice-Chairman; Mr. Joseph Cassar (Malta), Rapporteur of the Committee; Mr. Alyaksandr Sychou (Belarus); and Mr. M. Nasser Al-Kidwa (Palestine).

80. The programme for the meeting was formulated by the Committee in consultation with the members of the International Coordinating Committee for NGOs on the Question of Palestine (ICCP) and of the European Coordinating Committee for NGOs on the Question of Palestine (ECCP) at a preparatory meeting held in New York on 27 and 28 February 1995. The central theme of the combined meeting was "The fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations - Palestine, non-governmental organizations and the implementation of United Nations resolutions".

81. At the opening session, participants were welcomed on behalf of the Government of Austria by Mr. Wolfgang Schallenberg, Secretary-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. A message from Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, Secretary-General of the United Nations, was delivered by his representative, Mr. Giorgio Giacomelli, Under-Secretary-General and Director-General of the United Nations Office at Vienna. Mr. Cissé spoke in his capacity as Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. Mr. Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the PLO and Chairman of the Palestinian Authority, conveyed a message through his representative, Mr. Mohieddin Massoud. Statements were also made by Mr. Don Betz, Chairman of ICCP, and Ms. Maria Gazi, Vice-Chairman of ECCP.

82. The invited experts made presentations in five panels, which were followed by discussions. In the first panel, entitled "The United Nations at its fiftieth anniversary and the question of Palestine", presentations were made by Mr. Ilter Turkmen, Commissioner-General of UNRWA, and Mr. M. Nasser Al-Kidwa, Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations.

83. The second panel was entitled "The present political situation". Presentations were made by Mr. Victor Possouvalioug, Deputy Foreign Minister of the Russian Federation; Mr. Azimi Shuibi, Minister of Sports and Youth, Palestinian Authority; Mr. Abdulwahab Darawshe, Chairman of the Arab Democratic Party, Member of the Knesset; Mr. Haim Baram, journalist and founding member of the Israeli Council for Israeli-Palestinian Peace; and Mr. Taysir Arouri, Professor of Physics and Mathematics, Bir Zeit University and member of the Palestine National Council.

84. In the third panel, entitled "Elements of the final peace settlement, and obstacles to peace", presentations on various sub-topics were made as follows: Mr. Ibrahim Matar, Deputy Director, American Near East Refugee Aid (ANERA), spoke on the issue of Jerusalem and settlements; Mr. Elia Zureik, Professor of Sociology at Queen's College, Ontario, Canada and a member of the Palestinian delegation to the refugee working group of the multilateral peace talks, and Mr. Zakaria Abderahim, Director-General, Department for Returnee's Affairs, PLO, made presentations on the issues of refugees and the right of return; and Mr. Hashem Mahameed, Head of the Democratic Front for Peace and Equality and

Member of the Knesset, addressed the topic of Israel's violations of its commitments under the Declaration of Principles.

85. The fourth panel, entitled "Palestine update" consisted of briefings on social issues and living conditions facing the Palestinians on the ground. Mr. Taysir Arouri spoke on economic and social development issues. Dr. Imad Tarawiyeh, Ministry of Health, Palestinian Authority, addressed health-related questions. A presentation on education and children was made by Mr. George B. Sahhar, Director of Cultural Affairs, Ministry of Education, Palestinian Authority. Ms. Eileen Kuttub, Lecturer in Sociology and Anthropology and Coordinator, Women's Studies Programme, Bir Zeit University, spoke on women's issues.

86. The fifth panel considered the issue of "Building the NGO network - NGO strategies for action". Presentations in this regard were made by Mr. Fathi Darwish, Director in the Ministry of International Cooperation and Planning, Palestinian Authority; Ms. Emma Murphy, Lecturer in Middle Eastern Politics, University of Durham, United Kingdom; Mr. José Elias, Chairman, Federation of Palestinian Organizations in Chile, President, University of San Andrés; Mr. John Gee, Council for the Advancement of Arab-British Understanding; Mr. Don Betz, Chairman of ICCP; Ms. Maria Gazi, Vice-Chairman of ECCP; and Mr. Larry Ekin, Chairman of the North American Coordinating Committee for NGOs.

87. In addition to the panels, a number of workshops were held concurrently for participants interested in developing specific action-oriented proposals. The workshop topics were linked to those addressed in the panels. A demonstration in electronic skills was also organized.

88. Participating non-governmental organizations adopted a communiqué in which they welcomed the positive developments in the Middle East peace process as a result of the historic Declaration of Principles. They also noted with great concern the repeated delays in the implementation of the letter and spirit of the agreement, which posed a threat to the achievement of a just and lasting peace, and exhorted Israel to honour its commitments in a timely manner. They also reaffirmed that Israel, as the occupying Power, remained obligated to observe the Fourth Geneva Convention until the Palestinian people achieved full sovereignty.

89. The communiqué further stated that support for the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people in accordance with United Nations resolutions remained at the centre of non-governmental organization commitment. The Committee was called upon to convene a non-governmental organization meeting in Jerusalem or another location in the region in order to demonstrate solidarity with Palestinians on the ground.

90. Non-governmental organizations reaffirmed the fundamental importance of questions related to Jerusalem, settlements and the right of return for the attainment of a just and lasting peace. They expressed their opposition to Israeli actions designed to predetermine the final outcome of the talks, and called for concerted efforts by non-governmental organizations to publicize violations of Palestinian human rights and to lobby Governments regarding those concerns. Particular mention was made, in that regard, of the ongoing incarceration of political prisoners; the closure and intimidation of Palestinian institutions; the restrictions imposed on international and Palestinian non-governmental organizations aimed at disrupting their work; and the repeated closure of East Jerusalem. Israel was also urged to assure safe passage between Gaza and the West Bank for goods and people.

91. Further, the communiqué called on countries hosting Palestinian refugees to preserve and observe their rights, and called for greater non-governmental organization action on behalf of refugees, including by Palestinian grass-roots organizations.

92. Praising the efforts of local Palestinian non-governmental organizations, the communiqué stated that their strengthening would ensure the development of civil society and called for cooperation with the Palestinian Authority and for greater involvement of international non-governmental organizations. It also called for greater cooperation between Palestinian and Israeli non-governmental organizations.

93. Finally, the communiqué stressed the need to continue to develop the relationship of the non-governmental organization coordinating committees with the Committee and the Division for Palestinian Rights in order to achieve maximum effectiveness in assisting the Palestinian people.

94. The report of the meeting will be issued as a publication of the Division for Palestinian Rights.

3. Research, monitoring and publications

95. The Committee emphasized the essential contribution of the Division for Palestinian Rights as a centre for research, monitoring, the preparation of studies and the collection and dissemination of information on all issues related to the question of Palestine, and requested the Division to continue its programme of publications, in consultation with the Committee.

96. The Committee considered that the studies, bulletins, information notes, reports and other material published by the Division should focus on the priority issues to be addressed by the Committee in 1995 in order to enhance their usefulness at this important stage.

97. The Committee noted with appreciation that the Division for Palestinian Rights, in accordance with its mandate, continued to respond to information requests and to prepare and disseminate the following publications:

(a) Monthly bulletins covering action by the Committee, other United Nations organs, organizations and agencies, as well as intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations concerned with the question of Palestine;

(b) A monthly chronological review of events relating to the question of Palestine, as reflected in the Arabic, English and Hebrew media, for the use of the Committee;

(c) Reports of seminars and non-governmental organization meetings;

(d) Periodic compilations of statements, declarations, documents and other material generated by the peace process;

(e) A compilation of the resolutions and decisions of the General Assembly and the Security Council relating to the question of Palestine adopted in 1994;

(f) A special bulletin on the commemoration of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People in 1994.

98. The Committee also noted that the Division continued its programme of research and preparation of two studies (one on Jerusalem and the other on settlements) and information notes, in close cooperation with the Bureau of the Committee.

4. United Nations information system on the question of Palestine

99. The Committee noted that the Division, in cooperation with relevant technical services of the Secretariat, had advanced in the establishment of a United Nations computer-based information system on the question of Palestine (UNISPAL), as requested by the Committee and endorsed by the General Assembly. The Committee noted that the UNISPAL Bulletin Board Service had continued to provide access to United Nations resolutions on the question of Palestine and related issues and selected United Nations reports, bulletins and other documents to a number of users and that the Division had selected appropriate text-management software and had done further work in expanding its document collection and in designing the various databases that comprise UNISPAL. The Committee stressed the importance and usefulness of UNISPAL for the work of the Committee and the United Nations, as well as for other members of the international community, and called for intensified efforts to advance towards the full operation of the system and its further expansion as required.

5. International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People

100. The International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People was observed on 29 November 1994 at United Nations Headquarters in New York and at the United Nations Offices at Geneva and Vienna. The Committee noted with appreciation that the International Day had also been observed in 1994 in many other cities throughout the world. Details on the observance are contained in the special bulletin issued by the Division.

101. On the occasion of the observance of the Day an exhibit entitled "Images from Palestine" was provided by the Permanent Observer Mission of Palestine to the United Nations at Headquarters and presented under the auspices of the Committee.

VI. ACTION TAKEN BY THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INFORMATION IN
ACCORDANCE WITH GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 49/62 C

102. The Department of Public Information continued to provide press coverage, in English and French, of all meetings held at Headquarters of United Nations bodies dealing with the question of Palestine, including the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People; coverage in English and French of meetings, seminars and symposia of the Committee convened away from Headquarters, with the exception of a meeting in Rio de Janeiro where coverage was provided in English only. One press release in English and French was issued containing the text of a Secretary-General's statement relating to the question of Palestine, and five press releases were issued in English on the activities of UNRWA.

103. The Department cooperated at Headquarters with the Division for Palestinian Rights in media promotion and other arrangements for the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

104. The quarterly publication UN Chronicle continued its comprehensive coverage of Palestinian issues, including relevant General Assembly and Security Council actions as well as special meetings, symposia and seminars.

105. The Public Inquiries Unit of the Department responded to 323 requests for information concerning the question of Palestine and the Middle East issue between September 1994 and August 1995. During the same period, the Department's Group Programme Unit organized a total of seven briefings on the question of Palestine for various public groups visiting the United Nations. In addition, the subject was included in the presentation made to visitors taking guided tours, as appropriate.

106. The Department continued to distribute its publications, including Prerequisites for Peace in the Middle East: An Israeli-Palestinian Dialogue, based on the proceedings of the International Encounter for Journalists on the Question of Palestine, organized by the Department in cooperation with the Government of Denmark at Elsinore in June 1994. The Department also continued to distribute a "United Nations Focus" feature on the same topic.

107. From September 1994 to September 1995, the Department's Dissemination Unit distributed 63 titles on the Palestine issue to 226 recipients around the world, on Internet and other electronic networks. The materials consisted of statements and messages by the Secretary-General, press releases on encounters, seminars and symposia in Madrid, New York, Rio de Janeiro, and so on, and were disseminated in the English and French languages.

108. A 4½-minute video with the working title, "Palestine: Fifty Years On", was produced by the Media Division of the Department and distributed to all United Nations information centres and services and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) libraries. Additionally, several "UN in Action" pieces on topics such as water resource management, citrus processing and the Palestinian Police Force were videotaped during the fall.

109. The Radio Section covered various aspects of the question of Palestine and related items in news and current affairs radio programmes in official and non-official languages. Some of the topics included the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, the work of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, seminars and

symposia on the question of Palestine, and the work of the specialized agencies, for example, UNDP, UNRWA and WHO, relating to the Palestinian people. In addition, the Radio Section produced a number of feature programmes exclusively devoted to the question of Palestine, such as "Palestine/Israel: new possibilities for peace" (produced in Spanish and adapted into Portuguese); "Socio-economic Development of the Palestinian People" (produced in English and adapted into several languages); and "The Palestinian Question in the Middle East" (produced in French). All programmes were distributed world wide.

110. The Department's Video Section produced four "UN in Action"/CNN World Report segments on the following topics: the Palestinian Broadcasting Corporation in Jericho; Training of the Palestinian Police Force; Palestinian women set up business in the West Bank; and Agriculture in Jericho: a UNDP-assisted banana plantation.

111. On 8 December 1994, the NGO Section held a briefing for the non-governmental organization community entitled "Palestinian Economic Development: The role of the United Nations", featuring a presentation by Mr. Francis Dubois, Senior Programme Adviser, Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People, UNDP.

112. The global network of the United Nations information centres continued to disseminate information on the question of Palestine by reaching out to mass media, academics, non-governmental organizations and the general public. The centres produced or distributed newsletters, press releases and other information materials and regularly briefed media representatives. In observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, information centres were instrumental in widely disseminating and publicizing the Secretary-General's message in local newspapers. On that day, the Information Centre in Prague participated in a public meeting organized by the Czech Association for African and Arabic Friendship. The Information Centre in Rabat mounted a special exhibit. In 1995, the Information Centre in Madrid provided support services to the Department of Public Information's Seminar on Assistance to the Palestinian People in the Field of Media Development. Similarly, the Information Centre in Paris, at the request of the Division for Palestinian Rights, provided logistical assistance for the United Nations Seminar on Palestine in June 1995. In addition, the network of information centres continued to send relevant press clippings and other media feedback to Headquarters to keep senior officials of the Organization abreast of the prevailing public opinion.

113. In cooperation with UNESCO and with the support of the Institute for Cooperation with the Arab World of the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Department organized a Seminar on Assistance to the Palestinian People in the Field of Media Development in Madrid, from 29 to 31 March 1995. Twenty-eight Palestinian media practitioners participated, together with representatives of international media organizations, training institutions and foundations. The Seminar adopted recommendations aiming at strengthening Palestinian media capability.

114. From 7 October to 22 November 1995, the Department organized a training programme for a group of eight Palestinian media practitioners at Headquarters to strengthen the participants' professional capacity as information media personnel.

VII. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COMMITTEE

115. The year 1995 marked the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations. On that historic occasion, the leaders of the world solemnly reaffirmed the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and their commitment to them. They expressed their determination that the United Nations would work with renewed vigour and effectiveness in promoting peace, development, equality and justice and understanding among the peoples of the world. They also reaffirmed the inalienable right of self-determination of all peoples, taking into account the particular situation of peoples under colonial or other forms of alien domination or foreign occupation. The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, established 20 years ago to ensure that the Palestinian people would be able to attain these noble objectives, pledges to redouble its efforts in pursuit of this goal.

116. The signing of the Declaration of Principles in September 1993 by Israel and the PLO created a dramatic turning-point in the search for peace in the Middle East, leading to the emergence of a new reality on the ground, enabling the Palestinian people to take its first steps towards independence and opening new possibilities for cooperation among the peoples of the region. At the same time, the peace process remains fragile and fraught with dangers. The Committee is encouraged that during the past year the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations have proceeded despite repeated delays and acts of violence, which have caused many innocent victims on both sides and aroused the concern and condemnation of the international community. Welcoming the signing on 28 September 1995, in Washington, D.C., of the Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement on the West Bank and Gaza Strip, the Committee expresses its commitment to continue and intensify its support for the Palestinian people and its leadership during the transition process.

117. The Committee reaffirms that the United Nations has a permanent responsibility with respect to the question of Palestine until a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement is reached. The Committee reiterates that the involvement of the United Nations in the peace process, both as the guardian of international legitimacy and in the mobilization and provision of international assistance, is essential for the successful outcome of the peace efforts. As the organ of the General Assembly established to deal with the question of Palestine, the Committee believes that its own role continues to be useful and necessary during the transitional period and until a satisfactory final settlement is achieved.

118. The Committee reaffirms that such a settlement must be based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), the withdrawal of Israel from the Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and other Arab territories occupied since 1967, and the exercise by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights, in particular the right to self-determination. The Committee also believes that, during the interim period, Israel must recognize and respect its obligations as the occupying Power under the Fourth Geneva Convention. While remaining firm on this position of principle, the Committee has continued to make adjustments in its approach and programme of work in order to make a concrete contribution to promoting the implementation of the agreements reached and to mobilize international assistance to the Palestinian people. The Committee invites the General Assembly once again to recognize the importance of its role and to reconfirm its mandate with overwhelming support.

119. The Committee wishes to express its great appreciation to those States which have supported its work and have facilitated the organization of events held under the Committee's auspices by providing venues and participating in the debates. The Committee believes that, in view of the new situation and the responsive position of the Committee reflected in its programme of work, the time has come for all States to recognize the valuable contribution that the Committee can make as a forum for dialogue, analysis, exchange of expertise, mobilization of public opinion and action in support of the peace efforts and the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, as well as their socio-economic development. The Committee considers that a broadening of its membership to include countries that support its objectives but have not hitherto participated in its work would greatly enhance the contribution of the United Nations to promote peace at this important stage.

120. The Committee considers that its seminars on economic and social issues confronting the Palestinian people in the occupied territory have been particularly useful in bringing together experts in the relevant fields, including Palestinians and Israelis, as well as donor countries, United Nations departments, agencies and organizations, non-governmental organizations active in the field and others, and will continue its efforts in that regard. In view of the new situation on the ground created by the Declaration of Principles and subsequent implementation agreements, and mindful of the measures being taken by the Palestinian Authority to establish an effective administration, which require continued international support, the Committee is of the view that one of the events under its auspices should be held as soon as possible in the territory under the Palestinian Authority to address various aspects of the transition period.

121. The Committee also stresses the value of its role as a catalyst in bringing together and developing a network of non-governmental organizations interested in the question of Palestine and in promoting solidarity activities, as well as concrete assistance. The Committee intends to continue to promote the positive contribution of the non-governmental organization constituency to meet the humanitarian and development needs of the Palestinian people during the transitional period, in cooperation with the Palestinian Authority. Noting with appreciation the increasing interest and participation of Governments, in particular those of donor countries, and United Nations organizations and agencies in non-governmental organization events organized under its auspices, the Committee intends to continue its programme of meetings in the various regions in the coming year. The Committee will continue to seek to structure these meetings for maximum usefulness and to cooperate with coordinating committees for non-governmental organizations with a view to developing effective follow-up mechanisms and encouraging a wider and more active participation by non-governmental organizations, in particular those whose work encompasses humanitarian and development-oriented ends and programmes.

122. The Committee emphasizes the essential contribution of the Division for Palestinian Rights as a centre for research, monitoring, the preparation of studies and the collection and dissemination of information on all issues related to the question of Palestine. The Committee requests the Division to continue its programme of publications, in consultation with the Committee, and to pay particular attention to preparing studies or updating existing ones on the various issues that are subject to final status negotiations. The Committee notes with satisfaction the progress made in including in UNISPAL documentation on the relevant activities of the United Nations system and the non-governmental organization network, as well as other information material, including documents related to the peace process. Recalling that the Division was established at

the request of the General Assembly in 1978 and upgraded in 1982, and that its mandate has been reaffirmed and expanded in various resolutions since then, the Committee requests the Secretary-General to maintain the political structure and composition of the Division in accordance with those resolutions, and to continue to provide it with the necessary resources in order to carry out its tasks.

123. The Committee continues to consider that the Special Information Programme on the Question of Palestine of the Department of Public Information is very useful in raising the awareness of the international community concerning the complexities of the question and the situation in the Middle East in general. The Committee believes that the Programme is contributing effectively to an atmosphere conducive to dialogue and supportive of the peace process. The Programme should follow and reflect realities related to the new experiences of the Palestinian people, provide assistance in the field of Palestinian media development and continue to disseminate information about the just cause of the Palestinian people, in addition to continuing its support of dialogue in the effort to build peace.

124. The Committee will continue to strive to achieve maximum effectiveness in the implementation of its mandate and to adjust its work programme in the light of developments, in order to continue to contribute, to the extent possible, to the realization of the common United Nations objective of achieving a just and lasting solution of the question of Palestine.

Notes

1/ Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 47/1 of 22 September 1992, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) did not participate in the work of the Committee.

2/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-first Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/31/35).

3/ Ibid., Thirty-second Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/32/35); ibid., Thirty-third Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/33/35); ibid., Thirty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/34/35 and Corr.1); ibid., Thirty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/35/35); ibid., Thirty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/36/35); ibid., Thirty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/37/35 and Corr.1); ibid., Thirty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/38/35); ibid., Thirty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/39/35); ibid., Fortieth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/40/35); ibid., Forty-first Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/41/35); ibid., Forty-second Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/42/35); ibid., Forty-third Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/43/35); ibid., Forty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/44/35); ibid., Forty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/45/35); ibid., Forty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/46/35); ibid., Forty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/47/35); ibid., Forty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/48/35); and ibid., Forty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/49/35).

4/ A/AC.183/1995/CRP.1.

5/ The observers at the Committee meetings were as follows: Algeria, Bangladesh, Bulgaria, China, Ecuador, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Mauritania, Morocco, Nicaragua, Niger, Qatar, Sri Lanka, Syrian Arab Republic, United Arab Emirates, Viet Nam, the League of Arab States and the Organization of the Islamic Conference. Palestine, represented by the PLO, as the representative of the Palestinian people, was also an observer.

6/ The membership of the Working Group was as follows: Afghanistan, Belarus, Cuba, Guinea, Guyana, India, Malta, Pakistan, Senegal, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine, and Palestine, represented by the PLO, as the representative of the people directly concerned.

7/ See S/1995/151.

8/ See S/PV.3505 (resumption).

9/ S/1995/366.

10/ S/1995/367.

11/ S/1995/394.

12/ WHO/16.



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REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE EXERCISE OF THE
INALIENABLE RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE*

* The present document is a mimeographed version of the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, which will be issued in final form as Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-first Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/51/35).

CONTENTS

	<u>Paragraphs</u>	<u>Page</u>
LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL		4
I. INTRODUCTION	1 - 9	5
II. MANDATE OF THE COMMITTEE	10 - 13	7
III. ORGANIZATION OF WORK	14 - 19	9
A. Election of officers	14 - 15	9
B. Participation in the work of the Committee	16 - 18	9
C. Re-establishment of the Working Group	19	9
IV. REVIEW OF THE SITUATION RELATING TO THE QUESTION OF PALESTINE	20 - 34	10
V. ACTION TAKEN BY THE COMMITTEE	35 - 88	14
A. Action taken in accordance with General Assembly resolution 50/84 A	35 - 52	14
1. Reaction to developments affecting the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people .	35 - 49	14
2. Attendance at international conferences and meetings	50 - 51	16
3. Action taken by United Nations bodies, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and intergovernmental organizations	52	17
B. Action taken by the Committee and the Division for Palestinian Rights in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 50/84 A and B	53 - 56	18
1. Seminars and NGO meetings.....	57 - 81	19
2. Research, monitoring and publications	82 - 85	23
3. United Nations information system on the question of Palestine	86	24
4. International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People	87 - 88	25
VI. ACTION TAKEN BY THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INFORMATION IN ACCORDANCE WITH GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 50/84 C	89 - 132	26
VII. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COMMITTEE	133 - 145	32

CONTENTS (continued)

Page

Annexes

I.	United Nations Seminar on Assistance to the Palestinian people, held at Cairo from 21 to 23 May 1996	36
II.	United Nations North American NGO Symposium on the Question of Palestine, held in New York from 24 to 26 June 1996	38
III.	United Nations European NGO Symposium and International NGO Meeting on the Question of Palestine, held at Geneva from 2 to 4 September 1996	39

LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

15 November 1996

Sir,

I have the honour to enclose herewith the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for submission to the General Assembly in accordance with paragraph 5 of its resolution 50/84 A of 15 December 1995.

Accept, Sir, the assurances of my highest consideration.

(Signed) Ibra Deguène KA
Chairman of the Committee on the
Exercise of the Inalienable Rights
of the Palestinian People

His Excellency
Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali
Secretary-General of the United Nations

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People was established by the General Assembly in its resolution 3376 (XXX) of 10 November 1975, in which the Assembly requested the Committee to consider and recommend to it a programme designed to enable the Palestinian people to exercise its inalienable rights as recognized by the Assembly in resolution 3236 (XXIX) of 22 November 1974. During the reporting period the Committee continued to be composed of 23 Member States, as follows: Afghanistan, Belarus, Cuba, Cyprus, Guinea, Guyana, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mali, Malta, Nigeria, Pakistan, Romania, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine and Yugoslavia.¹

2. The recommendations made by the Committee in its first report to the General Assembly² were endorsed by the Assembly in resolution 31/20 of 24 November 1976 as a basis for the solution of the question of Palestine. In its subsequent reports³ the Committee has continued to stress that a comprehensive, just and lasting solution of the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, must be based on the relevant United Nations resolutions and the following essential principles: the withdrawal of Israel from the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, and from the other occupied Arab territories; respect for the right of all States in the region to live in peace within secure and internationally recognized boundaries; and the recognition and exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, primarily the right to self-determination.

3. The Committee has welcomed the signing in September 1993 of the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements by Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) (A/48/486-S/26560, annex), and subsequent implementation agreements, in particular the Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip of 28 September 1995, signed in Washington, D.C., which provided for phased withdrawal of Israeli forces and the establishment of the Palestinian Authority, as important steps towards the achievement of a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). The Committee strongly believes that the settlement of the question of Palestine can only be achieved through the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including the right to self-determination. Each year, the General Assembly has endorsed the Committee's recommendations with overwhelming support and has renewed its mandate and expanded it, as necessary.

4. During the year under review, the Committee welcomed, as important further steps in this process, the redeployment of Israeli forces from areas of the West Bank, the successful holding on 20 January 1996 of the first Palestinian elections to the Legislative Council and the Presidency of the Palestinian Authority, as well as the beginning on 5 May of the negotiations on the permanent status of the Palestinian territory. Notwithstanding these positive developments, the Committee was greatly concerned at the recrudescence of tensions in the region, as a result of acts of violence inside Israel aimed at jeopardizing the peace process, as well as the massive bombardment of Lebanon by Israeli forces, and the prolonged closure of the occupied territory, including Jerusalem, which had devastating consequences for the Palestinian economy.

5. The Committee expressed apprehension that the policy guidelines adopted by the new Government of Israel and statements made by the Prime Minister appeared

to reflect a departure from the basic terms of reference of the peace process. In that regard, the Committee was alarmed by the resumption of the settlement activities, land confiscations and closures of the Palestinian territory, as well as the position taken by the new Government on the issue of Jerusalem. The Committee emphasized that the transitional period had reached a crucial stage, which required the full and effective implementation of the agreements reached and a speedy resumption of substantive negotiations on the basis of agreed principles, as well as confidence-building measures.

6. The Committee expressed its great concern at the violations by the Government of Israel of the agreements already reached, including the delay in the redeployment of Israeli troops from Hebron, its decision to open a new entrance to the archaeological tunnel along the Western Wall of Haram al-Sharif in occupied East Jerusalem, which resulted in violent confrontations and deaths and injuries of many Palestinian civilians, as well as casualties among Palestinian police and Israeli military. The Committee believed that, if not promptly contained, these developments could lead to a greater tension on the ground that would seriously endanger the peace process. In this connection, it welcomed the efforts aimed at resolving the situation and resuming the negotiations between the parties. The Committee also believes that the Israeli-Palestinian agreements should be implemented in full and on time, beginning with the withdrawal of Israeli troops from Hebron and the lifting of closures of the Palestinian territory.

7. The Committee affirmed once again the permanent responsibility of the United Nations with respect to the question of Palestine until it is resolved in all its aspects. It emphasized the need for the full engagement of the United Nations in the peace process and in the process of building the Palestinian self-government institutions, as well as in providing varied assistance to the Palestinian people in all needed fields.

8. Expressing concern at the continued deterioration of the Palestinian economy and the problems of poverty, unemployment and lack of adequate infrastructure faced by the Palestinian Authority, the Committee urged Member States to expedite the provision of economic, technical and development assistance to the Palestinian people in order to help build solid foundations for peace.

9. The Committee firmly believes that, as the organ of the General Assembly dealing with the question of Palestine, it can make a valuable and positive contribution to United Nations endeavours during the transitional period by continuing to promote dialogue and to educate and mobilize international opinion and action for the successful outcome of the agreements reached by the parties and in solidarity with the Palestinian people until a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement is achieved, in accordance with international legitimacy. The Committee has continued to adjust its work programme in order to enhance its contribution, in view of these priorities and keeping in mind the evolving realities on the ground.

II. MANDATE OF THE COMMITTEE

10. The mandate of the Committee for the year 1996 is contained in paragraphs 2 to 6 of General Assembly resolution 50/84 A of 15 December 1995, in which the Assembly:

(a) Considered that the Committee could continue to make a valuable and positive contribution to international efforts to promote the effective implementation of the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements and to mobilize international support for and assistance to the Palestinian people during the transitional period; endorsed the recommendations of the Committee; and requested it to continue to keep under review the situation relating to the question of Palestine and to report and make suggestions to the Assembly or the Security Council, as appropriate;

(b) Authorized the Committee to continue to exert all efforts to promote the exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, to make such adjustments in its approved programme of work as it might consider appropriate and necessary in the light of developments, to give special emphasis to the need to mobilize support and assistance for the Palestinian people and to report thereon to the Assembly at its fifty-first session and thereafter;

(c) Also requested the Committee to continue to extend its cooperation to non-governmental organizations in their contribution towards heightening international awareness of the facts relating to the question of Palestine and promoting support and assistance to meet the needs of the Palestinian people, and to take the necessary steps to involve additional non-governmental organizations in its work.

11. In its resolution 50/84 B, also of 15 December 1995, the General Assembly considered that the Division for Palestinian Rights continued to make a useful and constructive contribution through the organization of seminars and meetings of non-governmental organizations, as well as through its research and monitoring activities, and the collection and dissemination of information in printed and electronic form on all issues pertaining to the question of Palestine. The Assembly requested the Secretary-General to continue to provide the Division with the necessary resources, including for the further development of the United Nations information system on the question of Palestine, and to ensure that it continued to discharge the tasks detailed in the pertinent resolutions of the Assembly, in consultation with the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and under its guidance.

12. In its resolution 50/84 C of 15 December 1995, the General Assembly requested the Department of Public Information, in full cooperation and coordination with the Committee, to continue, with the necessary flexibility as might be required by developments affecting the question of Palestine, its special information programme on the question of Palestine for the biennium 1996-1997, with particular emphasis on public opinion in Europe and North America.

13. In carrying out its programme of work, the Committee also took into account General Assembly resolution 50/84 D, in which the Assembly reaffirmed the necessity of achieving a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, in all its aspects; expressed its full support for the ongoing peace process, which began at Madrid, and the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements, as well as

subsequent implementation agreements, and expressed the hope that the process would lead to the establishment of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East; called for the timely and scrupulous implementation of the agreements reached between the parties towards the negotiation of the final settlement, which began on 5 May 1996; urged Member States to expedite the provision of economic and technical assistance to the Palestinian people during that critical period; and emphasized the importance for the United Nations to play a more active and expanded role in the current peace process and in the implementation of the Declaration of Principles.

III. ORGANIZATION OF WORK

A. Election of officers

14. At its 221st meeting, on 7 May 1996, the Committee elected Mr. Ibra Deguène Ka (Senegal) as Chairman, replacing Mr. Kéba Birane Cissé (Senegal), former Chairman of the Committee who had been assigned by his Government to another post, re-elected Mr. Ravan A. G. Farhadi (Afghanistan) and Mr. Bruno Eduardo Rodríguez Parrilla (Cuba) as Vice-Chairmen and Mr. Joseph Cassar (Malta) as Rapporteur.

15. At the same meeting, the Committee adopted its programme of work for 1996⁴ in implementation of its mandate.

B. Participation in the work of the Committee

16. As in previous years, the Committee reconfirmed that all States Members and Permanent Observers to the United Nations desiring to participate in the work of the Committee as observers were welcome to do so. Accordingly, in a letter dated 20 May 1996, the Chairman of the Committee informed the Secretary-General, who subsequently transmitted the letter, on 22 May 1996, to the States Members of the United Nations and members of the specialized agencies, and to intergovernmental organizations. In accordance with established practice, the Committee also invited Palestine, represented by the PLO, to participate in the work of the Committee as an observer, to attend all its meetings and to make observations and proposals for consideration by the Committee.

17. On 20 August 1996, the Government of South Africa, in a note verbale addressed to the Chairman of the Committee, informed him of its decision to participate in the work of the Committee as an observer. The Committee welcomed the decision of the Government of South Africa and approved the request at its 225th meeting, on 15 November 1996.

18. In 1996, the Committee again welcomed as observers all the States and organizations that had participated in its work in the preceding year.⁵

C. Re-establishment of the Working Group

19. At its 221st meeting, on 7 May 1996, the Committee re-established its Working Group in order to assist in the preparation and expedition of the work of the Committee, on the understanding that any Committee member or observer could participate in its deliberations.⁶ The Working Group was constituted as before under the chairmanship of Mr. Joseph Cassar (Malta), with Mr. Syed Akbaruddin (India) as Vice-Chairman.

IV. REVIEW OF THE SITUATION RELATING TO THE QUESTION OF PALESTINE

20. In pursuance of its mandate, the Committee continued to keep under review the situation relating to the question of Palestine and to exert all efforts to promote the exercise by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights. The Committee also continued to contribute to international efforts to promote the effective implementation of the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements and the Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip of 28 September 1995, as well as to mobilize international support for and assistance to the Palestinian people.

21. The Committee continued to monitor the situation in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and the developments in the peace process on an ongoing basis through the media, the reports of United Nations organs and agencies, as well as information provided by non-governmental organizations, individual experts and others who participated in meetings held under the auspices of the Committee.

22. The Committee welcomed the fact that, in accordance with the agreements, Israel had redeployed its military forces from six major West Bank towns and over 450 villages, and that powers and responsibilities in the administrative and civilian field, as well as in the area of security, had been transferred to the Palestinian Authority. The Committee noted with satisfaction the continued strengthening of the institutional capacity of the Authority. It also welcomed the successful holding of the first Palestinian elections, on 20 January, to the 87-member legislative Council and to the Presidency of the Palestinian Authority, and congratulated President Yasser Arafat on that historic event. The Council was subsequently inaugurated on 7 March 1996. On 9 May, President Arafat announced the appointment of a 21-member Executive Authority of the Palestinian Council. The Committee was also pleased to note that, for the first time, the Palestine National Council had been able to hold its meeting in Gaza, from 22 to 25 April, and had decided to abrogate articles of the Palestine National Charter that were contrary to the agreements reached between Israel and the PLO. The Committee also noted the start, in early May, of the permanent status negotiations between Israel and the PLO, in accordance with the timetable contained in the Declaration of Principles of September 1993. The negotiations were adjourned after a number of procedural decisions had been taken.

23. The Committee also noted with grave concern the exacerbation of the situation on the ground as a result of Israeli security measures in the wake of suicide attacks against Israeli civilians in February and March. The prolonged and at times complete closure of the Gaza Strip, the West Bank and East Jerusalem in particular further stifled the Palestinian economy and caused immense suffering and hardship to the Palestinian people.

24. Of particular concern were the guidelines adopted by the new Government of Israel and statements made by the Prime Minister concerning the basis of the peace process, including the implementation of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and the principle of land for peace, as well as issues related to the final settlement, in particular Jerusalem, settlements, the return of refugees and Palestinian sovereignty, which appeared to depart from the agreed principles and to link implementation to extraneous issues. The redeployment of Israeli troops from Hebron, which was to have taken place in March but was delayed until after the Israeli elections, was further postponed, encouraging provocations by settlers and greatly aggravating tension in the

town. The continued lack of safe passage between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip infringed on the status and integrity of the Palestinian territory as a single territorial unit, stipulated in the agreements, hampered the Palestinian Authority in the exercise of its responsibilities and further exacerbated the serious economic situation. The Committee was also concerned at the interference by Israel with activities of the Palestinian Council members representing the Jerusalem district. The Committee also noted with concern that further redeployments of Israeli troops, which were due to take place beginning six months after the inauguration of the Council, had not begun on 7 September in accordance with the agreed timetable.

25. The Committee also noted that although a number of prisoners had been released, some 3,100 Palestinians still remained in Israeli prisons, and that their relatives, and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), had experienced serious difficulties in visiting them owing to the prolonged closure of the occupied territory. The Committee recalled that the agreements provided for the phased release of Palestinian prisoners as an important confidence-building measure, to establish a solid basis of mutual trust and good faith between the two sides, and called upon Israel to release the prisoners in accordance with the agreements. The Committee further reaffirmed that the holding of prisoners in the territory of the occupying Power was a violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention and called upon Israel to respect its obligations under the Convention.

26. The imposition on 25 February of the closure of areas under Palestinian jurisdiction in effect fragmented the territory into many small enclaves isolated from each other and from the outside world. It was reported that the closure, the strictest ever since the beginning of occupation in 1967, continued as of September 1996, without any prospect of its being lifted in the near future, and that the measures periodically announced by Israel to ease the closure were insufficient to restore the situation. The Gaza Strip, in particular, experienced severe restrictions and even a prolonged total ban on the traffic of persons and goods, and limitations on access to the sea for fishing. While the situation in Gaza was reportedly more severe, the local economy in both the West Bank and the Gaza Strip was seriously disrupted as agricultural production could not be exported and raw materials needed for industries and public works projects could not be imported. Some 70,000 workers dependent on employment in Israel for their livelihood were being prevented from travelling to work. Education was also affected, as teachers and students could not move between areas and many schools and universities had been shut down. It was also reported that 1,200 Gazan students who attended educational institutions in the West Bank had been ordered home in March and had not been able to return. The closure also caused a deterioration in the health situation, particularly in Gaza, as provision of foodstuffs and medical supplies was restricted and many persons in need of urgent medical treatment unavailable locally were being denied permits to travel to Israel or the West Bank. The Committee further noted with the greatest concern that staff of international non-governmental organizations and of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) had experienced restrictions in their freedom of movement and that their humanitarian work had been disrupted at a time of great crisis.

27. The Committee praised the Secretary-General and his Special Coordinator in the Occupied Territories, and the United Nations system as a whole, for their rapid response to the emergency situation and the efforts to promote an easing of the closure and the creation of local employment, as well as for the continuing programme of assistance for the development of the Palestinian

territory despite the many difficulties on the ground. However, the Committee was gravely concerned to note, in the Secretary-General's report, projections that the closure would cost the Palestinian economy some \$800 million by the end of 1996 and result in average unemployment of over 30 per cent (over 50 per cent in Gaza). The Committee expressed the view that the drastic closure amounted to collective punishment of the 2.5 million Palestinians living in the occupied territory, in contravention of the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention, and could not in any way be justified by Israel's security needs, as it aggravated the economic hardships and insecurity of Palestinians, jeopardized assistance projects by the international community and thus undermined the achievements of the peace process, increasing tension and instability in the area. The Committee called on the international community, and in particular the donor countries, to continue to spare no effort in the pursuit of economic and social development and the improvement of the living conditions of Palestinians as the indispensable underpinning for peace.

28. The Committee was gravely concerned at the negative implications of the prolonged closure for the future of Jerusalem, which is to be negotiated as part of the final settlement as agreed in the Declaration of Principles of September 1993. The Committee noted that the closure had practically cut off Palestinian access to East Jerusalem, thus depriving Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank of their most important religious, cultural and social centre, isolating Palestinian Jerusalemites from their natural hinterland and stifling the economy of East Jerusalem. The Committee also noted with great concern that the Israeli Government had intensified its efforts against Palestinian institutions in East Jerusalem, in disregard of the letter from Prime Minister Shimon Peres to the late Foreign Minister of Norway Johan Jørgen Holst of 11 October 1993. A number of measures were also being taken aimed at withdrawing residency status from Palestinians living in Jerusalem. The Committee expressed alarm at the demolition, in August, in the Old City of a building belonging to the Burj al-Laqlaq Society, which provides services to Palestinian children, including the physically handicapped. The Committee considered that these measures were in violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention, which is applicable to all the territories occupied by Israel since 1967, including Jerusalem. They were also a violation of various resolutions of the Security Council, the General Assembly and other organs of the United Nations, which prohibit any attempts to alter the character, demographic composition and status of Jerusalem.

29. The Committee welcomed the relocation of the headquarters of UNRWA from Vienna to Gaza City. The Committee took note of the signing, on 5 July 1996, of the headquarters agreement between UNRWA and the Palestinian Authority. At the same time, it expressed concern at the financial constraints of the Agency and hoped that outstanding pledges and voluntary funds would be forthcoming so that the Agency could continue to provide its vital services to the Palestinian refugees.

30. The Committee further expressed grave concern at policy statements and decisions by the Israeli Government portending the renewed expansion of land confiscation and settlement construction in the Palestinian territory occupied by Israel since 1967, including Jerusalem. The Committee noted reports that, at the end of July, Israel's National Infrastructures Minister had announced the resumption of plans to build two highways through the West Bank to connect Jewish settlements with Israel. It was also reported that, on 2 August, the Israeli Cabinet had decided to lift the restrictions on construction of settlements in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip imposed by the previous Government in 1993 and to streamline approval procedures by placing them

directly under the responsibility of the Defence Minister. Subsequently, it was reported that the Government had pledged \$5 million in aid to settlers and, on 19 September, the Israeli authorities approved plans to build some 4,000 housing units in the Jewish settlements in the West Bank. The Committee noted reports that, despite restrictions under the previous Government, the number of settlers in the West Bank and Gaza had already increased by 45 per cent (from 100,000 to 145,000, excluding settlers in the area of East Jerusalem) in the past four years and it considered that the policy and practice of settlement was one of the gravest threats facing the Palestinian people and the peace process itself. The Committee noted that those measures were contrary to the Fourth Geneva Convention and to the provisions in the agreements, which stipulate that the integrity and status of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip would be preserved during the transitional period, pending the outcome of the permanent status negotiations. Noting the great international concern over this issue, the Committee called on all Governments, the United Nations system and the international community as a whole, including non-governmental organizations, to intensify their efforts against the settlements policy and for the protection of Jerusalem.

31. In a press release issued on 10 September 1996,⁷ the Bureau of the Committee expressed its satisfaction at the resumption, on 4 September, at Beit Hanoun, Gaza Strip, of the Israeli-Palestinian peace negotiations. The Bureau welcomed the meeting between the President of the Palestinian Authority, Yasser Arafat, and the Prime Minister of Israel, Benjamin Netanyahu, as an important step towards the full implementation of the agreements already reached between the two sides. The Bureau expressed the hope that the meeting would clear the way for the continuation of substantive discussions on matters pertaining to the permanent status.

32. The Committee expressed its concern at the continued lack of respect by the Israeli side for the provisions of the Israeli-Palestinian agreements reached so far. Of special concern to the Committee in the recent months remained the issue of delays in the redeployment of Israeli forces from the town of Hebron in violation of the agreements.

33. Further, on 23 September 1996, the Committee noted with alarm that the Israeli authorities, in violation of Israel's obligations under international law and the relevant Security Council resolutions, had opened an entrance to a tunnel in the vicinity of Haram al-Sharif in occupied East Jerusalem, as a result endangering the security and integrity of the Al-Aqsa Mosque and the foundations of the Islamic structures existing above the tunnel. In that connection, the Committee expressed grave concern at the escalation of violence resulting in deaths and injuries of over 50 Palestinian civilians and casualties among Palestinian police and Israeli military.

34. The Committee welcomed the efforts undertaken to resolve the situation and resume the peace process. It also took note of the Middle East Summit, held at the invitation of the President of the United States of America, which included the participation of King Hussein of Jordan, the Prime Minister of Israel and the President of the Palestinian Authority in Washington, D.C., on 1 and 2 October 1996 and the parties' determination to renew and intensify negotiations on how to carry out the provisions of the peace agreements already reached between them. In that regard, the Committee reiterated its strong support for the peace process and its determination to spare no effort in promoting the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including the right to self-determination and statehood.

V. ACTION TAKEN BY THE COMMITTEE

A. Action taken in accordance with General Assembly resolution 50/84 A

1. Reaction to developments affecting the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people

(a) Communication to the Secretary-General and the President of the General Assembly

35. In a letter dated 26 September 1996 (A/51/418-S/1996/795), the Chairman of the Committee expressed the greatest anxiety at the escalation of violence in the occupied Palestinian territory following Israel's decision to open a new entrance to the archaeological tunnel in East Jerusalem that runs under Palestinian property along the Western Wall of the Haram al-Sharif, the third largest site of Islam.

36. The Chairman stated that these tragic developments follow repeated warnings about the devastating consequences for Palestinian hopes and living conditions of the delayed implementation by Israel of the agreements already reached, its prolonged closure of the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, the resumption of land confiscation and settlement, and actions against Palestinian property and institutions in Jerusalem. The Committee believed that current events demonstrated the fragility of the peace process and called on Israel urgently to reverse its measures, to promote reconciliation with the Palestinian people and to resume substantive negotiations towards a just final settlement in accordance with international legitimacy.

(b) Action taken within the Security Council

37. At the request of the Permanent Representative of the United Arab Emirates, in his capacity as Chairman of the Arab Group for the month of April 1996, dated 10 April 1996,⁸ an urgent meeting of the Security Council was held on 15 April 1996, to consider the serious situation in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem.

38. The Acting Chairman of the Committee participated in the debate on this issue on 15 April 1996. In his statement on behalf of the Committee,⁹ he stated that the decision by the Israeli Government regarding the blockade and closure of Israeli borders with the Palestinian territory had led to economic hardships and aggravation of tensions in the area and was of great concern to the Committee. The action had made life for the people of the Palestinian territory extremely difficult and that situation might increase difficulties in relations between Israel and the Palestinian Authority.

39. The Israeli policy, he added, had resulted in rapidly escalating hardships for the entire Palestinian population. Uncertain food supplies and massive unemployment had reached crisis levels. Patients and medical staff alike were unable to travel from one area of the West Bank to another to reach hospitals and clinics, even in emergency situations. Education, agriculture and business activity had been severely disrupted. International non-governmental organization staff, including foreign nationals, had been prohibited from moving between population areas in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The Committee believed that those measures violated the relevant provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949, which was applicable to all the territories occupied

by Israel in 1967, including Jerusalem, as well as the relevant Security Council and General Assembly resolutions. The policy of Israel contradicted the concept of peacemaking on the basis of the agreements reached between the two parties. Responses to acts of violence committed by some elements should not be directed at the Palestinian people as a whole and should not hinder the peace process.

40. On behalf of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, he called upon the Security Council and the co-sponsors of the peace process to use their strong influence to persuade Israel to end its unjust policy of closure of Israeli borders with the Palestinian territory. The international community must also persuade those parties to proceed rapidly with the peace process as the only way that a lasting peace could be achieved in the region. The Committee was also extremely worried about the negative impact on all Palestinians of the recent armed conflicts and of Israeli shelling and air raids in south Lebanon and in the suburbs of Beirut.

41. The Security Council concluded its general debate on 15 April 1996, without deciding on any specific measures with respect to the item under consideration.

42. Noting a procedural decision taken by the Security Council to simplify the list of items of which it is seized, the Chairman of the Committee, in a letter dated 16 August 1996,¹⁰ conveyed the Committee's objection to the decision to delete from the list items related to the exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, the Palestine question and the Middle East problem. The Committee believed that pending a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict in the Middle East, the core of which is the question of Palestine, in accordance with international legitimacy, those items should remain on the list of matters of which the Council is seized as they continue to engage its responsibility with regard to the maintenance of international peace and security.

43. At the request of the Permanent Representative of Saudi Arabia, in his capacity as the Chairman of the Arab Group for the month of September 1996,¹¹ as well as in response to a letter by the Permanent Representative of Egypt,¹² supporting the request for a meeting of the Security Council concerning recent developments in the occupied Arab territories and the need to take the necessary measures, including the closing of an entrance to the tunnel extending under the Western Wall of the Al-Aqsa Mosque in occupied East Jerusalem, the Council met on 27 and 28 September 1996.

44. The Chairman of the Committee took part in the debate and stated that the decision recently taken by the Israeli Government to open a tunnel in the Old City of Jerusalem - the holiest of sites - following the closure of the Palestinian territory for several months, the confiscation of Palestinian lands to build settlements or roads around areas inhabited by Palestinians and measures of intimidation taken against the Palestinian civilian population showed that Israel wished to stifle the occupied territory economically and to deny the Palestinian people its legitimate rights to self-determination and to establish an independent State, in keeping with international legitimacy and the relevant resolutions adopted by the Security Council.

45. It is therefore important for the international community to exert pressure and take the measures necessary so that the inhumane closure of the Palestinian territory and the restrictions on the movements of Palestinians imposed by the occupying authorities are lifted; that the redeployment of Israeli troops from the town of Hebron in the West Bank should take place as called for in the interim peace accords signed by the former Israeli Government; that construction

and expansion of settlements should cease; that the tunnel should be closed once and for all; and that, finally, the protagonists - in order not to prove right the enemies of peace - should resume the peace process that had been under way since 1993.

46. Given the Israeli attitude since June 1996, the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People continues to be very much concerned by the situation created by Israel for reasons of its security and to the detriment of an entire people whose legitimate aspiration is to live in peace in its homeland.

47. The Chairman took the opportunity to make an urgent appeal to the Israeli authorities to reconsider their present policy of scorn and confrontation, and to commit themselves resolutely, as the international community has constantly called for, to recreate the conditions for a climate of confidence and hope by putting the peace process back on the right track, that of a peace that is profitable to both the Palestinian and Israeli peoples.

48. Fifty speakers, mostly Foreign Ministers, addressed the Security Council and at the end of the debate the Council adopted resolution 1073 (1996) on 28 September 1996, with 14 votes in favour, none against and 1 abstention.

49. In the resolution, the Security Council called for the immediate cessation and reversal of all acts that had resulted in the aggravation of the situation and had had negative implications for the Middle East peace process; for the safety and protection of Palestinian civilians to be ensured; and for the immediate resumption of negotiations within the Middle East peace process on its agreed basis and the timely implementation of the agreements; and decided to follow closely the situation and to remain seized of the matter.

2. Attendance at international conferences and meetings

50. The Committee, through its Chairman, continued to participate in relevant meetings of intergovernmental bodies, as considered necessary. During the period since its previous report to the General Assembly, the Committee was represented by its Chairman at the sixty-fourth ordinary session of the Council of Ministers of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the thirty-second session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization held in Yaoundé from 1 to 5 July and 8 to 10 July 1996, respectively (see A/51/524).

51. At the 222nd meeting of the Committee, on 31 July 1996, the Chairman reported that OAU had reviewed recent events in the occupied Palestinian territory and the Middle East, notably the deteriorating situation following the acts of violence that had threatened the peace process. The Organization praised the Palestinian leadership and stressed that the recent political declarations of the new Israeli Government had created great concern among leaders around the world. The Chairman of the Committee took part in the debate and stressed the need to do everything possible to support the continuation of the peace process. The Council of Ministers of OAU adopted two resolutions, one on the question of Palestine and another on the situation in the Middle East.

3. Action taken by United Nations bodies, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and intergovernmental organizations

52. The Committee continued to follow with great interest the activities relating to the question of Palestine of United Nations bodies, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and intergovernmental organizations. The Committee noted in particular the continued strong support of the international community for the ongoing peace process and the agreements already reached between the parties. At the same time, the international community was increasingly concerned that developments on the ground were undermining the achievements of the peace process and was intensifying its efforts to ensure the full and effective implementation of the agreements reached and to promote concrete progress in the negotiations. The Committee further noted the sense of urgency with which the international community addressed the serious economic situation in the Palestinian territory and the need to provide assistance to the Palestinian people in the transition period. The Committee took particular note of the following documents:

(a) Excerpts from the final communiqué and reports adopted at the annual coordination meeting of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of States members of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), held in New York on 2 October 1995 (A/50/723-S/1995/927, annexes);

(b) Excerpts from the final communiqué and Muscat Declaration adopted by the sixteenth summit of the Supreme Council of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), held in Muscat from 4 to 6 December 1995 (A/51/56-S/1995/1070, annex);

(c) Excerpts from the final communiqué and resolutions adopted by the twenty-third Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers of the member countries of OIC, held in Conakry from 9 to 12 December 1995 (A/50/953-S/1996/344, annexes);

(d) Resolution 40/2, on the integration of women in the Middle East peace process, adopted by the Commission on the Status of Women at its fortieth session, held in New York from 11 to 22 March 1996;¹³

(e) Statement made by the Co-Chairmen (Egypt and the United States of America) of the Summit of Peacemakers, adopted on 13 March 1996 in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt (A/51/91-S/1996/238, annex);

(f) Excerpt from the press communiqué issued by the Ministerial Council of GCC at its fifty-eighth session, held in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, on 16 and 17 March 1996 (A/51/119-S/1996/305, annex);

(g) Resolutions 1996/2 to 1996/6, on the question of Palestine and the Middle East conflict, adopted by the Commission on Human Rights at its fifty-second session, held in Geneva from 18 March to 26 April 1996;¹⁴

(h) Excerpts from the press communiqué issued by the Ministerial Council of GCC at its fifty-ninth session, held in Riyadh on 1 and 2 June 1996 (A/51/158-S/1996/409, annex);

(i) Excerpts from the final communiqué of the Arab Summit Conference, held in Cairo from 21 to 23 June 1996 (A/50/986-S/1996/474, appendix);

(j) Excerpts from the Chairman's final statement at the summit of seven major industrialized countries (G-7), held in Lyon, France from 27 to 29 June 1996 (A/51/208-S/1996/543, annex I);

(k) Economic and Social Council resolutions 1996/5 and 1996/40, on settlements and Palestinian women, respectively, adopted at its substantive session of 1996, held in New York from 24 to 26 July 1996;

(l) Resolution CM/RES.1654(LXIV) of the Council of Ministers of OAU, on the question of Palestine and the situation in the Middle East, adopted at its sixty-fourth ordinary session, held in Yaoundé from 1 to 5 July 1996 (A/51/524, annex I);

(m) Resolutions adopted by the League of Arab States (LAS) on 15 September 1996 in Cairo;

(n) Excerpts from the press communiqué issued by the Ministerial Council of GCC at its sixtieth session, held in Riyadh on 7 and 8 September 1996 (A/51/387-S/1996/767, annex);

(o) Excerpts from the statement issued on 26 September 1996 by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the five permanent members of the Security Council;¹⁵

(p) Letter dated 26 September 1996 from King Hassan II of Morocco, in his capacity as President of the seventh summit of OIC and President of the Al-Quds Committee (A/51/419-S/1996/798, annex);

(q) Declaration made on 1 October 1996 by the Council of Ministers of the European Union on the Middle East peace process (A/51/447-S/1996/825, annex);

(r) Excerpts from the communiqué of the meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Heads of Delegation of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, held in New York on 25 September 1996 (A/51/473-S/1996/839, annex).

B. Action taken by the Committee and the Division for Palestinian Rights in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 50/84 A and B

53. In accordance with the authorization given to it by the General Assembly in paragraph 5 of resolution 50/84 A, the Committee decided to introduce a number of adjustments in its programme of work for 1996 in order to make it more relevant and useful to the new realities on the ground, while reducing overall expenditure in response to the financial crisis of the United Nations. In particular, the Committee considered that seminars and NGO meetings convened under its auspices continued to be a useful mechanism for in-depth consideration of priority issues and decided to continue the programme, while streamlining it and sharpening its focus for maximum usefulness. The Committee decided, as in the past, to invite Palestinian and Israeli personalities to participate in all events organized under its auspices with a view to promoting mutual understanding and a concrete and action-oriented analysis of the most important issues relating to the question of Palestine, as well as better knowledge of the work and objectives of the Committee. The Committee also decided to continue to cooperate and expand its contacts with interested non-governmental organizations in all regions, in accordance with the mandate given by the Assembly. Noting the strong desire expressed by many such organizations, the Committee also

decided to give consideration to holding an event in the territory under the Palestinian Authority to address aspects of the transition period.

54. The Committee also decided on a number of new activities geared to expanding its contacts with the Palestinian Authority and other institutions, including non-governmental organizations, in the area under the jurisdiction of the Palestinian Authority. Specifically, the Committee envisaged inviting officials from the Authority and other Palestinian personalities to special meetings of the Committee in order to apprise its members and other delegations of the important developments on the ground and the evolving needs of the Palestinian people to be met through international action. The Committee also decided to consider ways and means of developing cooperation with and assistance to Palestinian non-governmental organizations, including participation in their meetings.

55. The Committee also requested the Division for Palestinian Rights to explore, in cooperation with the competent offices of the Secretariat, the possibility of introducing a training programme for young Palestinian professionals, from the area under the Palestinian Authority, with a view to acquiring better knowledge and understanding of the work and objectives of the United Nations. The Committee noted with appreciation that two staff members of the Authority had been invited by the Division to undertake a period of training during the fifty-first session of the General Assembly.

56. In carrying out the various aspects of its programme of work and in accordance with its mandate, the Committee continued to give the highest priority to promoting the exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people; promoting the effective implementation of the agreements reached between the parties; and mobilizing international support for and assistance to the Palestinian people. The Committee continued to cooperate with Governments, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and organizations of the United Nations system in carrying out its mandate.

1. Seminars and NGO meetings

57. In the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997,¹⁶ provision was made, as in the past, for the holding of annual seminars and NGO symposia in Europe and North America, and biennially in the other regions, as well as for an international NGO meeting and two preparatory meetings of non-governmental organizations each year. The Committee decided that those events should be combined as far as possible and that some could be deferred, with the resulting savings redeployed in part towards the above-mentioned new activities. Accordingly, the Committee decided on a streamlined calendar of meetings to be held in 1996, consisting of: (a) a combined meeting of consultations with representatives of NGO coordinating committees; (b) a seminar on assistance to the Palestinian people; (c) a symposium for non-governmental organizations in the North American region; and (d) a combined symposium for European non-governmental organizations and international NGO meeting. Noting that it had not organized an event in the Asian region for several years, the Committee also decided in principle to convene a combined seminar and NGO symposium in Asia in early 1997, subject to consultations with prospective host countries.

(a) Meeting of consultations with representatives of NGO coordinating committees

58. A meeting of consultations with 22 representatives of the International Coordinating Committee for NGOs on the Question of Palestine (ICCP), the North American Coordinating Committee for NGOs on the Question of Palestine (NACC), and the European Coordinating Committee for NGOs on the Question of Palestine (ECCP) was held at Headquarters on 1 and 2 February 1996. The Bureau of the Committee informed the NGO representatives of the recent developments in the political situation, the position of the Committee and the resolutions adopted by the General Assembly, and the programme of work envisaged by the Committee for 1996. For their part, the NGO participants provided information on the activities of the coordinating committees and of their member organizations, as well as of the NGO constituency at large. The meeting considered various aspects of the future cooperation between the Committee, the coordinating committees and the NGO constituency as a whole, as well as relevant activities of the Division for Palestinian Rights aimed at strengthening the NGO programme. Participants also exchanged views with regard to the format and organizational aspects of future NGO events to be organized by the Division under the auspices of the Committee.

(b) Seminar on assistance to the Palestinian people

59. A seminar with the theme "Building the Palestinian economy" was held in Cairo from 21 to 23 May 1996. The Committee expressed its great appreciation to the Government of Egypt for its cooperation in providing the venue and in the various arrangements needed for the holding of this important seminar.

60. The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People was represented by a delegation comprising Mr. Ibra Deguène Ka (Senegal), Chairman; Mr. Ravan A. G. Farhadi (Afghanistan), Vice-Chairman; Mr. Joseph Cassar (Malta), Rapporteur; Mr. Pedro Nuñez Mosquera (Cuba); and Mr. Nasser Al-Kidwa (Palestine). The officers of the Committee served as officers of the Seminar in their respective capacities.

61. The opening session was addressed by Mr. Mohamed Adel El Safty, First Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Egypt. A statement on behalf of the Secretary-General was read out by his representative and Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), Mr. Peter Hansen. Mr. Ibra Deguène Ka spoke in his capacity as Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. Statements were also made by Mr. Zuhdi Nashashibi, Minister of Finance of the Palestinian Authority and President of the Palestine National Fund, and Mr. Said Kamal, Assistant Secretary-General of LAS.

62. The seminar was attended by representatives of 62 donor and other Governments, as well as 3 intergovernmental organizations, 16 United Nations system organizations and entities and 8 non-governmental organizations. Twenty-two experts, including several officials of the Palestinian Authority, presented papers.

63. During the seminar, the participants considered a wide range of issues related to international assistance to the Palestinian people, reconstruction and further development of the Palestinian economy and the negative effects of the repeated closures by the Israeli authorities of parts of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip leading to limited economic exchange between the areas under the

jurisdiction of the Palestinian Authority and the disruption of Palestinian economic activity. The final report of the seminar was submitted to the Secretary-General for circulation as a document of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council in a letter from the Chairman of the Committee (A/51/166-E/1996/67). It will also be issued as a publication of the Division for Palestinian Rights. (For the titles of the plenary session, round-table discussions and names of experts, see annex I).

(c) North American Regional NGO Symposium

64. The United Nations North American NGO Symposium on the Question of Palestine was held in New York from 24 to 26 June 1996.

65. The Committee was represented by a delegation consisting of Mr. Ibra Deguène Ka (Senegal), Chairman of the Committee and head of delegation; Mr. Ravan A. G. Farhadi (Afghanistan) and Mr. Bruno E. Rodríguez Parrilla (Cuba), Vice-Chairmen of the Committee; Mr. Joseph Cassar (Malta), Rapporteur of the Committee; and Mr. Nasser Al-Kidwa (Palestine).

66. The Symposium was attended by representatives of 80 non-governmental organizations, 21 of them as observers, 12 panellists and workshop leaders, 16 Governments, 2 intergovernmental organizations and 6 United Nations bodies and agencies.

67. The theme of the Symposium was "Towards a just and comprehensive settlement of the question of Palestine". (For the titles of the plenary session topics and names of experts, see annex II).

68. Participants in the Symposium took the opportunity to exchange information and experience and to develop coordinated activities and strategies in solidarity with the Palestinian people. The participating non-governmental organizations also elected a new coordinating committee based on a revised structure that provides for rotation of half the membership every other year. The report of the Symposium will be issued as a publication of the Division for Palestinian Rights.

(d) European NGO Symposium and International NGO Meeting on the Question of Palestine

69. In response to the wish expressed by NGO representatives participating in the meeting of consultations with the Committee, the Committee decided to hold the 1996 International NGO Meeting in the territory under the Palestinian Authority. Subsequently, at the 222nd meeting of the Committee, on 31 July 1996, the Chairman informed the Committee that in a letter addressed to Mr. Yasser Arafat, President of the Palestinian Authority, he had requested that the International NGO Meeting on the Question of Palestine be held in the territory under the Palestinian Authority, seeking his concurrence for the holding of the event. In his reply Mr. Arafat welcomed the convening of the meeting in Gaza under the auspices of the Palestinian Authority and hoped that it would have a significant and effective role to play in efforts to promote assistance to the Palestinian people.

70. The Chairman of the Committee, in a letter addressed to the Chargé d'affaires of the Permanent Mission of Israel to the United Nations, after explaining the important role of non-governmental organizations in enhancing mutual understanding and relations between Israelis and Palestinians and in promoting socio-economic development in the area under the Palestinian

Authority, sought the cooperation of the Government of Israel in certain arrangements needed for the holding of the event in Gaza.

71. However, before receiving a reply from the Permanent Mission of Israel, the Committee, having reviewed recent developments, concluded that the actual situation prevailing in the Palestinian territory as a result of the Israeli measures in violation of the agreements between the two sides and in particular the restrictions imposed by the Government of Israel on freedom of movement between the residents of Gaza and the West Bank and the isolation of the Palestinian territory from the outside world would seriously hamper the successful holding of the meeting and accordingly decided on 12 July 1996 to hold it in Geneva from 2 to 4 September 1996.

72. Subsequently, on 19 July 1996 a note verbale was received from the Permanent Mission of Israel to the United Nations addressed to the Secretariat informing it of Israel's negative position with regard to the holding of the meeting. In its reply to the note verbale, the Permanent Observer Mission of Palestine to the United Nations emphasized that the Israeli-Palestinian agreements contained no provisions requiring Israeli consent to the holding of the international non-governmental organization event in Gaza City.

73. The Committee was disappointed and even saddened by the Israeli reply, which was not in line with the spirit of the peace process and ignored the constructive position advanced by the Committee since the inception of that process, as well as its efforts to promote dialogue and mutual understanding, essential foundations for a real peace between peoples. The Committee was also of the view that on the basis of the agreements reached thus far between the parties, the holding of such an event in the area under the jurisdiction of the Palestinian Authority did not require the consent of the Israeli Government, although its cooperation in terms of ensuring free passage was needed. In view of the importance of holding such meetings in the area under the Palestinian Authority, the Committee hopes that cooperation by the Israeli Government will be forthcoming in future as a significant confidence-building measure.

74. The International NGO Meeting/European NGO Symposium was attended by 21 experts and by representatives of 80 non-governmental organizations, 16 of them as observers. It was also attended by representatives of 26 Governments, 9 United Nations agencies and bodies, 3 intergovernmental organizations, 4 NGO coordinating committees and a delegation of Palestine.

75. The Committee was represented by a delegation composed of Mr. Ibra Deguène Ka (Senegal), Chairman of the Committee and head of delegation; Mr. Ravan A. G. Farhadi (Afghanistan), Vice-Chairman; Mr. Joseph Cassar (Malta), Rapporteur of the Committee; Mr. Pedro Nuñez-Mosquera (Cuba); and Mr. Nasser Al-Kidwa (Palestine).

76. The programme for the meeting was formulated by the Committee taking into account suggestions made by members of ICCP and ECCP at the consultations between the Committee and NGO representatives held at New York on 1 and 2 February 1996 and in subsequent consultations with the chairpersons of both ICCP and ECCP. The central theme of the combined meeting was "Building NGO partnerships for a just and comprehensive settlement of the question of Palestine".

77. At the opening session, a message from the Secretary-General was delivered by his representative, Mr. Vladimir Petrovsky, Under-Secretary-General and Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva. Mr. Ibra Deguène Ka

spoke in his capacity as Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. A statement was made by Mr. As'ad Abdul Rahman, Member of the Executive Committee of the PLO and representative of Palestine. Statements were also made by Mr. Don Betz, Chairman of ICCP, and Mr. John Gee, Chairman of ECCP.

78. The invited experts made presentations in three plenary sessions. (For the plenary session and round-table topics and names of experts, see annex III.)

79. Participating non-governmental organizations adopted a statement in which they welcomed the positive developments associated with the Middle East peace process, but noted with great concern the repeated delays in the implementation in the letter and spirit of the agreements. Certain measures by the Israeli Government had created new, significant obstacles for the peace process, thus undermining confidence and posing a genuine threat to securing a just and lasting peace. The ongoing incarceration of Palestinian prisoners and detainees was of great concern to the non-governmental organizations. They condemned the intimidation and closure of Palestinian institutions in Jerusalem and strongly denounced the Israeli acts of intimidation, humiliation and punishment of Palestinians, including closures of East Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza, travel restrictions, hampering the freedom of worship and preventing the free movement of goods and people between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

80. The non-governmental organizations reiterated their support for the right of the Palestinian people for self-determination, the right of return and to the establishment of an independent Palestinian State with East Jerusalem as its capital. The United Nations should play a key role in reaching a negotiated settlement. Non-governmental organizations requested that countries hosting Palestinian refugees observe and preserve their civil, social and political rights until they were allowed to exercise their right of return. The international community should fulfil the commitments undertaken to assist the Palestinian people's efforts in nation-building and political, economic and social development. The United States of America and the European Union (EU) were requested to urge Israel to comply with the concluded agreements. The non-governmental organizations congratulated the Palestinian Authority for the conduct of the first elections and reaffirmed their support for the consolidation of the rule of law, democratic values, political pluralism and the full enjoyment of the inalienable rights by the Palestinian people.

81. The non-governmental organizations declared their obligation to lobby their respective Governments and to register their concern regarding Israel's compliance with concluded agreements. Non-governmental organizations were called upon to make concerted efforts to publicize any Israeli violation of Palestinian human rights. The participating organizations urged the development of Israeli-Palestinian NGO cooperation, based on mutual understanding and commitment to a comprehensive, just and lasting peace. The non-governmental organizations would seek to generate public support for the Palestinian people through campaigns around the themes of the future of Jerusalem, Israeli settlements and their expansion in East Jerusalem, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, and the Palestinian refugees' right of return. The report of the meeting will be issued as a publication of the Division for Palestinian Rights.

2. Research, monitoring and publications

82. The Committee continued to attach great importance to the essential contribution of the Division for Palestinian Rights as a centre for research,

monitoring, the preparation of studies and the collection and dissemination of information on all issues related to the question of Palestine, and requested the Division to continue its programme of publications, in consultation with the Committee.

83. The Committee considered that the studies, bulletins, information notes, reports and other material published by the Division should focus on the priority issues to be addressed by the Committee in 1996 in order to enhance their usefulness at that important stage.

84. The Committee noted with appreciation that the Division for Palestinian Rights, in accordance with its mandate, continued to respond to requests for information and to prepare and disseminate the following publications:

(a) Monthly bulletins covering action by the Committee, other United Nations organs, organizations and agencies, as well as intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and others on the question of Palestine, containing the texts of the relevant resolutions, statements and decisions;

(b) The periodic bulletin, "Developments related to the Middle East peace process", containing information on the peace process and the multilateral negotiations on the Middle East regional issues;

(c) A monthly chronological summary of events relating to the question of Palestine, based on media reports and other sources;

(d) Reports of seminars and NGO meetings organized under the auspices of the Committee;

(e) A special bulletin on the commemoration, in 1995, of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People;

(f) A compilation of relevant resolutions, decisions and statements adopted in 1995 by the General Assembly and the Security Council relating to the question of Palestine.

85. The Committee noted with appreciation that, in response to the request made by the Committee, the Division had completed the first draft of a study on Jerusalem, and that it would continue its work on a draft study on Israeli settlements.

3. United Nations information system on the question of Palestine

86. The Committee noted that the Division, in cooperation with relevant technical services of the Secretariat, had completed the initial stages and had made substantial progress in the development of the United Nations information system on the question of Palestine, as mandated by the General Assembly at the Committee's request. This included the acquisition of the necessary hardware and software, the inclusion in the system of a comprehensive collection of current United Nations documents and some other documentation and the establishment of a database of accredited non-governmental organizations, and other initiatives of the Division in making full use of this electronic facility in its monitoring, research and other activities. The Committee also noted that a public replica of the system had been established and was now available to outside users, and that the Division was making efforts to place some of its

documentation on the Internet. While pleased with these developments, the Committee noted that the initial mandate of the system had been given by the General Assembly in 1991 and that it was now urgent to proceed to include in the system all the major documents relevant to the question of Palestine since its inception, with particular priority to be given to documents relating to the final status issues, and to make the system as user-friendly and as widely available as possible.

4. International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People

87. The International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People was observed on 29 November 1995 at Headquarters and at the United Nations Offices at Geneva and Vienna. On the occasion of the observance, in addition to other activities, an exhibit by Palestinian artists in the occupied territory entitled "Generations" was provided at Headquarters by the Permanent Observer Mission of Palestine to the United Nations and presented under the auspices of the Committee. The Committee noted with appreciation that the International Day had also been observed in many other cities throughout the world. Details on the observance are contained in the special bulletin issued by the Division.

88. In adopting its programme of work, the Committee decided that a similar commemorative programme would be organized in connection with the observance in 1996.

VI. ACTION TAKEN BY THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INFORMATION IN
ACCORDANCE WITH GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 50/84 C

89. Worldwide dissemination of accurate and comprehensive information remains of vital importance in heightening awareness of and support for the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.

90. The General Assembly considers the special information programme on the question of Palestine of the Department of Public Information very useful in raising the awareness of the international community concerning the complexities of the question and the situation in the Middle East in general, including the achievements of the peace process. The programme contributes effectively to an atmosphere conducive to dialogue and supportive of the peace process.

91. Within this framework, the General Assembly requested the Department, in full cooperation and coordination with the Committee, to continue, with the necessary flexibility as may be required by developments affecting the question of Palestine, its special information programme on the question of Palestine for the biennium 1996-1997, with particular emphasis on public opinion in Europe and North America.

92. The resolution identifies six particular areas of activity the Department is to focus upon in carrying out its assignment relative to the programme. It is within those parameters that the Committee reports on the activities of the Department.

Dissemination of information

93. The resolution requested the dissemination of information on all the activities of the United Nations system relating to the question of Palestine, including reports on the work carried out by the relevant United Nations organizations.

94. The Department continued to provide press coverage of meetings held at Headquarters of United Nations bodies dealing with the question of Palestine and coverage of seminars and symposia of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People convened away from Headquarters.

95. Different methods were used by the Department to provide for this dissemination. These include press releases and briefings, publications and radio news bulletins and feature programmes. In addition, the Department's Dissemination Unit has responded to a number of requests for information and utilized the Internet and e-mail to disseminate material.

96. The Department's Public Inquiries Unit responded to 465 requests for information concerning Middle East issues, including the question of Palestine. During the same period, the Department's Group Programme Unit organized eight briefings for a total audience of 251.

97. The Department's Dissemination Unit distributed 75 titles on the Palestine issue to more than 200 recipients around the world, on the Internet, by e-mail or as hard copies. The materials were disseminated in English and French.

98. The department's NGO Section continued to disseminate information materials through the NGO Resources Centre. The global network of United Nations information centres and services actively promoted the central issue relating to

the question of Palestine, organizing media activities and special events and regularly disseminating relevant information materials made available from Headquarters.

99. Information centres and services in Amman, Cairo, Jakarta, Madrid, New Delhi, Sana'a and Tokyo gave special attention to the question of Palestine through articles in their newsletters, in addition to ensuring the dissemination of press releases, backgrounders and statements by the Secretary-General and other officials. These activities generated local media coverage and resulted in increased requests for information on the Middle East question at some information centre libraries.

100. The Committee has taken positive note of this effort. The continued evolution of developments is demanding and requires an enhancement of present structures in order to carry out the obligations as set out in resolution 50/84 C. Through such change one could assure not only wider dissemination and better use of the electronic media available but also assure in this process the promptness and comprehensive information the public in general and the media and non-governmental organizations in particular are accustomed to in this day and age.

Publications

101. The General Assembly requested the Department to continue to issue and update publications on various aspects of the question of Palestine in all fields, including materials concerning the recent developments in that regard and, in particular, the achievements of the peace process.

102. The quarterly UN Chronicle has continued its comprehensive coverage of Palestinian issues, including relevant General Assembly and Security Council actions, as well as special meetings, symposia and seminars.

103. The publication "The United Nations and the Question of Palestine", continues to be a comprehensive historical source of information. This publication and the poster "Self-Determination: An Inalienable Right of the Palestinian People" were available in Arabic, English, French, German, Russian and Spanish. The publication was also disseminated in Chinese. The Department has also initiated the updating for 1997 of a new edition of that brochure.

104. The Committee feels that utilization of the facilities provided by modern electronic media in the manipulation of text could facilitate the production of new publications, which, other than providing the historical perspective, focus on the new avenues that are part and parcel of the success of the peace process. Material submitted by participants in symposia and seminars organized by the Committee, which include statesmen, parliamentarians, academics, journalists and other key figures active in the field, could provide the raw material to produce those materials concerning the recent developments and in particular the achievements of the peace process which the General Assembly called for in its resolution.

Audio-visual material

105. The Department's Radio and Central News Service provided a wide range of coverage on the question of Palestine and related issues in daily news bulletins, weekly news magazines and feature programmes in official and non-official languages for worldwide dissemination.

106. Some of the highlights covered in the news bulletins and news magazines included the successful holding of the Palestinian elections; the Secretary-General's meeting with Yasser Arafat, President of the Executive Authority of the Palestinian Council; the negative effects of the closure of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip on the Palestinian people; the report of the United Nations Special Rapporteur for Human Rights in Palestine and the opening of UNRWA headquarters in the Gaza Strip; the United Nations seminar focusing on building the Palestinian economy; the new United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) projects in the occupied territories; and a feature on a Palestinian woman setting up a business in the West Bank.

107. A number of other topics given extensive coverage were the observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, seminars and symposia of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, as well as meetings of the Committee, the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council as they dealt with the question of Palestine.

108. In addition, the Central News Service produced five feature programmes exclusively devoted to the question of Palestine, namely, "Challenges of Peace in the Palestinian Question" (Arabic); "Updated Review of the Palestinian Question in General Assembly's discussion of the UNRWA Report" (Arabic); "Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People in the Light of New Realities in the Current Phase of the Peace Process" (Arabic); "UNRWA: 45 Years of Service to Palestinian Refugees" (French); and "UNRWA as a Crucial Element in the Success of the Peace Process" (Russian).

109. "World Chronicle", the 30-minute panel discussion video programme, featured Ambassador Ilter Türkmen, Commissioner-General of UNRWA. Ambassador Türkmen reviewed the achievements of the Agency and discussed its future in the light of recent developments in the Middle East.

110. A Japanese language version of the video "Palestine 1890s-1990s" was produced by the United Nations information centre in Tokyo for local screening.

111. The Committee recognizes the distinct effort made by the Department's Radio and Central News Service. The service provided in the audio media has been effective and prompt. There exists a quantitative imbalance in audio and video productions that goes beyond the disproportion that it is customary to assume in view of the different cost of production. That imbalance is magnified by the greater dependence world public opinion has on visual media. The Committee is convinced that the Department will take the necessary steps in the course of the biennium to address the imbalance in order to remedy it.

Fact-finding news missions

112. The General Assembly requested the Department as part of its special programme to organize and promote fact-finding news missions for journalists to the area, including the territories under the jurisdiction of the Palestinian Authority and the occupied territories.

113. The Committee notes that no such missions were carried out during the period under review contrary to previous years. Since the signing of the 1993 Declaration of Principles, this aspect of the Department's special information programme on the question of Palestine should be strengthened.

114. Undoubtedly the Department's role as point of reference for the international media in the region suffers if a vacuum is allowed to persist in this regard. As was evident during the key events that have marked the period under review, the international media have been present in the region and have focused on aspects that are of immediate news value. The purpose of fact-finding missions would be that of providing accurate and comprehensive information that is vital and conducive to dialogue and supportive of the peace process.

Encounters for journalists

115. The Department of Public Information was requested by the General Assembly to organize international, regional and national encounters for journalists.

116. The Department organized a number of meetings for journalists, in particular in preparation for or on the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

117. These meetings do not fall in any of the three types of encounters called for by the resolution however. The General Assembly also requested the Department to continue its specialized programme, with particular emphasis on public opinion in Europe and North America. The Committee notes that in the period under review, no national, regional or international encounters were organized as had been customary in the past.

118. Noting this, the Committee emphasizes the need for all aspects of the General Assembly resolution and its specific requests to be implemented.

Assistance in the field of Palestinian media development

119. The General Assembly requested the Department to provide, in cooperation with specialized agencies of the United Nations system, in particular the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), assistance to the Palestinian people in the field of media development.

120. The United Nations information centre in Paris has participated in talks with UNESCO and the European Journalists' Training School's Association on the development and organization of training courses for Palestinian journalists.

121. The Department is again organizing in the autumn of 1996 a training programme for media practitioners along the lines of the successful one introduced by the Department in autumn 1995.

122. The 1996 programme enabled 10 Palestinian journalists to come to Headquarters from 15 September to 8 November 1996. Their programme included, among other things, briefings by officials of the United Nations and its specialized agencies, as well as by representatives of media organizations in the United States; a skills training internship at CNN headquarters at Atlanta; two weeks of special classes at the Columbia University School of International and Public Affairs; and on-the-job training serving as temporary United Nations correspondents, covering United Nations meetings and activities on behalf of their media organizations.

International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People

123. The Department cooperated at Headquarters with the Department of Political Affairs in media promotion and other arrangements for the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

124. The annual observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People provided several information centres with an opportunity to extend their outreach efforts to include resident Palestinian communities.

125. The United Nations information centre in Moscow, in cooperation with the Foreign Ministry, organized a meeting of high-level officials, Arab ambassadors, non-governmental organizations and the media, and arranged for an exhibition of UNRWA photographs and relevant public information materials. The United Nations information centre in New Delhi disseminated the backgrounder on the annual observance in local languages. The United Nations information centre in Lagos organized a commemorative ceremony dealing with issues of peace and development, in cooperation with the Arab group of ambassadors in Nigeria and with the participation of more than 400 people. The United Nations information centre in Tripoli, in cooperation with the Embassy of Palestine in the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, members of the diplomatic corps, non-governmental organizations and the Palestinian community in Tripoli, celebrated the Day with a cultural programme.

Media relations and logistical support

126. Three information centres provided media relations and logistical support for major seminars dealing with the question of Palestine.

127. The United Nations information centre in Cairo lent such support for a seminar on assistance to the Palestinian people in connection with the visit of representatives of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories and for a three-day seminar on building the Palestinian economy organized by the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People.

128. The United Nations information centre in Paris, at the request of the Division for Palestinian Rights, assisted with arrangements for a United Nations seminar on Palestinian administrative, managerial and financial needs and challenges.

Concluding remarks

129. The Committee has noted the efforts undertaken by the Department over the past year. It appreciates the results but notes that some important aspects of the resolution with regard to the special information programme have yet to be implemented. The requests made by the General Assembly to the Department need to be borne in mind in an assessment of performance.

130. A more regular and structured process of cooperation and coordination of the Department with the Committee, as called for by the resolution, should assist in identifying and overcoming difficulties that may be encountered in the organization of specific events and thus ensure full implementation of the provisions of General Assembly resolution 50/84 C.

131. In view of this need, two meetings were held during the period under review between members of the Bureau and senior officials of the Department, in which the officials stated that constraints imposed by diminished resources had influenced the review of all the programmes that fall under the responsibility of the Department, including that related to the question of Palestine. However, it was agreed that more regular consultations between the Committee and the Department would be beneficial in identifying the most efficient manner to utilize existing resources in order to implement all aspects of the resolution during the current biennium.

132. The Committee welcomes the Chairman's report about his discussions with the Department of Public Information and the assurance that he has already put in place a process of full implementation of relevant General Assembly resolutions in full cooperation and consultation between the Bureau of the Committee and the Department to prepare the information programme for the coming year.

VII. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COMMITTEE

133. The past year was one of great hopes and great disappointments, as the enthusiasm generated by the Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip of September 1995 and the first Palestinian election, which followed the Israeli redeployment from six West Bank towns and a number of villages, gave way to feelings of despair over the very future of the peace process in view of the renewed cycle of violence in the area, delays in the implementation of the agreements reached, the prolonged closure of the territories, with its grave economic consequences, and the resumption of the policy of settlements.

134. Believing that there is no peaceful alternative to the negotiations courageously undertaken by the parties, the Committee considers it essential for the international community to intensify its efforts in support of the historic process of reconciliation between the two sides and for the effective implementation of the agreements reached and for the resumption of all aspects of the negotiations on the agreed basis. The Committee notes that the year 1997 will mark the thirtieth anniversary of the military occupation of the Palestinian territories, including Jerusalem, an occupation that still continues over most of the Palestinian land despite the historic achievements of the peace process. Fifty years will have elapsed since the adoption by the General Assembly of resolution 181 (II) of 29 November 1947 partitioning mandated Palestine; 10 years since the beginning of the intifada, the Palestinian uprising, which through the sacrifice of many young people helped create the conditions for progress in the peace efforts. These milestones in the long history of the Palestinian struggle for the attainment of their inalienable national rights are a measure of the long road that still remains to be travelled and provide an impetus for intensified international action in the year to come.

135. The Committee reaffirms that the United Nations has a permanent responsibility with respect to the question of Palestine until a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement is reached. The Committee reiterates that the involvement of the United Nations in the peace process, both as the guardian of international legitimacy and in the mobilization and provision of international assistance, is essential for the successful outcome of the peace efforts. As the organ of the General Assembly established to deal with the question of Palestine, the Committee believes that its own role continues to be useful and necessary during the transitional period and until a satisfactory final settlement is achieved.

136. The Committee reaffirms that such a settlement must be based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), the withdrawal of Israel from the Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and other Arab territories occupied since 1967, the principle of exchange of land for peace and the exercise by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights, in particular the right to self-determination. The Committee also insists that, during the interim period, Israel must recognize and respect its obligations as the occupying Power under the Fourth Geneva Convention.

137. The Committee calls in particular for an end to the policy and practice of settlements in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, which is in violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention, prejudices the final status negotiations by creating facts on the ground and is therefore contrary to the

letter and the spirit of the agreements between the parties, and poses a grave threat to the future of the peace process.

138. Noting that the tragic clashes between Palestinians and Israelis in September 1996 began with protest demonstrations over Israel's archaeological excavations in the Old City of Jerusalem, the Committee reaffirms the particular status of the City in accordance with several United Nations resolutions. The Committee recalls that the Security Council has repeatedly affirmed that all measures altering the geographical, demographic and historical character and status of the Holy City are null and void and must be rescinded.

139. While remaining firm on these positions of principle, the Committee has continued to make adjustments in its approach and programme of work, taking into account the new realities, in order to make a concrete contribution to promoting the implementation of the agreements reached and to mobilize international assistance to the Palestinian people. The Committee invites the General Assembly once again to recognize the importance of its role and to reconfirm its mandate with overwhelming support.

140. The Committee wishes to express its great appreciation to those States which have supported its work and facilitated the organization of events held under the Committee's auspices by providing venues and participating in the debates. The Committee believes that, in the light of the new situation and the constructive position of the Committee reflected in its programme of work, the time has come for all States to recognize the valuable contribution that it can make as a forum for dialogue, analysis, exchange of expertise, mobilization of public opinion and action in support of the peace efforts and the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, as well as their socio-economic development. The Committee considers that a broadening of its membership to include countries that support its objectives but have not hitherto participated in its work, would greatly enhance the contribution of the General Assembly to promoting peace at this important stage.

141. The Committee considers that its programme of seminars in the different regions has played a useful role in informing and mobilizing public opinion, promoting exchange of experience and expertise between participants from the various regions and Palestinians and Israelis and in promoting increased involvement by Governments in the search for a just and comprehensive solution of the conflict. The annual convening of a seminar devoted specifically to issues related to the economic and social challenges facing the Palestinian people during the transitional period has proved very useful and the Committee intends to continue this practice in order to give the international donor community, including United Nations bodies and agencies, the opportunity to exchange views with representatives of the Palestinian Authority and internationally renowned experts on relevant issues.

142. In view of the current serious situation in the occupied Palestinian territories, including Jerusalem, the Committee intends to encourage renewed, intensified efforts by non-governmental organizations to organize and coordinate sustained campaigns to inform public opinion and to promote national and international action in support of United Nations resolutions and the Committee's objectives. It plans to continue its programme of NGO meetings in the various regions with a view to providing the NGO constituency with periodic analysis of political developments, a forum for an exchange of views and experience, as well as for planning and coordinating specific NGO activities. Encouraging mutual information and cooperation and enlarging the NGO network remain important goals for the Committee. Noting the continued desire of

non-governmental organizations to hold a future meeting in the area under the jurisdiction of the Palestinian Authority, the Committee reiterates its call to the Government of Israel not to interfere in a negative manner in this endeavour as an important confidence-building measure.

143. The Committee emphasizes the essential contribution of the Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat as a centre for research, monitoring, the preparation of studies and the collection and dissemination of information on all issues related to the question of Palestine. The Committee requests the Division to continue its programme of publications, in consultation with the Committee, and to pay particular attention to finalizing the proposed study on settlements during the coming year. The Committee notes with appreciation the further progress made by the Division in developing the United Nations computer-based information system on the question of Palestine and in making it available to users, including the establishment of a home page on the Internet, and calls for intensified efforts to include all relevant documentation in the system, including, if necessary, the redeployment of funds from lower-priority activities in the Division's budget.

144. Noting further the successful introduction in the Division of a pilot project for the training of staff of the Palestinian Authority in the workings of the United Nations system, the Committee requests the Division to continue this exercise in the future.

145. The Committee will continue to strive to achieve maximum effectiveness in the implementation of its mandate and to adjust its work programme in the light of developments, in order to continue to contribute, to the extent possible, to the realization of the common United Nations objective of achieving a just and lasting solution to the question of Palestine.

Notes

¹ Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 47/1 of 22 September 1992, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) did not participate in the work of the Committee.

² Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-first Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/31/35).

³ Ibid., Thirty-second Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/32/35); ibid., Thirty-third Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/33/35); ibid., Thirty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/34/35 and Corr.1); ibid., Thirty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/35/35); ibid., Thirty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/36/35); ibid., Thirty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/37/35 and Corr.1); ibid., Thirty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/38/35); ibid., Thirty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/39/35); ibid., Fortieth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/40/35); ibid., Forty-first Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/41/35); ibid., Forty-second Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/42/35); ibid., Forty-third Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/43/35); ibid., Forty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/44/35); ibid., Forty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/45/35); ibid., Forty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/46/35); ibid., Forty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/47/35); ibid., Forty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/48/35); ibid., Forty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/49/35); and ibid., Fiftieth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/50/35).

⁴ A/AC.183/1995/CRP.1.

⁵ The observers at the Committee meetings were as follows: Algeria, Bangladesh, Bulgaria, China, Ecuador, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Mauritania, Morocco, Nicaragua, Niger, Qatar, Sri Lanka, Syrian Arab Republic, United Arab Emirates, Viet Nam, the League of Arab States and the Organization of the Islamic Conference. Palestine, represented by the PLO, as the representative of the Palestinian people, was also an observer.

⁶ The membership of the Working Group was as follows: Afghanistan, Belarus, Cuba, Guinea, Guyana, India, Malta, Pakistan, Senegal, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine and Palestine, represented by the PLO, as the representative of the people directly concerned.

⁷ GA/PAL/734.

⁸ S/1996/257.

⁹ See S/PV.3652 (Resumption).

¹⁰ S/1996/667.

¹¹ S/1996/790.

¹² S/1996/792.

¹³ See Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1996, Supplement No. 6 (E/1996/26), chap. I, sect. C.

¹⁴ Ibid., Supplement No. 3 (E/1996/23).

¹⁵ S/1996/802, annex.

¹⁶ See Official Records of the General Assembly, Fiftieth Session, Supplement No. 6 (A/50/6/Rev.1), vol. I, part II, sect. 2.

ANNEX I

United Nations Seminar on Assistance to the Palestinian People,
held in Cairo from 21 to 23 May 1996

1. The programme for the seminar began with a plenary session on "Building the Palestinian economy - challenges and prospects". Statements were made by a Palestinian keynote speaker, Mr. Zuhdi Nashashibi, Minister of Finance of the Palestinian Authority, President of the Palestine National Fund, United Nations agencies and bodies, donor countries and other government representatives, intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations.

2. Subsequently, four round-table discussions, moderated by experts, were conducted, as follows:

(a) International assistance to the Palestinian people - experience and perspective: Palestinian institutions; United Nations programmes; Multilateral channels of assistance; Bilateral assistance; International and regional cooperation

Mr. Robert Z. Lawrence, Professor of International Trade, Institute for Social and Economic Policy in the Middle East, Harvard University (Moderator)

Mr. Odin G. Knudsen, representative of the World Bank in the West Bank and Gaza

Ms. Ghania Malhees, Assistant Deputy Minister, Ministry of the Economy, Trade and Industry, Palestinian Authority

Mr. Nabil El Sharif, Deputy Managing Director, Palestinian Economic Council for Development and Reconstruction (PECDAR), Gaza, Director, Palestinian Water Authority

Mr. Henry Siegman, Director, US/Middle East Project, and Senior Fellow, Council on Foreign Relations, New York

Mr. Geoffrey Haley, Aid Coordinator for Technical Assistance, Office of the European Union to the West Bank and Gaza

(b) Trade sector: Implementation of the Israeli-Palestinian economic agreements; Trade prospects with Arab countries; Bilateral trade agreements

Mr. James Duesenberry, Professor, John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University (Moderator)

Mr. Robert Z. Lawrence, Professor of International Trade, Institute for Social and Economic Policy in the Middle East, Harvard University

Mr. Samir Huleileh, Assistant Deputy Minister of Trade, Ministry of the Economy, Trade and Industry, Palestinian Authority

Mr. Hanspeter Tschäni, trade policy expert, Swiss Trade Initiative for the Middle East and North Africa (STIMENA), former Head, Trade Division, European Free Trade Association (EFTA)

Mr. Jean-Michel Dumont, Secretary-General, Parliamentary Association for Euro-Arab Cooperation

Mr. Taha Abdel Aleem, Deputy Director, El Ahram Centre for Strategic Studies

Mr. Yousef Mahmoud Najem, Palestine Chamber of Commerce, Gaza Strip

(c) The role of financial institutions: Palestinian monetary institutions; reinvesting private deposits; promotion of small business

Mr. Hanspeter Tschäni, trade policy expert, STIMENA, former Head, Trade Division, EFTA (Moderator)

Mr. Ahmad Mashal, Head, Research Department, Palestinian Monetary Authority

Mr. James Duesenberry, Professor, John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University

Mr. Mahmoud Ahmed Al Takruri, Deputy Regional Manager, Cairo-Amman Bank, West Bank

Mr. Said Hammoud, Secretary, Founding Committee, Salam International Investment

(d) The housing sector: short-, middle- and long-term policies and needs; role of the public sector; involvement of the private sector; financial policies and incentives; and employment opportunities

Mr. Khaled Abdel Shafie, Head, UNDP Office, Gaza (Moderator)

Mr. Marwan Abdul Hamid, Assistant Deputy Minister of Housing and Public Works, Palestinian Authority

Mr. James Ryan, Chairman, Shahrazad Homes

Mr. Ali Sha'at, Assistant Deputy Minister of Planning and International Cooperation, Palestinian Authority

Mr. Walid Hasna, Chief Engineer, UNDP Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People (PAPP)

Mr. Milad Hanna, writer, former Chairman, Committee on Housing and Construction, Egyptian Parliament

Mr. Mohamed M. Ziara, Director-General, Ministry of Housing and Public Works, Palestinian Authority

ANNEX II

United Nations North American NGO Symposium on the Question
of Palestine, held in New York from 24 to 26 June 1996

1. The plenary sessions of the Symposium discussed the issues of self-determination and state-building, Palestine refugees and displaced persons, and Jerusalem. Following are the names of experts who took part in the discussions:

(a) Self-determination, state-building - opportunities and obstacles

Mr. Izzat Abdul-Hadi, Director, Bisan Centre for Research and Development, Ramallah, West Bank

Ms. Samia Khoury, President, Rawdat Al-Zuhur Women's Organization, Representative of Palestinian Network of NGOs, Jerusalem

Mr. Larry Ekin, Chairman, North American Coordinating Committee for NGOs on the Question of Palestine

(b) Palestine refugees and displaced persons

Mr. Salim Tamari, Professor of Sociology, Director, Institute of Jerusalem Studies, Bir Zeit University, delegate to the multilateral peace negotiations on refugees

Mr. Andrew Robinson, Director-General, Middle East Peace Process Coordination Bureau, Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, Canada

Ms. Rosemary Sayigh, anthropologist, author, independent researcher, Beirut, Lebanon

Mr. Don Peretz, Professor Emeritus, Binghamton University, New York

Mr. William Lee, Chief, UNRWA Liaison Office, New York

(c) Jerusalem

Mr. Ziad Abu Zayyad, Member, Palestinian Council, Jerusalem District, journalist, editor and publisher of the Palestine-Israel Journal

Mr. Moshe Maoz, Professor in History of the Middle East, Director, Harry S. Truman Research Institute for the Advancement of Peace, Hebrew University

Mr. Ibrahim Mattar, Deputy Director, America Near East Refugee Aid (ANERA), Jerusalem

Mr. Stephen Zunes, Professor of Politics, University of San Francisco, California

2. The workshops addressed the following topics: building civil society; NGO work and developments and the current and continuing political changes; opportunities for development; the peace process and the diaspora community; work and cooperation between refugees and non-governmental organizations; Jerusalem: the closure and shifting borders; and the future of Jerusalem.

ANNEX III

United Nations European NGO Symposium and International
NGO Meeting on the Question of Palestine, held at Geneva
from 2 to 4 September 1996

1. The plenary and round-table discussions focused on the recent developments, key issues of a just and comprehensive settlement of the question of Palestine, and building NGO partnerships for a just and comprehensive settlement. The following experts participated in the discussions:

(a) Recent political developments

1. The status of the implementation of the concluded agreements

Mr. Ziad Abu Amr, Member, Palestinian Council

2. Israeli elections and Israeli public opinion

Mr. Azmi Bishara, Member, Knesset (National Democratic Assembly)

Mr. Yossi Katz, Member, Knesset (Labour Party)

3. Arab and international reaction to the recent political
developments

Mr. Ahmed Hamroush, President, Egyptian Committee for Solidarity

Mr. Michael Hindley, Member, European Parliament (Socialist
Party), United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

(b) Key issues of a just and comprehensive settlement

1. Israeli settlements in the occupied Palestinian territory

Mr. Sharif S. Elmusa, Senior Research Fellow, Institute for
Palestine Studies, Washington, D.C.

Ms. Zahaba Galón, Secretary-General, Ratz

Mr. Geoffrey Aronson, Editor, Foundation for Middle East Peace,
Washington, D.C.

Mr. Jan de Jong, geographer, planning consultant, St. Yves Legal
Resource and Development Centre, Jerusalem

2. Palestine refugees and displaced persons

Mr. Rashid Khalidi, Professor of Middle East History and
Director, Center for International Studies, Chicago University

Mr. Avishai Margalit, Professor of Philosophy, Hebrew University,
Jerusalem

Mr. Leonard Hausman, Director, Institute for Social and Economic
Policy in the Middle East, John F. Kennedy School of Government,
Harvard University

3. Jerusalem

Mr. Albert Aghazarian, Director for Public Relations, Bir Zeit
University

Mr. Gershon Baskin, Co-Director, Israel/Palestine Centre for
Research and Information, Jerusalem

Mr. David Andrews, Spokesman of Fianna Fail for Tourism and
Trade, Member of Dail Eriann, former Minister of Foreign Affairs
of Ireland

Mr. Giorgos Dimitrakopoulos, Member, European Parliament
(European People's Party), Greece

(c) Building non-governmental organization partnerships for a just and
comprehensive settlement

1. Defining priorities and implementing action plans

Mr. Marai Abdul Rahman, Secretary-General, Palestine Committee
for Non-Governmental Organizations, Director-General, Arab and
International Relations Department, PLO

Mr. Michael Warschawski, Director, Alternative Information
Centre, Jerusalem

Mr. Mustafa Barghouthi, Director, Health Development Information
Project, Jerusalem

Mr. Don Betz, Chairman, International Coordinating Committee for
Non-Governmental Organizations on the Question of Palestine

Mr. John Gee, Chairman, European Coordinating Committee for NGOs
on the Question of Palestine.

2. In addition to the plenary sessions, a number of workshops were held
concurrently for participants interested in developing specific action-oriented
proposals. The workshop topics were linked to those addressed in the plenary
sessions.



United Nations

**Report of the Committee on the Exercise
of the Inalienable Rights of the
Palestinian People**

General Assembly
Official Records · Fifty-second Session
Supplement No. 35 (A/52/35)

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of the Inalienable Rights of the
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United Nations · New York, 1997

NOTE

Symbols of United Nations documents are composed of capital letters combined with figures. Mention of such a symbol indicates a reference to a United Nations document.

CONTENTS

	<u>Paragraphs</u>	<u>Page</u>
LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL		v
I. INTRODUCTION	1 - 6	1
II. MANDATE OF THE COMMITTEE	7 - 10	3
III. ORGANIZATION OF WORK	11 - 13	4
A. Election of officers	11 - 12	4
B. Re-establishment of the Working Group	13	4
IV. REVIEW OF THE SITUATION RELATING TO THE QUESTION OF PALESTINE	14 - 30	5
V. ACTION TAKEN BY THE COMMITTEE	31 - 107	9
A. Action taken in accordance with General Assembly resolution 51/23	31 - 65	9
1. Reaction to developments affecting the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people .	31 - 58	9
2. Attendance at international conferences and meetings	59 - 64	13
3. Action taken by United Nations bodies, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and intergovernmental organizations	65	14
B. Action taken by the Committee and the Division for Palestinian Rights in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 51/23 and 51/24	66 - 107	15
1. Seminars and meetings of non-governmental organizations	74 - 97	16
2. Research, monitoring and publications	98 - 100	19
3. United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine	101 - 102	20
4. Training programme for staff of the Palestinian Authority	103 - 105	21
5. International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People	106 - 107	21

CONTENTS (continued)

	<u>Paragraphs</u>	<u>Page</u>
VI. ACTION TAKEN BY THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INFORMATION IN ACCORDANCE WITH GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 51/25 .	108 - 123	22
VII. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COMMITTEE	124 - 138	25

LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

5 November 1997

Mr. Secretary-General,

I have the honour to enclose herewith the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for submission to the General Assembly in accordance with paragraph 5 of its resolution 51/23 of 4 December 1996.

The report covers the period from 15 November 1996 to 5 November 1997.

Accept, Sir, the assurances of my highest consideration.

(Signed) Ibra Deguène KA
Chairman of the Committee on the
Exercise of the Inalienable Rights
of the Palestinian People

His Excellency
Mr. Kofi Annan
Secretary-General of the United Nations

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People was established by the General Assembly in its resolution 3376 (XXX) of 10 November 1975, in which the Assembly requested the Committee to consider and recommend to it a programme designed to enable the Palestinian people to exercise its inalienable rights as recognized by the Assembly in resolution 3236 (XXIX) of 22 November 1974. During the reporting period, the Committee continued to be composed of 23 Member States, as follows: Afghanistan, Belarus, Cuba, Cyprus, Guinea, Guyana, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mali, Malta, Nigeria, Pakistan, Romania, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine and Yugoslavia.¹

2. The recommendations made by the Committee in its first report to the General Assembly² were endorsed by the Assembly in resolution 31/20 of 24 November 1976 as a basis for the solution to the question of Palestine. In its subsequent reports³ the Committee has continued to stress that a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, must be based on the relevant United Nations resolutions and the following essential principles: the withdrawal of Israel from the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, and from the other occupied Arab territories; respect for the right of all States in the region to live in peace within secure and internationally recognized boundaries; and the recognition and exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, primarily the right to self-determination.

3. The Committee has welcomed the signing in September 1993 of the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements by Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) (A/48/486-S/26560, annex), and subsequent implementation agreements, in particular the Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip of 28 September 1995, signed in Washington, D.C., which provided for phased withdrawal of Israeli forces and the establishment of the Palestinian Authority, as important steps towards the achievement of a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973).

4. In the course of the year, the Committee followed closely the developments in the region. It noted that some progress had been made early in the year on the Protocol concerning the Redeployment in Hebron and the Note for the Record setting out a mutual understanding by the parties in implementation of the Protocol. The Committee welcomed the release of the Palestinian women prisoners.

5. The Committee was, however, increasingly concerned at the ongoing deterioration of the situation and the intensification of violence and tension on the ground. The Committee expressed its great concern that the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations faced serious setbacks owing to the position of the Government of Israel on the various aspects of the peace process. In particular, the Committee was alarmed by the position of the Government of Israel on the question of Jerusalem, especially the establishment of a new settlement in Jabal Abu Ghneim, the growing threat to Palestinian residency rights in Jerusalem, the continued expansion of settlements in general, the confiscation of Arab land, the demolition of Palestinian houses and the prolonged closure of the Palestinian territory (see chap. IV below).

6. As the organ of the General Assembly dealing with the question of Palestine, the Committee continued to make all efforts to promote a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question in accordance with international legitimacy, and participated actively in meetings of the Security Council, the General Assembly and other international forums convened for this purpose.

II. MANDATE OF THE COMMITTEE

7. The mandate of the Committee for the year 1997 is contained in paragraphs 2 to 7 of General Assembly resolution 51/23 of 4 December 1996, in which, inter alia, the Assembly:

(a) Considered that the Committee could continue to make a valuable and positive contribution to international efforts to promote the effective implementation of the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements and to mobilize international support for and assistance to the Palestinian people during the transitional period, endorsed the recommendations of the Committee and requested it to continue to keep under review the situation relating to the question of Palestine and to report and make suggestions to the Assembly or the Security Council, as appropriate;

(b) Authorized the Committee to continue to exert all efforts to promote the exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, and to report thereon to the Assembly at its fifty-second session and thereafter;

(c) Requested the Committee to continue to extend its cooperation to non-governmental organizations in their contribution towards heightening international awareness of the facts relating to the question of Palestine.

8. In its resolution 51/24 of 4 December 1996, the General Assembly considered that the Division for Palestinian Rights continued to make a useful and constructive contribution through the organization of seminars and meetings of non-governmental organizations, as well as through, inter alia, its research and monitoring activities, and the collection and dissemination of information in printed and electronic form on all issues pertaining to the question of Palestine. The Assembly requested the Secretary-General to continue to provide the Division with the necessary resources, including for the further development of the United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine.

9. In its resolution 51/25 of 4 December 1996, on the special information programme on the question of Palestine of the Department of Public Information, the General Assembly noted that several defined provisions of that programme were yet to be implemented, and stressed the importance of implementation of all provisions of the programme.

10. In carrying out its programme of work, the Committee also took into account General Assembly resolution 51/26 of 4 December 1996, in which the Assembly, inter alia, reaffirmed the necessity of achieving a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine, in all its aspects, and expressed its full support for the ongoing peace process, which began in Madrid and the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements⁴ of 1993, as well as the subsequent implementation agreements, including the Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip of 1995, and expressed the hope that the process would lead to the establishment of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East.

III. ORGANIZATION OF WORK

A. Election of officers

11. At its 227th meeting, on 19 February 1997, the Committee re-elected Mr. Ibra Deguène Ka (Senegal) as Chairman, and re-elected Mr. Ravan A. G. Farhadi (Afghanistan) and Mr. Bruno Eduardo Rodríguez Parrilla (Cuba) as Vice-Chairmen.

12. At its 228th meeting, on 14 April 1997, the Committee elected Mr. George Saliba (Malta) as Rapporteur.

B. Re-establishment of the Working Group

13. At its 227th meeting, on 19 February 1997, the Committee re-established its Working Group in order to assist in the preparation and expedition of the work of the Committee, on the understanding that any Committee member or observer could participate in its deliberations.⁵ The Working Group was constituted under the chairmanship of Mr. George Saliba (Malta) and Mr. Syed Akbaruddin (India) as Vice-Chairman.⁶ At the same meeting, the Committee adopted its programme of work for 1997.⁷

IV. REVIEW OF THE SITUATION RELATING TO THE QUESTION
OF PALESTINE

14. In accordance with its mandate, the Committee continued to keep under review the situation relating to the question of Palestine and to exert all efforts to promote the exercise by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights.

15. The Committee also continued to monitor the situation in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and the developments in the peace process on an ongoing basis through the media and the reports of United Nations entities, as well as through the information provided by non-governmental organizations, individual experts and participants in meetings held under the auspices of the Committee.

16. The Committee followed closely the developments in the Middle East peace process. The Committee welcomed the signing by the parties on 15 January 1997 of the Protocol Concerning the Redeployment in Hebron and the Note for the Record outlining mutual undertakings by the two sides in implementation of the Protocol. The document set a timetable for the further redeployment of the Israeli troops. Over 80 per cent of the city was successfully transferred to the Palestinian Authority. In a statement issued on 20 January 1997,⁸ the Bureau of the Committee said it was encouraged by the signing of the Protocol. It expressed the hope that the Protocol would lead to the full implementation of the agreements already reached between the parties, in particular the commencement of substantive negotiations on matters pertaining to the permanent settlement. The Bureau reaffirmed its full support for the peace process and the realization by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights, primarily the right to self-determination and statehood.

17. The Committee also welcomed the establishment, at the beginning of February, of eight bilateral Israeli-Palestinian subcommittees to tackle the outstanding issues during the transitional period, including the operation of the Gaza seaport and airport, safe passage corridors from the West Bank and the Gaza Strip and the release of Palestinian prisoners.

18. The Committee welcomed the increasing contribution to the Middle East peace process by the various international parties. In that regard, it noted the increased involvement of the co-sponsors of the peace process, as well as the European Union, in efforts to bring about the resumption of the bilateral negotiations. The Committee was also appreciative of the resilient efforts with which a number of world leaders contributed to the task of restarting the peace process.

19. The Committee noted with extreme concern, however, that the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations faced serious setbacks during the year as a direct result of the position taken by the Government of Israel on the various elements of the peace process. This year again, the Committee observed the disturbing lack of respect by the Israeli side for the agreements already signed with the Palestinian counterparts. In the course of the year, numerous statements and actions on the ground by the Government of Israel created a situation in which the peace process could not successfully move forward. Throughout the year, the Israeli Prime Minister, members of the Government and other high-level officials made statements that negatively affected the sensitive issues to be discussed by the parties in the course of the permanent status negotiations. Especially worrisome were continued Israeli statements of intent with regard to the expansion of the existing Jewish settlements, the construction of new ones, and

the building of roads to connect those settlements. The Committee considered those declarations not conducive to creating an atmosphere of trust and confidence between the parties and generally harmful to the peace process.

20. The Committee deplored the decision by the Government of Israel on 26 February 1997 to approve the construction of a new Jewish settlement at Jabal Abu Ghneim, south of East Jerusalem. In spite of the overwhelming expression of opposition to this decision by the international community (see paras. 34-55 below), construction of the settlement began on 18 March. On the same day, the Bureau of the Committee issued a statement⁹ deploring the beginning of the construction and voiced its concern at the negative implication of this decision for the future of the peace process. The Bureau also called for an end to the policies of military occupation, land confiscation and settlement, and for the resumption of the bilateral negotiations. In September, the Committee also expressed grave concern at efforts by militant settlers to establish a permanent presence in the Ras al-Amud district in occupied East Jerusalem.

21. In the year under review, the issue of Jewish settlements remained at the forefront of the Committee's attention. The Committee noted that the situation with respect to the construction and expansion of the settlements remained a serious concern. Statements made by representatives of the various branches of the Israeli Government and in the Knesset, indicated that a vigorous effort was under way to maintain and strengthen the Jewish settlers' presence in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip. In the month of March alone, in addition to the start of construction at Jabal Abu Ghneim, several steps were taken by Israel to that end. The Ministry of Industry and Trade approved a US\$ 30 million programme to encourage investment in a number of settlements, including four in the West Bank and one in the Gaza Strip. The Ministry of Defence approved the plan for the construction of 1,550 housing units in the settlement of Givat Zeev, north of Jerusalem. The Knesset Finance Committee approved a special allocation of US\$ 16 million for the reinforcement of settlement in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. In April, a new policy of benefits to settlers, approved in late 1996, was finalized. Purchasers of apartments in 110 settlements throughout the West Bank and the Gaza Strip would receive additional mortgages and grant payments. Also in April, the Ministry of Construction and Housing launched a new advertisement campaign in Israeli newspapers offering government subsidies of up to tens of thousands of dollars to buyers of apartments in West Bank settlements. In May, Israel's Treasury announced the transfer of US\$ 16.5 million into further development of Jewish settlements, as part of the Government's decision to grant favoured development status to those areas. The Ministry of National Infrastructures proposed that large tracts of Palestinian land in the West Bank containing water sources be annexed. Also, the construction of a new road network began in the West Bank to allow Jewish settlers to bypass Palestinian self-rule areas.

22. Demolition of Palestinian houses in the various parts of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip continued during the year. From January to early September, some 100 Palestinian houses were demolished in the occupied territory. The demolitions were carried out by the Israeli army, as well as by Jewish settlers. The Committee noted reports that the Jewish settler population has continued to grow. This led to numerous confrontations between armed settlers and Palestinians and resulted in casualties, including fatalities on the Palestinian side.

23. The Committee noted that, in February, 30 Palestinian women prisoners had been released by the Israeli authorities. The Committee emphasized that the release of the prisoners should have become an important confidence-building

step between the Israelis and the Palestinians. Israel, however, continues to hold more than 3,600 Palestinian prisoners. Instances of the use of excessive force were recorded by the Palestinian Authority and various human rights organizations monitoring the situation on the ground. The Committee reaffirmed that the holding of prisoners in the territory of the occupying Power was a violation of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949 (the Fourth Geneva Convention),¹⁰ and called upon the Government of Israel to respect its obligations under the Convention. It also called upon Israel to release the prisoners, pursuant to the bilateral agreements.

24. The Committee followed with much concern the situation with regard to the issue of Palestinian residency rights in Jerusalem. It noted reports by Israeli and international human rights organizations of the illegal confiscation by the Israeli Ministry of the Interior of Jerusalem identification documents from Palestinian residents of Jerusalem. Apart from denying residency rights to the Palestinian residents of the city, this policy hampers their access to social services. The Committee is also of the view that the policy is aimed at creating a demographic reality in the city, which would pre-empt any just solution to the question of Jerusalem and would create an eventual imbalance in favour of the Israeli side in the course of the permanent status negotiations on the issue.

25. The Palestinian economy in the past year faced many of the same problems as in the previous years. The wide-scale international assistance effort notwithstanding, the economic situation in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip remained a matter of great concern to the Committee. The Palestinian economy continued to suffer from high unemployment, especially in the rural areas and amongst the young Palestinians.

26. During the past year, Israel continued arbitrarily to impose closures in response to its alleged security needs. According to a report prepared by the United Nations Special Coordinator in the Occupied Territories, the Palestinian economy lost US\$ 6 billion from 1992 to 1996, mostly owing to Israeli closures of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, which prevented Palestinian workers from reaching jobs in Israel. The result of the closures has been a 36 per cent drop in per capita gross national product from US\$ 2,700 in 1992 to US\$ 1,700 in 1996.

27. According to a report of the World Bank issued in August, losses caused by the closure could amount to 40 to 60 per cent of income and output, or US\$ 4 million to US\$ 6 million a day. Some 51,000 Palestinians had been licensed to work in Israel each day until 30 July 1997. The closure resulted in a US\$ 31.1 million loss in potential income, while restrictions on trade between Israel and the Palestinian territories cost another US\$ 29.9 million.

28. The Committee expressed grave concern at the imposition by the Israeli authorities of a blockade of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip following the suicide bombing incident in West Jerusalem, on 30 July 1997. The Bureau of the Committee unreservedly condemned all acts of violence against defenceless civilians. The Bureau, in a statement issued on 6 August 1997,¹¹ also stated that harsh retaliatory measures on the part of the Israeli Government would dangerously exacerbate the state of the Palestinian economy and result in greater hardship and despair among the Palestinian population. A closure was reimposed by the Israeli authorities following another suicide incident in West Jerusalem on 4 September 1997. The Committee affirmed on a number of occasions its strong opposition to this policy, which suffocates the fledgling Palestinian

economy, interferes with the implementation of assistance projects and the disbursement of international aid, brings hardship and suffering to Palestinian households and exacerbates tension in the region. The Committee also reiterated its position that the practice of closures was in direct contravention to the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention.

29. In the period under review, the Committee expressed great appreciation for the continued efforts of the international community to provide the needed assistance to the Palestinian people through the Palestinian Authority, despite the growing difficulties on the ground. The Committee was of the view that the international assistance provided by the organizations of the United Nations system, as well as that provided by the donor community, remained vital to the successful transition of the Palestinian people to national sovereignty and statehood. It welcomed the appointment in February of Mr. Chinmaya R. Gharekhan as the Special Coordinator in the Occupied Territories, to serve as a focal point for the United Nations family of organizations and to maintain ongoing contact with the donor community, non-governmental organizations active in the field and others.

30. The Committee noted the dedicated effort of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), which continued to provide its much-needed services to the refugees and their families despite its difficult financial situation. The Committee noted with appreciation the provision by UNRWA of education, health and social services to some 3.4 million Palestinians and considered it a valuable contribution to the alleviation of poverty and the development of the human, social and economic potential of the Palestinian people. The Agency's programme of special hardship assistance, along with the social welfare programme of the Palestinian Authority Ministry of Social Affairs, constituted an important safety net for the Palestinian poor. The two programmes supported some 303,000 Palestinians. The Committee called for continued and intensified international support for the activities of UNRWA.

V. ACTION TAKEN BY THE COMMITTEE

A. Action taken in accordance with General Assembly resolution 51/23

1. Reaction to developments affecting the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people

(a) Communication to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

31. In letters dated 28 February 1997 addressed to the Secretary-General and to the President of the Security Council (A/51/812-S/1997/172), the Acting Chairman of the Committee expressed deep concern and strongly deplored Israel's decision to build a new Jewish settlement in the Jabal Abu Ghneim area, south of East Jerusalem.

32. The Committee reaffirmed that, in accordance with Security Council resolution 465 (1980) of 1 March 1980, and other resolutions, all measures taken by Israel to change the physical character, demographic composition, institutional structure or status of the Palestinian and other Arab territories occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, or any part thereof, had no legal validity and must be rescinded.

33. The Committee considered that the growing expansion and consolidation of settlements created facts on the ground inconsistent with Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) of 22 November 1967 and 338 (1973) of 22 October 1973, which the current peace process seeks to implement. This situation seriously undermined the agreements reached between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization and jeopardized the much-needed process of confidence-building between the parties.

(b) Action taken in the Security Council and the General Assembly

(i) Security Council meeting, 5 March 1997

34. At the request of Egypt, the Council met on 5 March 1997 to consider the situation in the occupied Arab territories, in particular the 26 February decision of the Israeli Government to begin construction of new Jewish housing in the Jabal Abu Ghneim area south of occupied East Jerusalem.

35. Requests for a meeting of the Council were also made by the Acting Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (see A/51/812-S/1997/172); the Permanent Observer of Palestine, both in his capacity as Chairman of the Group of Arab States for the month of February and on behalf of the members of the League of Arab States (see S/1997/165); and the Permanent Representative of Indonesia to the United Nations, in his capacity as Chairman of the Islamic Group of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (see A/51/817-S/1997/182).

36. The Chairman of the Committee participated in the debate on this issue in the Council on 5 March 1997.¹² He stated that the Committee deplored that decision as a violation of international law, the Fourth Geneva Convention and many relevant Security Council and General Assembly resolutions. The decision was particularly untimely in that the Israeli Government and the Palestine Liberation Organization had recently reached agreement on redeployment in Hebron, which had given new impetus to the peace process.

37. The Chairman declared that the decision of the Israeli Government ran counter to the letter and the spirit of the Declaration of Principles on the Interim Self-Government Arrangements and the subsequent implementation of agreements, particularly the Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, signed in September 1995.

38. Moreover, the decision, along with the closing of Palestinian offices in East Jerusalem, had come at a time when the Israeli army continued to seal off Palestinian territories and was delaying its withdrawal from sectors of the West Bank, thereby jeopardizing the continuation of the peace process. As these measures were taken just before the new stage of negotiations on Jerusalem, they seemed to take on the character of a *fait accompli*. The decision undermined the credibility of the entire peace process and created undesirable tensions in the region at a crucial stage of the negotiations on the final status of the Palestinian territories.

39. In concluding his statement, the Chairman said that by convening the meeting, the members of the Security Council had shown that the decision taken by the Israeli Government was a source of major concern for the international community as a whole. The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People therefore expressed the hope that, at the end of the debate, the Council would demonstrate to world public opinion its unshakable will to annul the Israeli decision to build housing for Jewish settlers in Jabal Abu Ghneim and to put an end to the policy of the Judaization of the Holy City of Jerusalem, a symbol of peaceful coexistence of peoples and religions.

40. At the end of the debate, the Council failed to adopt a draft resolution sponsored by France, Portugal, Sweden and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.¹³ The vote was 14 in favour to 1 against (United States of America), with no abstentions. The draft resolution was not adopted owing to the negative vote of a permanent member of the Security Council.

41. The draft resolution would have called upon Israel, the occupying Power, to refrain from all actions or measures, including settlement activities, which altered the facts on the ground, pre-empting the final status negotiations, and had negative implications for the Middle East peace process, and to abide scrupulously by its legal obligations and responsibilities under the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilians in Time of War of 12 August 1949, which is applicable to all the territories occupied by Israel since 1967. It also would have called upon all parties to continue, in the interests of peace and security, their negotiations within the Middle East peace process on its agreed basis and the timely implementation of the agreements reached.

42. In response to the negative vote by the United States of America, the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations stated that he would bring the issue before the General Assembly.

(ii) Resumed session of the General Assembly

43. At the request of the Permanent Representative of Qatar to the United Nations, in his capacity as Chairman of the Group of Arab States for the month of March (see A/51/822), and the Permanent Representative of Colombia in his capacity as Chairman of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/51/823), an urgent meeting of the General Assembly was held on 12 March 1997.

44. At the end of the debate, the Assembly, by 130 votes in favour to 2 against, with 2 abstentions, adopted resolution 51/223 of 13 March 1997. In the resolution, the Assembly, inter alia, called upon the Israeli authorities to refrain from all actions or measures, including settlement activities, which altered the facts on the ground, pre-empting the final status negotiations, and had negative implications for the Middle East peace process; called upon Israel, the occupying Power, to abide scrupulously by its legal obligations and responsibilities under the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War of 12 August 1949, which was applicable to all the territories occupied by Israel since 1967; and called upon all parties to continue, in the interests of peace and security, their negotiations within the Middle East peace process on its agreed basis and the timely implementation of the agreements reached.

(iii) Security Council meeting, held on 21 March 1997

45. At the request of the Permanent Representative of Qatar, in his capacity as Chairman of the Group of Arab States for the month of March 1997, and on behalf of the members of the League of Arab States,¹⁴ the Security Council met on 21 March 1997.

46. A draft resolution submitted by Egypt and Qatar¹⁵ received 13 votes in favour to 1 against (United States of America), with 1 abstention, and was not adopted owing to the negative vote of a permanent member of the Security Council.

47. The draft resolution would have demanded Israel's immediate cessation of construction of the Jabal Abu Ghneim settlement south of occupied East Jerusalem, as well as all other Israeli settlement activities in the occupied territories.

(iv) Tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly

48. The tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly was convened on 24 and 25 April 1997 to consider the item entitled "Illegal Israeli actions in occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory". The session was convened at the request of the Permanent Representative of Qatar, in his capacity as Chairman of the Group of Arab States for the month of April 1997, and with the concurrence of a large majority of Member States, in accordance with the provisions of Assembly resolution 377 A (V) of 3 November 1950, entitled "Uniting for Peace". On behalf of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, its Chairman supported the convening of the emergency special session (see A/51/876).

49. The Chairman of the Committee took part in the debate (see A/ES-10/PV.1) and stated that, while condemning any resort to violence, in particular against civilians, the Committee wished to recall that the peace process had made progress because both parties accepted the principle of land for peace and of a negotiated solution, in accordance with Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973).

50. On 25 April 1997, the General Assembly, by a recorded vote of 134 votes in favour to 3 against, with 11 abstentions, adopted resolution ES-10/2.

51. In the resolution, the General Assembly, inter alia, condemned the construction by Israel, the occupying Power, of a new settlement in Jabal Abu Ghneim to the south of occupied East Jerusalem; reaffirmed that all legislative

and administrative measures and actions taken by Israel, the occupying Power, that had altered or purported to alter the character, legal status and demographic composition of Jerusalem were null and void and had no validity whatsoever; demanded immediate and full cessation of the construction in Jabal Abu Ghneim and of all other Israeli settlement activities, as well as of all illegal measures and actions in Jerusalem; called for the cessation of all forms of assistance and support for illegal Israeli activities in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, in particular settlement activities; requested the Secretary-General to monitor the situation and to submit a report on the implementation of the present resolution, within two months of its adoption; and decided to adjourn its tenth emergency special session temporarily and to authorize the President of the General Assembly to resume its meetings upon request from Member States.

(v) Resumed tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly

52. After the submission by the Secretary-General of the report requested under General Assembly resolution ES-10/2, the tenth emergency session was resumed on 15 July 1997 at the request of the Permanent Representative of Egypt, in his capacity as Chairman of the Group of Arab States for the month of July 1997. The Acting Chairman of the Committee, in a letter dated 9 July 1997 addressed to the President of the General Assembly (A/ES-10/10), supported the resumption of the tenth emergency session of the General Assembly.

53. The Chairman of the Committee took part in the debate and made a statement (see A/ES-10/PV.4).

54. At the end of the debate on 15 July 1997, the General Assembly, by a recorded vote of 131 votes in favour to 3 against, with 14 abstentions, adopted resolution ES-10/3.

55. In the resolution, the Assembly, inter alia, reiterated its demand for the immediate and full cessation of the construction of a new settlement at Jabal Abu Ghneim, and demanded that Israel, the occupying Power, immediately cease and reverse all actions taken illegally, in contravention of international law, against Palestinian Jerusalemites. It demanded that Israel, the occupying Power, make available to Member States the necessary information about goods produced or manufactured in the illegal settlements in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem. It recommended that the High Contracting Parties to the Geneva Convention convene a conference on measures to enforce the Convention in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and to ensure its respect, in accordance with common article 1, and requested the Secretary-General to present a report on the matter within three months. It decided to adjourn its tenth emergency special session temporarily and to authorize the President of the most recent General Assembly to resume its meetings upon request from Member States.

(c) Commemoration of the thirtieth anniversary of the occupation by Israel of the Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and other Arab territories

56. On 9 June 1997, the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People convened a special meeting to commemorate the thirtieth anniversary of the occupation by Israel of the Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and other Arab territories.

57. The Secretary-General, the President of the Security Council, and a Vice-President of the General Assembly took part in the special meeting and made statements. Statements by the President of the Palestinian Authority, the Chairmen of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, Organization of the Islamic Conference and Organization of African Unity, the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States and the North American Coordinating Committee of Non-Governmental Organizations on the Question of Palestine were also read out in the meeting by their representatives.

58. A statement was adopted by the Committee on the occasion.¹⁶ The Committee expressed its belief that the current situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory called for a reaffirmation of the commitments of the international community to the objective of achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine, in accordance with international legitimacy and United Nations resolutions.

2. Attendance at international conferences and meetings

59. The Committee, through its Chairman, continued to participate in relevant meetings of intergovernmental bodies, as considered necessary. During the period since its previous report to the General Assembly, the Committee was represented by its Chairman at the sixty-fifth ordinary session of the Council of Ministers of the Organization of African Unity, held at Tripoli from 24 to 28 February 1997; the Twelfth Ministerial Conference of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, held at New Delhi on 7 and 8 April 1997; the sixty-sixth ordinary session of the Council of Ministers and the thirty-third session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), held at Harare from 28 to 30 May 1997 and from 2 to 4 June 1997, respectively.

60. The Chairman of the Committee reported on his participation in the above-mentioned events at the 229th and 231st meetings of the Committee.¹⁷ In his statements, he reviewed recent events in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem and other occupied Arab territories, in particular the continued Israeli statements of intent to expand existing settlements and construct new ones. In that regard, the Chairman in particular deplored the decision of the Government of Israel to construct a new Jewish settlement at Jabal Abu Ghneim.

61. He stated that the Ministers at the Non-Aligned Conference had issued a special declaration, in which they had called upon member States to reconsider the steps that they had taken to normalize relations within Israel in the framework of the peace process, so as to ensure its compliance with the terms of reference of the Madrid Conference, the land-for-peace principle and full implementation of Israel's agreements, undertakings and commitments on all tracks of the peace talks.

62. At the OAU session, matters relating to the situation in the occupied Palestinian territory had been taken up directly in plenary meeting. That meeting had focused, in particular, on Israel's settlement plans in East Jerusalem. The Organization had expressed its grave concern at such violations by Israel of the peace agreements and had called upon the international community to provide the necessary assistance to the Palestinian Authority during the current critical juncture of the peace process.

63. The Heads of State and Government of OAU had adopted two important resolutions, one on the question of Palestine and one on the situation in the Middle East.

64. In its resolution on the question of Palestine, it had reaffirmed the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination and the establishment of an independent State on its national soil, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

3. Action taken by the United Nations bodies, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and intergovernmental organizations

65. The Committee continued to follow with great interest the activities relating to the question of Palestine of United Nations bodies, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and intergovernmental organizations. The Committee noted, in particular, the continued strong support of the international community for the continuation of the peace process on the basis of the agreements already reached between the parties. The Committee took particular note of the following:

(a) Excerpts from the final communiqué adopted by the Supreme Council of the Gulf Cooperation Council at its seventeenth session, held at Doha from 7 to 9 December 1996 (A/51/717-S/1996/1030);

(b) Excerpts from the final communiqué of the fourteenth meeting of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Damascus Declaration States, held at Cairo on 28 and 29 December 1996 (see A/51/768-S/1997/4);

(c) Statement issued on 27 February 1997 by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union on the decision of the Government of Israel to approve construction plans for Har Homa/Jabal Abu Ghneim (A/52/86-S/1997/181, annex);

(d) Statement concerning the expansion of Israeli settlement on occupied Arab land (Jerusalem), issued by the Council of the League of Arab States at its resumed extraordinary session on 1 March 1997 (A/51/816-S/1997/175, annex);

(e) Special declaration on the cause of Palestine, Al-Quds Al-Sharif and the Arab-Israeli conflict, adopted by the Heads of State and Government of the Organization of the Islamic Conference at the extraordinary session of the Islamic Summit, held at Islamabad on 23 March 1997 (see A/51/915-S/1997/433);

(f) Resolutions adopted by the Commission on Human Rights on 26 March 1997, as follows: resolution 1997/1, on the question of the violation of human rights in the occupied Arab territories, including Palestine; resolution 1997/2, on human rights in the occupied Syrian Golan; resolution 1997/3, on Israeli settlements in the occupied Arab territories; resolution 1997/4, on the situation in the occupied Palestine; and resolution 1997/6, on the Middle East peace process;¹⁸

(g) Resolutions on the question of Palestine and the situation in the Middle East, adopted by the League of Arab States at its 107th regular session held on 31 March 1997 (A/51/858-S/1997/281, A/51/859-S/1997/282, A/51/860-S/1997/280, A/51/881-S/1997/327 and A/51/883-S/1997/330);

(h) Excerpts from the final document adopted by the Twelfth Ministerial Conference of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, held at New Delhi on 7 and 8 April 1997 (A/51/912-S/1997/406, annex);

(i) Resolutions on the question of Palestine and on the situation in the Middle East, adopted by the Council of Ministers of the Organization of African Unity at its meeting held at Harare from 28 to 30 May 1997;

(j) Economic and Social Council resolutions 1997/16 of 21 July 1997, on Palestinian women, and 1997/67 of 25 July 1997, on the economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation on the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan;

(k) Statement on the aggressive and abusive decision taken by the Israeli Government against the Palestinian people, adopted by the Council of the League of Arab States at its extraordinary meeting, held at Cairo on 5 August 1997;¹⁹

(l) Statements on Israeli settlements and the closure of the Palestinian territory, adopted by the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination at its meeting held at Geneva, from 18 to 22 August 1997;²⁰

(m) Statement on Israeli actions in the occupied territories, issued by the Subcommission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities on 27 August 1997.²¹

B. Action taken by the Committee and the Division for Palestinian Rights in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 51/23 and 51/24

66. In carrying out its mandated programme of work, the Committee continued to exert all efforts to promote the exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and the effective implementation of the agreements reached between the parties, and to mobilize international support and assistance to the Palestinian people.

67. In accordance with the authorization given to it by the General Assembly in resolution 51/23, the Committee continued to adjust its programme of work in order to make it more relevant and useful in light of developments on the ground, while keeping in mind the continuing financial constraints facing the Organization.

68. In particular, the Committee considered that its programme of seminars and meetings of non-governmental organizations continued to be a useful mechanism for in-depth consideration of priority issues and decided to continue that programme, with a sharpened focus and an increased action orientation.

69. The Committee also decided to continue the other aspects of its programme of work, including the programme of studies and publications of the Division for Palestinian Rights; the training programme for staff of the Palestinian Authority, launched in 1996; and the annual observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, as described below.

70. The Committee, through its Bureau, made efforts to involve additional Member States in its programme of work. In particular, the Bureau held a useful exchange of views with representatives of Luxembourg, the Netherlands and the

United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, on behalf of the European Union, and other representatives of the European Community, on cooperation between the two sides. It was agreed to maintain the contact in the future.

71. The Bureau of the Committee also held consultations with representatives of the secretariats of the League of Arab States and the Organization of the Islamic Conference with a view to organizing jointly an event in early 1998.

72. The Bureau of the Committee agreed with the possibility of making a contribution, from savings achieved in carrying out its programme of work, towards the implementation of the Secretary-General's mandate for the modernization of the land records of Palestine refugees in the custody of the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine. The Bureau requested the Division for Palestinian Rights to study the various aspects, including the financial aspects, of the electronic conversion of the records.

73. The Bureau also held useful and constructive meetings with the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs and the Assistant Secretary-General for Public Information regarding key elements of the implementation of its programme of work.

1. Seminars and meetings of non-governmental organizations

74. In accordance with decisions taken in 1996 with regard to streamlining its programme of meetings, the Committee decided to hold the following meetings in the course of 1997: the annual meeting of consultations with representatives of coordinating committees of non-governmental organizations; an Asian seminar and a symposium of non-governmental organizations; a seminar on assistance to the Palestinian people; the annual North American Symposium of Non-Governmental Organizations; and the annual International Meeting of Non-Governmental Organizations, combined with the European Symposium of Non-Governmental Organizations. The Committee also decided not to hold the remaining meetings programmed for the biennium 1996-1997, and requested the Secretariat to ensure that the resulting savings, to the extent necessary, be used to finance new activities and the further development of the United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine.

(a) Consultations between non-governmental organizations and the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

75. The meeting of consultations with representatives of the International Coordinating Committee of Non-Governmental Organizations on the Question of Palestine, the North American Coordinating Committee of Non-Governmental Organizations on the Question of Palestine, and the European Coordinating Committee of Non-Governmental Organizations on the Question of Palestine was held at United Nations Headquarters on 3 and 4 February 1997. The Bureau of the Committee informed the representatives of non-governmental organizations of recent developments, the position of the Committee and its programme of work for 1997. The representatives of non-governmental organizations informed the Committee of the activities carried out by the coordinating committees and of the non-governmental organization constituency at large. Various aspects of future cooperation between the Committee and the coordinating committees and the non-governmental organization constituency were considered at the meeting.

(b) Asian Seminar and Non-Governmental Organization Symposium
on the Question of Palestine

76. An Asian seminar and a symposium of non-governmental organizations, on the theme "Achieving a just, comprehensive and lasting solution of the question of Palestine - the role of Asia" were held at Jakarta from 4 to 7 May 1997. The Committee expressed its deep appreciation to the Government of Indonesia for providing the venue and for the excellent cooperation afforded the Committee and the Division for Palestinian Rights in the preparation and conduct of that event. The Committee was particularly honoured by the presence of H.E. Mr. Ali Alatas, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Indonesia, at the opening ceremony.

77. In panel discussions, the participants in the Seminar dealt with issues relating to the Middle East peace process; key issues of a just and comprehensive settlement; and the role of Asia in promoting a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the question of Palestine through solidarity and assistance.

78. The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People was represented by a delegation comprising Mr. Ibra Deguène Ka (Senegal), Chairman; Mr. Ravan A. G. Farhadi (Afghanistan), Vice-Chairman of the Committee, who acted as Vice-Chairman and Rapporteur of the meeting; Mr. Slaheddine Abdellah (Tunisia) who also acted as Vice-Chairman; and Mr. Nasser Al-Kidwa (Palestine).

79. Presentations were made by 18 experts from Asia and other regions. Each panel was followed by a discussion open to all participants. Representatives of 56 Governments, 5 United Nations bodies and agencies, 1 intergovernmental organization and 22 non-governmental organizations, as well as special guests of the Government of Indonesia, representatives of the media, of universities and institutes attended the Seminar and the Symposium.

80. In a final document adopted at the conclusion of the meeting, the participants at the Seminar emphasized the significance of the role that the countries of Asia and the Pacific had played, and could continue to play, to bring about a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine, in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions. They emphasized that the countries of the region had an important stake in promoting peace and stability in the Middle East. It was suggested that the Palestinian Authority consider formulating a list of specific economic requests that might be presented to Asian Governments to assist the Palestinian people. It was also suggested that a fund be set up by the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, similar to the Africa Fund, to assist the Palestinian people. The transfer of technology, vocational training, health and housing were mentioned as important areas in which Asian and Pacific countries could extend meaningful support to the Palestinian people. Non-governmental organizations were called upon to undertake a mobilization campaign of Asian public opinion, based on the principles of a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine.

81. The participating non-governmental organizations elected a new coordinating committee for follow-up action in Asia. The report of the meeting was issued as a publication by the Division for Palestinian Rights.

(c) Seminar on assistance to the Palestinian people

82. A seminar on the theme "Palestinian human development needs" was held at Amman from 20 to 22 May 1997. Its round-table meetings discussed sustainable human development as the basis for nation-building; promotion of poverty eradication and sustainable development; and promotion of gender equality and the full participation of women in society.

83. The Committee expressed sincere appreciation to the Government of Jordan for hosting the Seminar and for the excellent arrangements made. The Seminar participants were honoured to hear an opening address by H.E. Dr. Abdullah Ensour, Deputy Prime Minister of Jordan.

84. The Committee was represented by a delegation comprising Mr. Ibra Deguène Ka (Senegal), Chairman; Mr. Eduardo Rodríguez Parrilla (Cuba), Vice-Chairman; Mr. George Saliba (Malta), Rapporteur; Mr. Aloukèo Kittikoun (Lao People's Democratic Republic); and Mr. Nasser Al-Kidwa (Palestine).

85. Sixteen experts from various regions, including Palestinians and one Israeli, presented papers. Representatives of 32 Governments, 3 intergovernmental organizations and 11 United Nations bodies and agencies, as well as of 17 non-governmental organizations, participated in the Seminar.

86. The report of the Seminar (A/52/179-E/1997/76) was submitted to the Secretary-General by the Chairman of the Committee, with the request that it be circulated under respective items of the agendas for the regular session of the Economic and Social Council and the fifty-second session of the General Assembly. The report was also issued as a publication by the Division for Palestinian Rights.

(d) North American Symposium of Non-Governmental Organizations

87. The North American Symposium of Non-Governmental Organizations, with the theme "Thirty years of occupation: looking ahead towards self-determination and Statehood" was held at United Nations Headquarters from 9 to 11 June 1997.

88. Its panel discussions dealt with the key issues of a just and comprehensive settlement; the role of the international community in the transition towards permanent status, and promoting joint action of Palestinian and North American non-governmental organizations in support of the transition to self-determination and statehood. Six workshops were held on related themes to mobilize concrete action by the North American non-governmental organization community.

89. The Committee was represented by its Bureau. Ten panellists presented papers on the different issues and commented on questions and observations. Representatives of 10 Governments, 1 intergovernmental organization and 3 United Nations agencies participated as observers. Representatives of 65 non-governmental organizations, 55 of them accredited to the Committee, participated in the Symposium.

90. Six members of the North American Coordinating Committee of Non-Governmental Organizations were elected at the final session of the Symposium. The report of the Symposium was issued as a publication by the Division for Palestinian Rights.

(e) United Nations International Meeting of Non-Governmental Organizations and European Symposium of Non-Governmental Organizations on the Question of Palestine, Geneva, 25-28 August 1997

91. The United Nations International Meeting of Non-Governmental Organizations and European Symposium of Non-Governmental Organizations on the Question of Palestine, on the theme "Ending thirty years of occupation - the role of non-governmental organizations", was held at Geneva from 25 to 28 August 1997.

92. The Committee was represented by a delegation composed of Mr. Ibra Deguène Ka (Senegal), Chairman; Mr. Ravan A. G. Farhadi (Afghanistan), Vice-Chairman; Mr. George Saliba (Malta), Rapporteur; Mr. Anatoli M. Zlenko (Ukraine); and Mr. Nasser Al-Kidwa (Palestine).

93. The Meeting was attended by 18 panellists and workshop resource persons, and representatives of 107 non-governmental organizations, 15 of them as observers. It was also attended by 31 Governments, 5 intergovernmental organizations, 12 United Nations bodies and agencies, 5 coordinating committees of non-governmental organizations and a delegation of Palestine.

94. In the Plan of Action adopted at the Meeting, the non-governmental organization participants concluded that campaigns by non-governmental organizations at the national and international levels should be primarily focused on ending the Israeli policy of establishing and expanding settlements, supporting the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, including its own State with East Jerusalem as its capital, supporting the rights of the Palestinian refugees to return and/or to compensation, as well as family reunification, and on continuing and intensifying all efforts to assist the Palestinian people in the economic and social fields.

95. The non-governmental organization participants declared, individually and collectively, that they recognized the State of Palestine with borders in conformity with those announced by the Palestine National Council in its Declaration of Independence of 1988. They called upon all non-governmental organizations throughout the world to join them in that solemn declaration and to petition the Governments of their respective nations to recognize the State of Palestine on that basis.

96. At the conclusion of the Meeting, the participants elected the new International Coordinating Committee of Non-Governmental Organizations on the Question of Palestine and the European Coordinating Committee of Non-Governmental Organizations on the Question of Palestine.

97. The report of the joint event, as well as the Plan of Action, will be issued as a publication by the Division for Palestinian Rights.

2. Research, monitoring and publications

98. The Committee continued to attach great importance to the essential contribution of the Division for Palestinian Rights as a centre for research, monitoring, the preparation of studies and the collection and dissemination of information on all issues related to the question of Palestine, and requested the Division to continue its programme of publications, in consultation with the Committee.

99. The Committee noted with appreciation that the Division for Palestinian Rights, in accordance with its mandate, had continued to respond to requests for information and to prepare and disseminate the following publications:

(a) Monthly bulletins covering action by the Committee and other United Nations organs, organizations and agencies, as well as intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and others on the question of Palestine, containing the texts of the relevant resolutions, statements and decisions;

(b) Periodic bulletin entitled "Developments related to the Middle East peace process", containing information on the peace process and the multilateral negotiations on the Middle East regional issues;

(c) A monthly chronological summary of events relating to the question of Palestine, based on media reports and other sources;

(d) Reports of seminars and non-governmental organization meetings organized under the auspices of the Committee;

(e) A special bulletin on the commemoration, in 1996, of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People;

(f) A compilation of relevant resolutions, decisions and statements adopted in 1996 by the General Assembly and the Security Council relating to the question of Palestine.

100. The Committee noted with appreciation that, in response to its request, the Division had completed a study on the status of Jerusalem that would be published in the near future, and that it would continue its work on a draft study on Israeli settlements.

3. United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine

101. The Committee noted that the Division for Palestinian Rights, in cooperation with relevant technical services of the Secretariat, had made substantial progress in the development of the United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine (UNISPAL), as mandated by the General Assembly at the Committee's request. This included the upgrading of its hardware and software, the inclusion in the system of a comprehensive collection of current United Nations documents and some older documentation, the establishment of a database of non-governmental organizations accredited to the Committee, and other initiatives of the Division in making full use of the electronic facility in its monitoring, research and other activities. The Committee also noted that a public replica of the system had been established and had been made available to external users for the second year, and that the Division was making progress in placing some of its documentation on the Internet.

102. While pleased with these developments, particularly the conversion of some 5,000 pages into electronic format through a vendor from outside the United Nations system, the Committee expressed the wish that, in order to fully implement the mandate originally given by the General Assembly in 1991, further conversion of major relevant documents should take place so as to make the database more comprehensive and useful.

4. Training programme for staff of the Palestinian Authority

103. In accordance with the decision of the Committee, two staff members of the Palestinian Authority, one from the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, the other from the Ministry of the Interior, were invited to participate in a pilot training programme at the Division for Palestinian Rights, from September to December 1996, in conjunction with the fifty-first session of the General Assembly. Owing to unavoidable circumstances, one of the trainees had to leave before completing the programme. The other was extended through January 1997.

104. In the course of their training, the officials familiarized themselves with the various facets of the work of the United Nations and acquired useful insight into the functioning of various United Nations bodies and entities, the Secretariat, as well as the United Nations information activities. The trainees also attended meetings of selected committees and bodies of the United Nations, and conducted research.

105. The Committee considered that the training programme was beneficial and useful for the staff of the Palestinian Authority, in particular its young professionals, and decided to maintain this activity, in cooperation with the Permanent Observer Mission of Palestine to the United Nations. The Committee was also of the view that the Division for Palestinian Rights provided valuable day-to-day guidance and supervision to the officials of the Palestinian Authority in their training programme at United Nations Headquarters.

5. International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People

106. The International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People was observed on 29 November 1996 at United Nations Headquarters and at the United Nations Office at Geneva and at Vienna. On the occasion of the observance, in addition to other activities, an exhibit of Palestinian handicrafts in the occupied territory, entitled "Preserving the Legacy, A New Dawn of Hope", was provided at Headquarters by the Permanent Observer Mission of Palestine to the United Nations and presented under the auspices of the Committee. The Committee noted with appreciation that the International Day had also been observed in many other cities throughout the world. Details on the observance are contained in the special bulletin issued by the Division.

107. In adopting its programme of work, the Committee decided that a similar commemorative programme would be organized in connection with the observance of the Day in 1997.

VI. ACTION TAKEN BY THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INFORMATION IN
ACCORDANCE WITH GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 51/25

108. The Department of Public Information continued to provide press coverage, in English and French, of all meetings held at Headquarters and of United Nations bodies dealing with the question of Palestine, including the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. Coverage in English and French was also provided to the seminars and symposia held under the auspices of the Committee at Jakarta, Amman and Geneva. Press releases were issued on the text of the statements by the Secretary-General.

109. From September 1996 to August 1997, the Dissemination Unit of the Department responded to a number of information requests and utilized the electronic mail to disseminate material.

110. The Public Inquiries Unit responded to requests for information concerning Middle East issues, including the question of Palestine. The Group Programme Unit organized briefings on the question of Palestine and the Middle East for students and other groups. In addition, the subject was included in the presentation made to visitors taking guided tours, as appropriate.

111. The non-governmental organization sections of the Department continued to disseminate relevant information material, as well as video programmes, to the non-governmental organization community in New York and at Geneva and Vienna.

112. The United Nations Dag Hammarskjöld Library and the depositary libraries continued to disseminate material, documents and press releases on the activities on the Committee.

113. The quarterly UN Chronicle has continued its comprehensive coverage of issues related to the question of Palestine, including relevant action taken by the General Assembly and Security Council, as well as special meetings, symposia and seminars. The publications The United Nations and the Question of Palestine and For the Rights of the Palestinians: The Work of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People continue to be comprehensive sources of historical information. These publications and the poster entitled "Self-determination: an inalienable right of the Palestinian people" were made available in all languages of the United Nations.

114. The Radio and Central News Service covered extensively all aspects of the question of Palestine and related issues in daily news bulletins, weekly current affairs magazines and feature programmes in official and non-official languages for dissemination throughout the world.

115. The Media Division undertook a video taping mission to the Palestinian territories and completed a programme on: (a) Palestinian television with special emphasis on the broadcasters trained by the Department of Public Information; (b) a rehabilitation project of youth centres in Gaza sponsored by the United Nations Development Programme; and (c) training and income-generating programmes for women, sponsored by UNRWA. Videos are being produced for "UN in Action", "CNN World Report" and "1997 Year in Review".

116. As requested by the Committee, video footage on the question of Palestine since 1945 to date has been researched and compiled. Work is under way to establish a small section in the video library devoted to the question of Palestine.

117. The Department, in cooperation with the Government of Greece, organized an international seminar on the theme "The peace process: the challenges ahead", which was held at Athens on 26 and 27 May 1997. The Seminar brought together Palestinian and Israeli media representatives. Participating in the Seminar also were academics and experts on the political and economic development of the Middle East, officials of the Palestinian Authority, and senior journalists representing prominent media organizations from the United States of America, Europe, Africa, Asia and Latin America. Representatives of Member States and States members of specialized agencies based at Athens participated in the Seminar as observers. The Seminar discussed the status of the peace process and the implementation of peace agreements. Final status negotiations and the economic situation in the region were also discussed.

118. After the Seminar, a fact-finding news mission of eight international journalists visited Cairo and Amman and held meetings with high-ranking officials of the Governments of Egypt and Jordan. It also held meetings with the local press corps.

119. From 15 September to 9 November 1996, the Department organized a training programme at Headquarters for a group of 10 Palestinian media practitioners to strengthen their professional capacity as information media personnel.

120. The Department, in cooperation with the Division for Palestinian Rights, promoted the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People and provided assistance for the special exhibit mounted in the public lobby of the General Assembly building, entitled, "Preserving the Legacy, A New Dawn of Hope".

121. The global network of United Nations information centres and services actively promoted the central issues relating to the question of Palestine, organizing media activities and special events, producing newsletters and regularly disseminating relevant information materials made available from Headquarters. In many cases, the material disseminated was translated into local languages.

122. The observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People presented special opportunities for cooperating with local non-governmental organizations in organizing joint events and programmes to draw attention to the issue of Palestinian rights. Both print and electronic media coverage of this event in most of these countries were extensive. Panel discussions and forums were among several activities organized by the United Nations information centres at Harare and Prague. The centre at Harare organized a forum on the theme "Searching for peace", in cooperation with the Palestinian Ministry of Social Welfare, the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization and a panel of Zimbabwean academics. With the support of the Czech-Arabic Friendship Society, the centre at Prague organized a panel discussion focusing on the economic issues involved in the Middle East peace process, the impact of border closures and the activities of the United Nations system. The United Nations information centre at Pretoria, in cooperation with the African National Congress and the Government of South Africa, honoured the observance of the Day. Other activities included an exhibition of paintings dedicated to the peace process, organized by the information centre at Rabat, and the dedication of the weekly television programme of the information centre at Ouagadougou to the question of Palestine. Film screenings were arranged by the information centre at Tokyo, which produced a Japanese-language version of the United Nations video "Palestine: 1890s-1990s", and the centre at Brazzaville, which organized a special screening of the film "Oui, les

Palestiniens ont des droits", for teachers in the Department of History at the Lycée Chaminade.

123. Three United Nations meetings dealing with the question of Palestine received special attention from select United Nations information centres. The information centre at Cairo and the information service at Amman provided press coverage and logistical support for the United Nations seminar on assistance to the Palestinian People on the theme "Palestinian human development needs", which was held at Amman. The centre at Cairo also provided logistical and information support for visiting members of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories. The information centre at Athens played a key role in the organization of a Department of Public Information seminar for journalists on the question of Palestine on the theme "The peace process: challenges ahead", which was held at Athens. The information centre at Jakarta provided organizational support to the Division for Palestinian Rights and mounted an exhibit for the United Nations Asian seminar and Non-Governmental Organization Symposium on the Question of Palestine held at Jakarta, while the information service at Bangkok provided press coverage.

VII. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COMMITTEE

124. The year 1997 marked the thirtieth anniversary of the occupation of the Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem and other Arab territories, by Israel. The year also marked the fiftieth anniversary of the adoption of General Assembly resolution 181 (II), in which the Assembly decided on the partitioning of Palestine and called for the establishment of independent Jewish and Arab States and a special international regime for Jerusalem. It was also 10 years since the beginning of the intifada, the Palestinian uprising which helped create the conditions for the peace process. Mindful of these milestones in the history of dispossession and suffering of the Palestinian people, the Committee urges the international community to redouble its efforts in support of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, the key to a just and lasting peace.

125. The signing of the Declaration of Principles in September 1993 by Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization created a dramatic turning point in the search for peace in the Middle East, leading to the emergence of a new reality on the ground, enabling the Palestinian people to take its first steps towards independence and opening new possibilities for cooperation among the peoples of the region. The Committee considers it essential for the international community to intensify its efforts in support of the historic process of reconciliation between the two sides and for the effective implementation of the agreements reached and for the resumption of all aspects of the negotiations on the agreed basis.

126. The Committee expresses its greatest concern and anguish that the hopes ushered in by initial positive developments were not carried through in the year under review and that the peace process itself appeared increasingly in jeopardy, leading to an alarming exacerbation of tension and violence on the ground, resulting in loss of life on both sides. The Committee believes that the harsh economic measures taken against the occupied Palestinian territory, including the prolonged blockade, are a form of collective punishment in contravention of the Fourth Geneva Convention and the agreements reached, and calls for their end in the interests of restoring mutual confidence and promoting peace.

127. Especially worrisome were actions taken by Israel to strengthen its control over occupied East Jerusalem, such as the opening of a new entrance to the tunnel near Al Aqsa Mosque, the withdrawal of Jerusalem identity cards, the destruction of buildings, and the intensified efforts to establish Jewish settlements in the old city. The resumption of construction and expansion of settlements throughout the occupied territory, including Jerusalem, and statements made by the Government in that regard caused increasing fears for future prospects of achieving a just peace and the Palestinian right to self-determination.

128. The Committee deplores the decision by the Government of Israel to approve the construction of a new Jewish settlement at Jabal Abu Ghneim, south of East Jerusalem, and its decision to begin and proceed with construction in spite of the unanimous expression of opposition by the international community. The Committee fully supports the recommendations made by the General Assembly in resolutions ES-10/2 and ES-10/3, in particular for the convening of a conference of the High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention to consider measures to enforce the Convention in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem, and to ensure its respect, in accordance with common

article 1. The Committee will continue to remain engaged in the follow-up to the recommendations of the Assembly and to promote the necessary action.

129. The Committee calls for the reinjection of momentum into the stalled Middle East peace process and for the implementation of the agreements reached between the Government of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization. In this regard, it notes with appreciation the increased involvement in efforts to bring about the resumption of the bilateral negotiations by the co-sponsors of the peace process, as well as the European Union. The Committee is also appreciative of the resilient efforts with which a number of world leaders contributed to the task of restarting the peace process.

130. The Committee reaffirms that the United Nations has a permanent responsibility with respect to the question of Palestine until a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement is reached. The Committee reiterates that the involvement of the United Nations in the peace process, both as the guardian of international legitimacy and in the mobilization and provision of international assistance, is essential for the successful outcome of the peace efforts. As the organ of the General Assembly established to deal with the question of Palestine, the Committee believes that its role continues to be useful and necessary during the transitional period and until a satisfactory final settlement is achieved.

131. The Committee reaffirms that such a settlement must be based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), the withdrawal of Israel from the Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and other Arab territories occupied since 1967, the principle of exchange of land for peace and the exercise by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights, in particular the right to self-determination. The Committee also insists that, during the interim period, Israel must recognize and respect its obligations as the occupying Power under the Fourth Geneva Convention.

132. While remaining firm on these positions of principle, the Committee has continued to make adjustments in its approach and programme of work, taking into account the new realities, in order to make a concrete contribution to promoting the implementation of the agreements reached and to mobilize international assistance to the Palestinian people. The Committee invites the General Assembly once again to recognize the importance of its role and to reconfirm its mandate with overwhelming support.

133. The Committee wishes to express its great appreciation to those States that have supported its work and facilitated the organization of events held under the Committee's auspices. The Committee believes that, in the light of the new situation and the constructive position of the Committee, as reflected in its programme of work, the time has come for all States to recognize the valuable contribution that it can make as a forum for dialogue, analysis, exchange of expertise, mobilization of public opinion and action in support of the peace efforts and the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, as well as its socio-economic development. The Committee considers that a broadening of its membership to include countries that support its objectives but have not hitherto participated in its work, would greatly enhance the contribution of the General Assembly to promoting peace at this important stage.

134. The Committee considers that its programme of seminars in the various regions has played a useful role in informing and mobilizing public opinion, promoting the exchange of experience and expertise among participants from the various regions and Palestinians and Israelis, and in promoting increased

involvement by Governments in the search for a just and comprehensive solution to the conflict. The annual convening of a seminar devoted specifically to issues related to the economic and social challenges facing the Palestinian people during the transitional period has proved very useful and the Committee intends to continue this practice in order to give the international donor community, including United Nations bodies and agencies, the opportunity to exchange views with representatives of the Palestinian Authority and internationally renowned experts on relevant issues.

135. In view of the current serious situation in the occupied Palestinian territories, including Jerusalem, the Committee intends to encourage renewed, intensified efforts by non-governmental organizations to organize and coordinate sustained campaigns in order to inform public opinion and to promote national and international action in support of United Nations resolutions and the Committee's objectives. It plans to continue its programme of meetings of non-governmental organizations in the various regions with a view to providing the non-governmental organization constituency with a periodic analysis of political developments, a forum for an exchange of views and experience, as well as for planning and coordinating specific activities of non-governmental organizations.

136. The Committee emphasizes the essential contribution of the Division for Palestinian Rights as a centre for research, monitoring, the preparation of studies and the collection and dissemination of information on all issues related to the question of Palestine. The Committee requests the Division to continue its programme of publications, in consultation with the Committee, and to pay particular attention to finalizing the proposed study on settlements during the coming year. The Committee notes with appreciation the further progress made by the Division in developing the United Nations computer-based Information System on the Question of Palestine and calls for continuing efforts to include all relevant documentation in the system.

137. Noting further the successful continuation in the Division of the project for the training of staff of the Palestinian Authority in the workings of the United Nations system, the Committee requests the Division to continue this exercise in the future.

138. The Committee will continue, especially during the transitional period and until a fair, satisfactory solution is achieved, to strive to achieve maximum effectiveness in the implementation of its mandate and to adjust its work programme in the light of developments in order to continue to contribute, to the extent possible, to the realization of the common United Nations objective of achieving a just and lasting solution to the question of Palestine.

Notes

¹ Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 47/1 of 22 September 1992, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia did not participate in the work of the Committee.

² Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-first Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/31/35).

³ Ibid., Thirty-second Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/32/35); ibid., Thirty-third Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/33/35); ibid., Thirty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/34/35 and Corr.1); ibid., Thirty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/35/35); ibid., Thirty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/36/35); ibid., Thirty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/37/35 and Corr.1); ibid., Thirty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/38/35); ibid., Thirty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/39/35); ibid., Fortieth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/40/35); ibid., Forty-first Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/41/35); ibid., Forty-second Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/42/35); ibid., Forty-third Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/43/35); ibid., Forty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/44/35); ibid., Forty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/45/35); ibid., Forty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/46/35); ibid., Forty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/47/35); ibid., Forty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/48/35); ibid., Forty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/49/35); ibid., Fiftieth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/50/35); and ibid., Fifty-first Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/51/35).

⁴ A/48/486-S/26560, annex; see Official Records of the Security Council, Forty-eighth Year, Supplement for October, November and December 1993, document S/26560.

⁵ The observers at the Committee meetings were as follows: Algeria, Bangladesh, Bulgaria, China, Ecuador, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Mauritania, Morocco, Nicaragua, Niger, Qatar, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Syrian Arab Republic, United Arab Emirates, Viet Nam, the League of Arab States and the Organization of the Islamic Conference. Palestine, represented by the PLO as the representative of the Palestinian people, was also an observer.

⁶ The membership of the Working Group was as follows: Afghanistan, Belarus, Cuba, Guinea, Guyana, India, Malta, Pakistan, Senegal, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine and Palestine, represented by the Palestine Liberation Organization as the representative of the people directly concerned.

⁷ A/AC.183/1996/CRP.1.

⁸ See press release GA/PAL/739.

⁹ See press release GA/PAL/742.

¹⁰ United Nations, Treaty Series, vol. 75, No. 973.

¹¹ See press release GA/PAL/766.

¹² See S/PV.3745.

¹³ S/1997/199.

¹⁴ S/1997/235.

¹⁵ S/1997/241.

¹⁶ A/AC.183/SR.230.

¹⁷ See A/AC.183/SR.229 and A/AC.183/SR.231.

¹⁸ See Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1997, Supplement No. 3 (E/1997/23-E/CN.14/1997/150), chap. II, sect. A.

¹⁹ S/1997/623.

²⁰ See press releases HR/CERD/97/53 and HR/CERD/97/60.

²¹ See press release HR/SC/97/31.



United Nations

Report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

General Assembly
Official Records
Fifty-third session
Supplement No. 35 (A/53/35)

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**Report of the Committee on the
Exercise of the Inalienable Rights
of the Palestinian People**



United Nations • New York, 1998

Note

Symbols of United Nations documents are composed of capital letters combined with figures. Mention of such a symbol indicates a reference to a United Nations document.

Contents

<i>Chapter</i>	<i>Paragraphs</i>	<i>Page</i>
Letter of transmittal		iv
I. Introduction	1–5	1
II. Mandate of the Committee	6–9	1
III. Organization of work	10–14	2
A. Membership and officers	10–12	2
B. Participation in the work of the Committee	13–14	2
IV. Review of the situation relating to the question of Palestine	15–25	2
V. Action taken by the Committee	26–72	4
A. Action taken in accordance with General Assembly resolution 52/49	26–38	4
1. Action in the Security Council and the General Assembly	27–35	4
2. Participation by the Chairman of the Committee in international conferences and meetings	36–38	6
B. Action taken by the Committee and the Division for Palestinian Rights in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 52/49 and 52/50	39–72	7
1. Conference in Support of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People	43–47	8
2. Seminars and meetings of non-governmental organizations	48–64	8
3. Research, monitoring and publications	65–67	10
4. United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine	68–69	10
5. Training programme for staff of the Palestinian Authority	70	11
6. International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People	71–72	11
VI. Action taken by the Department of Public Information in accordance with General Assembly resolution 52/51	73–85	11
VII. Conclusions and recommendations of the Committee	86–94	13

Letter of transmittal

4 November 1998

Mr. Secretary-General,

After more than half a century of dispossession of the Palestinian people and at the threshold of a new millennium, it is more important than ever to promote rapid further progress in the peace process. The question of Palestine has reached a crossroads, and many crucial decisions will be made at the fifty-third session of the General Assembly and in the months to come. The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and its Bureau have devoted much thought to ways in which to implement the mandate of the Committee in the most effective and useful manner, in order not only to strengthen international solidarity with the Palestinian people to bring about the realization of its inalienable rights but also to revitalize the spirit of reconciliation and cooperation that is so essential to the achievement of a lasting solution.

The Committee salutes your contribution to the promotion of a just and comprehensive settlement and to the improvement of economic prospects and cooperation throughout the region. The Committee pledges itself to intensify its own efforts in support of those undertaken by the international community to bring about an end to this conflict which has bedevilled the United Nations, cost countless lives and drained the resources of the region for such a long time.

In the hope that our work will make a constructive contribution to the deliberations of the General Assembly, I have the honour to enclose herewith the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for submission to the General Assembly in accordance with paragraph 5 of Assembly resolution 52/49 of 9 December 1997. We especially draw your attention to the conclusions and recommendations of the Committee, contained in paragraphs 86 to 94 of its report.

The report covers the period from 5 November 1997 to 4 November 1998.

Accept, Sir, the assurances of my highest consideration.

(Signed) Ibra Deguène **Ka**
Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of
the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

His Excellency
Mr. Kofi Annan
Secretary-General of the United Nations

Chapter I. Introduction

1. The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People was established by the General Assembly in resolution 3376 (XXX) of 10 November 1975, with the task of recommending a programme designed to enable the Palestinian people to exercise its inalienable rights as recognized by the Assembly in resolution 3236 (XXIX) of 22 November 1974.

2. The recommendations made by the Committee in its first report¹ were endorsed by the Assembly as a basis for the solution to the question of Palestine. In its subsequent reports,² the Committee has continued to stress that a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, must be based on the relevant United Nations resolutions and the following essential principles: the withdrawal of Israel from the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, and from the other occupied Arab territories; respect for the right of all States in the region to live in peace within secure and internationally recognized boundaries; and the recognition and exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, primarily the right to self-determination. The Committee's recommendations could not be implemented, and the Assembly each year renewed the Committee's mandate and requested it to intensify its efforts in pursuit of its objectives.

3. The Committee welcomed the historic breakthrough in the peace process in 1993 and the subsequent establishment of new realities on the ground as important steps towards the achievement of a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine, based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). At the same time, the Committee continued to work towards the full realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including the right to self-determination and to its own independent State, and to mobilize the needed international assistance and solidarity during the transitional period.

4. The stalemate in the peace process, which has continued during most of the past year despite the efforts by the co-sponsors and other interested parties to re-inject momentum into the negotiations, has caused extreme concern. In that regard, the Committee welcomed the signing, on 23 October 1998, of the Wye River Memorandum and expressed the hope that it would clear the way for further progress in the Israeli-Palestinian peace negotiations. The Committee, however, has joined the international community in condemning the intensification of the policies and practices

of occupation which are not only in violation of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949 (the Fourth Geneva Convention),³ and Security Council resolutions, but are also contrary to the spirit and the letter of the peace process, pose grave obstacles to its continuation and fuel mistrust, tension and violence by extremists.

5. Despite the glimmer of hope currently on the horizon, the Committee believes that the exacerbation of the situation on the ground calls for the redoubling of efforts by all concerned in order to ensure respect for international law and United Nations resolutions, and a speedy return to full and comprehensive negotiations and cooperation between the parties. As the organ of the General Assembly dealing with the question of Palestine, the Committee has supported, and participated actively in, all recent multilateral initiatives in this regard and intends to continue to do so to the best of its abilities.

Chapter II. Mandate of the Committee

6. The mandate of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People was again renewed by the General Assembly in resolution 52/49 of 9 December 1997, in which the Assembly, *inter alia*: (a) endorsed the recommendations of the Committee⁴ and requested it to continue to keep under review the situation relating to the question of Palestine and to report and make suggestions to the Assembly or the Security Council, as appropriate; (b) authorized the Committee to continue to exert all efforts to promote the exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, and to report thereon to the Assembly at its fifty-third session and thereafter; and (c) requested the Committee to continue to extend its cooperation to non-governmental organizations in their contribution towards heightening international awareness of the facts relating to the question of Palestine.

7. In its resolution 52/50 of 9 December 1997, on the Division for Palestinian Rights of the United Nations Secretariat, the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to continue to provide the Division with the necessary resources, including those required for the further development of the United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine, and to ensure that it continues to discharge the tasks detailed in previous resolutions.

8. In its resolution 52/51 of 9 December 1997, on the special information programme on the question of Palestine, the Assembly requested the Department of Public Information of the United Nations Secretariat, in full cooperation and coordination with the Committee, to continue, with the necessary flexibility as may be required by developments affecting the question of Palestine, its special information programme for the biennium 1998–1999, with particular emphasis on public opinion in Europe and North America.

9. In carrying out its programme of work, the Committee also took into account General Assembly resolution 52/52 of 9 December 1997, in which the Assembly, *inter alia*, reaffirmed the necessity of achieving a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine in all its aspects, expressed its full support for the ongoing peace process, and stressed the need for the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, primarily the right to self-determination; the need for the withdrawal of Israel from the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967; and the need for resolving the problem of the Palestine refugees.

Chapter III.

Organization of work

A. Membership and officers

10. By General Assembly decision 52/317 of 9 December 1997, South Africa and Namibia were appointed members of the Committee, increasing the membership to 25. The Committee was encouraged by this expression of growing support for its work. The Committee is accordingly composed of the following Member States: Afghanistan, Belarus, Cuba, Cyprus, Guinea, Guyana, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mali, Malta, Namibia, Nigeria, Pakistan, Romania, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine and Yugoslavia.⁵

11. At its 235th meeting, on 5 February 1998, the Committee re-elected Ibra Deguène Ka (Senegal) as Chairman, and re-elected Ravan A. G. Farhâdi (Afghanistan) and Bruno Eduardo Rodríguez Parrilla (Cuba) as Vice-Chairmen and George Saliba (Malta) as Rapporteur.

12. At the same meeting, the Committee adopted its programme of work for 1998.⁶

B. Participation in the work of the Committee

13. As in previous years, the Committee reconfirmed that all States Members and Permanent Observers to the United Nations desiring to participate in the work of the Committee as observers were welcome to do so. In 1998, the Committee again welcomed as observers all the States and organizations that had participated in its work in the preceding year.⁷

14. In accordance with established practice, the Permanent Observer of Palestine participated in the work of the Committee as an observer, attended all its meetings and made observations and proposals for consideration by the Committee and its Bureau. In that regard, the Committee took note with satisfaction of the adoption by the General Assembly, by an overwhelming vote in favour, of resolution 52/250 of 7 July 1998 on the participation of Palestine in the work of the United Nations, which conferred upon Palestine additional rights and privileges of participation in the sessions and work of the General Assembly and the international conferences convened under the auspices of the Assembly or other organs of the United Nations, as well as in United Nations conferences.

Chapter IV.

Review of the situation relating to the question of Palestine

15. Pursuant to its mandate, the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People continued to keep under review the situation relating to the question of Palestine and, in particular, to monitor the situation in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and the developments in the peace process.

16. The Committee followed closely and with increasing concern the efforts made throughout the year to restart the peace process. In the Committee's view, the reluctance of the Government of Israel to abide by the existing agreements precluded the possibility of a constructive dialogue and the continuation of the peace process in accordance with the agreed timetable. Essential aspects of the agreements, such as further Israeli withdrawals from the West Bank, safe passage between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, the Gaza airport and seaport, and the release of prisoners, remained unimplemented in the year under review. The Committee welcomed the signing at Wye Mills, Maryland, United States of America, on 23 October 1998, of the Wye River Memorandum and accompanying documents, which provided,

inter alia, for: further Israeli redeployment from 13 per cent of the West Bank; the steps to be taken by the parties in the area of security; the renewal of negotiations on safe passage between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip; the agreement to address without delay the issue of the Port of Gaza; and the commitment to resume permanent status negotiations. The Committee viewed the conclusion of this agreement as an important breakthrough in the efforts to restart the peace process. The Committee also expressed the hope that the Memorandum would be implemented in full and would restore the atmosphere of trust and confidence between the parties, enabling them to move without delay to the permanent status negotiations.

17. One of the principal stumbling blocks to the peace process has been the growth of settlements throughout the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, in pursuance of the stated policy of the Government of Israel. To encourage settlement, prospective settlers are offered various incentives in the form of low-rate loans, favourable purchase prices and grants. In addition to the expansion of existing settlements, new ones have been or are being established. According to reports, these included, in late November 1997, a new settlement known as "Oranim" in the "Modi'in" block, west of Ramallah; in June 1998, a new settlement known as "Hadar Betar", south of Bethlehem, as well as approval for the construction of 150 new housing units in "Kiryat Arba", east of Hebron; allocation by the Knesset Finance Committee of some US\$24 million for the construction of 400 new units in village settlements, which are essentially new areas on the outskirts of existing settlements; and approval by the Ministry of Defence of the transfer of 150 mobile homes to the settlements of "Dolev", "Neve Tzuf" and "Shavut Rachel", in response to a campaign by settlers against further Israeli redeployment in the West Bank. In late July 1998, the Civil Administration approved the construction of a new neighbourhood of 200 units in "Kiryat Arba". Further housing units, including mobile homes, were added to a number of other settlements, in particular near Nablus and in the area of Hebron still under occupation, where clashes between settlers and Palestinians have generated increasing tension. It was reported in August 1998 that 5,235 new units were under construction throughout the occupied territory.

18. Of particular concern are settlement activities in and around Jerusalem, where Palestinian residency rights are also under increasing threat. It has been estimated that, as at February 1998, up to 15,000 identity cards of Palestinian Jerusalemites may have been confiscated. In June 1998, an extremist settler group took over 4 housing units and a plot of land in the Silwan neighbourhood. Also in early June, the

Ministry of the Interior approved the construction of 58 units in the area of the Mount of Olives. At the end of August 1998, the Israeli authorities gave final approval for the construction of 132 units in the Ras al-Amud neighbourhood of the city. On Jabal Abu Ghneim, the infrastructure stage of construction of the "Har Homa" settlement has been completed and the Government has declared that building is soon to begin. A plan for strengthening Israel's control over Jerusalem was announced in June, with the creation of a Greater Jerusalem umbrella municipality with administrative powers over an enlarged area encompassing nearby towns in Israel and a number of settlements in the West Bank, with the stated purpose of linking them and strengthening the Jewish majority in the entire area.

19. Reflecting the intensification of settlement activities, it was reported that the settler population in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip grew by 3.3 per cent, to a total of 169,339 in the first six months of 1998, with 163,173 settlers in the West Bank and 6,166 in the Gaza Strip. In addition, some 180,000 settlers are estimated to be living in the Jerusalem area. The situation is further aggravated by the accelerated pace of demolition of Palestinian houses by the Israeli authorities. Since the beginning of 1998, some 112 Palestinian homes have been demolished in the West Bank and 14 in East Jerusalem, resulting in the displacement of over 440 Palestinians. As at August 1998, some 1,800 Palestinian homes were reportedly targeted for demolition and were being destroyed at the rate of about one a day.

20. The presence of settlements further exacerbates an already tense situation because of the provocative actions of extremist and armed settler groups. On numerous occasions, settlers have moved illegally into Palestinian areas, forcefully occupying housing or beginning the construction of new housing under Israeli police protection. Violent confrontations with Palestinian civilians have often ensued. The Temporary International Presence in Hebron, the international observer force set up in 1994, has expressed concern at the aggressive behaviour of settlers in the city and their increased verbal and physical attacks against Palestinians and their property. On 11 June 1998, the Israeli army authorized the creation of civil defence militias which operate alongside Israeli police and security forces inside settlements in the West Bank, beginning with the largest settlements of "Ma'ale Adumim" and "Givat Ze'ev" near Jerusalem, and "Ariel" south of Nablus.

21. Another issue of great concern to the Committee is the continued imprisonment of a large number of Palestinians in Israel (a total of 3,228 as at August 1998, to whom must be added Palestinians held under administrative detention or jailed in facilities run by the Israeli Defence Forces).

Information reviewed by the human rights treaty bodies indicates that the Israeli authorities have continued to use psychological and physical torture against Palestinian detainees, resulting in a considerable deterioration of their health. In that regard, the Committee called upon Israel to respect its obligations under human rights treaties and the Fourth Geneva Convention and to release the prisoners in implementation of the bilateral agreements signed to date.

22. The Committee observed with great concern that, during the year, the Palestinian economy continued to suffer, in particular owing to the prolonged closures of the West Bank and Gaza Strip and the resulting fragmentation of the territory under the Palestinian Authority, which restricted the movement of workers and goods, caused growing hardships and led to a decline in output, exports, investment and income. Economic conditions in the Gaza Strip were particularly precarious, with an unemployment rate of some 30 per cent. Unemployment in the West Bank was around 20 per cent. Overall, there had been a steady deterioration of the Palestinian economy since the signing of the 1993 agreement, with gross national product per capita declining by at least 20 per cent in real terms.

23. The Committee also expressed concern at the reports of water shortages in the occupied Palestinian territory, which were seriously harming Palestinian agriculture and causing severe difficulties, particularly in view of the fact that Israel continues to control and utilize Palestinian water resources freely for its own needs and those of the settlements. Increasing industrial pollution, including groundwater pollution, resulting from Israeli industrial activity in the occupied territory also emerged as an issue for concern. While noting with appreciation that some donor countries had agreed to finance a major drilling project in the southern West Bank, the Committee considered that ultimately only the restoration of the rights of Palestinians to their own natural resources would resolve this serious problem.

24. The Committee was encouraged to note that, despite the growing difficulties faced by the Palestinian economy, the international donor community had continued to make sustained and determined efforts to meet emergency needs and to promote the economic and social development of the Palestinian people. The Committee also welcomed the continued assistance rendered to the Palestinian people by the United Nations family of organizations. It also noted with appreciation the continuing essential role played by the United Nations Special Coordinator in the Occupied Territories in serving as a focal point for coordinating and channelling the varied types of assistance provided by the United Nations to the Palestinian people.

25. The Committee also welcomed the important work carried out by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) in providing relief and social services to Palestinian refugees in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The Committee expressed great concern, however, at the considerable deficit in the Agency's budget and the continued decline in the level of service delivered to Palestinian refugees. In the light of this, the Committee reiterated its call for stepped up international support for the vital humanitarian activities of UNRWA.

Chapter V.

Action taken by the Committee

A. Action taken in accordance with General Assembly resolution 52/49

26. In pursuance of its mandate and in response to the worsening situation with regard to prospects for a just and comprehensive settlement of the question of Palestine, the Committee multiplied its efforts to mobilize the international community in support of the Palestinian people, in cooperation with United Nations bodies, intergovernmental organizations, Governments, non-governmental organizations and others, as indicated below.

1. Action in the Security Council and the General Assembly

(a) Resumed tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly

27. The Chairman and members of the Committee participated actively in the second and third resumption of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly dealing with the item entitled "Illegal Israeli actions in occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory". Following the issuance of the report of the Secretary-General (A/ES-10/16-S/1997/798 and Add.1), pursuant to General Assembly resolution ES-10/3 of 15 July 1997, the emergency special session was reconvened on 13 November 1997 at the request of the Permanent Representative of Yemen, in his capacity as Chairman of the Arab Group for the month of October 1997, the Permanent Representative of Indonesia, in his capacity as Chairman of the Islamic Group of the Organization of the Islamic Conference in New York, and the Permanent Representative of Colombia, in his capacity as Chairman of the Coordinating Bureau of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

28. The Chairman of the Committee took part in the debate and made a statement in which he called upon the Assembly to express the position and will of the international community in a clear and forthright manner, and to adopt measures that would restore respect for international legitimacy and thus help to move the process forward (A/ES-10/PV.6).

29. At the end of the debate, the General Assembly, by a recorded vote of 139 to 3, with 13 abstentions, adopted resolution ES-10/4 of 13 November 1997, in which it condemned the failure of the Government of Israel to comply with the provisions of two previous resolutions; reiterated its recommendation for the convening of a conference of the High Contracting Parties to the Geneva Convention on measures to enforce the Convention in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem; recommended to the Government of Switzerland, in its capacity as the depositary of the Geneva Convention, to undertake the necessary steps, including the convening of a meeting of experts, as soon as possible and with a target date not later than the end of February 1998; called for reinjecting momentum into the stalled Middle East peace process and for the implementation of the agreements reached between the Government of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization, as well as for the upholding of the principles of the process, including the exchange of land for peace; and decided to adjourn its tenth emergency special session temporarily and to authorize the President of the most recent General Assembly to resume its meetings upon request from Member States.

30. The tenth emergency special session was again reconvened on 17 March 1998 at the request of the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic in his capacity as the Chairman of the Arab Group for the month of March 1998, and by the Permanent Representative of Colombia in his capacity as Chairman of the Coordinating Bureau of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries. The Acting Chairman of the Committee took part in the debate and made a statement in which he called upon the Government of Israel to comply with the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention and the recommendations of the General Assembly, and to cooperate fully in the preparatory work aimed at the convening of the meeting of experts and the proposed conference of High Contracting Parties (A/ES-10/PV.8).

31. At the end of the debate, the General Assembly, by a recorded vote of 120 to 3, with 5 abstentions, adopted resolution A/RES/ES-10/5 of 17 March 1998, in which it reiterated its condemnation of the failure of the Government of Israel to comply with the provisions of previous resolutions; reiterated all of the demands made in those

resolutions and stressed the necessity of the full and immediate implementation by Israel, the occupying Power, of those demands; reiterated once again its recommendation concerning the convening of a conference on measures to enforce the Fourth Geneva Convention in the Occupied Palestinian Territory; reiterated its recommendation to the Government of Switzerland to undertake the necessary preparatory steps with regard to the convening of such a conference, including the convening of a meeting of experts; decided to extend the target date for the convening of the meeting of experts until the end of April 1998; and decided to adjourn the tenth emergency special session temporarily and to authorize the President of the most recent General Assembly to resume its meeting upon request from Member States.

(b) Security Council meeting, 30 June 1998

32. Following the decision by the Government of Israel to further expand the boundaries of Jerusalem and create an umbrella municipality that would include a number of settlements in the West Bank, the Security Council, at the request of the Permanent Representative of the Sudan, in his capacity as the Chairman of the Group of Arab States for the month of June 1998, held two meetings on 30 June 1998 to consider the situation in the occupied Arab territories. The Chairman of the Committee intervened in the debate, expressing the hope that the Security Council would take timely measures, with the support of the sponsors of the peace process, to put an end to the unilateral decisions concerning control over the Holy City of Jerusalem, which must remain the living symbol of peaceful coexistence among religions and peoples that are different yet complementary (see S/PV.3900 (Resumption)).

33. In a statement issued by its President on 13 July 1998, the Security Council recognized the importance and sensitivity of the issue of Jerusalem to all parties; expressed its support for the decision of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and the Government of Israel, in accordance with the Declaration of Principles, that the permanent status negotiations should cover the issue of Jerusalem; and called upon the parties to avoid actions which might prejudice the outcome of those negotiations. The Council also stated that it considered the decision by the Government of Israel to broaden the jurisdiction and planning boundaries of Jerusalem a serious and damaging development, called upon Israel not to proceed with that decision and not to take any other steps which would prejudice the outcome of the permanent status negotiations, and to abide scrupulously by its legal obligations and responsibilities under the Fourth Geneva Convention.

Expressing support for the efforts of the Government of the United States of America to end the stalemate in the peace process, the Council called upon the parties to respond positively to those efforts; noted that the Palestinian side had already given agreement in principle to the proposals of the United States; and expressed the hope that the permanent status negotiations could resume and progress could be made towards the achievement of a just, lasting and comprehensive peace based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). The Council also decided to keep Israeli actions under review.

(c) Communication addressed to the President of the Security Council

34. In a letter dated 17 February 1998 addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/1998/134), the Acting Chairman of the Committee referred to proposals to streamline the standing agenda of the Council by deleting items that had not been considered for a certain period of time. He indicated that the Committee objected to the deletion of items related to the exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, the Palestine question and the Arab-Israeli conflict in the Middle East, which were of utmost concern not only to the Committee but also to the majority of Member States. He stated that, pending a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict, the core of which was the question of Palestine, in accordance with international legitimacy, those items should remain on the list, as they continued to engage the responsibility of the Security Council with regard to the maintenance of international peace and security.

(d) Request for the inclusion of an item entitled "Bethlehem 2000" in the agenda of the fifty-third session of the General Assembly

35. In response to a request made by the Committee at its 237th meeting on 16 April 1998, the members of its Bureau addressed a letter to the Secretary-General dated 15 May 1998 (A/53/141), recommending the inclusion of an item entitled "Bethlehem 2000" in the agenda of the fifty-third session of the General Assembly. In the explanatory memorandum annexed to the letter, the Bureau members stressed the significance of holding the millennial celebration in a global vision of hope and peace for all peoples at Bethlehem, one of the most historic and religiously significant sites on Earth. They called for the mobilization of international support for the undertaking by the Palestinian Authority through financial contributions, investment, expertise and promotion of international awareness, and for

the unanimous adoption by the General Assembly of a resolution in that regard.

2. Participation by the Chairman of the Committee in international conferences and meetings

36. The Chairman of the Committee participated in a number of high-level meetings of intergovernmental bodies concerned with the question of Palestine and contributed to their deliberations in support of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, as follows:

(a) **Eighth Islamic Summit Conference, Tehran, 9–11 December 1997.** At the 236th meeting of the Committee, the Chairman reported on the resolutions adopted by the Eighth Islamic Summit Conference, which had reaffirmed support for the peace process, had expressed concern over the unilateral actions by Israel in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and had called upon the Security Council and the High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention to take the necessary measures (see A/53/72-S/1998/156, annex V, resolutions 1/8-P (IS), 2/8-P (IS) and 6/8-P (IS));

(b) **Twenty-fifth session of the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers, Doha, 15–19 March 1998.** The Chairman informed the Committee at its 236th meeting that the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers had adopted a communiqué calling, *inter alia*, upon its members to commemorate appropriately the fiftieth anniversary of the dispossession of the Palestinian people, and requesting Islamic States which had established relations with Israel within the framework of the peace process, to reconsider such relations (see A/53/95-S/1998/311, annex);

(c) **Bethlehem 2000 Participants Conference, Brussels, 11–12 May 1998.** The Chairman attended the Bethlehem 2000 Participants Conference at the invitation of Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the PLO and President of the Palestinian Authority, and reported to the Committee at its 238th meeting that the Conference had been successful in mobilizing substantial international support for the various aspects of the Bethlehem 2000 project, and that President Arafat had welcomed the Committee's engagement to do everything possible to heighten awareness of the project within the United Nations;

(d) **Ministerial Meeting of the Coordinating Bureau of the Non-Aligned Movement, Cartagena de Indias, Colombia, 18–20 May 1998.** In its final communiqué, the Ministerial Meeting, *inter alia*, expressed support for the draft resolution to be submitted to the General Assembly to enable the full participation of Palestine in the work of the United Nations and all of its subsidiary organs,

and reiterated that the participation of Israel in the work of the General Assembly must be in conformity with international law and the Charter of the United Nations;

(e) **Sixty-eighth ordinary session of the Council of Ministers of the Organization of African Unity and thirty-fourth ordinary session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity, Ouagadougou, 4–10 June 1998.** In its resolution on the question of Palestine, the Council of Ministers of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) reaffirmed the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including the right to establish its own independent State with Jerusalem as its capital, called for implementation of the resolutions adopted by the General Assembly at its tenth emergency special session and for the continuation of the peace process in accordance with the relevant resolutions, and invited the support of the member States of OAU for the Bethlehem 2000 project (see A/53/179, annex I, resolution CM/Dec/413(LXVIII));

(f) **Twelfth Conference of Heads of State or Government of the Non-Aligned Countries, Durban, South Africa, 29 August–3 September 1998.** The Heads of State or Government of the Non-Aligned Countries reiterated their support for the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including the right to return and to an independent State with Jerusalem as its capital; expressed confidence that Palestine would enjoy full membership in the United Nations in the near future; and reiterated that the representation of Israel in the work of the General Assembly must be in conformity with international law and that the credentials of Israel did not cover the territories occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem.

37. The Chairman of the Committee also spoke on behalf of the Committee at the meeting of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, in observance of the Week of Solidarity with Peoples of All Colonial Territories Fighting for Freedom, Independence and Human Rights, held at United Nations Headquarters, on 22 May 1998.

38. The Committee also continued to follow with great interest the activities of other intergovernmental organizations relating to the question of Palestine, in particular the European Union, the decisions and resolutions of United Nations bodies and agencies, notably the Economic and Social Council, the Commission on Human Rights and the Committee against Torture, and the positive efforts made by many Governments. The Committee noted the increasing concern of the international community over the stalemate in the peace process and the aggravation of tensions in the

region, and welcomed its determination to continue to make efforts to restart the negotiations and to achieve a just peace on the basis of the agreements already reached between the parties.

B. Action taken by the Committee and the Division for Palestinian Rights in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 52/49 and 52/50

39. In carrying out its programme of meetings in the various regions, the Committee continued to give priority to promoting the exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and the effective implementation of the agreements reached between the parties, and to mobilizing international support for and assistance to the Palestinian people.

40. In accordance with the authorization given to it by the General Assembly in resolution 52/49, the Committee again adjusted its programme as necessary in order to meet the evolving situation in the most effective and constructive manner, while keeping in mind the continuing financial constraints facing the Organization. The Committee expressed its great appreciation to the Governments of Belgium, Chile and Egypt for having provided venues and facilities for important events sponsored by the Committee.

41. In the course of the past year, the Committee, through its Bureau, developed fruitful and mutually beneficial cooperation on the question of Palestine with States members of the European Union. The Bureau held periodic meetings with representatives of Luxembourg, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and Austria, in their capacity as holders of the Presidency of the European Union, on furthering cooperation between the Committee and those three members of the European Union. The Bureau was encouraged by the exchange of views with the members of the European Union, as well as by the growing understanding between the two sides. The Bureau was also grateful to the members of the European Union for their strong position in support of the peace process and substantial economic assistance to the Palestinian people. Both sides agreed to continue the fruitful dialogue on issues of common interest.

42. The Bureau also held useful and constructive meetings with the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs and the Under-Secretary-General for Public Information on key elements of the implementation of its programme of work.

1. Conference in Support of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

43. The Conference in Support of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People was held at Brussels, on 24 and 25 February 1998, in cooperation with the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the League of Arab States.

44. The Conference was attended by many high-level participants, including Erik Derycke, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Belgium, who opened the meeting and spoke on behalf of the host country. Among the distinguished speakers were Hennadiy Udovenko, President of the General Assembly of the United Nations; Carlos Lemos Simmonds, Vice-President of Colombia; Azeddine Laraki, Secretary-General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference; and Said Kamal, Assistant Secretary-General of the League of Arab States for Palestinian Affairs. The Chairman of the Executive Committee of the PLO and President of the Palestinian Authority, Yasser Arafat, attended the Conference and made an important statement. Statements were also made by the representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, high-level representatives of Member States, and by representatives of OAU and the Islamic Development Bank.

45. A number of eminent personalities from various parts of the world, including Palestinians and Israelis, participated in an exchange of views on the following themes: promoting the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people: a key to peace in the Middle East; the need to improve the living conditions of the Palestinian people and promote economic and social development; and the Middle East peace process: the current situation and prospects.

46. The organizers of the Conference issued concluding remarks, in which they voiced concern at the stalemate in the peace process caused by setbacks and obstacles put in place by the Government of Israel. They referred to the violation by Israel of the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention, its settlement policies, attempts at altering the demographic, historical and cultural character and status of Jerusalem and the imposition of an economic blockade on the Palestinian territory. The organizers emphasized the fact that, while the world was celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the rights of the Palestinian people continue to be denied. They underlined the fact that the Israeli occupation of Palestinian and Arab lands, including Jerusalem, must be brought to an end without delay. The organizers also reaffirmed the permanent responsibility of the United Nations towards the question of Palestine until it is resolved in all its aspects.

47. A comprehensive report containing the proceedings of the Conference will be issued as a publication of the Division for Palestinian Rights.

2. Seminars and meetings of non-governmental organizations

48. In accordance with previous decisions to streamline its programme of meetings, and in the light of the need to redeploy funds towards other initiatives, the Committee decided not to hold the annual meeting of consultations with the coordinating committees of non-governmental organizations in 1998, and to review that decision in the context of its programme for 1999.

49. In response to a request made by members of the North American Coordinating Committee of Non-Governmental Organizations, the Bureau of the Committee met informally with some members of the Coordinating Committee in New York on 2 February 1998 for an exchange of views with regard to current priorities in the work of the Committee and future cooperation with the North American non-governmental organizations.

(a) European Symposium of Non-Governmental Organizations

50. The European Symposium of Non-Governmental Organizations on the Question of Palestine with the theme "Action by non-governmental organizations in support of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people", was held at Brussels, on 26 February 1998, after the Conference in Support of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. The participants included representatives of European non-governmental organizations, Governments, United Nations bodies and agencies, intergovernmental organizations, a delegation of Palestine, and a number of panellists, including Palestinians and Israelis.

51. The following topics were discussed by the participants: the Middle East peace process: current situation and prospects; the European position and the policy of the European Union; and international law, world public opinion and the role of non-governmental organizations. In their final statement, the non-governmental organizations expressed deep concern at the stalemate in the negotiations, resulting in particular from the unilateral actions of the Government of Israel. They reiterated their commitment to a just and lasting peace based on self-determination for the Palestinian people, an independent Palestinian State with Jerusalem as its capital and the right of return for Palestinian refugees.

52. The report of the Symposium will be issued as a publication of the Division for Palestinian Rights.

(b) International Meeting of Non-Governmental Organizations

53. The United Nations International Meeting of Non-Governmental Organizations on the Question of Palestine, with the theme “The question of Palestine: the international responsibility 50 years later”, was held at Cairo, on 25 and 26 April 1998. The Meeting was attended by panellists from various regions, including Palestinians and Israelis, as well as representatives of non-governmental organizations, Governments, United Nations bodies and agencies, intergovernmental organizations, and a delegation of Palestine.

54. Panel discussions were held on the international responsibility fifty years later, and on support by non-governmental organizations for international efforts to promote a comprehensive, just and lasting solution of the question of Palestine. In their final statement, the participating non-governmental organizations noted with satisfaction that the meeting had been convened in the Middle East for the first time and urged that future events for non-governmental organizations also be held in the region. They reiterated their commitment to a just and lasting peace based on self-determination and the establishment of an independent Palestinian State with Jerusalem as its capital. In support of that goal, the non-governmental organizations reaffirmed their recognition of the State of Palestine in conformity with the 1988 Declaration of Independence, and looked to 1999 as the year of the State of Palestine. The participating non-governmental organizations also stated that they would work with their constituents and the public to prepare them for the declaration of the independent Palestinian State.

55. The report of the Meeting will be issued as a publication of the Division for Palestinian Rights.

(c) Seminar on Assistance to the Palestinian People

56. A seminar, with the theme “Facing the challenges of the year 2000: promoting Palestinian national development”, was held at Cairo, on 27 and 28 April 1998. The participants included Palestinian and Israeli panellists, representatives of Governments, including the host Government, representatives of United Nations bodies and agencies, representatives of intergovernmental organizations, and a delegation of Palestine.

57. The following topics were discussed by the participants: the Palestinian development plan; gathering information for future planning: the results of the Palestinian census; and overcoming obstacles: the role of the international community. Summarizing the results of the Seminar, the Chairman noted that economic measures could not by

themselves resolve fundamental political issues and that political action required a favourable economic environment in order to succeed. There was a consensus among the participants regarding the responsibility of the international community, including the United Nations, Member States and intergovernmental organizations, for ending 30 years of occupation and 50 years of dispossession of the Palestinian people. The Committee was encouraged that many speakers at the seminar expressed the view that the establishment of a Palestinian State was inevitable, and expressed their support for it as the only viable solution.

58. The report of the Seminar was issued as a document of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council for consideration under the relevant agenda items, at the request of the Chairman of the Committee (A/53/152–E/1998/71). It will also be issued as a publication of the Division for Palestinian Rights.

(d) Latin American and Caribbean Seminar and Symposium of Non-Governmental Organizations on the Question of Palestine

59. The Latin American and Caribbean Seminar and Symposium of Non-Governmental Organizations, with the theme “Achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting solution of the question of Palestine – the role of Latin America and the Caribbean”, was held at Santiago, from 26 to 29 May 1998. The participants included representatives of Governments, a representative of the host Government, representatives of United Nations bodies and agencies, and a delegation of Palestine, as well as experts from Latin America and the Caribbean and other regions, including Palestinian and Israeli panellists.

60. The following issues were discussed by the participants: the current political situation; the current situation in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem; and the role of Latin America and the Caribbean in promoting a comprehensive, just and lasting solution of the question of Palestine through solidarity and assistance. In a final document adopted at the conclusion of the meeting, the participants emphasized the significance of the role of Latin America and the Caribbean in promoting a comprehensive, just and lasting solution of the question of Palestine in accordance with relevant United Nations resolutions. They particularly welcomed the holding of the meeting in Chile because of its prominent role in the region and in international bodies, the presence of many Chileans of Palestinian descent, and its support for Palestinian rights. The participants called upon the Governments of Latin America and the Caribbean to play an important role in promoting Palestinian efforts to achieve independence and sovereignty, in particular by

establishing diplomatic representation in the area under the Palestinian Authority and by supporting the upgrading of the status of Palestine at the United Nations. For their part, non-governmental organizations decided to assign priority to humanitarian, social and cultural assistance to the Palestinian people, as well as the promotion of dialogue and joint activities by the Palestinian and Jewish communities in Latin America and the Caribbean with the objective of achieving better mutual understanding and promoting support for the peace process.

61. The report of the Seminar and Symposium will be issued as a publication of the Division for Palestinian Rights.

(e) North American Symposium of Non-Governmental Organizations

62. The North American Symposium of Non-Governmental Organizations with the theme "Fifty years of dispossession of the Palestinian people", was held at United Nations Headquarters, from 15 to 17 June 1998. Participants included representatives of non-governmental organizations from Canada and the United States of America, Governments, United Nations bodies and agencies, and intergovernmental organizations, a delegation of Palestine, and panellists, including Palestinians and Israelis.

63. Papers were presented by the panellists on the following topics: memory: remembering the Palestinian history; conscience: strategies for contesting the future; and from memory to conscience: the consequences for the work of non-governmental organizations in North America. In addition, workshops were held, at which the participating non-governmental organizations decided on a number of activities to be carried out in future, in particular regarding Israeli settlements, Jerusalem, the closures, promoting respect for the Fourth Geneva Convention, and refugees, as well as monitoring of the media in order to ensure fairness and accuracy.

64. The report of the Symposium will be issued as a publication of the Division for Palestinian Rights.

3. Research, monitoring and publications

65. The Committee continued to attach great importance to the essential contribution of the Division for Palestinian Rights and requested it to continue its established programme of work, including studies and publications, the further development of the electronic information system United Nations Information System on the question of Palestine (UNISPAL), the annual training programme for staff of the Palestinian Authority, and the annual observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

66. Accordingly, the Division continued to respond to requests for information and to prepare and disseminate throughout the world the following publications:

(a) Monthly bulletin covering action by the Committee, United Nations bodies and agencies, and intergovernmental organizations concerned with the question of Palestine;

(b) Periodic bulletin entitled "Developments related to the Middle East peace process";

(c) Monthly chronology of events relating to the question of Palestine, based on media reports and other sources;

(d) Reports of meetings organized under the auspices of the Committee;

(e) Special bulletin on the observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People;

(f) Annual compilation of relevant resolutions, decisions and statements by the General Assembly and the Security Council relating to the question of Palestine.

67. In addition, the Division published a study entitled "The status of Jerusalem". It also updated and reissued its information notes on the work of the Committee and the Division, on the activities of the United Nations and those of non-governmental organizations on the question of Palestine, and on the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. The Committee expressed the wish that the Division prepare a new pamphlet on the question of Palestine, in close cooperation with the Department of Public Information.

4. United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine

68. The Division for Palestinian Rights, in cooperation with relevant technical services of the United Nations Secretariat, continued to develop UNISPAL, as mandated by the General Assembly in 1991. This included a further upgrading of hardware and software, the expansion of the collection of documents, improvement of a database relating to non-governmental organizations, and the establishment and further development of the question of Palestine and UNISPAL sites, <<http://www.un.org/Depts/dpa/qpala>> and <<http://domino.un.org/UNISPAL.nsf>>, respectively, on the Internet.

69. The technical resources of the Division were also used to assist in the electronic conversion of the records of the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine, in pursuance of the mandate given by the General Assembly in resolution 51/129 of 13 December 1996 and the understanding reached with regard to the redeployment of

funds from savings generated in carrying out the programme of work of the Committee.

5. Training programme for staff of the Palestinian Authority

70. Two staff members of the Palestinian Authority from, respectively, the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation and the Negotiations Affairs Department, participated in a training programme conducted by the Division from September to December 1997, in conjunction with the fifty-second session of the General Assembly. They familiarized themselves with various aspects of the work of the United Nations, attended various briefings and meetings of relevant committees and bodies of the United Nations, and conducted research on topics of interest to them.

6. International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People

71. The International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People was observed, on 1 December 1997, at United Nations Headquarters and at the United Nations Offices at Geneva and Vienna. On the occasion of the observance at Headquarters, in addition to a solemn meeting of the Committee and other activities, an exhibit entitled "At home in Palestine", was presented by the Permanent Observer Mission of Palestine, under the auspices of the Committee. The Committee noted with appreciation that the International Day had also been observed in many other cities throughout the world. Details on the observance are contained in the special bulletin issued by the Division.

72. In adopting its programme of work, the Committee decided that a similar event would be organized in connection with the observance of the Day in 1998.

VI. Action taken by the Department of Public Information in accordance with General Assembly resolution 52/51

73. The Committee noted that, in pursuance of General Assembly resolution 52/51, the Department of Public Information continued its special information programme on the question of Palestine, which included the convening of a regional seminar and an international seminar on the theme "Prospects for peace".

74. In cooperation with the Government of India, the Department convened a regional seminar at New Delhi, on 3 and 4 February 1998. Panellists included distinguished

officials and analysts from the Palestinian Authority, Israel, neighbouring countries and the United States of America, as well as the host country. Their presentations were followed by an exchange of views with the participants in the audience, which consisted primarily of representatives of prominent media organizations from the Asian region, as well as the Palestinian Authority and Israel. Representatives of Member States and of specialized agencies based at New Delhi participated in the seminar as observers.

75. The international seminar was held, in cooperation with the Government of the Czech Republic at Prague, on 24 and 25 June 1998. The format of the seminar was the same as that held at New Delhi and included the participation of distinguished officials and analysts from the Palestinian Authority, Israel, neighbouring countries, the United States of America, Europe and the host country, as well as prominent media representatives from Western and Eastern Europe, the Palestinian Authority and Israel.

76. The Department provided press coverage, in English and French, of all meetings held at United Nations Headquarters, including those of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. Coverage in English and French was also provided to the seminars and symposia held under the auspices of the Committee in Belgium, Chile and Egypt. Press releases were issued on the texts of the statements by the Secretary-General.

77. From September 1997 to August 1998, the Dissemination and Communications Unit of the Department, in accordance with its established pattern, distributed 9,436 hard copies of documents and, through electronic mail, 74 titles of documents related to the question of Palestine.

78. The Public Inquiries Unit of the Department responded to 481 requests for information concerning Middle East issues, including the question of Palestine. Its Group Programmes and Community Liaison Unit organized nine briefings on Middle East issues, including the question of Palestine. One briefing was devoted exclusively to the question of Palestine.

79. From 15 September to 7 November 1997, the Department organized a training programme at Headquarters for a group of 10 Palestinian media practitioners in order to strengthen their professional capacity as information media personnel.

80. The quarterly publication *UN Chronicle* has continued to cover all important developments related to the question of Palestine, including: action taken by the General Assembly at its fifty-second session and at its tenth emergency special session; action taken by the Security Council; special coverage in the "Systemwatch" section of the publication of

the activities of UNRWA, as well as other relevant activities of the United Nations system. The *UN Chronicle* also carried an interview with Ibra Deguène Ka, Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, which was conducted by a group of the Palestinian media practitioners undertaking the training programme at United Nations Headquarters.

81. The Radio and Central News Service of the Department covered extensively all aspects of Palestine and related issues in daily news bulletins and weekly current affairs magazine programmes, in both official and non-official languages for regional and worldwide dissemination. The Service also produced a four-part special series in Arabic entitled "United Nations assistance to the Palestinian People", based on interviews conducted in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip by the United Nations radio officer with United Nations officials, personnel of the Palestinian Authority and United Nations local staff. The Service widely covered in news magazines United Nations-sponsored regional conferences on the question of Palestine held at Athens, New Delhi, Brussels and Santiago, as well as the financial crisis of UNRWA. Meetings of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly were also covered in news bulletins and news magazine programmes, in various languages.

82. The Media Division of the Department taped on video all the activities of the visit of the Secretary-General to the Middle East, including the occupied Palestinian territory and Israel. The footage and photographs were made available to news syndicators and used in the television production "Year in Review".

83. The Department cooperated with the Division for Palestinian Rights in the media promotion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People and provided assistance in organizing the special exhibit in connection with the observance, entitled "At home in Palestine". The observance of the Day presented special opportunities for cooperating with local non-governmental organizations in the organization of joint events and programmes to draw attention to the issue of Palestinian rights. Print and electronic media coverage of the event in most of the countries concerned was extensive. Panel discussions and forums, with the participation of officials from Governments, delegations of Palestine, United Nations officials and representatives of non-governmental organizations, were among several activities organized by the United Nations information centres at Mexico City, New Delhi, Ouagadougou, Rabat, Sydney, Australia, and Tunis. The Centre at New Delhi collaborated with the Ministry of External Affairs, the Forum of Indian non-governmental organizations and Jawaharlal Nehru University and the Embassy of Palestine. The Centre at

Sydney, in cooperation with the Human Rights and Equal Opportunities Commission of Australia, organized a public forum to highlight the rights of the Palestinian people. The Centre at Washington, D.C., organized meetings for the 10 Palestinian media practitioners to observe the press conference at the White House and the Department of State of the United States of America, and provided administrative and logistical support for those journalists. The Centre in Paris arranged interviews with the Commissioner-General of UNRWA with *Le Monde*, *Le Figaro*, *Libération* and *La Croix*. The Centre at Tokyo arranged interviews for the Education Director of UNRWA, with *Yomiuri Shinbun* and *The Japan Times*. Many centres also dealt with the question of Palestine in their periodic newsletters and bulletins, issued special information materials in local languages, and made relevant documents available.

84. The global network of United Nations information centres and information services actively promoted the central issues relating to the question of Palestine, by organizing media activities and special events, producing newsletters and regularly disseminating relevant information materials made available from Headquarters. In many cases, the material disseminated was translated into local languages. Six information centres provided media relations and logistical support for major seminars held on the question of Palestine. The Centre at Cairo lent such support, including assigning the National Press Officer to cover the Seminar on Assistance to the Palestinian People, followed by the International Meeting of Non-Governmental Organizations on the Question of Palestine. The centres and services at Brussels and Santiago also provided logistical, administrative and informational support. The Department, in cooperation with and with the assistance of the centres at New Delhi and Prague, organized the regional and international seminars mentioned in paragraphs 73 to 75 above. The Centre at Cairo, the Centre and Service at Beirut and the office of the United Nations Development Programme at Amman provided assistance to the visit by members of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories to Egypt, Jordan and the Syrian Arab Republic, from 21 to 31 July 1998.

85. The Dag Hammarskjöld Library has initiated cooperative arrangements with the Library and Documentation Centre of Al-Quds University at Jerusalem.

VII. Conclusions and recommendations of the Committee

86. A crucial stage has been reached in the long history of the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict in the Middle East. The dispossession of the Palestinian people has now passed the half-century mark. Of the two States envisaged under General Assembly resolution 181 (II) of 29 November 1947, only the Jewish State has come into being, while the Palestinian people still yearns for the establishment of its own State on its national soil. Four million Palestinians still live in refugee camps under precarious conditions. Despite the undeniable achievements of the peace process since 1993, most of the Palestinian and other Arab territories occupied by Israel in 1967, including Jerusalem, remain under occupation, vulnerable to exploitation of resources, land confiscation and encroaching settlements. The area under the Palestinian Authority remains fragmented, its social and economic life jeopardized by damaging closures, lack of free passage and access to the outside world. Thousands of Palestinians are still in Israeli jails.

87. The continuation of this unjust situation and the widespread suffering it entails is unacceptable, particularly since agreements outlining the framework for a peaceful solution were already reached by the parties. The Committee believes that, as humankind prepares to enter the new millennium, it is incumbent upon the co-sponsors of the peace process, the Security Council and the international community as a whole to do everything within their power to achieve peace and reconciliation in the Middle East, which is so essential for international peace and security. In this context, the Committee expressed the hope that the Wye River Memorandum, signed on 23 October 1998, would be fully implemented, provide the much-needed impetus to the Oslo process and help the parties to move forward to the negotiations on permanent status issues.

88. To be truly lasting, peace must be based on solid foundations of justice, respect for human rights and humanitarian law, and relations of equality and partnership between neighbours. The policies and practices of occupation, which seek to create actuality on the ground and to permanently alter the demographic composition of the occupied territory, violate the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and statehood and make the achievement of real peace impossible. The international community, in particular the High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention, must intensify its efforts to ensure protection for the Palestinian people, pending the achievement of a final settlement. The Committee, accordingly, will remain fully engaged in efforts to convene the conference requested by the General Assembly at its tenth emergency special session.

89. The Committee reaffirms that the United Nations has a permanent responsibility with respect to the question of Palestine until a satisfactory settlement based on international legitimacy is reached. The Committee reiterates that the involvement of the United Nations in the peace process, both as the guardian of international legitimacy and in the mobilization and provision of international assistance for development, is essential for the successful outcome of the peace efforts. As the organ of the General Assembly established to deal with the question of Palestine, the Committee pledges itself to continue to mobilize the international community at the governmental, intergovernmental and non-governmental levels, in support of a comprehensive, just and lasting solution of this question, in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions.

90. The Committee considers that its programme of meetings in the various regions and its cooperation with non-governmental organizations have played a useful role in heightening international awareness of the relevant issues and in achieving wider recognition of and support for the achievement of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. In that regard, the Committee will continue to review and assess its programme in order to achieve maximum effectiveness in its programme of meetings and other activities, and to respond adequately to developments on the ground and in the peace process. Recommendations to that effect will be submitted in due course.

91. In response to the call by the Chairman of the Executive Committee of the PLO and President of the Palestinian Authority, Yasser Arafat, for the convening of the millennial celebration at Bethlehem in the context of a global vision of peace and reconciliation, the Committee has requested the inclusion of an item in the agenda of the fifty-third session of the General Assembly in order to mobilize wide international support for the event. It is the hope of the Committee that the Assembly will adopt a consensus resolution on this item. The Committee is also planning to convene a Bethlehem 2000 international conference in Rome in early 1999. The Committee invites the greatest international participation in this major event.

92. The Committee stresses the essential contribution of the Division for Palestinian Rights of the United Nations Secretariat in support of the objectives of the Committee and requests it to continue its programme of publications and other activities, in particular the further development of the UNISPAL collection, and the completion of the project for the modernization of the records of the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine. The Committee also considers that the annual training programme for staff of the

Palestinian Authority has demonstrated its usefulness and requests that it be continued.

93. The Committee also considers that the special information programme on the question of Palestine of the Department of Public Information has made an important contribution to informing the media and public opinion of the relevant issues, and requests that it be continued, with the flexibility necessary in the light of new developments. The Committee believes that strengthening cooperation and coordination with the Department will help to enhance the special information programme on the question of Palestine and assist the Committee in the implementation of its mandate. The Committee is of the view that cooperation and coordination between the Department and the Division for Palestinian Rights should also be strengthened. The Committee requests the Department to give particular attention to the preparation of audio-visual and other informational materials aimed at the general public.

94. Wishing to make the greatest possible contribution to the achievement of a just and lasting peace during the difficult times that lie ahead, the Committee calls upon all States to join in this endeavour and invites the General Assembly again to recognize the importance of the role of the Committee and to reconfirm its mandate with overwhelming support.

Notes

¹ *Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-first Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/31/35).*

² *Ibid., Thirty-second Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/32/35);* *ibid., Thirty-third Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/33/35);* *ibid., Thirty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/34/35 and Corr.1);* *ibid., Thirty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/35/35);* *ibid., Thirty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/36/35);* *ibid., Thirty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/37/35 and Corr.1);* *ibid., Thirty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/38/35);* *ibid., Thirty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/39/35);* *ibid., Fortieth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/40/35);* *ibid., Forty-first Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/41/35);* *ibid., Forty-second Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/42/35);* *ibid., Forty-third Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/43/35);* *ibid., Forty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/44/35);* *ibid., Forty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/45/35);* *ibid., Forty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/46/35);* *ibid., Forty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/47/35);* *ibid., Forty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/48/35);* *ibid., Forty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/49/35);* *ibid., Fiftieth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/50/35);* *ibid., Fifty-first Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/51/35);* and *ibid., Fifty-second Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/52/35).*

³ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 75, No. 973.

⁴ *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-second Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/52/35)*, chap. VII.

⁵ Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 47/1 of 22 September 1992, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia did not participate in the work of the Committee.

⁶ A/AC.183/1998/CRP.1.

⁷ The observers at the Committee meetings were as follows: Algeria, Bangladesh, Bulgaria, China, Ecuador, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Mauritania, Morocco, Nicaragua, Niger, Qatar, Sri Lanka, Syrian Arab Republic, United Arab Emirates and Viet Nam, as well as the League of Arab States and the Organization of the Islamic Conference. Palestine also participated as an observer.



United Nations

Report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

**General Assembly
Official Records
Fifty-fourth Session
Supplement No. 35 (A/54/35)**

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United Nations • New York, 1999

Note

Symbols of United Nations documents are composed of capital letters combined with figures. Mention of such a symbol indicates a reference to a United Nations document.
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Contents

<i>Chapter</i>	<i>Paragraphs</i>	<i>Page</i>
Letter of transmittal		iv
I. Introduction	1–5	1
II. Mandate of the Committee	6–9	1
III. Organization of work	10–15	2
A. Membership and officers	10–12	2
B. Participation in the work of the Committee	13–15	2
IV. Review of the situation relating to the question of Palestine	16–29	3
V. Action taken by the Committee	30–74	6
A. Action taken in accordance with General Assembly resolution 53/39	30–37	6
1. Action in the General Assembly and communications to the President of the Security Council and the Secretary-General	31–35	6
2. Participation by the Chairman of the Committee at international conferences and meetings	36–37	7
B. Action taken by the Committee and the Division for Palestinian Rights in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 53/39 and 53/40	38–72	8
1. Bethlehem 2000 International Conference	43–48	8
2. United Nations African Meeting in Support of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People	49–53	9
3. United Nations International Meeting on the Convening of the Conference on Measures to Enforce the Fourth Geneva Convention in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem	54–57	10
4. Visit of the Committee delegation to Gaza	58–60	10
5. Cooperation with non-governmental organizations	61–64	10
6. Research, monitoring and publications	65–67	11
7. United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine ...	68–69	11
8. Training programme for staff of the Palestinian Authority	70	11
9. International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People	71–72	12
C. Action taken in accordance with General Assembly resolution 53/27	73–74	12
VI. Action taken by the Department of Public Information in accordance with General Assembly resolution 53/41	75–83	12
VII. Conclusions and recommendations of the Committee	84–92	14

Letter of transmittal

15 November 1999

Mr. Secretary-General,

As humankind approaches the dawn of the new millennium, the Palestinian people is yet to fulfil its aspirations for the exercise of its inalienable rights — the rights it has been denied for over five decades. The Palestinian people has now reached a crucial point in its history, at which decisions and transformations of historic consequence for the future of the entire region of the Middle East will be made. Since its inception in 1975, the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People has striven to support the Palestinian people in the quest for the realization of its inalienable rights, namely, the right to self-determination without external interference; the right to national independence and sovereignty; and the right to return to their homes and property from which they had been displaced. The Committee will continue to provide the necessary support to the Palestinian people until those rights are realized.

The Committee commends your efforts at supporting the Middle East peace process and at bringing about a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine, providing the varied economic assistance to the Palestinian people, carrying out the difficult task of rehabilitating the Palestinian economy, as well as making the socio-economic development of the Palestinian society viable and sustainable. The Committee is confident that the United Nations will continue to support the Palestinian people, helping it advance steadily towards statehood and economic recovery.

In the hope that our work will make a constructive contribution to the deliberations of the General Assembly, I have the honour to enclose herewith the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for submission to the General Assembly in accordance with paragraph 5 of its resolution 53/39 of 2 December 1998. The report covers the period from 4 November 1998 to 12 November 1999.

Accept, Sir, the assurances of my highest consideration.

(Signed) Ibra Deguène **Ka**
Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights
of the Palestinian People

Chapter I Introduction

1. The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People was established by the General Assembly in its resolution 3376 (XXX) of 10 November 1975, with the task of recommending a programme designed to enable the Palestinian people to exercise its inalienable rights as recognized by the Assembly in its resolution 3236 (XXIX) of 22 November 1974.

2. The recommendations made by the Committee in its first report to the General Assembly¹ were endorsed by the Assembly as a basis for the solution to the question of Palestine. In its subsequent reports,² the Committee has continued to stress that a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, must be based on the relevant United Nations resolutions and the following essential principles: the withdrawal of Israel from the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, and from the other occupied Arab territories; respect for the right of all States in the region to live in peace within secure and internationally recognized boundaries; and the recognition and exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, primarily the right to self-determination. The Committee's recommendations could not be implemented and the Assembly each year renewed the Committee's mandate and requested it to intensify efforts in pursuit of its objectives.

3. The Committee welcomed the historic breakthrough in the peace process in 1993 and the subsequent important steps towards the achievement of a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine, based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). At the same time, the Committee continued to work towards the full realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including the right to self-determination and to its own independent State and to mobilize the needed international assistance and solidarity during the transitional period.

4. Having welcomed, in October 1998, the signing of the Wye River Memorandum, the Committee expressed concern at the subsequent freezing of its implementation by the Israeli Government, which resulted in a prolonged stalemate in the Israeli-Palestinian peace negotiations. Following the May 1999 elections in Israel, the Committee was hopeful that the new Israeli Government would be in a position to bring about positive changes in the peace

process, as well as on the ground. In this regard, the Committee took note of the stated intent of the Israeli side, as stipulated in the Basic Guidelines of the Government of Israel of 6 July 1999, to honour and implement the agreements signed with the Palestinians. The Committee was of the view that the resumption in August 1999 of the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations, the signing on 4 September 1999 of the Sharm el-Sheikh Memorandum, the implementation of the first phase of Israel's further redeployment from the West Bank and the start of the permanent status negotiations were positive and encouraging developments. The Committee also took note of the agreed commitment by the parties to conclude a framework agreement within five months from the resumption of the permanent status negotiations and a comprehensive agreement on all permanent status issues within one year, that is, in September 2000. The Committee expressed the hope that those important negotiations would progress in the spirit of trust and understanding between the parties and would bring tangible results. The Committee, however, reiterated its position of principle that the policies and practices of occupation currently in place are in violation of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949 (the Fourth Geneva Convention),³ and Security Council resolutions, pose a serious threat to the peace process and can destabilize the situation on the ground.

5. The Committee strongly supported all international endeavours aimed at bringing about a speedy resumption of the peace process and a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine. For its part, the Committee, as the organ of the General Assembly entrusted to deal with the question of Palestine, has participated in the various international initiatives in this regard. It intends to continue to do so until the question of Palestine is resolved in all aspects and the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people are fully realized.

Chapter II Mandate of the Committee

6. The mandate of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People was again renewed by the General Assembly in its resolution 53/39 of 2 December 1998, in which the Assembly (a) endorsed the Conclusions and Recommendations of the Committee⁴ and requested it to continue to keep under review the situation relating to the question of Palestine and to report

and make suggestions to the Assembly or the Security Council, as appropriate; (b) authorized the Committee to continue to exert all efforts to promote the exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and to report thereon to the Assembly at its fifty-fourth session and thereafter; and (c) requested the Committee to continue to extend its cooperation and support to Palestinian and other non-governmental organizations in order to mobilize international solidarity with and support for the achievement by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights and for a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine.

7. In its resolution 53/40 of 2 December 1998, on the Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to continue to provide the Division with the necessary resources and to ensure that it continues to carry out its programme of work as detailed in the relevant earlier resolutions, including, in particular, the organization of meetings in various regions with the participation of all sectors of the international community, the further development and expansion of the documents collection of the United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine, the preparation and widest possible dissemination of publications and information materials on various aspects of the question of Palestine, the provision of assistance in completing the project on the modernization of the records of the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine and the provision of the annual training programme for staff of the Palestinian Authority.

8. In its resolution 53/41 of 2 December 1998, on the special information programme on the question of Palestine, the General Assembly requested the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat, in full cooperation and coordination with the Committee, to continue, with the necessary flexibility as may be required by developments affecting the question of Palestine, its special information programme for the biennium 1998-1999.

9. In carrying out its programme of work, the Committee also took into account General Assembly resolution 53/42 of 2 December 1998, in which the Assembly reaffirmed the necessity of achieving a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine in all its aspects, expressed its full support for the ongoing peace process, and stressed the need for the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, primarily the right to self-determination; the need for the withdrawal of Israel from the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967; and the need for resolving the problem of the Palestine refugees.

Chapter III

Organization of work

A. Membership and officers

10. The Committee is composed of the following Member States: Afghanistan, Belarus, Cuba, Cyprus, Guinea, Guyana, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mali, Malta, Namibia, Nigeria, Pakistan, Romania, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine and Yugoslavia.⁵

11. At its 243rd meeting, on 9 February 1999, the Committee re-elected Ibra Deguène Ka (Senegal) as Chairman and re-elected Ravan A. G. Farhâdi (Afghanistan) and Bruno Eduardo Rodríguez Parrilla (Cuba) as Vice-Chairmen and George Saliba (Malta) as Rapporteur. At its 246th meeting, on 11 August 1999, the Committee elected Walter Balzan (Malta) as its Rapporteur, replacing George Saliba, former Rapporteur of the Committee, who had been assigned by his Government to another post.

12. At its 243rd meeting, the Committee adopted the programme of work for 1999.⁶

B. Participation in the work of the Committee

13. As in previous years, the Committee reconfirmed that all States Members of and permanent observers to the United Nations desiring to participate in the work of the Committee as observers were welcome to do so. In accordance with established practice, the Permanent Observer of Palestine participated in the work of the Committee as an observer, attended all its meetings and made observations and proposals for consideration by the Committee and its Bureau.

14. On 17 November 1998, the Government of Yemen, in a note verbale addressed to the Chairman of the Committee, informed him of its decision to take part in the work of the Committee as an observer. The Committee welcomed the decision of the Government of Yemen and approved the request at its 243rd meeting, on 9 February 1999.

15. In 1999, the Committee again welcomed as observers all the States and organizations that had participated in its work in the preceding year.⁷

Chapter IV

Review of the situation relating to the question of Palestine

16. The Committee continued to follow closely the developments in the peace process. It expressed much concern at the breakdown of the peace process following the freezing of the implementation of the Wye River Memorandum. In that regard, the Committee emphasized the importance of respect for, as well as the full and timely implementation of all the Israeli-Palestinian agreements. The Committee expressed its regret that, for the greater part of 1999, the peace process had remained stalled owing to the position taken by the Government of Israel. During that period, the Israeli authorities had continued to pursue the policy of creating illegal “facts on the ground”, effectively undermining the peace process and pre-empting the outcome of the permanent status negotiations.

17. At the same time, the Committee was encouraged by a series of important developments that had a positive impact on the peace process. The Committee viewed the visit by the United States President Bill Clinton to Gaza and Bethlehem from 14 to 16 December 1998 and the important statements made by him in the course of the visit as a positive step aimed at restarting the peace process. The Committee took note with satisfaction of the statement on the Middle East peace process made by the Council of the European Union at its session on 24 and 25 March 1999 and its reaffirmation of the continuing and unqualified Palestinian right to self-determination, including the option of a State. The Committee also noted the important decisions in that regard made by the Palestinian Central Council at its extraordinary session held in Gaza from 27 to 29 April 1999 and expressed full support for the position taken by the Palestinian political leadership on the issue of Palestinian statehood (see para. 35).

18. The Committee was hopeful that the new Government of Israel would honour its obligations vis-à-vis the Palestinian side under the Wye River Memorandum, restore the spirit of confidence between the two parties, vital to the success of the peace process, re-engage in the peace negotiations fully and without preconditions and move forward towards the sensitive stage of the permanent status negotiations. In that connection, it welcomed the resumption in August 1999 of the Israeli-Palestinian

negotiations followed by the signing on 4 September of the Sharm el-Sheikh Memorandum on Implementation Timeline of Outstanding Commitments of Agreements Signed and the Resumption of Permanent Status Negotiations. The Memorandum provided, *inter alia*, for resumption of the permanent status negotiations; further phased Israeli redeployment from the West Bank; phased release of Palestinian prisoners; agreement on the safe passage between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip; beginning of the construction work on the Gaza sea port; agreement on some issues relating to the city of Hebron; and agreement on security-related issues. The Committee noted with satisfaction the beginning of the implementation of the Memorandum in September 1999 and hoped that it would be completed in good faith and in strict compliance with the agreed timetable. The Committee also welcomed the signing of the Memorandum as it enabled the parties to restart, on 13 September 1999, their negotiations on the permanent status issues. It was hopeful that the parties would be able to conclude a framework agreement within five months from the resumption of the permanent status negotiations, followed by a comprehensive agreement on all permanent status issues within one year.

19. The Committee supported the convening on 15 July 1999 at the United Nations Office at Geneva of the Conference of the High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention on Measures to Enforce the Convention in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem, as recommended by the General Assembly at its tenth emergency special session in its resolution ES-10/6. In that regard, the Committee noted the significance of the Conference as it convened to consider for the first time a specific case of violations of the Fourth Geneva Convention. The Committee also took note of the statement adopted at the conclusion of the Conference. The participating High Contracting Parties reaffirmed the applicability of the Fourth Geneva Convention to the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. The Conference adjourned on the understanding that it would convene again in the light of consultations on the development of the humanitarian situation in the field.

20. In the year under review, the Committee continued to follow closely the situation on the ground, including the illegal settlement activities carried out by the Israeli authorities. In disregard of the position of the international community, the construction of new and expansion of the existing settlements in the various parts of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem, continued.

Moreover, the outgoing Israeli Government made a determined effort to accelerate that process. The year witnessed an unhindered continuation by the Israeli authorities of their settlement activities. During the year, the Israeli authorities made public their plans for further expansion of the settlement work. The Knesset Finance Committee, on 16 December 1998, approved US\$ 6.5 million for settlement housing and infrastructure construction. On 10 May 1999, the same Committee allocated another US\$ 3 million for infrastructure work in 32 settlements in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, beyond the borders of existing settlements. According to Israeli press reports, more than 20 per cent of all land slated by Israel's Ministry of Construction and Housing for marketing in 1999 was located in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. On 5 February 1999, the Israeli Government approved its 1999 budget, adding US\$ 38 million for settlement construction in spite of repeated appeals by the international community to halt settlement activity. Actual settlement construction continued at an accelerated pace in the various parts of the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Settlements selected for such sales included "Ariel", "Alfe Menashe", "Emmanuel", "Betar", "Efrat", "Maaleh Adumim", "Givat Ze'ev", "Adam" and "Har Homa". In February, tenders were published for the construction of housing in the settlement of "Efrat", south, and "Betar Ilit" west of Bethlehem, as well as in "Ofarim", north-west of Ramallah. On 12 April 1999, a new construction was reported near the settlement of "Brakha", south of Nablus. In May, the Government approved a plan to enlarge the area of the settlement of "Maaleh Adumim", east of Jerusalem, by over 1,300 hectares (3,250 acres), forming a continuous strip of settlements and virtually cutting the West Bank in half. In June 1999, settlers of "Ariel", south of Nablus, obtained permission to build 1,000 new housing units. It was estimated that, once completed, the new units would increase the number of settler households in the settlement by 25 per cent. Also in June, "Neveh Dekalim" settlers confiscated land near Khan Younis and built a new settlement of "Tal Katif". In the course of the year, tenders were invited by the Government or published in the press for the construction of additional housing in a number of West Bank and Gaza Strip settlements. In spite of the stated position of the new Israeli Government not to build new settlements, Israel's Ministry of Construction and Housing has since July 1999 reportedly issued tenders for the illegal construction of 2,594 new residential units slated for settlements around Jerusalem, namely "Maaleh Adumim", "Givat Ze'ev", "Betar Ilit" and "Har Adar".

21. Another disturbing feature of the settlement drive of the past year has been the "grab and settle" policy targeting hilltops in the various parts of the West Bank, as well as the continued acceleration of the construction of bypass roads to service the settlements. Since mid-November 1998, following calls from Israeli government ministers to "grab hilltops", settler attempts to occupy hilltops throughout the West Bank have become increasingly frequent. Some 42 new hilltop settlements have been established since the signing of the Wye River Memorandum. The Committee noted the decision of the Israeli Government to evacuate some of the settlements stating that they had been set up "illegally". In that connection, the Committee wishes to reiterate its position of principle that all the Israeli settlements on Palestinian land are illegal and should be dismantled.

22. Settlement activity continued in and around East Jerusalem. It was reported on 24 January 1999 that a 30,000 sq m commercial/residential development plan had been approved for the settlement of "Ramot". Israel continued to challenge and violate the internationally recognized status of Jerusalem. In a communiqué issued on 14 March 1999, the Israeli Cabinet challenged the legal status of the city, by stating that Jerusalem's position as a *corpus separatum* was legally incorrect and unacceptable to Israel. It declared further that Israel would never accept the "division or internationalization" of the city. In order to attract settlers to the city, the Israeli authorities on 9 May 1999 offered US\$ 5,000 to any Israeli willing to settle in "new neighbourhoods" of East Jerusalem. The authorities also agreed to a four-year plan to develop their infrastructure. The Committee was particularly alarmed by the beginning of the actual construction work on 16 May 1999 at Jabal Abu Ghneim, south of East Jerusalem and, two days later, at the Ras al-Amud neighbourhood.

23. The Committee stressed the illegality of the continued Israeli policy of "silent transfer" of Palestinians from East Jerusalem. During the year, Palestinian residence rights remained in jeopardy. In the first four months of 1999, 127 identity cards were confiscated from Palestinian Jerusalemites.

24. The Committee also noted with great concern the provocative activities of extremist settlers and settler groups. In the course of the year, the settlers continued attempts to occupy Palestinian land and property, harass Palestinian civilians and often engage in violent confrontations with them. On 8 January 1999, a militia composed of right-wing settlers was created for the purpose of assisting settlers in the Nablus and Hebron areas in their conflicts with the Palestinian population. On 8 June 1999,

members of the "El Ad" settler organization occupied four buildings purchased earlier in the Silwan neighbourhood of East Jerusalem. For the first time since 1967, a civilian guard was established on 11 June 1999 in the West Bank settlements, intended to operate independently from the Israeli police or Israel Defence Forces (IDF).

25. The Committee expressed concern that Israel continued to detain some 2,000 Palestinians. Reports available to the Committee indicated that many Palestinian prisoners were suffering from various kinds of illness. Some had serious heart or kidney conditions. The Committee noted the release, in September and October, of 350 prisoners, in accordance with the provisions of the Sharm el-Sheikh Memorandum. However, having noted a delay in the implementation of the second stage of the prisoner release, the Committee expressed the hope that the remaining stage of the release would be implemented on time and in full compliance with the Memorandum. Concerned about the conditions of detention of Palestinian prisoners and reports of harsh interrogation methods and torture used by Israel's General Security Service (GSS), the Committee called once again upon the Government of Israel to respect and abide by the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention. The Committee noted with satisfaction the decision adopted by Israel's High Court of Justice in September 1999 stipulating that the GSS was not authorized to employ certain investigation and interrogation methods that involved the use of physical pressure against detainees.

26. Although the Palestinian economy showed signs of a slight growth in real terms in the past year, the Committee noted that it continued to suffer from structural imbalance as a result of the occupation and over-reliance on the Israeli economy. The restrictions on the movement of goods and labour force between the West Bank and East Jerusalem and between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip imposed by the Israeli authorities and the protracted lack of agreement on the safe passage routes had a negative impact on the livelihood of the Palestinian economy. The economic situation in the Gaza Strip, in particular, remained a cause of great concern.

27. During the year under review, the Committee observed with increasing concern that the water supply situation was precarious, stifling the prospects of economic development of the Palestinian population. During the summer drought of 1999, some 200,000 Palestinians suffered from severe water shortages. Also, there remained a long-standing disparity in the water consumption between the Israelis and the Palestinians. On average, the Israelis used some 53 gallons of water per person a day,

while the Palestinians used 18.5 gallons. In the densely populated Gaza Strip the water situation was particularly dire, at times forcing the population to consume water polluted by the nearby eastern Mediterranean. Palestinians in about 180 unconnected West Bank villages, with a population comprising approximately 20 per cent of the Palestinian population of the West Bank, were most detrimentally affected by the water shortage. By contrast, Israeli settlements had free access to water supplies. Reports indicated that the IDF regularly trucked in water to some of the settlements. As a result of the discriminatory and illegal Israeli water-management practices, the Palestinian population remained deprived of the right to its water resources. In that context, the Committee welcomed the assistance by some donor countries in providing Palestinian towns and villages with water-supply facilities.

28. The Committee expressed appreciation to the international community for its continued economic assistance to the Palestinian people in the various fields. The Committee viewed this much-needed assistance by the United Nations system and by the donor community as an important form of support for and underpinning of the peace process. It also considered it to be a crucial contribution to the development of a sustainable Palestinian economy and to the Palestinian institution- and nation-building. In that regard, the Committee called upon the international donor community to step up its assistance to the Palestinian people and expressed the hope that the contributions pledged towards the development of the Palestinian economy would be disbursed in full and as a matter of highest priority. The Committee welcomed the determination of the donors to assist the Palestinian people in its economic development. It noted the signing at an Ad Hoc Liaison Committee meeting, in Tokyo, on 15 October, of a tripartite action plan aimed at assisting the peace process and accelerating the disbursement of commitments in order to expedite implementation of essential development projects without delay. The Committee took note of the appointment on 21 September 1999 of Terje Rød-Larsen as the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General to the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Palestinian Authority and expressed the hope that he would continue to serve as a focal point for the various forms of United Nations assistance to the Palestinian people. The Committee also expressed appreciation for the efforts of the outgoing United Nations Special Coordinator in the Occupied Territories, Chinmaya R. Gharekhan, to mobilize and coordinate the various

forms of United Nations assistance to the Palestinian people.

29. In spite of the worsening financial constraints faced by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) during the year, the Committee noted the crucial role played by the Agency in assisting Palestine refugees through the provision of relief and social services. The Committee called upon all Governments, including non-contributing Governments, to contribute to the Agency's budget regularly in order to meet its anticipated needs and to intensify support for its activities. The Committee was of the view that any reduction in the levels of financing of UNRWA would result in further exacerbation of the plight of the refugees. In view of this, the Committee firmly believed that the international community should continue to support the vital activities of UNRWA until the question of Palestine refugees was fully resolved in accordance with relevant United Nations resolutions and international legitimacy. In that regard, the Committee was encouraged by the outcome of the donors' meeting held in Amman in September 1999, at which pledges of additional contributions to UNRWA were made by some donors.

Chapter V

Action taken by the Committee

A. Action taken in accordance with General Assembly resolution 53/39

30. In pursuance of its mandate and in response to the difficulties experienced by the peace process and diminishing prospects for a just and comprehensive settlement of the question of Palestine, the Committee stepped up its efforts to mobilize the international community in support of the Palestinian people, in cooperation with United Nations bodies, Governments, intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations and others, as indicated below.

1. Action in the General Assembly and communications to the President of the Security Council and the Secretary-General

(a) Resumed tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly

31. The Chairman and members of the Committee participated in the fourth resumption of the tenth emergency special session dealing with the illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory. In pursuance of General Assembly resolution ES-10/5 of 17 March 1998, the emergency special session was resumed on 5 February 1999 at the request of the Permanent Representative of Jordan, in his capacity as Chairman of the Group of Arab States for the month of January 1999.

32. The Chairman of the Committee took part in the debate and made a statement in which he reviewed the situation on the ground, as well as in the peace process. He expressed support for and stressed the crucial importance of convening a conference of the High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention (A/ES-10/PV.10).

33. At the end of the debate, on 9 February 1999, the General Assembly, by a recorded vote of 115 to 2, with 5 abstentions, adopted resolution ES-10/6, in which it reiterated its condemnation of the failure of the Government of Israel to comply with the provisions of earlier resolutions; expressed grave concern at the adoption by the Knesset of the law of 26 January 1999 and the legislation of 27 January 1999, and reaffirmed that all legislative and administrative measures and actions taken by Israel, the occupying Power, which had altered or purported to alter the character, legal status and demographic composition of Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, were all null and void and had no validity whatsoever; reiterated all the demands made of Israel, the occupying Power, in the earlier resolutions of the tenth emergency special session, including the immediate and full cessation of the construction at Jabal Abu Ghneim and of all other Israeli settlement activities, as well as of all illegal measures and actions in Occupied East Jerusalem, the acceptance of the *de jure* applicability of the Fourth Geneva Convention and compliance with relevant Security Council resolutions, the cessation and reversal of all actions taken illegally against Palestinian Jerusalemites and the provision of information about goods produced or manufactured in the settlements; reiterated also its previous recommendations to Member States for the cessation of all forms of assistance and support for illegal Israeli activities in the Occupied

Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem, in particular settlement activities and actively to discourage activities that directly contribute to any construction or development of those settlements; affirmed that increased efforts must be exerted to bring the peace process back on track and to continue the process towards the achievement of a just, comprehensive and lasting peace in the region on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and the principle of land for peace, as well as Security Council resolution 425 (1978); recommended that the High Contracting Parties convene a conference on measures to enforce the Convention in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem, on 15 July 1999 at the United Nations Office at Geneva; invited the Government of Switzerland to undertake the necessary preparations prior to the conference; requested the Secretary-General to make the necessary facilities available to enable the High Contracting Parties to convene the conference; expressed its confidence that Palestine, as a party directly concerned, would participate in the conference; and decided to adjourn the tenth emergency special session temporarily and to authorize the President of the most recent General Assembly to resume its meeting upon request from Member States.

(b) Communications to the President of the Security Council and the Secretary-General

34. In a letter dated 11 February 1999 addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/1999/151), the Chairman of the Committee reiterated the Committee's objection to the deletion from the list of items related to the exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, the question of Palestine and the Middle East problem, which were of utmost concern not only to the Committee but also to the majority of Member States. He stated the Committee's belief that pending a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict in the Middle East, the core of which is the question of Palestine, in accordance with international legitimacy, those items should remain on the list of matters of which the Council is seized, as they continued to engage its responsibility with regard to the maintenance of international peace and security. He also stressed that any decision to delete those items, in the absence of positive developments in the peace process, would go well beyond procedural reform and would have far-reaching negative political implications.

35. In a letter dated 4 May 1999 to the Secretary-General (A/53/938-S/1999/512), the Chairman of the Committee informed the Secretary-General of the Committee's position concerning the series of meetings held in Gaza

from 27 to 29 April 1999, within the framework of the extraordinary session of the Palestinian Central Council and of the final statement adopted at the conclusion of the session. He stated that the Committee expressed its full support for the decisions of the Palestinian political leadership and that it was hopeful that the Council's statement would lead to the revitalization of the currently deadlocked peace process. In the Committee's view, that constructive diplomatic initiative should enable the parties to re-engage in the critical phase of the permanent status negotiations on the most sensitive and far-reaching political issues of great importance for both peoples and for the region as a whole. In view of this, the Committee wished to take the opportunity to call upon the Government of Israel to stop immediately its illegal policy and actions aimed at creating "facts on the ground", among other things, through establishing new and expanding existing settlements, stifling the Palestinian economic development and livelihood, and denying the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights. The Committee considered that the Israeli side should respond to the decisions of the Palestinian Central Council by returning to the negotiating table as soon as possible, without preconditions and in good faith, so as to allow the permanent status negotiations to proceed towards a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine. The Committee remains hopeful that the permanent status negotiations, once resumed by the parties, would be concluded within the agreed time-frame of approximately one year. The Committee also reiterated its position of principle in support of the exercise by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights, including the right to self-determination and the establishment of a sovereign State.

2. Participation by the Chairman of the Committee at international conferences and meetings

36. During the year, the Chairman of the Committee participated in meetings of intergovernmental and other bodies and other meetings relevant to the question of Palestine and contributed to their deliberations in support of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, as follows:

(a) Twenty-sixth session of the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers, Ouagadougou, 28 June-1 July 1999. The Chairman informed the Committee at its 246th meeting that the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers had adopted a communiqué calling on the international community to avoid dealings with Israel that might be interpreted as implicit recognition of the de facto situation

imposed by Israel when it declared the city of Al-Quds as its capital, requesting its members who had established relations with Israel to reconsider such relations, and calling on the United Nations and other forums to force Israel to release detainees (see A/53/1044-S/1999/924);

(b) Seventieth ordinary session of the Council of Ministers and 35th ordinary session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), Algiers, 8-10 July and 12-14 July 1999, respectively (see A/54/424). In its decision on the question of Palestine, the OAU Council of Ministers reaffirmed the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including its right to declare a State; called upon Israel to halt immediately its confiscation of Palestinian land and expansion of settlements, especially in Jerusalem and its suburbs; called for an accurate implementation of all peace agreements; urged the sponsors of the peace process, the parties concerned and the entire international community to deploy all the required efforts to revive the peace process and ensure its success; hailed the decision of the Palestinian Authority to hold Bethlehem 2000 celebrations and called on all Member States to give those celebrations the attention they deserved, so as to ensure their success on the path to peace and hope in the Middle East;

(c) The meeting celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of the Pontifical Mission for Palestine, United Nations Headquarters, 25 October 1999. The Chairman made a statement on behalf of the Committee in support of the work done in the Middle East, since 1949, by the Pontifical Mission for Palestine — an operating agency of the Catholic Near East Welfare Association. He expressed appreciation for the Mission's humanitarian assistance to Palestine refugees and others throughout the region. The Chairman also referred to specific activities of the Mission, including, among others, the medical assistance to children of the intifada, emergency relief to needy children in Lebanon, the rebuilding of Palestinian homes, the establishment of the Bethlehem University, the Ephpheta Institute for hearing-impaired children and the Notre Dame of Jerusalem pilgrimage centre.

37. As in previous years, the Committee followed with great interest the activities relevant to the question of Palestine of other intergovernmental organizations, as well as decisions and resolutions of United Nations bodies and agencies, notably the Economic and Social Council, the Commission on Human Rights, the Subcommission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities and the Committee against Torture, and the positive efforts made by many Governments. In that regard, the Committee noted the increasing concern of the international

community over the lengthy stalemate in the peace process and welcomed its determination to continue efforts aimed at assisting the parties in bringing the negotiations back on track.

B. Action taken by the Committee and the Division for Palestinian Rights in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 53/39 and 53/40

38. In its programme of meetings organized in the various regions, the Committee continued to give priority to promoting the exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, supporting the peace process and stressing the need for timely and scrupulous implementation by the parties of the bilateral agreements. The Committee also urged the international community to continue to provide political support, as well as broad economic assistance to the Palestinian people.

39. On the basis of the provision contained in General Assembly resolution 53/39, the Committee again adjusted this programme, as necessary, in order to meet the evolving situation in the most effective and constructive manner, while keeping in mind the continuing financial constraints facing the Organization. The Committee expressed its great appreciation to the Governments of Egypt, Italy and Namibia for having provided venues, facilities and financial support for the events sponsored by the Committee.

40. During the year, the Committee, through its Bureau, continued its cooperation on the question of Palestine with States members of the European Union. The Bureau held consultation meetings with representatives of the European Union (under the Presidencies of Germany and Finland) with a view to developing closer cooperation between the Committee and members of the Union. The Chairman of the Committee briefed the members of the EU delegation on the Committee's current and planned activities and expressed the hope that the Committee and EU would continue to hold consultations on issues of common interest. Both sides were in agreement on the need to continue the dialogue. In the course of the preparations for the Bethlehem 2000 International Conference (see paras. 43-48 below), the Bureau of the Committee developed a close and fruitful cooperation with the Government of Italy, which provided assistance in the organization of the Conference. The Committee expressed its gratitude to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Italy for its dedicated involvement in all aspects and all stages of the preparations

for the Bethlehem 2000 International Conference. The Committee was also grateful for the financial contribution made by the Government of Italy towards the promotion of the Conference. The Committee expressed satisfaction at the way partnership had developed between the Committee and the Italian side in the course of the preparations for the Bethlehem 2000 International Conference and expressed the hope that that cooperation would continue.

41. The Bureau also met with the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs and discussed the situation on the ground and in the peace process, as well as the various aspects of the work of the Committee. The Bureau was of the view that such meetings were useful and constructive and should be held periodically in the future.

42. Throughout the year, the staff of the Division for Palestinian Rights met at Headquarters with members of the general public and student groups and briefed them on the various aspects of the question of Palestine and the involvement of the United Nations in the issue.

1. Bethlehem 2000 International Conference

43. The Bethlehem 2000 International Conference was held in Rome on 18 and 19 February 1999. The Conference was organized in response to General Assembly resolution 53/27 of 18 November 1998. It was attended by many high-level participants, including the Honourable Francesco Rutelli, Mayor of Rome; Sir Kieran Prendergast, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs and Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations; His Eminence Roger Cardinal Etchegaray, President of the Committee for the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000 and Head of the Holy See delegation; Mr. Jacques Baudin, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Senegal; Dr. Azeddine Laraki, Secretary-General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference; Ambassador Ibra Deguène Ka, Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People; Mr. Jacques Diouf, Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations; Mr. Lamberto Dini, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Italy. Among the eminent personalities who spoke at the Conference were the Honourable Luciano Violante, President of the Italian Chamber of Deputies, and the Honourable Domenico Fisichella, Senator, Vice-President of the Italian Senate and Representative of the Honourable Nicola Mancino, President of the Italian Senate. The Chairman of the Executive Committee of the PLO and President of the Palestinian Authority, Mr. Yasser Arafat, attended the Conference and made an important statement.

44. A number of eminent personalities from various parts of the world, including representatives from different religious denominations, addressed the following themes: celebrating the new millennium in a global vision of peace and reconciliation, and preparing for the millennium celebrations.

45. During the Conference, the Committee delegation was received by H.E. Dr. Oscar Luigi Scalfaro, President of the Italian Republic, who expressed the readiness of his country to continue to make every effort aimed at bringing the peace process back on track. The Committee delegation was also received by His Holiness Pope John Paul II, who expressed confidence that peace was possible in the Middle East and that the promise of peace would become a reality when the dignity and the rights of human beings, made in the image of God, were acknowledged and respected. His Holiness welcomed the Committee's endeavours and sent his blessings for the success of the coming celebrations in Bethlehem.

46. In preparation for the Conference and with the financial assistance from the Government of Italy, the Division for Palestinian Rights, in cooperation with the Palestinian Authority, produced a background note on the United Nations involvement in the Bethlehem 2000 Project, entitled "The United Nations and Bethlehem 2000".

47. At the conclusion of the Conference, the participants adopted the Rome Declaration, in which they promoted the Bethlehem 2000 Project launched by the Palestinian Authority and highlighted the urgency of bringing economic recovery and prosperity to the Palestinian people. They welcomed the adoption by the General Assembly of resolution 53/27 and considered it a clear reflection of the world community's strong desire to bring the era of dialogue, tolerance and reconciliation to the people of Bethlehem and the entire Middle East. The participants also expressed the view that freedom of movement and unhindered access to the Holy Places in Bethlehem by the faithful of all religions and nationalities were essential to the city's revival.

48. A comprehensive report containing the proceedings of the Conference was issued as a publication of the Division for Palestinian Rights.

2. United Nations African Meeting in Support of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

49. The United Nations African Meeting in Support of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People was held at Windhoek from 20 to 22 April 1999. The participants

included eminent political personalities from Africa, a representative of the Secretary-General, representatives of Governments, intergovernmental organizations, United Nations system organizations and agencies, the Palestinian Authority, parliamentarians, non-governmental organizations and representatives of the media.

50. The participants discussed the following issues: promoting the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people — a key to peace in the Middle East; the role of Africa in supporting the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people; and celebrating the new millennium in a global vision of peace and reconciliation — the Bethlehem 2000 Project of the Palestinian Authority.

51. In the Windhoek Declaration, the final document of the Meeting, the participants focused on the role of African States in supporting the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people as well as the international community's action in promoting the Bethlehem 2000 Project. It was also emphasized that the establishment of a Palestinian State remained a key element for the successful settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict, the core of which is the question of Palestine. The participants discussed the experience of African States in the struggle for decolonization, independence and sovereignty, as well as the experience of Africa in the quest for economic independence and sustainable development. Prospects for the promotion of bilateral economic cooperation and trade, as well as the establishment of business partnerships with the Palestinian counterparts, were also discussed.

52. The Committee delegation was received by H.E. Dr. Sam Nujoma, President of the Republic of Namibia, who welcomed the efforts of the Committee aimed at bringing about a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement on the question of Palestine. The delegation was also received by The Right Honourable Hage Geingob, Prime Minister of Namibia, who expressed his country's strong support for the work of the Committee.

53. The report of the Meeting was issued as a publication of the Division for Palestinian Rights.

3. United Nations International Meeting on the Convening of the Conference on Measures to Enforce the Fourth Geneva Convention in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem

54. The United Nations International Meeting on the Convening of the Conference on Measures to Enforce the Fourth Geneva Convention in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem, was held in Cairo on 14

and 15 June 1999. The Meeting was attended by international legal experts, as well as by a representative of the Secretary-General, representatives of Governments, intergovernmental organizations, United Nations system organizations and agencies, a representative of the International Committee of the Red Cross, the Palestinian Authority, non-governmental organizations and representatives of the media.

55. The following topics were discussed by the participants: violations by Israel, the occupying Power, of the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention; the enforcement of the Convention; and the Conference of the High Contracting Parties to the Convention and its possible outcomes.

56. In their final statement at the close of the Meeting, the participants stressed the universal character of the Geneva Conventions and the fact that their provisions had been accepted as norms of international customary law. They expressed serious concern with regard to grave breaches and violations by Israel, the occupying Power, of the Fourth Geneva Convention. They expressed their utmost concern at the continuing settlement activities, which included land confiscation and transfer of Israeli civilians to the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem, in clear violation of article 49 of the Fourth Geneva Convention. They strongly supported the convening by the High Contracting Parties of the conference on measures to enforce the Convention, on 15 July 1999, at the United Nations Office at Geneva.

57. The report of the Meeting will be issued as a publication of the Division for Palestinian Rights.

4. Visit of the Committee delegation to Gaza

58. Following the Meeting in Cairo, the Committee delegation visited Gaza from 16 to 18 June 1999. During that visit, the first for the Committee, the delegation was received by the Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization and President of the Palestinian Authority, Yasser Arafat. The Committee also had the opportunity to meet with high-ranking Palestinian officials, including Palestinian Authority Ministers, the Mayor of Gaza City, the District Governor, as well as the United Nations Special Coordinator of the Occupied Territory and representatives of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Children's Fund and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

59. The Chairman of the Committee briefed Mr. Arafat on the various activities of the Committee, including the

outcome of the Meeting in Cairo. Mr. Arafat and the Chairman exchanged views on the latest developments in the peace process, the continuing difficulties faced by the Palestinian people and the need for international action in support of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.

60. While in Gaza, the Committee delegation visited a number of UNDP projects in Gaza City, the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation and the Palestine Red Crescent Community Centre, near the Khan Younis refugee camp.

5. Cooperation with non-governmental organizations

61. The Committee noted the important role played by non-governmental organizations in mobilizing international solidarity with the Palestinian people and support for the achievement of its inalienable rights. With a view to developing the most effective means of cooperation with organizations on the question of Palestine, the Committee has restructured its non-governmental organizations programme, including its programme of meetings. The Committee held consultations with representatives of organizations in Rome, in February 1999, during the Bethlehem 2000 International Conference. Another consultation meeting is scheduled to take place in November 1999 at Headquarters. In the course of the year, representatives of non-governmental organizations have participated in all the international conferences and meetings organized under the auspices of the Committee. A large number of organizations participated actively in those meetings and showed particular interest in supporting the Bethlehem 2000 Project of the Palestinian Authority, as well as discussing issues relating to the enforcement of the Fourth Geneva Convention in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem.

62. In response to the Committee's request to the Division for Palestinian Rights to develop new and more flexible ways of cooperating and communicating with non-governmental organizations, an Internet Web site, entitled "NGO Network on the Question of Palestine", was launched in September 1999. It is maintained by the Division and is part of a Web site on the United Nations cooperation with civil society organizations established on the United Nations home page. This Web site can be found at: <<http://www.un.org/depts/dpa/ngo>>.

63. The staff of the Division participated in meetings organized by civil society organizations in Murcia, Spain, and Athens.

64. During the year, the Division continued to issue its periodic newsletter entitled *NGO Action News* covering the activities of non-governmental organizations on the various aspects of the question of Palestine.

6. Research, monitoring and publications

65. The Committee continued to attach great importance to the essential contribution of the Division for Palestinian Rights and requested it to continue its established programme of work, including studies and publications; the further development of the United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine; the annual training programme for staff of the Palestinian Authority; and the annual observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

66. Accordingly, the Division continued to respond to requests for information and to prepare and disseminate to its worldwide network the following publications:

(a) Monthly bulletin covering action by the Committee, United Nations bodies and agencies, and intergovernmental organizations concerned with the question of Palestine;

(b) Periodic bulletin entitled "Developments related to the Middle East peace process";

(c) Monthly chronology of events relating to the question of Palestine, based on media reports and other sources;

(d) Reports of meetings organized under the auspices of the Committee;

(e) Special bulletin on the observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People; and

(f) Annual compilation of relevant resolutions, decisions and statements of the General Assembly and the Security Council relating to the question of Palestine.

67. The Committee expressed the wish that the Division continue to work on a draft study on Israeli settlements and on updating its information notes.

7. United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine

68. The Division for Palestinian Rights, in cooperation with relevant technical services of the United Nations Secretariat, continued to develop UNISPAL, as mandated by the General Assembly in 1991. This included a further upgrading of its hardware and software components, the scanning and inclusion into the system of several hundreds

of new and old documents, improvement of a database relating to non-governmental organizations, improvement of quality control and the further development and improvement of access to the UNISPAL, as well as question of Palestine sites on the Internet.

69. The staff of the Division coordinated and supervised the electronic conversion of the records of the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine, in pursuance of the mandate given by the General Assembly in its resolution 51/129 of 13 December 1996 and the understanding reached with regard to the redeployment of funds from savings achieved in carrying out the programme of work of the Committee. The conversion of those records was further expanded to include additional related documentation.

8. Training programme for staff of the Palestinian Authority

70. Two staff members from the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation of the Palestinian Authority participated in a training programme conducted by the Division, from September to December 1998, in conjunction with the fifty-third session of the General Assembly. They familiarized themselves with various aspects of the work of the Secretariat and other organs. The programme included, among other things, attendance at various briefings and meetings of relevant committees and bodies of the United Nations, meetings with representatives of delegations to the General Assembly and members of staff of permanent missions to the United Nations. The trainees also conducted research on specific topics of interest to them.

9. International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People

71. The International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People was observed on 30 November 1998 at United Nations Headquarters and at the United Nations Offices at Geneva and Vienna. On the occasion of the observance at Headquarters, in addition to a solemn meeting of the Committee and other activities, an exhibit entitled "Bethlehem 2000" was presented by the Permanent Observer Mission of Palestine, under the auspices of the Committee. The Committee noted with appreciation that the International Day of Solidarity had also been observed in many other cities throughout the world. Details on the observance are contained in the special bulletin issued by the Division.

72. In adopting its programme of work, the Committee decided that a similar event would be organized in connection with the observance of the Day in 1999.

C. Action taken in accordance with General Assembly resolution 53/27

73. In pursuance of General Assembly resolution 53/27 of 18 November 1998 and in response to the overwhelming support the resolution had received during the fifty-third session of the Assembly, the Committee has throughout the year attached the greatest importance to the need to support and promote the Bethlehem 2000 Project of the Palestinian Authority. The Committee devoted a considerable part of its programme of activities to that issue.

74. In a letter dated 28 September 1999 to the Secretary-General, the Chairman of the Committee outlined the action taken by the Committee with respect to Bethlehem 2000, including the convening of the Bethlehem 2000 International Conference in Rome; the promotion of the Bethlehem 2000 Project at other meetings organized under the auspices of the Committee; the promotion of the Project at meetings with representatives of intergovernmental organizations, namely, EU, the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the League of Arab States; the role played by UNDP, the World Bank and UNESCO in providing assistance in connection with the Project; the preparation and display at United Nations Headquarters, as well as in Rome and Windhoek, of the Palestinian exhibit, comprising works of art and photography from Bethlehem; and the publication, in cooperation with the Palestinian Authority, of a background note entitled "The United Nations and Bethlehem 2000" (A/54/416).

Chapter VI

Action taken by the Department of Public Information in accordance with General Assembly resolution 53/41

75. In pursuance of General Assembly resolution 53/41 of 2 December 1998, the Department of Public Information continued its special information programme on the question of Palestine, which included among its highlights the convening of an international encounter on the theme "Prospects for Peace" and the organization of a training programme for Palestinian broadcasters and journalists.

76. In cooperation with the Government of Spain, the Department convened an international encounter in Madrid on 23 and 24 March 1999. Panellists included distinguished officials and analysts from the Palestinian Authority, the Palestine Liberation Organization, Israel, neighbouring countries, Europe and the United States of America, as well as the host country. Their presentations were followed by an exchange of views with the participants in the audience, which consisted of representatives of prominent media organizations from Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America and the United States of America, as well as the Palestinian Authority and Israel. A large number of media organizations from the host country were also represented.

77. From 19 October to 20 November 1998, the Department organized a training programme at Headquarters for a group of nine Palestinian broadcasters and journalists in order to strengthen their professional capacity as information media personnel. From 25 October to 17 December 1998, the Department organized a training programme for seven additional Palestinian broadcasters and journalists. As was the case since the inception of the programme in 1995, the Department included in the planning of the programme elements such as workshops at Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs in New York and at CNN in Atlanta, as well as briefings at international organizations and at institutions of the Government of the United States of America in Washington, D.C.

78. The Department provided press coverage, in English and French, of all meetings held at United Nations Headquarters, including those of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. Coverage in English and French was also provided to the conferences and meetings held under the auspices of the Committee in Rome, Windhoek and Cairo. Press releases were issued on the texts of the statements by the Secretary-General.

79. From September 1998 to July 1999, the Dissemination and Communications Unit of the Department, in accordance with its established pattern, distributed 1,529 hard copies of documents and, through electronic mail, 43 titles of documents related to the question of Palestine.

80. The Public Inquiries Unit of the Department responded to 33 queries from the public on the question of Palestine.

81. The quarterly publication *UN Chronicle* has continued its coverage of issues related to the question of

Palestine in the period from September 1998 to July 1999. Among articles published, one looked back on the establishment, 50 years earlier, of the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO) and another provided coverage of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. The Bethlehem 2000 Project to commemorate the new millennium in Bethlehem was also covered. Issue No.1, 1999, of the quarterly included a personal account of the early days of UNTSO by one of its original local staff members. The *UN Chronicle* provided regular coverage of peacekeeping operations in the Middle East.

82. The Radio and Central News Service of the Department covered extensively all aspects of the question of Palestine and related issues in daily news bulletins and current affairs radio programmes in various languages for regional and worldwide dissemination. During the reporting period, many interviews were conducted in Arabic with Palestinian representatives and journalists such as the Deputy Health Minister of the Palestinian Authority, the Deputy Observer of the Permanent Observer Mission of Palestine to the United Nations and journalists who attended the 1998 DPI training programme for Palestinian broadcasters and journalists. Among the topics covered in the news bulletins and current affairs magazines were: the question of Palestine during the fifty-third session of the General Assembly; the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People; the Committee on Population and Development and the health situation in Palestine; the situation in the occupied Palestinian territory; the current status of the peace process and the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people; the Panel of Experts on Israeli Violations of the Fourth Geneva Convention; and the UNDP celebration of the twentieth anniversary of its assistance to the Palestinian people. In addition to short items in the news and current affairs magazines, the Service also produced 12 magazine and feature programmes devoted exclusively to the question of Palestine, including a four-part series entitled "UN assistance to the Palestinian People" in Arabic.

83. The Department cooperated with the Division for Palestinian Rights in the media promotion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People and provided assistance in organizing the special exhibit in connection with the observance, entitled "Bethlehem 2000". The observance of the Day presented special opportunities for cooperating with local non-governmental organizations in the organization of joint events and programmes to draw attention to the issue of Palestinian rights. Print and electronic media coverage of the event in

most of the countries concerned was extensive. The Day was a major focus of the global network of United Nations information centres and information services. Special events were organized by the United Nations Information System in Beirut, and the United Nations Information Centres in Cairo, Dhaka, Harare, Islamabad, Lagos, Lisbon, Mexico City, Moscow, New Delhi, Ouagadougou, Pretoria, Sana'a, Bogotá and Tunis. Those activities included briefings, media campaigns, press conferences, interviews, lectures, seminars, television programmes and concerts. The United Nations Information Centre in Ouagadougou, together with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Burkina Faso and the University of Ouagadougou, organized a lecture for an audience of 700. The Moscow United Nations Information Centre made arrangements for a round table on Palestine, co-sponsored by the League of Arab States. The Pretoria United Nations Information Centre's commemoration, organized jointly with the Government of South Africa, featured speeches, poetry citations, music and dance performances. At the United Nations Information Centre in Harare's Concert for Palestine, co-sponsored by the Zimbabwe-Palestine Solidarity Committee, Zimbabwean musicians paid tribute to the Palestinian people. Throughout the reporting period, the centres and services also continued to disseminate information on the question of Palestine and to organize special outreach activities relating to this issue. The Centre in Harare, together with the University of Zimbabwe, made arrangements for a special model United Nations session on the question of Palestine. That session, widely publicized beforehand, drew an audience of 600, including senior government officials and diplomats. The United Nations Information Centre in Athens hosted a special colloquium on the subject. A number of centres provided information and logistical support to visiting officials, as well as for conferences and seminars relating to the question of Palestine. The Centre in Rome lent its support to the Bethlehem 2000 International Conference. The Centre in Windhoek assisted in organizing broad media coverage of the United Nations African Meeting in Support of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. The Centre in Madrid helped to organize and publicize the international encounter for journalists on the question of Palestine; and the Rio de Janeiro Centre assisted in the selection of a speaker for the same event. The United Nations Information Centre in Cairo provided support to the members of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories. The United Nations Information Centre in Washington coordinated the meetings of Mr. Gharekhan,

United Nations Special Coordinator in the Occupied Territories, with officials of the Government of the United States of America.

Chapter VII

Conclusions and recommendations of the Committee

84. The General Assembly, in its resolution 181 (II) of 29 November 1947, stipulates that independent Arab and Jewish States will come into existence in Palestine. After more than five decades of suffering and dispossession, as the world prepares to embrace the new millennium, the Palestinian people is yet to see that provision implemented and its aspirations for self-determination and statehood realized. Today, recent breakthroughs in the peace process notwithstanding, the Palestinian people still carries the heavy burden of occupation. Millions of Palestine refugees carry on with their lives in dismal and harsh conditions of refugee camps. A solution to the Palestine refugee question, in conformity with General Assembly resolution 194 (III) of 11 December 1948, is yet to be achieved. Palestinians living under occupation are forced to grapple with the daily violation of their rights by the occupying Power and with the hostility of the settlers. The territory under the jurisdiction of the Palestinian Authority now represents a disjointed multitude of enclaves surrounded by a dense net of settlements, restricting the freedom of movement of the Palestinians and severely affecting their livelihood. Over the years, this has had a damaging effect on the Palestinian economy and is likely to have an impact on the sustainability of the social and economic development of the Palestinian people, including its efforts at nation-building.

85. In the course of the year, the Committee has continued to reaffirm its strong support for the Israeli-Palestinian peace negotiations and has called upon the international community to help the parties rebuild the trust and confidence needed to move the peace process ahead towards the permanent status negotiations. In this connection, the Committee welcomed the resumption of the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations on permanent status issues and expressed the hope that they would be conducted in compliance with the timetable agreed in the Sharm el-Sheikh Memorandum, signed on 4 September 1999. The Committee was encouraged by the commitment of the parties to conclude a framework agreement within five months from the resumption of the permanent status negotiations and a comprehensive agreement on all

permanent status issues within one year. In that regard, the Committee wishes to emphasize that strong international consensus has emerged with respect to the need to reach the final settlement in the year 2000. The Committee also maintained that, at this crucial juncture, the international community, and in particular the co-sponsors of the peace process, should spare no effort in order to bring about a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine, as well as peace and stability to the entire region.

86. The Committee is appalled by the fact that, as the parties engaged in the sensitive stage of the permanent status negotiations, the situation on the ground remained deplorable. In spite of some progress achieved in the negotiating process, the occupation of a vast Palestinian land area, the determination with which the occupying Power creates "facts on the ground" and violates the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people seriously jeopardizes and prejudices the outcome of the peace negotiations. It is, therefore, of paramount importance for the international community, including the High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention, to do everything in their power to protect the Palestinian people until the parties reach a permanent status agreement and it is fully implemented.

87. In view of the above, the Committee reaffirms the permanent responsibility of the United Nations with respect to the question of Palestine until a satisfactory settlement, based on the relevant United Nations resolutions and international legitimacy, is reached and the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people are fully realized. As the parties embark on the sensitive stage of the permanent status negotiations, the role of the United Nations becomes even more critical. The Committee reiterates that the involvement of the United Nations in the peace process, both as the guardian of international legitimacy and in the mobilization and provision of international assistance for development, is essential for the successful outcome of the peace efforts. As the organ of the General Assembly established to deal with the question of Palestine, the Committee pledges to continue its work aimed at mobilizing the international community as a whole, at the governmental, intergovernmental and non-governmental levels, in support of a comprehensive, just and lasting solution of the question in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions.

88. The Committee is of the view that the adjustments made over the past year in the programme of meetings held 99-34940 (E) 241199

in the various regions and in its cooperation with the non-governmental organization community made the programme more effective and focused. Moreover, it has played a useful role in heightening international awareness of the question of Palestine and in achieving wider recognition for the exercise by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights. The Committee will continue to review and assess that programme with a view to making it more effective and responsive to the evolving situation on the ground and in the peace process. In that regard, the Committee, in its programme of meetings for the next year, intends to focus on the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, Palestinian nation- and institution-building, socio-economic development and permanent status issues.

89. In pursuance of General Assembly resolution 53/27, the Committee, in the course of the year, placed special emphasis in its programme of activities on supporting and promoting the Bethlehem 2000 Project of the Palestinian Authority. The Committee intends to continue that important activity in order to ensure broad international support for the Project, as well as active international participation in the millennial celebrations in Bethlehem.

90. The Committee emphasizes the essential contribution of the Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat in support of the Committee's objectives and requests it to continue its programme of publications and other activities, including the completion of its work on the UNISPAL collection and on the project for the modernization of the records of the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine. The Committee also considers that the annual training programme for staff of the Palestinian Authority has demonstrated its usefulness and requests that it be continued.

91. The Committee believes that the special information programme on the question of Palestine of the Department of Public Information has continued to be an important tool in informing the media and public opinion about issues relating to the question of Palestine, and requests that it be continued, with the necessary flexibility that may be required as a result of developments affecting the question of Palestine. The Committee wishes to reiterate its earlier requests that, as a matter of priority, the Department update the permanent photo exhibit on the question of Palestine for public display at Headquarters, update its publications on the various aspects of the question of Palestine and prepare audio-visual and other types of informational material for use by the general public.

92. In an effort to make its contribution to the achievement of a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine, the Committee calls

on all States to join in this endeavour and invites the General Assembly again to recognize the importance of its role and to reaffirm its mandate with overwhelming support.

Notes

¹ *Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-first Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/31/35).*

² *Ibid., Thirty-second Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/32/35);* *ibid., Thirty-third Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/33/35);* *ibid., Thirty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/34/35 and Corr.1);* *ibid., Thirty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/35/35);* *ibid., Thirty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/36/35);* *ibid., Thirty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/37/35 and Corr.1);* *ibid., Thirty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/38/35);* *ibid., Thirty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/39/35);* *ibid., Fortieth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/40/35);* *ibid., Forty-first Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/41/35);* *ibid., Forty-second Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/42/35);* *ibid., Forty-third Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/43/35);* *ibid., Forty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/44/35);* *ibid., Forty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/45/35);* *ibid., Forty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/46/35);* *ibid., Forty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/47/35);* *ibid., Forty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/48/35);* *ibid., Forty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/49/35);* *ibid., Fiftieth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/50/35);* *ibid., Fifty-first Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/51/35);* *ibid., Fifty-second Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/52/35);* and *ibid., Fifty-third Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/53/35).*

³ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 75, No. 973.

⁴ *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-third Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/53/35)*, chap. VII.

⁵ Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 47/1 of 22 September 1992, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia did not participate in the work of the Committee.

⁶ A/AC.183/1999/CRP.1.

⁷ The observers at the Committee meetings were as follows: Algeria, Bangladesh, Bulgaria, China, Ecuador, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Mauritania, Morocco, Nicaragua, Niger, Qatar, Sri Lanka, Syrian Arab Republic, United Arab Emirates, Viet Nam, League of Arab States, Organization of the Islamic Conference and Palestine.



United Nations

Report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

General Assembly
Official Records
Fifty-fifth session
Supplement No. 35 (A/55/35)

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United Nations • New York, 2000

Note

Symbols of United Nations documents are composed of capital letters combined with figures. Mention of such a symbol indicates a reference to a United Nations document.

Contents

<i>Chapter</i>	<i>Paragraphs</i>	<i>Page</i>
Letter of transmittal		iv
I. Introduction	1–5	1
II. Mandate of the Committee	6–9	2
III. Organization of work	10–14	3
A. Membership and officers	10–12	3
B. Participation in the work of the Committee	13–14	3
IV. Review of the situation relating to the question of Palestine	15–25	3
V. Action taken by the Committee	26–71	6
A. Action taken in accordance with General Assembly resolution 54/39	26–33	6
1. Communications to the President of the Security Council and the Secretary-General	27–28	6
2. Action in the Security Council	29–31	7
3. Participation by the Chairman of the Committee at international conferences and meetings	32–33	8
B. Action taken by the Committee and the Division for Palestinian Rights in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 54/39 and 54/40	34–69	9
1. United Nations Asian Meeting on the Question of Palestine	38–42	9
2. International Conference on Palestine Refugees	43–46	10
3. United Nations NGO Meeting on Palestine Refugees	47–50	10
4. United Nations International Meeting in Support of a Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Establishment of Peace in the Middle East	51–55	11
5. United Nations Seminar on Prospects for Palestinian Economic Development and the Middle East Peace Process	56–59	11
6. Cooperation with non-governmental organizations	60–62	12
7. Research, monitoring and publications	63–64	13
8. United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine	65–66	13
9. Training programme for staff of the Palestinian Authority	67	13
10. International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People	68–69	13
C. Action taken in accordance with General Assembly resolution 54/22	70–71	14
VI. Action taken by the Department of Public Information in accordance with General Assembly resolution 54/41	72–83	14
VII. Conclusions and recommendations of the Committee	84–93	16

Letter of transmittal

10 October 2000

Mr. Secretary-General,

The international community has dealt with the question of Palestine for over five decades. For the past 25 years, the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People has worked hard to implement in the most effective way the mandate given to it by the General Assembly. The Committee devoted its activities to the full realization by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights — the right to self-determination without external interference; the right to national independence and sovereignty; and the right to return to their homes and property, from which they had been displaced. The Committee reiterates its pledge to continue to work towards the implementation of its important mandate until those rights are fully exercised by the Palestinian people.

Today, on the threshold of the twenty-first century, it is incumbent on the international community to spare no effort in order to assist the Palestinian people in its quest for justice, peace, a better future for their children and economic prosperity. The Israeli-Palestinian peace negotiations, co-sponsored by the Russian Federation and the United States of America, are now at a critical turning point. We are hopeful that the peace process will result in a final agreement bringing peace, stability and normalcy to the relations between the Israelis and the Palestinians and will lead to a comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict. In this regard, we, in the Committee, highly appreciate and value your personal contribution aimed at supporting the peace process and promoting a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the entire region of the Middle East.

In the hope that our work will make a further constructive contribution to the deliberations of the General Assembly, I have the honour to enclose herewith the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for submission to the General Assembly in accordance with paragraph 5 of its resolution 54/39 of 1 December 1999. The report covers the period from 12 November 1999 to 10 October 2000.

Accept, Sir, the assurances of my highest consideration.

(Signed) Ibra Deguène **Ka**
Chairman of the Committee on the
Exercise of the Inalienable Rights
of the Palestinian People

Chapter I Introduction

1. The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People was established by the General Assembly by resolution 3376 (XXX) of 10 November 1975, with the task of recommending a programme designed to enable the Palestinian people to exercise its inalienable rights as recognized by the Assembly in resolution 3236 (XXIX) of 22 November 1974.

2. The recommendations made by the Committee in its first report to the General Assembly¹ were endorsed by the Assembly as a basis for the solution of the question of Palestine. In its subsequent reports,² the Committee has continued to stress that a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, must be based on the relevant United Nations resolutions and the following essential principles: the withdrawal of Israel from the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, and from the other occupied Arab territories; respect for the right of all States in the region to live in peace within secure and internationally recognized boundaries; and the recognition and exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, primarily the right to self-determination. The Committee's recommendations could not be implemented, and the Assembly each year renewed the Committee's mandate and requested it to intensify efforts in pursuit of its objectives.

3. The Committee welcomed the historic breakthrough in the peace process in 1993 and the subsequent important steps towards the achievement of a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine, based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). At the same time, the Committee continued to work towards the full realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including the right to self-determination and to its own independent State. The Committee also continued to mobilize the needed international assistance and solidarity during the transitional period.

4. Following the signing in September 1999 of the Sharm el-Sheikh Memorandum, the Committee was encouraged by steps aimed at its implementation, namely the partial release of Palestinian prisoners, the opening of the southern safe passage between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, the further redeployment of

Israeli troops from areas of the West Bank, the resumption of the interim and permanent status talks, and the signing of the Israeli-Palestinian agreements on the implementation of economic issues and on the construction work on the Gaza seaport. In March-April 2000, the Committee followed closely the discussions on permanent status issues held by the parties at Bolling Air Force Base near Washington, D.C. Much hope was attached by the Committee to the Middle East Peace Summit and negotiations that were held under the auspices of the President of the United States of America in July 2000 at Camp David, Maryland. Although the Peace Summit was inconclusive, the parties firmly committed themselves to continuing negotiations with a view to concluding an agreement on permanent status issues as soon as possible. The Committee observed with much concern, however, the failure to create the necessary momentum for the conclusion of a final agreement on 15 September 2000, as stipulated by the provisions of the Sharm el-Sheikh Memorandum. In this regard, the Committee noted the determined effort of the United States President to re-engage the two sides on specific elements of the final settlement, in particular on the question of Jerusalem, in the course of the meetings held on the sidelines of the United Nations Millennium Summit in September 2000 in New York. The Committee was also encouraged by the important decisions of the Palestinian Central Council (PCC), held on 9 and 10 September 2000 in Gaza City, on the issue of Palestinian statehood and other permanent status issues. However, irrespective of the measure of progress achieved in the peace negotiations, the Committee reaffirmed the need for a speedy completion of the negotiations and the conclusion of a final settlement. In the meantime, the Committee stated its position of principle that the policies and practices of occupation were in violation of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949 (the Fourth Geneva Convention)³ and Security Council resolutions, and could lead to an increased volatility on the ground, putting the entire peace process in jeopardy. In this connection, the Committee emphasized that, at the end of the five-year interim period, Israel is yet to carry out the third redeployment of its forces, release Palestinian prisoners and return Palestinian displaced persons.

5. In spite of the many setbacks faced by the peace process in the past year, the Committee remains confident that the parties, assisted by the co-sponsors,

will continue to make a determined effort aimed at reaching a final settlement and putting an end to decades of hostility and conflict. It is also the Committee's earnest hope that the entire international community will stand by and support the Israelis and the Palestinians in their quest for a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine. As the organ of the General Assembly entrusted to deal with the question of Palestine, the Committee has participated in the various international initiatives in this regard and will continue to do so until the question of Palestine is resolved in all its aspects and the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people are fully realized.

Chapter II

Mandate of the Committee

6. The mandate of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People was again renewed by the General Assembly in resolution 54/39 of 1 December 1999, in which the Assembly, *inter alia*: (a) endorsed the conclusions and recommendations of the Committee⁴ and requested it to continue to keep under review the situation relating to the question of Palestine and to report and make suggestions to the General Assembly or the Security Council, as appropriate; (b) authorized the Committee to continue to exert all efforts to promote the exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its fifty-fifth session and thereafter; and (c) requested the Committee to continue to extend its cooperation and support to Palestinian and other non-governmental organizations in order to mobilize international solidarity and support for the achievement by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights and for a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine.

7. In its resolution 54/40 of 1 December 1999, on the Division for Palestinian Rights of the United Nations Secretariat, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to continue to provide the Division with the necessary resources and to ensure that it continues to carry out its programme of work as detailed in the relevant earlier resolutions, including, in particular, the organization of meetings in various regions with the participation of all sectors of the international community, the further development and expansion of the documents collection of the United

Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine, the preparation and widest possible dissemination of publications and information materials on various aspects of the question of Palestine, the provision of assistance in completing the project on the modernization of the records of the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine (UNCCP) and the provision of the annual training programme for staff of the Palestinian Authority.

8. In its resolution 54/41 of 1 December 1999, on the special information programme on the question of Palestine of the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat, the General Assembly requested the Department, in full cooperation and coordination with the Committee, to continue, with the necessary flexibility as may be required by developments affecting the question of Palestine, its special information programme for the biennium 2000-2001; and also requested the Department to promote the Bethlehem 2000 Project, within existing resources and until the Bethlehem 2000 commemoration comes to a close, including the preparation and dissemination of publications, audio-visual material and the establishment of a "Bethlehem 2000" site on the United Nations Internet home page.

9. In carrying out its programme of work, the Committee also took into account General Assembly resolution 54/42 of 1 December 1999 on the peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine, in which the Assembly, *inter alia*, reaffirmed the necessity of achieving a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine in all its aspects, expressed its full support for the ongoing peace process, stressed the necessity for commitment to the principle of land for peace and the implementation of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), which form the basis of the Middle East peace process; and also stressed the need for the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, primarily the right to self-determination; the need for the withdrawal of Israel from the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967; and the need for resolving the problem of the Palestine refugees.

Chapter III

Organization of work

A. Membership and officers

10. The Committee is composed of the following Member States: Afghanistan, Belarus, Cuba, Cyprus, Guinea, Guyana, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mali, Malta, Namibia, Nigeria, Pakistan, Romania, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine and Yugoslavia.⁵

11. At its 250th meeting, on 3 February 2000, the Committee re-elected Ibra Deguène Ka (Senegal) as Chairman and re-elected Ravan A. G. Farhâdi (Afghanistan) and Bruno Eduardo Rodríguez Parrilla (Cuba) as Vice-Chairmen and Walter Balzan (Malta) as Rapporteur.

12. At the same meeting, the Committee adopted its programme of work for the year 2000.⁶

B. Participation in the work of the Committee

13. As in previous years, the Committee reconfirmed that all States Members of and permanent observers to the United Nations wishing to participate in the work of the Committee as observers were welcome to do so. In accordance with established practice, the Permanent Observer of Palestine participated in the work of the Committee as an observer, attended all its meetings and made observations and proposals for consideration by the Committee and its Bureau.

14. In 2000, the Committee again welcomed as observers all the States and organizations that had participated in its work in the preceding year.⁷

Chapter IV

Review of the situation relating to the question of Palestine

15. In pursuance of its mandate, the Committee continued to keep under review the situation relating to the question of Palestine and, in particular, to monitor the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem. The Committee also continued to

follow closely the various developments in the Israeli-Palestinian peace negotiations. On numerous occasions in recent years, the Committee has voiced its concern over Israeli activities on the ground carried out in spite of the peace negotiations. In this regard, the Committee recalls its own and other parties' appeals to the Government of Israel to respect the spirit and the letter of the peace process and refrain from actions that may prejudice the outcome of the peace negotiations and erode trust and confidence between the parties.

16. Since November 1999, the Committee has observed with hope a series of actions taken on the ground in implementation of the Sharm el-Sheikh Memorandum. Those included the further redeployment of Israeli troops from parts of the West Bank, the agreement on the release of Palestinian prisoners, the opening of a southern safe passage between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip and the resumption of the negotiations on permanent status issues. The Committee welcomed the signing, on 7 June 2000, of the Israeli-Palestinian agreement on the implementation of economic issues, as well as the agreement concerning the Gaza seaport, signed on 20 September 2000. The Committee also took note of the official statement made by the PCC at the conclusion of its session in Gaza, on 9 and 10 September 2000. The Committee welcomed and supported the Council's decisions with regard to the postponement of the establishment of a State, as well as on steps to be taken in preparation for statehood, including the completion of work on the constitutional declaration and laws for presidential and parliamentary elections, and the submission of an application by Palestine for membership in the United Nations. In this regard, the Committee reiterated the inalienable, natural and historic right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, national independence and sovereignty.

17. The Committee remained hopeful that efforts of the co-sponsors of the peace process would allow the parties to resolve their outstanding differences and move forward towards the framework and final settlement agreements in accordance with the agreed timetable. In this context, the Committee observed closely the negotiations on permanent status issues conducted in March-April 2000 at Bolling Air Force Base near Washington, D.C. and the intense discussions at the Middle East Peace Summit, held from 11 to 24 July 2000 under the auspices of President Clinton, at Camp David, Maryland. The Committee

was of the view that with the meetings at Camp David the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations had reached a high water mark. It was especially troubled, therefore, by the failure of the parties to bridge the gaps in their positions and reach a comprehensive agreement. It welcomed, however, the final Trilateral Statement made at the conclusion of the Peace Summit, in which both parties committed themselves to continue their efforts to conclude an agreement on all permanent status issues as soon as possible. The Committee expressed the hope that the meetings held by the two sides with the United States President on the sidelines of the Millennium Summit and afterwards would result in a breakthrough enabling the parties to move forward towards a final agreement. The Committee viewed the September 2000 decisions of the PCC as a critical stepping stone on the way to a serious consideration of all outstanding permanent status issues.

18. The Committee was greatly disturbed by the violent confrontations between the Israel Defence Forces (IDF) and police and Palestinian civilians at the Al-Haram al-Sharif compound in the Old City of Jerusalem that erupted on 28 September 2000, following a visit to the holy site by the Israeli opposition leader Ariel Sharon, accompanied by a group of Likud Knesset members and hundreds of Israeli security personnel and police. Confrontations also took place all across the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, with over 90 people killed and more than 3,000 injured. Excessive force was used by IDF against the Palestinian protesters, including rubber-coated metal bullets, live ammunition, tanks and armoured personnel carriers, combat helicopters, anti-tank rockets and grenades. The Committee was shocked by the tragic loss of life as a result of these confrontations, in particular by the deaths of innocent Palestinian children. The Committee reiterated that these events were a direct result of the policies and practices of the Israeli occupation and the failure of Israel to respect its obligations under the Fourth Geneva Convention and the provisions of relevant Security Council and General Assembly resolutions. The Committee firmly believed that Israel's continued refusal to live up to those principles, as well as the continued lack of progress in the Israeli-Palestinian peace negotiations, would allow despair and frustration to set in, put the peace process in considerable jeopardy and lead to an increased volatility on the ground. In an effort to stop the violence, Chairman Yasser Arafat and Israel's Prime Minister Ehud Barak met in Paris, on 4 October 2000,

with the United States Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, French President Jacques Chirac and the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Kofi Annan. The Committee viewed these meetings and the understandings reached on 5 October 2000 at Sharm el-Sheikh as useful steps towards halting the violence on the ground, lessening tension between the two sides and resuming the Israeli-Palestinian dialogue. The Committee also welcomed the determined effort to revive the peace process, undertaken by the United States Secretary of State, as well as the Presidents of France and Egypt and the United Nations Secretary-General. The Committee followed with great attention the deliberations in the Security Council with respect to the outbreak of violence and welcomed the adoption, on 7 October 2000, of resolution 1322 (2000) (see paras. 29-31).

19. Throughout the year, the Committee followed closely the situation on the ground, in particular the construction and expansion of the illegal Israeli settlements and road network in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including in and around East Jerusalem. The Committee firmly believed that Israel's settlement policy and actions remained a key factor causing great damage to the peace process. The Committee was greatly alarmed by the fact that, in spite of the ongoing negotiations, the settlement drive in the course of the year under review has been as vigorous as it had been in previous years. In fact, according to reports available to the Committee, between 15 October and 13 December 1999, the Israeli Government approved building plans for the construction of 2,575 new housing units in six West Bank settlements, approved the "deposit" of plans for an additional 2,139 units and for the placement of 85 mobile homes in settlements identified in October 1999. In January 2000, construction began on 39 units in the settlement of "Betar" near Bethlehem. This settlement, with a population of some 15,000, is fast approaching the size of a city. On 3 January 2000, the Israel Lands Administration issued a tender for the construction of 122 units in the settlement of "Pisgat Ze'ev" north of East Jerusalem. At the end of February 2000, there were more than 7,120 units in various stages of construction. It was also reported in February that Israel's Ministry of Transportation would spend US\$ 100 million on roads in and around Jerusalem, with a focus on new corridors in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. In March 2000, Israel's Higher Planning Council dealing with the West Bank gave

final approval for the construction of a high-tech industrial park in the "Etzion" block of settlements. The same month, 658 dunums of land belonging to the Palestinian villages of Issawiya, At-Tur, Al-Azariya, Abu Dis and Ras al-Amud were confiscated for the construction of the eastern ring road, intended to cut off East Jerusalem and its Palestinian residents from the rest of the city, and to connect Jewish settlers to Jerusalem. On 10 April 2000, the Knesset's Budget and Security Committee approved \$400 million for settlement security and construction of 12 bypass roads in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. In April, initial groundwork for a new settlement began at Olive Hill in the settlement of "Efrat", south of Bethlehem. A total of 1,816 plots of land in the Israeli settlements went up for sale in the first seven months of 2000. In the period from 8 July 1999 to 24 August 2000, a total of 3,419 tenders were issued for settlement construction. According to figures from Israel's Ministry of Construction and Housing, construction in settlements increased by 96 per cent in the first half of 2000. Work began on 1,067 residential units in the first six months of the year, compared to 545 during the same period in 1999. Of the 1,067 units, 860 were located in settlements in the Jerusalem district and 207 in other areas. The Committee reaffirmed in no uncertain terms that the policy of confiscation of Palestinian land, demolition of houses and other Palestinian property and construction of settlements constituted a serious violation of international law, in particular the Fourth Geneva Convention. The Committee was particularly appalled by the intensified construction at the Jabal Abu Ghneim and Ras al-Amud neighbourhoods of East Jerusalem. These actions are also in violation of the provisions of the Oslo and Wye River agreements and, by changing the status quo, predetermine the outcome of the permanent status negotiations.

20. On 27 July, Israel's Ministry of the Interior announced that the number of settlers in the occupied West Bank and the Gaza Strip had risen in the past year by 13,600 or 7.5 per cent and stood at some 200,000. The Committee reiterated its concern over the provocative and often violent actions of extremist settlers occupying Palestinian land, erecting makeshift houses and other structures and engaging in violent confrontations with Palestinians. During the year, settlers were collecting considerable donations in Israel and abroad to purchase special military and rescue equipment. According to the Council of Jewish Communities in Judea, Samaria and Gaza, the

equipment is purchased in full coordination with the Israel Defence Forces, including the Regional Defence Officer in the IDF Central Command. In this regard, the Committee was alarmed by reports of increased settler activity, especially since the Camp David Peace Summit. This included a noticeable increase in the number of settlers with IDF-issued weapons and settlement fortification works in the vicinity of Hebron and Nablus, in particular.

21. The Committee stressed the inadmissibility and illegality of the Israeli policy of revoking the residency rights of Palestinian Jerusalemites. Although the Israeli Minister of the Interior declared the cessation of the revocation-of-residency policy in October 1999, no clear procedures have been introduced regarding the new policy, and the rules applied by the Ministry officials in East Jerusalem remained unclear.

22. The situation with regard to the Palestinian prisoners was of special concern to the Committee. Although a number of prisoners were released during the year, some 1,650 of them remained imprisoned in Israel. The Committee was especially alarmed by reports of administrative detention of Palestinians without charge or trial; overcrowded confinement conditions; solitary confinement as a means of severe punishment; inadequate medical care, resulting in some instances in the death of prisoners; deprivation of basic facilities, such as a place to practice religion and a place to study; restricted access to legal counsel; lack of privacy during legal consultations; and restrictions placed on family visits, which are arbitrarily granted by the prison administration, despite the intensive efforts of the International Committee of the Red Cross to facilitate and arrange such visits. The Committee, greatly concerned about the aforementioned conditions of detention, again called upon the Government of Israel to abide by the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention.

23. In the year under review, the Palestinian economy has continued to experience serious difficulties, although a measure of progress has been achieved in some areas. The economy remained beset by a number of restrictions on Palestinian economic transactions, limited passage between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, and persistent unemployment. There was also a pressing need to improve the physical environment and underdeveloped infrastructure, including water, energy, transportation and the sewage system. The Committee was of the view that it was incumbent on the

international community to assist the Palestinian people in rehabilitating infrastructure, improving natural resources management, institutional capacity-building, human resources and social development, and in developing productive sectors of the economy. In this connection, the Committee greatly appreciated the diversified and substantial assistance provided to the Palestinian people during the year. It again stressed the need and urgency of assisting the Palestinian people in meeting their social and economic development needs so as to create a solid foundation for future peace and stability in the region. The contribution of donor countries remained essential. Encouraged by the readiness of the international donor community to continue to assist the Palestinian people, the Committee called upon the donors to increase their commitments and the disbursement of funds. The United Nations system, especially the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and the United Nations Development Programme, continued to focus its activities on developing Palestinian infrastructure, enhancing institutional capacity and improving the living conditions of the Palestinian people. The Committee noted with satisfaction the useful role played by the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General to the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Palestinian Authority. Along with his responsibilities for providing political support to the parties in the region, he continued to serve as an important focal point for all United Nations entities operating on the ground and to maintain contact with the donor community, NGOs and others.

24. The water supply situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory remained serious, with water shortages stifling the livelihood of hundreds of thousands of Palestinian households. Reports available to the Committee indicated that, while the average Israeli consumed 348 litres of water a day, average water consumption among Palestinians was 70 litres a day. Therefore, Israeli water consumption for household, municipal and industrial use was, on average, five times higher than that of the Palestinians. The water shortage in the Occupied Palestinian Territory was characterized by the absence of a water distribution network; discriminatory and insufficient supply of water; and poor quality of water. More than 150 villages, home to some 215,000 Palestinians, were

not connected to a water network, compelling the villagers to purchase water from private dealers at high prices. Some municipalities in the West Bank must rotate the water supply by areas in order to distribute the little water available, particularly during the summer. The town of Yatta, for example, is divided into 14 sectors, each sector receiving water once every 45 days for two to three days. The poor water quality, particularly in the Gaza Strip, had a severe impact on the quality of daily life of the Palestinian population and exposed them to serious health risks.

25. UNRWA remained a vital source of humanitarian and socio-economic assistance to some 3.7 million Palestine refugees. Regrettably, in spite of the recognition given by members of the international community to the laudable work done by UNRWA, there was a noticeable discrepancy between that recognition and the willingness to provide resources to the Agency. This has caused major operational difficulty for UNRWA in its effort to maintain an adequate quality of service to Palestine refugees.

Chapter V

Action taken by the Committee

A. Action taken in accordance with General Assembly resolution 54/39

26. In pursuance of its mandate and in response to the difficulties experienced by the peace process and in the search for a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine, the Committee continued to mobilize the international community in support of the Palestinian people, in cooperation with United Nations bodies, Governments, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and others, as indicated below.

1. Communications to the President of the Security Council and the Secretary-General

27. In a letter dated 24 March 2000 addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2000/253), the Chairman of the Committee reiterated the Committee's objection to the deletion from the list of items of which the Council was seized those items that related to the exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, the Palestine question and the Middle East problem, and which were of special concern not only to

the Committee but also to the majority of Member States. He stated the Committee's belief that pending a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict in the Middle East, the core of which is the question of Palestine, in accordance with international legitimacy, these items should remain on the list of matters of which the Council is seized, as they continue to engage its responsibility with regard to the maintenance of international peace and security. He also stressed that any decision to delete these items, especially at this critical point in the peace process, would go well beyond procedural reform and would have far-reaching negative political implications.

28. In a letter dated 2 October 2000 addressed to the Secretary-General (A/55/440-S/2000/936), the Chairman of the Committee drew the attention of the Secretary-General, as a matter of urgency, to the violent confrontations between IDF and Israeli police and Palestinian worshippers at Al-Aqsa Mosque and throughout the Haram al-Sharif compound that had erupted on 28 September 2000. He referred to reports indicating that most of the dead and injured in the confrontations had sustained wounds caused by rubber-coated metal bullets and live ammunition. The Chairman stressed that excessive force had been used by IDF against the Palestinian protesters, including tanks, helicopter gunships, anti-tank missiles and grenades. On behalf of the Committee, he expressed the gravest and growing concern at the continued confrontations in the Old City of Jerusalem and throughout the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. The Chairman said the Committee was dismayed by the loss of life as a result of the confrontations and was particularly saddened by the tragic deaths of innocent Palestinian children. The Committee was of the view that the events were a direct result of the policies and practices of the Israeli occupation. The Chairman said Israel had continued to violate its obligations under the Fourth Geneva Convention and the provisions of Security Council and General Assembly resolutions. He also alluded to the fact that the Committee had warned on a number of occasions that Israel's failure to live up to those principles, as well as the continued lack of progress in the Israeli-Palestinian peace negotiations, would allow despair and frustration to set in, putting the peace process in considerable jeopardy and leading to an increased volatility on the ground. The Chairman addressed an urgent appeal to the Secretary-General and all the parties concerned to take the necessary steps in order to induce Israel to abide by

its obligations and responsibilities under the Fourth Geneva Convention, to guarantee its respect for the Holy Places, and to ensure international protection of the Palestinian people. He said the Committee reiterated its long-standing position that the United Nations should continue to exercise its permanent responsibility towards all the aspects of the question of Palestine, including the issue of Jerusalem, until it is resolved in a satisfactory manner, in conformity with relevant United Nations resolutions and in accordance with international legitimacy, and until the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people are fully realized.

2. Action in the Security Council

29. Following the events of 28 September 2000 (see para. 18), massive protests and violent confrontations took place in other parts of the Old City of Jerusalem and throughout the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. At the request of the Permanent Representative of Iraq to the United Nations, in his capacity as Chairman of the Arab Group of States for the month of October 2000, the Permanent Representative of Malaysia to the United Nations, on behalf of the members of the Non-Aligned Movement Caucus, and also in his capacity as Chairman of the Islamic Group of States, the Permanent Representative of South Africa to the United Nations, in his capacity as Chair of the Coordinating Bureau of the Non-Aligned Movement, and the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations, the Security Council met on 3, 4, 5 and 7 October 2000 to consider agenda item "The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question" (S/2000/928, S/2000/929, S/2000/930, S/2000/934 and S/2000/935).

30. The Chairman of the Committee participated in the debate in the Security Council on 4 October 2000 and made a statement on behalf of the Committee. In his statement, the Chairman reviewed the situation on the ground and joined the international community in calling on both parties to refrain from further escalation of violence and do their utmost to defuse the tension. He also joined the large part of the international community, which was calling on the Israeli Government, political parties and security forces to desist from taking any further measures that would undermine the peace process; to ensure respect for the Holy Places; to guarantee the protection of the Palestinians and their property in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem; to put an

end to all illegal settlement activities; and to proceed rapidly towards the full implementation of the agreements already reached with a view to achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). The Chairman stated that the Committee believed that only rapid and consistent progress in the peace process leading to a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East would prevent the situation from deteriorating even further, with unforeseen consequences for peace and stability in the entire region. The Chairman reiterated the position of the Committee that the United Nations should continue to exercise its permanent responsibility towards all the aspects of the question of Palestine, including the issue of Jerusalem, until it is resolved in a satisfactory manner, in conformity with relevant United Nations resolutions and in accordance with international legitimacy, and until the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people are fully realized.

31. On 7 October 2000, at its 4205th meeting, the Security Council adopted resolution 1322 (2000), which had been submitted by Bangladesh, Jamaica, Malaysia, Mali, Namibia, Tunisia and Ukraine. In the resolution, the Council deplored the provocation carried out at Al-Haram al-Sharif in Jerusalem on 28 September 2000 and the subsequent violence there and at other Holy Places, as well as in other areas throughout the territories occupied by Israel since 1967, resulting in over 80 Palestinian deaths and many other casualties; condemned acts of violence, especially the excessive use of force against Palestinians, resulting in injury and loss of human life; called upon Israel, the occupying Power, to abide scrupulously by its legal obligations and its responsibilities under the Fourth Geneva Convention; called for the immediate cessation of violence, and for all necessary steps to be taken to ensure that violence ceased, that new provocative actions were avoided, and that the situation returned to normality in a way which promoted the prospects for the Middle East peace process; stressed the importance of establishing a mechanism for a speedy and objective inquiry into the tragic events of the past few days with the aim of preventing their repetition, and welcomed any efforts in that regard; called for the immediate resumption of negotiations within the Middle East peace process on its agreed basis with the aim of achieving an early final settlement between the Israeli and Palestinian sides; invited the Secretary-General to continue to follow the

situation and to keep the Council informed; and decided to follow closely the situation and to remain seized of the matter.

3. Participation by the Chairman of the Committee at international conferences and meetings

32. In the course of the year, the Chairman of the Committee participated in meetings of intergovernmental and other bodies and other meetings relevant to the question of Palestine and contributed to their deliberations in support of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, as follows:

(a) International Conference on Jerusalem, London, 13-15 December 1999, organized by the Royal Institute of International Affairs (Chatham House), at which the Chairman delivered a statement on the question of Jerusalem;

(b) Seventy-first ordinary session of the Council of Ministers of the Organization of African Unity, Addis Ababa, 6-10 March 2000;

(c) Thirteenth Ministerial Conference of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, Cartagena de Indias, Colombia, 8 and 9 April 2000 (A/54/917-S/2000/580);

(d) The South Summit of the Group of 77, Havana, 10-14 April 2000 (A/55/74);

(e) Twenty-seventh session of the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers, Kuala Lumpur, 27-30 June 2000 (A/54/949-S/2000/746);

(f) Seventy-second ordinary session of the Council of Ministers and thirty-sixth ordinary session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity, Lomé, 6-12 July 2000 (A/55/286).

33. As in previous years, the Committee continued to follow the activities relevant to the question of Palestine of other intergovernmental organizations, as well as decisions and resolutions of United Nations bodies and agencies, including the Economic and Social Council and the Commission on Human Rights, and the positive efforts made by many Governments. The Committee took note of the declarations of concern on the part of the international community over the degree of progress achieved in the peace process in the course of the year. It was encouraged by

the broad international support for the peace efforts and the readiness of the international community to help the parties bring the peace process to fruition.

B. Action taken by the Committee and the Division for Palestinian Rights in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 54/39 and 54/40

34. In its programme of meetings organized in the various regions, the Committee continued to give priority to promoting the exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, supporting the peace process and stressing the need for timely and scrupulous implementation by the parties of the bilateral agreements. The Committee also urged the international community to continue to provide political support, as well as broad economic assistance, to the Palestinian people.

35. On the basis of the provision contained in General Assembly resolution 54/39, the Committee adjusted this programme, as necessary, in order to meet the evolving situation in the most effective and constructive manner, while keeping in mind the continuing financial constraints facing the Organization. The Committee expressed its great appreciation to the Governments of Viet Nam, Greece and Egypt for having provided venues and facilities for the events sponsored by the Committee.

36. Following the practice of previous years, the Committee, through its Bureau, continued its cooperation on the question of Palestine with States members of the European Union (EU). In July 2000, the Bureau held an important and useful meeting of consultations with representatives of EU (under the presidency of France) as part of the continued effort to build a constructive relationship with EU members on issues of common concern. In accordance with established practice, the Chairman of the Committee briefed the members of the EU delegation on the ongoing activities of the Committee, including the project on the modernization of records of the UNCCP. The Chairman also informed the EU delegation on the activities planned by the Committee for the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly. He also expressed the hope that the two sides would continue consultations.

37. Throughout the year, the staff of the Division for Palestinian Rights met at United Nations Headquarters

with members of the general public and student groups and briefed them on the various aspects of the question of Palestine and the involvement of the United Nations in this issue.

1. United Nations Asian Meeting on the Question of Palestine

38. The United Nations Asian Meeting on the Question of Palestine was held in Hanoi from 1 to 3 March 2000. The participants included representatives of Governments, Palestine, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, United Nations bodies and agencies, special guests from the host country and representatives of the media, the academic community and students.

39. The participants discussed the following topics: the peace process and Palestinian statehood; the United Nations and the question of Palestine; international support for the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people; and the role of parliaments in achieving the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.

40. At the conclusion of the Conference, the participants adopted the Hanoi Declaration, in which they declared their broad and determined commitment to support the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and the establishment of an independent and sovereign Palestinian State. They also stated, *inter alia*, that the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem, as well as other Arab territories, must be brought to an end without delay and that mutual recognition and peaceful coexistence must be given the opportunity to flourish; Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), which embodied the principle of land for peace and formed the legal basis for the Middle East peace process, must be adhered to; in view of the continued settlement activities, the United Nations and the High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention should play an effective role in reconvening the Conference of the High Contracting Parties; the deadline of September 2000 to achieve a permanent status agreement in accordance with the Sharm el-Sheikh Memorandum and the international consensus, which had been developed at the end of the five-year transition in May 1999, should be observed; and that the United Nations should grant full membership to Palestine to enable it to participate fully in the United Nations Millennium Summit.

41. The Committee delegation was received by H.E. Mr. Phan Van Khai, Prime Minister of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, who welcomed the efforts of the Committee aimed at bringing about a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine. The delegation was also received by H.E. Mr. Nguyen Dy Nien, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Viet Nam.

42. The report of the Meeting was issued as a publication of the Division for Palestinian Rights.

2. International Conference on Palestine Refugees

43. The International Conference on Palestine Refugees was held at the headquarters of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), in Paris, on 26 and 27 April 2000. The Conference was organized by the Committee in cooperation with the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the League of Arab States. Among the participants were eminent personalities, including high-level officials, experts on the Palestine refugee issue, representatives of States Members of the United Nations, representatives of intergovernmental organizations and United Nations agencies, parliamentarians, members of the academic community, representatives of non-governmental and other civil society organizations, as well as the media.

44. The participants discussed the following issues: Palestine refugees — the longest-running humanitarian problem in today's world; the United Nations and Palestine refugees; and Palestine refugees and the current Middle East peace process.

45. In their concluding remarks, the organizers of the Conference stressed that the social and economic conditions of some 3.7 million Palestine refugees registered with UNRWA remained difficult and required urgent intervention on the part of the international community. They noted that the plight of Palestine refugees was among the permanent status issues negotiated by the parties. It was emphasized, in this context, that a just solution to the question of Palestine and a lasting peace in the Middle East could not be achieved without a just and fair solution to the question of Palestine refugees. They stated that the multilateral track of negotiations remained an essential part of the peace process and that the Refugee Working Group, chaired by Canada since 1992, continued to play a useful supporting role. The organizers reaffirmed that the right of return of Palestine refugees

to their homes, as stipulated by the General Assembly in its resolution 194 (III) of 11 December 1948, remained a *conditio sine qua non* for the exercise by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights to self-determination, national independence and sovereignty. They also stated that the provisions of General Assembly resolution 194 (III) and subsequent relevant United Nations resolutions remained valid and must be taken into full consideration in any final settlement of the question of Palestine. The organizers reaffirmed the inalienable right of the Palestinian people to return to their land and property, abandoned as a result of the 1948 and 1967 hostilities. They considered the issue of refugee compensation to be an integral element of, but not a substitute for, their right of return. They were of the view that the international community should continue to support the vital activities of UNRWA until the question of Palestine refugees is resolved in accordance with relevant United Nations resolutions and international legitimacy. The organizers noted with appreciation the role played by the co-sponsors of the peace process, the European Union and the international donor community in creating conditions on the ground conducive to the success of the peace process.

46. The report of the Conference was issued as a publication of the Division for Palestinian Rights.

3. United Nations NGO Meeting on Palestine Refugees

47. The United Nations NGO Meeting on Palestine Refugees was held at UNESCO headquarters, Paris, on 28 April 2000, immediately following the International Conference on Palestine Refugees. The participants included representatives of NGOs from all regions, Governments, United Nations bodies and agencies, intergovernmental organizations, a delegation of Palestine and a number of panellists.

48. The participants discussed the following issues: the role of NGOs in promoting a just settlement of the Palestine refugee problem; the experience of NGOs in delivering basic social services to refugee communities; promoting stronger support to UNRWA; promoting awareness of Palestine refugee rights internationally; and the role of NGOs in empowering the refugee communities.

49. In the NGO statement, the participating organizations declared that the provisions of General

Assembly resolution 194 (III) and subsequent relevant United Nations resolutions remained valid and must be taken into full consideration in any final settlement of the question of Palestine and called upon the United Nations to continue to protect the natural and inalienable right of Palestinians to return to their homes and act as its guarantor, pending a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine. They expressed particular alarm at the plight of Palestine refugees living in Lebanon and firmly rejected any attempt to use their fate for issues not related to the Palestine refugee problem. The NGOs pledged to utilize their expertise and experience in communication, education, advocacy and assistance in locally and internationally coordinated efforts on behalf of Palestine refugees in areas such as: increased commitment to UNRWA services; the need to ensure both quantity and quality of service coverage; the development and empowerment of refugee community structures, especially relating to women; increased capacity of refugee communities to address their own socio-economic needs; full refugee participation in development aid programmes; ensuring that Palestinian refugees are not excluded from the internationally accepted frameworks that have guided solutions to other refugee populations; and promoting refugee representation in political processes regarding their future.

50. The report of the NGO Meeting was issued as a publication of the Division for Palestinian Rights.

4. United Nations International Meeting in Support of a Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Establishment of Peace in the Middle East

51. The United Nations International Meeting in Support of a Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Establishment of Peace in the Middle East was held in Athens on 23 and 24 May 2000. The Meeting was attended by international experts, eminent political personalities from Greece, representatives of Governments, intergovernmental organizations, entities of the United Nations system, the Palestinian Authority, civil society organizations and the media.

52. The following topics were discussed by the participants: final status negotiations and Palestinian statehood; international support for a just and peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine and the

establishment of a lasting peace in the Middle East; and civil society in support of the peace process.

53. In their Final Statement, the participants, among other things, expressed concern that yet another target date for the conclusion of a framework agreement had been missed. In the light of this, the parties were urged to do everything in their power to preserve and solidify the accomplishments of the peace process and to make an effort to achieve a final settlement agreement by September 2000. The participants also stressed the urgency of reaching an agreement on interim issues, namely the third Israeli redeployment from the West Bank, the release of Palestinian prisoners, the opening of the northern safe passage between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, the operation of the Gaza seaport, and economic issues. The participants noted that, in the preceding months, the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations had been offset on a number of occasions by Israeli actions on the ground and Israeli Government statements, incompatible with the spirit and the letter of the peace process. The participants reiterated the permanent responsibility of the United Nations with respect to all aspects of the question of Palestine, until a satisfactory settlement based on relevant United Nations resolutions and international legitimacy was reached and the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people were fully realized. The participants appreciated the contribution by EU members to the peace process. EU's political support and large volume of economic assistance were viewed as vital to the efforts aimed at rehabilitating and developing the Palestinian economy. The participants acknowledged the important role played by civil society in the process of transition to Palestinian statehood, as well as in building and developing Palestinian institutions.

54. The Committee delegation was received by H.E. Mr. George Papandreou, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Greece, who welcomed the efforts of the Committee aimed at bringing about a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement on the question of Palestine.

55. The report of the Meeting was issued as a publication of the Division for Palestinian Rights.

5. United Nations Seminar on Prospects for Palestinian Economic Development and the Middle East Peace Process

56. The United Nations Seminar on Prospects for Palestinian Economic Development and the Middle

East Peace Process was held in Cairo on 20 and 21 June 2000. The Meeting was attended by representatives of Governments, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, United Nations system organizations and agencies, and experts.

57. The following topics were discussed by the participants: Palestinian institution-building and economic performance during the interim period — achievements, shortcomings and future tasks; Palestinian development objectives and strategies; international assistance to the Bethlehem 2000 Project of the Palestinian Authority; Israeli-Palestinian economic relations during the interim period; and the impact of non-economic issues on sustained Palestinian economic and social development (Israeli settlements, Jerusalem, Palestine refugees, water and natural resources).

58. In his concluding remarks of the Seminar, the Chairman of the Committee said that the Committee had always attached great importance to social and economic development and the improvement of living conditions of the Palestinian people. It was for this reason that the Committee had devoted a special place in its annual programme of work to social and economic issues of the transitional stage. In a continued effort to mobilize international assistance to the emerging Palestinian nation, the Committee had decided to convene the United Nations Seminar on Prospects for Palestinian Economic Development and the Middle East Peace Process. The participants reviewed the current status of Palestinian institution-building and economic performance during the interim period, and the steps taken towards establishing a better environment for sustainable economic development, in coordination with donors, intergovernmental organizations and other actors. The experience gained in the past several years has been thoroughly discussed and formed the basis for formulating objectives and strategies of Palestinian development. The participants were of the view that partnership between Israelis and Palestinians in the peace process had to be accompanied by partnership in economic development, and that the sustainability of Palestinian economic and social development was in great measure influenced by non-economic issues. The outcome of the negotiations on interim and permanent status issues would most certainly affect the present Palestinian economic activity and the future of the Palestinian economy in general.

59. The report of the Seminar was issued as a document of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council for consideration under the relevant agenda items (A/55/144-E/2000/87). It was also issued as a publication of the Division for Palestinian Rights.

6. Cooperation with non-governmental organizations

60. In the course of the year, the Committee has continued to encourage NGOs in all regions to mobilize international solidarity with the Palestinian people and support for the achievement of its inalienable rights. The Committee emphasized the important role of civil society in educating the various constituencies about the fundamental issues of the question of Palestine and in mobilizing public support for the Palestinian cause and the peace process. The Committee has continued its practice of inviting civil society organizations to all international conferences and meetings organized under its auspices. Participating NGOs used these events to inform the other participants about their initiatives and campaigns and to bring forward their views and ideas on the issues at stake. In addition to the United Nations NGO Meeting on Palestine Refugees, organized on 28 April 2000 at UNESCO headquarters in Paris, the Committee provided NGOs participating in meetings in Hanoi and Athens with the time and facilities to conduct their own meetings in order to advance further cooperation and networking among themselves. A large number of NGOs participated actively in all these meetings and manifested particular support for the right of return of Palestine refugees.

61. Consultations between the Bureau of the Committee and NGO representatives were held on 26 November 1999 in New York in order to continue the dialogue with NGO activists on the future shape of cooperation with civil society. The consultations were followed up with an additional meeting in the course of the United Nations Seminar on Prospects for Palestinian Economic Development and the Middle East Peace Process, held in Cairo in June 2000. The participants reviewed the effect of the Committee's restructured work programme on their cooperation with the Committee and made suggestions to further increase its effectiveness. The Bureau urged the NGOs to focus their initiatives on the most crucial issues at stake and to mobilize solidarity movements in support

of Palestine refugees and a just solution of the question of Jerusalem.

62. The Division for Palestinian Rights maintained the Internet web site entitled "NGO Network on the Question of Palestine", launched in September 1999, and, in consultation with NGOs, developed it into a permanent tool of mutual information and cooperation between the Committee and civil society. The web site can be found at <<http://www.un.org/depts/dpa/ngo>>. The Division also continued to issue its periodic newsletter entitled *NGO Action News* covering the activities of civil society on the various aspects of the question of Palestine.

7. Research, monitoring and publications

63. The Committee continued to attach great importance to the essential contribution of the Division for Palestinian Rights and requested it to continue its established programme of work, including studies, information notes and other publications; the further development of the United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine (UNISPAL); the annual training programme for staff of the Palestinian Authority; and the annual observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

64. Accordingly, the Division continued to respond to requests for information and to prepare and disseminate to its worldwide network the following publications:

(a) Monthly bulletin covering action by the Committee, United Nations bodies and agencies, and intergovernmental organizations concerned with the question of Palestine;

(b) Monthly chronology of events relating to the question of Palestine, based on media reports and other sources;

(c) Reports of meetings organized under the auspices of the Committee;

(d) Special bulletin on the observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People;

(e) Annual compilation of relevant resolutions, decisions and statements of the General Assembly and the Security Council relating to the question of Palestine.

8. United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine

65. The Division for Palestinian Rights, in cooperation with relevant technical services of the United Nations Secretariat, continued to develop UNISPAL, as mandated by the General Assembly since 1991. This included the required ongoing upgrading of the system's hardware and software components; the scanning, retyping or downloading, editing and inclusion into the system of several hundreds of new and old documents; the improvement of quality control mechanisms; and the further development and improvement of access to the "UNISPAL" and "Question of Palestine" sites on the Internet.

66. The staff of the Division completed the coordination and supervision of the electronic conversion by a contractor of the records of the UNCCP, in pursuance of the mandate given by the General Assembly in its resolution 51/129 of 13 December 1996.

9. Training programme for staff of the Palestinian Authority

67. Two staff members from the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation of the Palestinian Authority participated in a training programme conducted by the Division, from September to December 1999, in conjunction with the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly. They familiarized themselves with various aspects of the work of the Secretariat and other organs. The programme included, among other things, attendance at various briefings and meetings of relevant committees and bodies of the United Nations, meetings with representatives of delegations to the General Assembly and members of staff of permanent missions to the United Nations. The trainees also conducted research and prepared studies on specific topics of interest to them.

10. International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People

68. The International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People was observed on 29 November 1999 at United Nations Headquarters and at the United Nations Offices at Geneva and Vienna. On the occasion of the observance at Headquarters, in addition to a solemn meeting of the Committee and other activities, an exhibit entitled "Follow the Star: Images from the

Palestinian City of Bethlehem at the New Millennium” was presented by the Permanent Observer Mission of Palestine, under the auspices of the Committee. The Committee noted with appreciation that the International Day of Solidarity had also been observed in many other cities throughout the world. Details on the observance are contained in the special bulletin issued by the Division.

69. In adopting its programme of work, the Committee decided that a similar event would be organized in connection with the observance of the Day in 2000.

C. Action taken in accordance with General Assembly resolution 54/22

70. In pursuance of General Assembly resolution 54/22 of 10 November 1999 and in response to the overwhelming support the resolution had received by the Assembly, the Committee continued to attach great importance to educating public opinion on the Bethlehem 2000 Project of the Palestinian Authority and promoting the Project.

71. In a letter dated 7 September 2000 addressed to the Secretary-General, the Chairman of the Committee said that the Committee had consistently reserved a special place for the Bethlehem 2000 Project in its various activities and in its meetings programme. The importance of heightening awareness of and promoting support for the Project had been highlighted at the United Nations Seminar on Prospects for Palestinian Economic Development and the Middle East Peace Process, held at Cairo on 20 and 21 June 2000. The Bureau of the Committee had also discussed this important issue with representatives of intergovernmental organizations, such as the European Union, the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the League of Arab States, as well as with NGOs. The Chairman of the Committee recalled that over the year he had consistently promoted the Committee’s objectives and activities, including its support for the Project, in the course of the discussions he had had at the various intergovernmental meetings attended by him in his capacity as Chairman of the Committee, especially those organized by the Organization of the Islamic Conference, the Organization of African Unity and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries. The Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat continued to disseminate information about the Project

through UNISPAL, which could be accessed on the Internet through the United Nations home page or at <<http://domino.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF>>. Also, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 54/41, the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat had established an Internet web site entitled “Bethlehem 2000”, which could be found at <<http://www.un.org/Depts/dpi/bethlehem2000>>. Substantial contributions had been made by Member States, intergovernmental and civil society organizations. The Chairman stated that a lot was yet to be accomplished within the remaining time frame of the Project, as well as in the months and years to come, in the City of Bethlehem and in other Palestinian municipalities throughout the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. The Palestinian people would require considerable international assistance in order to deal successfully with the enormous rehabilitation and development tasks. Donor assistance, therefore, was vital for the improvement of the economic and social conditions of the Palestinian people and for creating a viable Palestinian economy. The Committee renewed its appeal to the international community to continue to support and render assistance to the Bethlehem 2000 Project of the Palestinian Authority and to the development of all other Palestinian municipalities (A/55/370).

Chapter VI

Action taken by the Department of Public Information in accordance with General Assembly resolution 54/41

72. In pursuance of General Assembly resolution 54/41 of 1 December 1999, the Department of Public Information continued its special information programme on the question of Palestine, which included, among other things, the organization of its annual training programme for Palestinian broadcasters and journalists and the production of an exhibit, in English and French, entitled “The United Nations and the Question of Palestine”.

73. From 25 October to 17 December 1999, the Department organized a training programme at Headquarters for a group of seven Palestinian broadcasters and journalists to strengthen their professional capacity as information media personnel.

As was the case since the programme's beginning in 1995, the Department arranged a series of briefings and workshops at Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs in New York and at CNN in Atlanta. Briefings were also organized for the participants at United Nations Headquarters and at international organizations and at institutions of the Government of the United States of America in Washington, D.C. As part of their training, participants covered meetings of the General Assembly and transmitted radio, television and print reports back to their news organizations in the Middle East.

74. On 16 December 1999, the Department launched an exhibit on "The United Nations and the Question of Palestine" containing illustrations, maps and text on the history and situation of the Palestinian people and tracing the search for a solution to the question of Palestine. The exhibit is currently a permanent part of the guided tour route at Headquarters. A French-language version of the exhibit was launched at UNESCO headquarters in Paris on 29 May 2000 and was scheduled to remain there through 15 December 2000.

75. In September 2000, the Department began production of a colour brochure in Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian, Spanish and German, entitled "The United Nations and the Question of Palestine". Based on the aforementioned exhibit, the brochure will be distributed worldwide through the network of United Nations information centres (UNICs) and services and will be placed on the United Nations home page.

76. In March-June 2000, the Department launched the English and Arabic versions of the "Bethlehem 2000" Internet web site, which is illustrated with photos supplied by the Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People of the United Nations Development Programme.

77. The Department provided press release coverage, in English and French, of all meetings held at United Nations Headquarters, including those of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. Coverage in English and French was also provided to the conferences and meetings held under the auspices of the Committee at locations away from Headquarters. Press releases were also issued concerning relevant statements by the Secretary-General.

78. The quarterly publication *UN Chronicle* continued its coverage of issues concerning the question of Palestine between November 1999 and August 2000. It regularly reported on peacekeeping operations in the Middle East. In addition, Issue No. 4, 1999, featured an article by Ibrahim Abu Lughod, entitled "In Palestine — Integration, Development, Participation". Issue No. 1, 2000, reported on the work of the General Assembly's Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee), including the Committee's action on the various aspects of the question of Palestine.

79. At the request of the Division for Palestinian Rights, the Dag Hammarskjöld Library cooperated with the Division on digitizing General Assembly press releases dating back to 1947 for the UNISPAL documents collection.

80. The Video Section produced a World Chronicle show with Mr. Peter Hansen, Commissioner-General of UNRWA. World Chronicle is a half-hour television interview current affairs programme produced by the Department and distributed to TV broadcasters in North America, Africa, Asia, and the Caribbean. DPI also produced and distributed three "UN in Action" TV programmes, entitled "50 Years Later and UNRWA is Still Needed", "Bethlehem 2000 Project" and "UNRWA Assists Small Palestinian Entrepreneurs". The programmes were produced in the six official languages and shown weekly on CNN World Report and other networks worldwide.

81. The Radio News Unit covered extensively the various aspects of the question of Palestine and related issues in its news and current affairs programmes in the official and non-official languages for regional and worldwide dissemination. During the period under review, the Unit conducted special interviews in Arabic with Dr. Hanan Ashrawi, Secretary-General of "Miftah", and Mrs. Samia Bamia, representative of the Palestinian Women's Union. Some of the topics covered in various languages included: International Cooperation and Planning of Palestine meeting welcoming the outcome of the Conference on the Fourth Geneva Convention; briefing of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People on a Cairo meeting and other activities; debate on the agenda item "Question of Palestine" at the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly; the Palestinian economy as a result of developments in the peace operations; Palestinian

economy suffers due to many years of occupation; health situation of women in the Occupied Palestinian Territory; the debate in the Fourth Committee on the report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories; the observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People; and the General Assembly vote on resolutions concerning Palestine-related issues. In addition to short items in news and current affairs magazines, the Service produced 12 features and 13 magazines in Arabic, Bangla, Chinese, English, French, Indonesian, Turkish and Urdu.

82. As in previous years, a major focus of the work of the United Nations information centres was the promotion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. Special events and activities to observe the Day were organized by UNICs Asunción, Bonn, Cairo, Dar-es-Salaam, Harare, Lisbon, Mexico City, Moscow, New Delhi, Rabat, Paris, Prague, Pretoria, Sydney, Tokyo and Tunis. The activities included briefings, press conferences, radio and television programmes, seminars and exhibitions.

83. Throughout the year, UNICs have been involved in a number of activities promoting better understanding of the question of Palestine and its various aspects. UNIC Paris assisted the UNESCO secretariat in mounting the aforementioned DPI exhibit entitled "The United Nations and the Question of Palestine" at UNESCO headquarters. UNIC Tokyo, in collaboration with Japanese NGOs active in providing assistance to the Palestinian people, set up an exhibit on the theme "The United Nations Works for Palestine Refugees". To highlight the Bethlehem 2000 Project, UNIC Harare, in cooperation with the Embassy of Palestine in Zimbabwe, organized an interdenominational Zimbabwean choir to represent the country at the Easter celebrations in Bethlehem. UNIC Rome, in collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, co-sponsored a football match between teams of famous artists and representatives from Israel and Palestine at the Rome Olympic Stadium to draw attention to the issue of peace. H.E. Mr. Yasser Arafat, Shimon Peres and the Italian President were among the personalities attending the event, which was telecast live by RAI. UNIC Tunis produced a publication entitled "Bethlehem 2000" for distribution to the media. UNIC Tunis carried information on the Centre's home page

concerning an event commemorating the Bethlehem 2000 Project. UNICs Bonn, Lisbon, Moscow, New Delhi, Sana'a and UNO Baku translated and widely disseminated an article written by the Commissioner-General of UNRWA Mr. Peter Hansen, entitled "Nurturing Palestine Refugees for Peace". Information outreach on the various aspects of the question of Palestine has been further strengthened by use of the Internet. UNIC Bonn posted the German translation of the Secretary-General's message for the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People on the Centre's home page. UNIC Paris provided logistical support and information dissemination for the International Conference on Palestinian Refugees, held at UNESCO headquarters in April 2000. UNIC Athens assisted the Division for Palestinian Rights in organizing the United Nations International Meeting in Support of a Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Establishment of Peace in the Middle East in May 2000. UNIC Cairo undertook media coverage for the United Nations Seminar on Prospects for Palestinian Economic Development and the Middle East Peace Process, held in July 2000.

Chapter VII

Conclusions and recommendations of the Committee

84. As humankind is preparing to enter the new millennium, the future of peace in the region stands at a critical crossroads. In the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations, the two sides have travelled a long way. The negotiating process, which began at Madrid in 1991, has been difficult and challenging. Today, the parties are facing issues of paramount importance not only for the Israelis and the Palestinians, but also for peace and security in the entire region of the Middle East. The outcome of this process will shape the future of their relations for years to come. The Committee will continue to support the peacemaking efforts by the parties, assisted by the co-sponsors, until peace prevails and the question of Palestine is solved on the basis of justice and international legitimacy.

85. The Committee noted with much regret that, following the signing in 1999 of the Sharm el-Sheikh Memorandum, a considerable amount of time has been lost. In the period under review, the situation in the

Israeli-Palestinian peace negotiations remained a cause for serious concern, marked by frequent breakdowns and only a few breakthroughs. For most of the year, progress in the interim and permanent status talks has been slow. The Committee, however, welcomed a number of steps made in implementation of the agreements, including the partial release of Palestinian prisoners, the opening of a safe passage between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, the further redeployment of Israeli troops from areas of the West Bank, and the signing of the Israeli-Palestinian agreements on economic issues and on the Gaza seaport. In September 2000, the important meetings held on the sidelines of the Millennium Summit created expectations that a breakthrough was at hand.

86. The Committee wishes to emphasize once again that more than 50 years after the adoption by the General Assembly of resolution 181 (II) of 29 November 1947, the Palestinian people is yet to see the establishment of its own independent and sovereign State. In this context, the Committee reiterates its full support for the exercise by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights, including the right to self-determination and the establishment of an independent State, and recalls the broad international support for Palestinian statehood.

87. At a time when both sides are dealing with the critical permanent status negotiations, the situation on the ground remains untenable. Illegal "facts on the ground" continue to be created in gross violation of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. This also jeopardizes the possibility of making tangible progress in the peace negotiations. The Committee considers it unacceptable that, on the threshold of the third millennium, the Palestinian people, in their daily lives, are still carrying the heavy weight of occupation. One of the core issues in the permanent status negotiations is the question of Jerusalem. The Committee believes that the issue should be resolved based on Security Council resolution 242 (1967), other relevant United Nations resolutions, the exercise by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights, and with due regard to the universal spiritual meaning of the Holy City of Jerusalem for all humankind. Among other permanent status issues, the question of Palestine refugees is a most difficult and painful one. Generations of Palestinians have grown up as refugees, living in dismal conditions of refugee camps or under occupation, many away from their homeland, denied

their natural right to self-determination, with bleak economic prospects, their freedom of movement restricted, families torn apart, their hopes for the future dependent on the outside world. If this problem is not resolved with due care, patience and in accordance with norms of international law, more Palestinian lives will be ruined, frustration and mistrust will set in again and the potential for peace and stability in the region will be seriously jeopardized. The Committee reiterates its view that the solution to the problem should be based on General Assembly resolution 194 (III) of 11 December 1948 and other relevant resolutions. Nothing has altered the situation on the ground since 1967 more than the illegal settlements spread around the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip. They have not only changed the geography of the area, but also had the most devastating immediate and long-term effect on the livelihood of individual Palestinian households and the Palestinian economy in general. The Committee was appalled that the settlement activity continued alongside the peace negotiations — a policy which stands in marked contrast to the mutually agreed ground rules of the peace process.

88. The Committee strongly believes that the United Nations should continue to exercise its permanent responsibility towards all the aspects of the question of Palestine until it is resolved in a satisfactory manner, in conformity with relevant United Nations resolutions and in accordance with international legitimacy, and until the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people are fully realized. Today, the supporting role of the United Nations in the peace process is even more crucial and needed than ever. The United Nations should remain the guardian of international legitimacy and play a key role in mobilizing international assistance for development, as an important underpinning of the peace process. The Committee believes that the United Nations should continue to maintain its responsibility towards the question of Palestine and the Palestinian people until the end of the implementation period, so that a final agreement could be legitimized and complemented, as necessary. In this regard, the Committee shares the view that the important work carried out by UNRWA should be continued. The Committee also supports the view that the reactivation of the work of the UNCCP, established by the General Assembly in its resolution 194 (III) of 11 December 1948, and the use of the records of the Commission related to land ownership in Palestine should be considered. For its part, as the organ of the General

Assembly established to deal with the question of Palestine, the Committee pledges to continue its work aimed at mobilizing the international community as a whole, at the governmental, intergovernmental and non-governmental levels, in support of a comprehensive, just and lasting solution of the question of Palestine, in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions.

89. In the course of the past year, the Committee has worked towards heightening international awareness of the question of Palestine and the urgency of making it possible for the Palestinian people to exercise its inalienable rights. It has also continued its programme of meetings in the various regions and cooperated with the NGO community in order to make the programme more effective and useful. The Committee intends to continue to review and assess its programme of activities with a view to making it more focused and responsive to the developments in the peace process and on the ground. In its programme of work for the next year, the Committee will continue to focus on the question of the exercise by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights, permanent status issues, as well as Palestinian nation- and institution-building and social and economic development.

90. The Committee, in its future activities, intends to continue to promote the Bethlehem 2000 Project of the Palestinian Authority. It is of the view that this important undertaking will require sustained international support not only for the period of the millennial celebrations in Bethlehem, but also long after the celebrations come to a close. Moreover, the Committee wishes to draw the attention of the international community to the urgency of providing varied assistance to many other Palestinian municipalities throughout the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

91. The Committee recognizes the essential contribution of the Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat in support of the Committee's objectives and requests it to continue its programme of publications and other informational activities. This would include the updating of UNISPAL on a day-to-day basis with relevant documents available in electronic form and the completion of work on UNISPAL's collection of documents hitherto unavailable in machine-readable form.

92. The Committee is of the view that the special information programme on the question of Palestine of the Department of Public Information has remained an important and useful tool in informing the media and public opinion on issues relating to the question of Palestine. The Committee considers that the programme should be continued with the necessary flexibility, as required by developments affecting the question of Palestine.

93. In an effort to make its contribution to the achievement of a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine, the Committee calls upon all States to join in this endeavour and invites the General Assembly once again to recognize the importance of its role and to reconfirm its mandate with overwhelming support.

Notes

¹ *Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-first Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/31/35).*

² *Ibid.*, *Thirty-second Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/32/35)*; *ibid.*, *Thirty-third Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/33/35)*; *ibid.*, *Thirty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/34/35 and Corr.1)*; *ibid.*, *Thirty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/35/35)*; *ibid.*, *Thirty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/36/35)*; *ibid.*, *Thirty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/37/35 and Corr.1)*; *ibid.*, *Thirty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/38/35)*; *ibid.*, *Thirty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/39/35)*; *ibid.*, *Fortieth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/40/35)*; *ibid.*, *Forty-first Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/41/35)*; *ibid.*, *Forty-second Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/42/35)*; *ibid.*, *Forty-third Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/43/35)*; *ibid.*, *Forty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/44/35)*; *ibid.*, *Forty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/45/35)*; *ibid.*, *Forty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/46/35)*; *ibid.*, *Forty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/47/35)*; *ibid.*, *Forty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/48/35)*; *ibid.*, *Forty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/49/35)*; *ibid.*, *Fiftieth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/50/35)*; *ibid.*, *Fifty-first Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/51/35)*; *ibid.*, *Fifty-second Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/52/35)*; *ibid.*, *Fifty-third Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/53/35)*; and *ibid.*, *Fifty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/54/35).*

³ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 75, No. 973.

⁴ *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/54/35)*, chap. VII.

⁵ Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 47/1 of 22 September 1992, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia did not participate in the work of the Committee.

⁶ A/AC.183/2000/CRP.1.

⁷ The observers at the Committee meetings were as follows: Algeria, Bangladesh, Bulgaria, China, Ecuador, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Mauritania, Morocco, Nicaragua, Niger, Qatar, Sri Lanka, Syrian Arab Republic, United Arab Emirates, Viet Nam, League of Arab States, Organization of the Islamic Conference and Palestine.



United Nations

Report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

**General Assembly
Official Records
Fifty-sixth Session
Supplement No. 35 (A/56/35)**

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Exercise of the Inalienable Rights
of the Palestinian People**



United Nations • New York, 2001

Note

Symbols of United Nations documents are composed of capital letters combined with figures. Mention of such a symbol indicates a reference to a United Nations document.

Contents

<i>Chapter</i>	<i>Paragraphs</i>	<i>Page</i>
Letter of transmittal		iv
I. Introduction	1–6	1
II. Mandate of the Committee	7–10	3
III. Organization of work	11–16	4
A. Membership and officers	11–14	4
B. Participation in the work of the Committee	15–16	4
IV. Review of the situation relating to the question of Palestine	17–30	5
V. Action taken by the Committee	31–84	11
A. Action taken in accordance with General Assembly resolution 55/52	31–50	11
1. Action in the General Assembly and the Security Council	32–41	11
2. Communications to the Secretary-General, President of the General Assembly and President of the Security Council	42–48	13
3. Participation by the Chairman of the Committee at international conferences and meetings	49–50	17
B. Action taken by the Committee and the Division for Palestinian Rights in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 55/52 and 55/53	51–84	18
1. United Nations Seminar on Assistance to the Palestinian People	55–58	18
2. United Nations Latin American and Caribbean Meeting on the Question of Palestine	59–63	19
3. Workshop of Latin American and Caribbean NGOs	64–66	20
4. United Nations International Meeting on the Question of Palestine	67–71	21
5. United Nations NGO Meeting in Solidarity with the Palestinian People ..	72–75	22
6. Cooperation with civil society organizations	76–78	22
7. Research, monitoring and publications	79–80	23
8. United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine	81	24
9. Training programme for staff of the Palestinian Authority	82	24
10. International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People	83–84	24
VI. Action taken by the Department of Public Information in accordance with General Assembly resolution 55/54	85–97	25
VII. Conclusions and recommendations of the Committee	98–106	29

Letter of transmittal

10 October 2001

Mr. Secretary-General,

The second half of the twentieth century was marked by the struggle of the Palestinian people for the exercise of its fundamental and natural rights. For the past 50 years, the United Nations has been closely involved in and has remained in the forefront of international efforts aimed at resolving the question of Palestine — the core of the conflict in the Middle East. For its part, the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, since its inception in 1975, has continued to work towards the exercise by the Palestinian people of their inalienable rights, namely the right to self-determination without external interference; the right to national independence and sovereignty; and the right to return to their homes and property. The Committee's many activities in implementation of the mandate given to it by the General Assembly continue to be devoted to the achievement of this important objective until the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people are realized in their entirety.

The decade since the Middle East Peace Conference held at Madrid and the beginning of the Oslo peace process has considerably altered the political environment of the Middle East. The parties to the conflict appeared to have succeeded in breaking out of a shell of age-old suspicion and mistrust and to have dedicated themselves to a single goal of attaining a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in their region. The past year, however, has witnessed yet another dramatic and rapid deterioration of the situation on the ground and a complete halt in the peace process. The international community was greatly appalled by the outbreak of violence and the tragic loss of life following the events at Al-Haram al-Sharif that took place in September 2000. The Al-Aqsa intifada has continued throughout the year. These events have seized the attention of the international community, including the General Assembly and the Security Council and our Committee. It was disappointing and frustrating, after 10 gruelling years of peace negotiations, to see the momentum of the peace process wither away.

The Committee fully supports your dedicated and hard work for peace in the Middle East. We have welcomed your intense efforts in the course of the year aimed at bringing the two sides together and salvaging the peace process. The Committee remains hopeful that your leadership will enable the parties to overcome the present difficulties and return to the negotiating table.

In the hope that our Committee's endeavours will make a meaningful contribution to the deliberations of the General Assembly, I have the honour to enclose herewith the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for submission to the General Assembly in accordance with paragraph 5 of its resolution 55/52 of 1 December 2000. The report covers the period from 11 October 2000 to 10 October 2001.

Accept, Sir, the assurances of my highest consideration.

(Signed) Papa Louis **Fall**
Chairman of the Committee on the
Exercise of the Inalienable Rights
of the Palestinian People

I. Introduction

1. The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People was established by the General Assembly by resolution 3376 (XXX) of 10 November 1975, with the task of recommending a programme designed to enable the Palestinian people to exercise its inalienable rights as recognized by the Assembly in resolution 3236 (XXIX) of 22 November 1974.

2. The recommendations made by the Committee in its first report to the General Assembly¹ were endorsed by the Assembly as a basis for the solution of the question of Palestine. In its subsequent reports,² the Committee has continued to stress that a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, must be based on the relevant United Nations resolutions and the following essential principles: the withdrawal of Israel from the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, and from the other occupied Arab territories; respect for the right of all States in the region to live in peace within secure and internationally recognized boundaries; and the recognition and exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, primarily the right to self-determination. The Committee's recommendations could not be implemented, and the Assembly each year renewed the Committee's mandate and requested it to intensify efforts in pursuit of its objectives.

3. The Committee welcomed the historic breakthrough in the peace process in 1993 and the subsequent important steps towards the achievement of a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine, based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). At the same time, the Committee continued to work towards the full realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including the right to self-determination and to its own independent State. The Committee also continued to mobilize the needed international assistance and solidarity during the transitional period.

4. In the course of the past year, the situation in the region has been marked by the eruption of the Palestinian intifada in protest over the highly provocative visit of the then opposition leader Ariel Sharon to the Al-Haram al-Sharif compound in the Old City of Jerusalem. The year of violent confrontations left hundreds of civilians dead, mostly among Palestinians, and tens of thousands of wounded and permanently disabled, including hundreds of children. The Committee noted that the explosive situation on the ground had been further exacerbated by the rapid deterioration of the Palestinian economy, the dispossessing effects of the Israeli settlement policy and protracted internal and external closures of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem. The Committee, therefore, joined the international community in stressing the need for the Government of Israel to fulfil its legal obligations under the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949 (the Fourth Geneva Convention)³ and Security Council resolutions. The Committee also reaffirmed that the continued failure on the part of Israel to live up to the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention would cause even greater suffering and dispossession to the Palestinian people and would lead to an increased volatility in the entire region.

5. The peace process has remained stalemated since the beginning of 2001. In October-November 2000, the Committee observed with much hope the efforts by various parties in Paris, at Taba and Sharm el-Sheikh to end the violence and resume

the peace negotiations. The Committee noted in that regard the key role played in these endeavours by the United States of America, Egypt, Jordan and the European Union (EU). It welcomed, fully supported and was particularly appreciative of the increased engagement in the course of the year of the Secretary-General of the United Nations. The Committee was hopeful that the understandings reached by the parties at Sharm el-Sheikh and Taba, Egypt, in October 2000 and January 2001, respectively, would result in curbing and eventually stopping the violence and the return of the two sides to the negotiating table. The establishment in November 2000 of the Sharm el-Sheikh Fact-Finding Committee, led by former United States Senator George Mitchell, was a promising step aimed at resolving the crisis on the ground. It appeared that the sensible and balanced recommendations made by the Mitchell Committee in its report, released in late April 2001, offered a practicable way out of the impasse. Most importantly, both sides have accepted them. However, the Israeli insistence that all violence should cease before the cooling-off period begins and negotiations resume prevented the two sides from breaking out of the deadlock. Subsequent attempts at resuming security cooperation between the two sides, notably the June 2001 proposal by the United States Director of Central Intelligence, also remained inconclusive. A September 2001 meeting at Gaza International Airport between the Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization and President of the Palestinian Authority Mr. Yasser Arafat and Israel's Minister for Foreign Affairs Mr. Shimon Peres was a welcome development and created new expectations of an imminent breakthrough. They agreed to resume security cooperation, take measures to sustain the ceasefire and bring the violence under control. The Committee hoped that the strict adherence by the two sides to the agreed terms and the sustained security coordination work would lead to positive changes on the ground, creating the necessary momentum for the resumption of the peace process. The Committee also welcomed and was greatly encouraged by the statement made on 2 October 2001 by the United States President George Bush concerning the Palestinian State.

6. The aforementioned setbacks notwithstanding and as the crisis persisted, the Committee expressed the view that a stepped-up and more involved assistance of key international actors, including the Secretary-General of the United Nations, was warranted in order to help the parties implement the Mitchell Committee recommendations, stop the violence and resume the peace negotiations. As the organ of the General Assembly mandated to deal with the question of Palestine, the Committee during the year has strongly supported all multilateral initiatives aimed at ensuring a de-escalation on the ground and a speedy return of the two sides to the resumption of the peace negotiations.

II. Mandate of the Committee

7. The mandate of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People was again renewed by the General Assembly in its resolution 55/52 of 1 December 2000, in which the Assembly, inter alia: (a) endorsed the conclusions and recommendations of the Committee⁴ and requested it to continue to keep under review the situation relating to the question of Palestine and to report and make suggestions to the Assembly or the Security Council, as appropriate; (b) authorized the Committee to continue to exert all efforts to promote the exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and to report thereon to the Assembly at its fifty-sixth session and thereafter; and (c) requested the Committee to continue to extend its cooperation and support to Palestinian and other non-governmental organizations in order to mobilize international solidarity and support for the achievement by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights and for a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine.

8. In its resolution 55/53 of 1 December 2000, on the Division for Palestinian Rights of the United Nations Secretariat, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to continue to provide the Division with the necessary resources and to ensure that it continues to carry out its programme of work as detailed in the relevant earlier resolutions, including, in particular, the organization of meetings in various regions with the participation of all sectors of the international community, the further development and expansion of the documents collection of the United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine, the preparation and widest possible dissemination of publications and information materials on various aspects of the question of Palestine, and the provision of the annual training programme for staff of the Palestinian Authority.

9. In its resolution 55/54 of 1 December 2000, on the special information programme on the question of Palestine, the General Assembly requested the Department of Public Information of the United Nations Secretariat, in full cooperation and coordination with the Committee, to continue, with the necessary flexibility as may be required by developments affecting the question of Palestine, its special information programme for the biennium 2000-2001; and to promote the Bethlehem 2000 Project, within existing resources and until the Bethlehem commemoration comes to a close, including the preparation and dissemination of publications, audio-visual material and further development of the "Bethlehem 2000" site on the United Nations Internet home page.

10. In carrying out its programme of work, the Committee also took into account General Assembly resolution 55/55 of 1 December 2000, in which the Assembly, inter alia, reaffirmed the necessity of achieving a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine in all its aspects; expressed its full support for the ongoing peace process; stressed the necessity for commitment to the principle of land for peace and the implementation of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), which form the basis of the Middle East peace process; and stressed the need for the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, primarily the right to self-determination; the need for the withdrawal of Israel from the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967; and the need for resolving the problem of the Palestine refugees.

III. Organization of work

A. Membership and officers

11. The Committee is composed of the following Member States: Afghanistan, Belarus, Cuba, Cyprus, Guinea, Guyana, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mali, Malta, Namibia, Nigeria, Pakistan, Romania, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Tunisia, Turkey and Ukraine.

12. At its 256th meeting, on 1 March 2001, the Committee re-elected Mr. Ibra Deguène Ka (Senegal) as Chairman, and re-elected Mr. Bruno Eduardo Rodríguez Parrilla (Cuba) and Mr. Ravan A. G. Farhâdi (Afghanistan) as Vice-Chairmen, and Mr. Walter Balzan (Malta) as its Rapporteur.

13. At the same meeting, the Committee adopted its programme of work for the year 2001.⁵

14. At its 258th meeting, on 18 September 2001, the Committee elected by acclamation Mr. Papa Louis Fall (Senegal) as Chairman, replacing Mr. Ibra Deguène Ka (Senegal), former Chairman of the Committee, who had retired from the diplomatic service of his country.

B. Participation in the work of the Committee

15. As in previous years, the Committee reconfirmed that all States Members and permanent observers to the United Nations wishing to participate in the work of the Committee as observers were welcome to do so. In accordance with established practice, the Permanent Observer of Palestine participated in the work of the Committee as an observer, attended all its meetings and made observations and proposals for consideration by the Committee and its Bureau.

16. In 2001, the Committee again welcomed as observers all the States and organizations that had participated in its work in the preceding year.⁶

IV. Review of the situation relating to the question of Palestine

17. In accordance with its mandate, the Committee continued to follow closely the situation relating to the question of Palestine and to monitor the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem. The Committee also continued to follow closely the various developments relevant to the peace process following the breakdown in the Israeli-Palestinian peace negotiations. The Committee has been particularly worried by the protracted stalemate in the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations, grievous difficulties experienced by the parties in trying to restore the peace process, escalation of violence on the ground and Israel's illegal occupation policies and practices.

18. Throughout the year, the Committee remained hopeful that the peace talks, which had been suspended since late January 2001, would resume. This, however, has not happened, owing to the position on the peace negotiations taken by the new Israeli Government and the continuing violence in the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem. The Al-Aqsa intifada, as it became known in 2000-2001, had three distinctive characteristics: the rapid escalation of the Israel Defence Forces (IDF) operations against the Palestinians; the introduction of a policy of targeted extrajudicial assassinations of Palestinian leaders and activists; and the frequent incursions into areas under full Palestinian control.

19. Since the beginning of the intifada, over 660 Palestinians have been killed by the IDF, security forces and settlers. Some 20,000 Palestinians have been wounded, a great number of them left permanently disabled. In monitoring the situation on the ground on a daily basis, the Committee, on several occasions, voiced its grave concern at the severity of the Israeli military response to the outbreak of Palestinian protest. The Committee noted that during the year, in addition to the use of plastic, rubber-coated metal and live ammunition, the Israeli military, in their attacks against Palestinians, continued to rely on heavy and sophisticated weapons, using them in an excessively harsh and indiscriminate manner. In the course of the past several months, the Committee has noted the alarmingly frequent use by IDF of helicopter gunships, air-to-surface and heavy anti-tank missiles, tanks and missile boats throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory. On 18 May 2001, the Government of Israel changed the nature and scale of the conflict by authorizing the use of fighter aircraft against unprotected Palestinian targets. The Committee joined the international community in condemning these and subsequent air attacks as excessive, disproportionate and indiscriminate. The Committee also expressed the view that this policy was contrary to the accepted norms of international law. The new policy escalated the violence threatening to expand the conflict.

20. In the course of the past several months, the Israeli security apparatus has resorted to selective assassinations of Palestinian activists and political leaders. The methods used in these Government-authorized operations have varied from special undercover units and snipers to helicopter gunship-fired air-to-surface missiles and other high-tech means. In this regard, the Committee noted with special concern the public statements by some Israeli leaders openly calling for the "liquidation" of the fathers of Palestinian militants. Since December 2000, more than 50 Palestinians have been killed in targeted attacks. These political assassinations often claimed the lives of innocent bystanders, including children. The practice has prompted the international community's immediate and unequivocal condemnation. The Committee stated that the policy of targeted extrajudicial killings of Palestinian

officials by Israeli security forces clearly violated the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention and was criminal in nature. The Committee has also received information on continued beatings and other abuse by IDF soldiers, Israeli border police officers and security forces of Palestinian civilians, ranging in age from 3 to 58.

21. Since April 2001, the Committee has observed with great concern what appeared to be an emerging pattern of Israeli incursions into areas under full Palestinian control. The Committee has stated that this type of IDF operations constituted an illegal activity and violated the letter and the spirit of the bilateral agreements signed as part of the peace process. During these massive incursions, IDF was supported by tanks, heavy armoured vehicles, helicopter gunships and bulldozers. The incursions constituted a virtual reoccupation of Palestinian lands, accompanied by the destruction of public and private property in various Palestinian towns, villages and refugee camps, including Beit Jala, Hebron, Jenin, Jericho, Khan Yunis, Qalqilya, Rafah, Ramallah, Tulkarm and others. The Committee considered a blatant provocation the taking over on 10 August 2001 of Orient House in East Jerusalem and nine other Palestinian offices in Abu Dis and Al-Eizariyeh, east of the city. Besides being illegal and provocative, this act was aimed at accelerating the process of Judaization of the city — the policy which Israel has been pursuing since 1967. In a simultaneous incursion that took place on 18 September 2001, in the north and south of the Gaza Strip, Israeli tanks and a bulldozer drove into an area south of Gaza City where a seaport was under construction, tearing down the fence and destroying the premises of the seaport project funded by the Governments of the Netherlands and France. The Committee was concerned about the official statements by Israeli leaders indicating Israel's intent to continue incursions into Areas "A".

22. During the year, the Israeli authorities have considered "unilateral separation" schemes aimed at further isolating Palestinian population centres from the settlements and restricting the movement of Palestinians throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem. The Committee was much alarmed by the establishment, in late September 2001, of a 30-kilometre-long "closed military zone" in the northern part of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, stretching from Jenin to Tulkarm. In the Committee's view, this was an extremely provocative unilateral measure, taken by IDF in gross violation of the signed Israeli-Palestinian agreements. The Committee expressed much concern at the adverse implications this development might have for future talks on permanent status issues. Also in late September 2001, Israel's Ministry of Public Security announced an intention to consider physically separating the settlements of "Pisgat Ze'ev" and "Neve Ya'akov", north of East Jerusalem, from the Shu'fat refugee camp and the nearby Palestinian village of Dahiyat al-Bareed, respectively. The plan of the Jerusalem District police was to erect up to 12 kilometres of fences, a fortification that would include night-vision equipment and other high-tech defences. The Committee strongly opposed this policy, as it represented a new form of collective punishment and created another obstacle to efforts aimed at resolving the crisis.

23. In the period under review, as the crisis persisted, the Committee has observed with great hope and anticipation the intensive efforts mounted by various international parties to hold violence in check, achieve a viable ceasefire and hold it long enough to reach a political solution. To this end, Israeli and Palestinian leaders met with a number of world leaders and the Secretary-General of the United Nations. A series of meetings held in Paris were followed by an important summit at

Sharm el-Sheikh, which was not attended by the Prime Minister of Israel. A way out of the escalating violence and towards the resumption of the peace negotiations was offered through the setting up, on 7 November 2000, of the Sharm el-Sheikh Fact-Finding Committee, headed by former United States Senator George Mitchell. At the start of 2001, the international community made another effort to persuade the two sides to bring about an end to violence, to protect civilians and to resume negotiations. The two sides met at Taba in late January 2001 and agreed on a number of understandings with respect to the situation on the ground and in the peace process. They also achieved a measure of progress by narrowing some gaps on core issues such as refugees, Jerusalem, borders and security. The peace negotiations were suspended in early February, however, following elections in Israel and the refusal of the new Israeli Government to respect the understandings reached at Sharm el-Sheikh and Taba. As the situation continued to escalate, the Mitchell Committee, on 30 April 2001, released a report putting forward a set of practical recommendations the parties should comply with in order to end confrontation and return to the negotiations. The international community expressed renewed hope that both sides, having accepted the report's recommendations, would be in a position to implement them in their entirety. The position of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People was that a confidence-building phase that would bring about a sustainable ceasefire was key to ending the confrontation. In this context, the Committee deplored the Israeli Government's tactic of using isolated incidents of violence as a pretext for delaying its compliance with the Mitchell Committee recommendations, such as the freeze on settlement activity. The Palestinian Rights Committee has also emphasized that a concrete framework for the implementation of the recommendations and an independent mechanism for monitoring compliance were urgently needed. Security cooperation between the two sides was perceived as vital for achieving a ceasefire. Several attempts have been made during the year at resuming security cooperation between the two sides, including the proposal made in June 2001 by the United States Director of Central Intelligence, which the Israeli side refused to implement by insisting on a seven-day total ceasefire. The Committee welcomed the visit of the Secretary-General to the region in June 2001 and, in particular, the important meetings he had with the Israeli and Palestinian leadership. The Committee also remained hopeful that the intensified involvement of the co-sponsors of the peace process, EU, regional leaders and the Secretary-General of the United Nations was a most workable way to secure an end to the violence, build confidence and move back to the peace negotiations. As the parties remained deadlocked, the Committee called upon the wider international community to help them out of the impasse. At a meeting between the Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization and President of the Palestinian Authority Mr. Yasser Arafat and Israel's Minister for Foreign Affairs Mr. Shimon Peres, held on 26 September 2001 at Gaza International Airport, the parties discussed their respective actions that would allow them to maintain the ceasefire. In particular, they reiterated their commitment to the Mitchell Report recommendations and the understandings reached earlier in the year with the assistance of the United States Director of Central Intelligence. They also agreed to resume full security cooperation, exert maximum effort to sustain the ceasefire and carry out their respective obligations emanating from previous agreements. Israel pledged to lift closures and redeploy its forces. The Committee welcomed the results of the meeting and the renewal of security coordination and hoped that it would lead to a reduction of violence,

restoration of trust between the two sides and the resumption of serious negotiations on key political issues.

24. A major obstacle to the peace process has been the persistence with which the Israeli authorities have been expanding the illegal settlements and infrastructure in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem. According to the reports available to the Committee, Israel continued its settlement, outpost and road network construction throughout the area in disregard of the strong opposition to such activities expressed by the international community. There has been an alarming increase in the demolitions of Palestinian houses and other property in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Also, most of the IDF incursions into Palestinian-controlled areas were accompanied by the indiscriminate and often massive bulldozing of Palestinian property, both public and private, under various security-related justifications. The Gaza Strip suffered the most from these massive demolitions. In the period from the beginning of the intifada to 12 September 2001, IDF demolished a total of 559 Palestinian residential buildings. In East Jerusalem alone, some 30 Palestinian houses were demolished. A total of 3,669 residential buildings were shelled. In the same period, 112,900 olive trees were uprooted and 3,669,000 square miles of cultivated land destroyed. At least 15 settlement sites have been established or resettled anew in the West Bank since February 2001. Throughout the year, tenders have been issued by the Israeli authorities for the construction of settler housing in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem. In November 2000, tenders were issued for the construction of 131 housing units in the settlement of "Pisgat Ze'ev", north of East Jerusalem, and for 110 units in "Har Homa", at Jabal Abu Ghneim, south of East Jerusalem; in the same month, Israel's Ministry of Construction and Housing issued tenders for road and infrastructure construction at "Betar Ilit" near Bethlehem. In December 2000, the Israeli Minister of Housing and Construction announced that 1,400 housing units had been started since January of that year. Half of the tenders issued by the Israel Land Administration were earmarked for construction in settlements. For May 2001 alone, tenders were issued for the construction of more than 700 new homes in the West Bank.

25. According to the "Council of Jewish Communities in Judea, Samaria and Gaza", during 2001, the number of settlers in the occupied West Bank and the Gaza Strip has increased by 17,000 and has now reached nearly 227,000. Violence against the Palestinian population and acts of vandalism against their land and other property perpetrated by extremist settlers remained of special concern to the Committee. Individual armed settlers and radical settler groups continued to terrorize and assault Palestinians. Since the start of the intifada, settlers have killed 16 Palestinian civilians. Under the protection or due to indifference on the part of IDF, settler groups often resort to the use of firearms, hit-and-run incidents, torture and beatings of Palestinians. The arsenal of their illegal and criminal activities includes the obstruction of Palestinian road traffic and setting up roadblocks, throwing stones at Palestinian cars, setting Palestinian property on fire, uprooting trees, attacking Palestinian medical crews and journalists, and burning Palestinian places of worship. They have routinely occupied Palestinian land, establishing illegal temporary structures and outposts. In several areas of the West Bank, settlers have instituted armed patrols. IDF has made its opposition to this particular activity clear, but appears to have done nothing to stop it. In late August 2001, monitors of the Temporary International Presence in Hebron (TIPH) became the object of

harassment and violence by Hebron settlers, who have disrupted its operation, forcing the TIPH contingent to scale back its regular patrols of the city. The Committee was seriously alarmed by the dramatic increase in the course of the year of the scope and intensity of settler violence against Palestinian civilians. It has always reiterated that the presence and the activities of the settlers in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem, were illegal and violated the established norms of international humanitarian law, including article 49, paragraph 6, of the Fourth Geneva Convention.

26. The Committee remained much concerned about the plight of some 2,500 Palestinian prisoners held in Israeli jails. Many of the detainees are often subjected to psychological pressure and physical torture. Forced isolation, administrative detention, sudden night checks and interrogations, restrictions on internal movement and overcrowding have had a highly traumatic effect on the detainees. The Palestinian prisoners also face a lack of religious and educational facilities. The health situation is a cause for great concern. Many suffer from various diseases and surgical operations are frequently delayed. Palestinian prisoners under 18 are exposed to physical assaults by Israeli criminal prisoners with whom they are often jailed. Since the outbreak of the Al-Aqsa intifada, the Israeli authorities have deprived the detainees of their right to family visitations. In addition, lawyers from the areas under Palestinian Authority control have been denied access to Palestinian prisoners since 8 April 1996. Legal assistance and advice are made unavailable to the Palestinian prisoners as a result of this policy. On a number of occasions, the Committee has called on the Government of Israel to abide by its obligations under the Fourth Geneva Convention and to release the prisoners in implementation of the bilateral agreements.

27. The Palestinian economy, in the year of the current intifada, has experienced extreme difficulties and has shown signs of rapid disintegration as a result of the Israeli military occupation. Months of intensive violence and military confrontation as well as protracted closures and restrictions on the movement of goods and the labour force have decimated practically all sectors of the economy. In contrast to previous years, there has been a noticeable shift to emergency assistance and humanitarian aid. Since the beginning of the crisis in September 2000, the Israeli authorities have introduced a policy of recurrent and often prolonged closures, which is viewed as a particularly harsh form of collective punishment. Mobility has been severely restricted on the borders between the Palestinian Territory and Israel, between the West Bank and Jordan, and between the Gaza Strip and Egypt. The closure of borders with Israel has resulted in the closure of the safe passage route established as part of the peace negotiations. Internal closures within the West Bank and Gaza Strip have led to the establishment of a dense network of Israeli checkpoints, which, in turn, has resulted in temporary or permanent traffic disruption and road blockages. The present crisis has considerably offset the gains made by the Palestinian economy in the past several years. Estimates by the Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General to the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Palestinian Authority indicate that the total income losses of the Palestinian economy since the start of the intifada range from US\$ 1.8 to US\$ 2.5 billion. The closures have caused a dramatic rise in unemployment, bringing the rates back to the 1996 levels. Poverty rates were expected to reach 50 per cent by the end of 2001, meaning that half of the Palestinian population would

live on \$2 or less a day. The IDF incursions into Palestinian-controlled areas have had a destructive effect on the Palestinian physical infrastructure. Palestinian social services have also been disrupted. The Committee was of the view that in the light of the gravity of the economic crisis and in order to address the situation adequately, the international community would have to renew its commitment to assist the Palestinian people with a view to rehabilitating the economy and infrastructure and bringing about a substantial improvement in the living conditions of the Palestinians. Also in this connection, the Committee stressed the increasingly important role of the United Nations system and the Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General to the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Palestinian Authority in coordinating international assistance and emergency humanitarian aid.

28. As was the case in the previous years, water in the Occupied Palestinian Territory remained in short supply. Constant water shortages continued to have a harmful effect of Palestinian households throughout the Palestinian territory. Israeli authorities continued to exercise control over Palestinian water resources, with thousands of Palestinian families deprived of connection to water networks. Almost 200,000 Palestinians were forced to rely on alternative water sources. The pervasive restrictions on movement imposed by Israel on the Palestinian population during the intifada, coupled with a sharp deterioration of the economy, have further impeded access by Palestinians to sources of water supply. Restrictive and repressive Israeli actions in the course of the year have affected the water supply situation. During the closures of the Palestinian territory, IDF often prevented Palestinian traffic, including water tanks, from reaching their water suppliers. Settlers have been reported to use their bulldozers to rupture Palestinian water pipelines, whereas Israeli snipers have targeted Palestinian roof water tanks, considered by the Palestinians as an essential alternative to relying on water pipelines.

29. The Committee greatly appreciated and supported the substantial humanitarian work done during the year by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). UNRWA has provided some 3.8 million Palestine refugees with social services, schooling and health care. In spite of its important and dedicated humanitarian effort, the Agency continued to experience serious financial difficulties. The severe decline in the Palestinian economy and the desperate condition of Palestine refugees since the start of the intifada in particular compelled UNRWA to launch a series of emergency appeals to the international community for funds to be used for emergency operations. In all its activities during the year, the Committee has consistently called for increased international support for the Agency's vital activities and generous financial contributions to its budget. It has also supported UNRWA's appeals for aid to provide food, medical supplies and emergency work programmes for some 217,000 refugee families.

30. Since December 1978, the Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP/PAPP) has provided substantial assistance to the Palestinian people. For over two decades, UNDP/PAPP has helped build Palestinian technical capacities, as well as project management and administrative capacities within counterpart Palestinian institutions, including the Palestinian Authority, local government, the private sector and non-governmental organizations. The Committee has been grateful to UNDP/PAPP for the invaluable and highly effective development assistance rendered to the Palestinian people during these difficult years.

V. Action taken by the Committee

A. Action taken in accordance with General Assembly resolution 55/52

31. In pursuance of its mandate and in response to the difficulties experienced by the peace process and in the search for a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine, the Committee continued to mobilize the international community in support of the Palestinian people, in cooperation with United Nations bodies, Governments, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and others, as indicated below.

1. Action in the General Assembly and the Security Council

(a) Resumed tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly

32. The Chairman, as well as members and observers of the Committee, participated in the fifth resumption of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, convened to discuss the item entitled "Illegal Israeli actions in occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory". In pursuance of General Assembly resolution ES-10/6 of 9 February 1999, the emergency special session was resumed on 18 October 2000 at the request of the Permanent Representative of Iraq to the United Nations, in his capacity as Chairman of the Group of Arab States for the month of October 2000.

33. The Chairman of the Committee took part in the debate and made a statement, in which he reviewed the situation on the ground and the international efforts to resume the peace negotiations at Sharm el-Sheikh. He also welcomed the particularly important role which the United Nations Secretary-General had played in efforts to bring an end to the violence (A/ES-10/PV.13).

34. At the 14th meeting of the session, on 20 October 2000, the Secretary-General made a statement on the latest developments on the item (A/ES-10/PV.14). At the end of the debate, on 20 October 2000, the General Assembly, by a recorded vote of 92 to 6, with 46 abstentions, adopted resolution ES-10/7, in which it condemned the violence that had taken place on 28 September 2000 and the following days at Al-Haram al-Sharif and other Holy Places in Jerusalem as well as other areas in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, resulting in the deaths of over 100 people, the vast majority of whom were Palestinian civilians, and many other casualties; condemned also acts of violence, especially the excessive use of force by the Israeli forces against Palestinian civilians; expressed support for the understandings reached at the summit convened at Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, and urged all parties concerned to implement those understandings honestly and without delay; demanded the immediate cessation of violence and the use of force, called upon the parties to act immediately to reverse all measures taken in that regard since 28 September 2000, and acknowledged that necessary steps had been taken by the parties in that direction since the summit of Sharm el-Sheikh; reiterated that Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem, were illegal and were an obstacle to peace, and called for the prevention of illegal acts of violence by Israeli settlers; demanded that Israel, the occupying Power, abide scrupulously by its legal obligations and its responsibilities under the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, which was applicable to all

territories occupied by Israel since 1967; strongly supported the establishment of a mechanism of inquiry into the recent tragic events, with the aim of establishing all the precise facts and preventing the repetition of those events, and in that regard strongly supported also the understanding reached at Sharm el-Sheikh about a committee of fact-finding, and called for its establishment without delay; supported the efforts of the Secretary-General, including his efforts for the establishment of the above-mentioned committee, and requested him to report to the Assembly on the progress made in those efforts; called upon the members of the Security Council to follow the situation closely, including the implementation of Council resolution 1322 (2000), in fulfilment of the Council's primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security; invited the depositary of the Fourth Geneva Convention to consult on the development of the humanitarian situation in the field, in accordance with the statement adopted on 15 July 1999 by the Conference of High Contracting Parties to the Convention, with the aim of ensuring respect for the Convention in all circumstances in accordance with common article 1 of the four Conventions; supported the efforts towards the resumption of the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations within the Middle East peace process on its agreed basis, and called for the speedy conclusion of the final settlement agreement between the two sides; and decided to adjourn the tenth emergency special session temporarily and to authorize the President of the General Assembly at its most recent session to resume its meeting upon request from Member States.

(b) Security Council meetings

35. Following the events of 28 September 2000 and the outbreak of the Al-Aqsa intifadah that ensued, the Security Council met on 3, 4 and 5 October 2000 to consider the agenda item entitled "The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question". At its 4205th meeting on 7 October 2000, the Council adopted resolution 1322 (2000).⁷

36. On 22 November 2000, at the request of the Permanent Representative of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya to the United Nations in his capacity as Chairman of the Arab Group for the month of November 2000 (S/2000/1109), the Security Council met to discuss the agenda item entitled "The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question".

37. The Acting Chairman of the Committee participated in the debate on the same day and made a statement on behalf of the Committee. In his statement, the Acting Chairman underscored the very important role played by the Secretary-General of the United Nations in the search for a solution to the crisis. On behalf of the Committee, he urged the Secretary-General to continue his efforts. The Acting Chairman also emphasized that Israeli practices and policies denying the legitimate needs and aspirations of the Palestinian people would never be compatible with a legitimate peace process based on resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). There could be no just and lasting peace in the Middle East until the Palestinian people exercised their legitimate right to establish an independent State with its capital in East Jerusalem, until all the occupied Arab territories were returned, and until Israel withdrew from the Gaza Strip, the West Bank and the occupied Syrian Golan, to the lines of 4 June 1967 (S/PV.4231).

38. On 18 December 2000, the Security Council met again to consider the agenda item entitled "The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question"

(S/2000/1206). At the end of the debate on the same day, the Council voted on a draft resolution (S/2000/1171) submitted by the Non-Aligned Movement Caucus (Bangladesh, Jamaica, Malaysia, Mali, Namibia and Tunisia). The draft received 8 votes in favour, none against and 7 abstentions. The draft resolution was not adopted, as it did not obtain the required majority (S/PV.4248).

39. On 15 March 2001, at the request of the Permanent Representative of the United Arab Emirates to the United Nations in his capacity as Chairman of the Arab Group for the month of March 2001 (S/2001/216), the Security Council met to consider the agenda item entitled "The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question". Resumed meetings under this item were held on 19 and 27 March 2001. At the conclusion of the debate, on 27 March 2001, the Council voted on a draft resolution (S/2001/270) submitted by the Non-Aligned Movement Caucus (Bangladesh, Colombia, Jamaica, Mali, Mauritius, Singapore and Tunisia). The draft received 9 votes in favour, 1 against and 4 abstentions. One Council member did not participate in the voting. The draft resolution was not adopted, owing to the negative vote of a permanent member of the Security Council (S/PV.4305).

40. At the request of the representatives of Mali and Qatar to the United Nations (S/2001/797), on 20 and 21 August 2001, the Security Council resumed its consideration of the agenda item entitled "The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question".

41. The Acting Chairman of the Committee participated in the debate on 20 August 2001 and made a statement on behalf of the Committee. In his statement, the Acting Chairman expressed the concern of the Committee at the dramatic escalation of tension and violence in and around East Jerusalem and in areas under full Palestinian control. He stated that Israel had no intentions of abiding by agreements signed with the Palestinian side and had firmly decided on wide-scale military operations in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem, as well as in areas under full control of the Palestinian Authority. The Acting Chairman specifically referred to Israel's takeover of Orient House and other Palestinian institutions in East Jerusalem and Abu Dis. He added that the Security Council had on numerous occasions failed to take any tangible action in response to the situation on the ground. The Committee believed that the Mitchell Committee report and its recommendations should be implemented in their entirety. A framework for their implementation should be established within a reasonable time span and with the international community monitoring the compliance of both parties. Negotiations on security, as well as consideration of the interim and permanent status issues, should be revived as a matter of urgency. The Acting Chairman said that the Committee was of the view that a permanent status agreement, long overdue, should be finally reached on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) (S/PV.4357).

2. Communications to the Secretary-General, the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council

42. In a letter dated 7 March 2001 addressed to the Secretary-General (A/55/827, A/ES-10/62-S/2001/207), the Chairman of the Committee voiced great concern at the continuing violence on the ground and the use of deadly force by the Israeli army and security forces. He said that Israel continued to rely on the use of massive armed response to individual outbreaks of Palestinian protest throughout the

Occupied Palestinian Territory. The Chairman added that the Committee wished to join the rest of the international community in its indignation over the Israeli practice of extrajudicial killings by Israeli security forces of the members of the Palestinian leadership and other Palestinian officials, stating that this policy was contrary to the rule of international law, provoked further violence, led to a crisis of trust and confidence between the two sides and created new obstacles to peace. The Committee was of the view that, with the situation continuing to deteriorate, the international community should act by stepping up its efforts to ensure the protection of the Palestinian people. The Committee also strongly believed that the status quo was absolutely untenable and was firmly rooted in Israel's continued violation of the principles of the Fourth Geneva Convention and the provisions of relevant Security Council and General Assembly resolutions. By its actions, Israel had clearly demonstrated its unwillingness to respect the bilateral agreements and understandings reached to date. The Committee viewed with particular concern the dangerously rapid disintegration of the Palestinian economy as a result of various restrictive policies of the Government of Israel. Protracted closures of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem, tight restrictions on the movement of people and goods, customs and tax income withholding and other measures of collective punishment had had a disastrous effect on the Palestinian economy as a whole, as well as on individual Palestinian households.

43. In another letter dated 7 March 2001 addressed to the Secretary-General (A/56/59-E/2001/9, A/ES-10/63-S/2001/208), the Chairman of the Committee drew the attention of the Secretary-General to the United Nations Seminar on Assistance to the Palestinian People, organized under the auspices of the Committee at the United Nations Office at Vienna. The Seminar had been convened in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 55/52 and 55/53 of 1 December 2000. In deciding to devote its first international meeting of the year to this critical issue, the Committee had been guided by the overriding need to address the disastrous situation facing the Palestinian economy after months of violent confrontations in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem, and the dramatic deterioration of the living conditions of the Palestinian people. The purpose of the Seminar had been to review the state of the economy and to examine efforts by Governments, intergovernmental and civil society organizations to alleviate the ongoing humanitarian emergency. The Seminar had also aimed at mobilizing greater support for the attainment of the legitimate economic rights of the Palestinian people in the hope of contributing to the broader peace-building efforts in the region. Given the special importance of the subject matter of the Seminar, it had attracted a great deal of international attention and had been attended by a large number of Member States, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, as well as United Nations family entities. The Chairman also recalled the regrettable fact that the four invited Palestinian speakers, including high-ranking officials of the Palestinian Authority, and several NGO participants from the Occupied Palestinian Territory had been unable to attend this important United Nations gathering owing to the general closure and travel restrictions imposed by Israel. Among those prevented from leaving the Occupied Palestinian Territory was Mr. Maher Masri, Minister for Economy and Trade of the Palestinian Authority, who had been invited as the official representative of Palestine and the keynote speaker of the Seminar.

44. In a letter dated 29 March 2001 addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2001/296), the Chairman of the Committee reiterated the Committee's

continued objection to the deletion from the list of items of which the Security Council was seized those items that related to the exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, the Palestine question and the Middle East problem, which were of special concern not only to the Committee but also to the majority of Member States. He stated the Committee's belief that pending a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict in the Middle East, the core of which was the question of Palestine, in accordance with international legitimacy, those items should remain on the list of matters of which the Council was seized, as they continued to engage its responsibility with regard to the maintenance of international peace and security. He also stressed that any decision to delete the items, especially at the current critical juncture in the peace process, would go well beyond procedural reform and would have far-reaching negative political implications.

45. In a letter dated 5 April 2001 addressed to the Secretary-General (A/ES-10/73-S/2001/335) and in identical letters addressed on the same date to the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council (A/ES-10/74-S/2001/336), the Chairman of the Committee reiterated that the Committee was extremely disturbed by the continuing violence and bloodshed on the ground. The reliance of IDF on excessive military power, including artillery, tanks, helicopter gunships and missile boats, in recent days in particular, had resulted in many deaths and injuries. He said that the confrontation was unequal, with a high human cost, especially for the Palestinian people. The Chairman said that, confined to their towns and villages because of the Israeli blockade, the Palestinians were subjected on a daily basis to gunfire, bombardments, extrajudicial killings, arbitrary arrests and detention, as well as the destruction of property and infrastructure. Compounding the desperate straits of the Palestinian people were the disastrous state of the economy, the dispossessing effects of the Israeli settlement expansion and repeated closures of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem. The Chairman said that the Committee firmly believed that the international community had a moral responsibility towards the Palestinian people, which had been striving to exercise its inalienable rights for so long. He also said that the Committee appreciated and strongly supported the important facilitating role that the Secretary-General was playing in the peace process and urged him to continue to remain actively and closely engaged with the parties, directly as well as through the United Nations Special Coordinator, in an effort to end the violence and resume the historic dialogue between Israel and the Palestinians.

46. In a letter dated 19 April 2001 addressed to the Secretary-General (A/ES-10/78-S/2001/392) and in identical letters addressed on the same date to the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council (A/ES-10/77-S/2001/390), the Chairman of the Committee expressed the Committee's concern at the violence and bloodshed on the ground. He said that the Israeli military attacks had been taken to a new level of intensity, particularly in the Gaza Strip. He referred, in particular, to a massive land, air and sea operation on 17 April 2001, in which the Israeli army had occupied the area, imposed a blockade on Gaza City, dissected the Gaza Strip into three separate parts, advanced at least half a mile into the Palestinian territory and six Palestinian police positions along the eastern border of the Gaza Strip. In the operation, IDF had used heavy machine guns, tanks, armoured personnel carriers, helicopter gunships, artillery and sea-launched surface-to-surface missiles. The letter said that the army had also closed all major roads and

the Gaza International Airport. Palestinian Authority border police positions at Beit Hanoun, an area under full Palestinian control, had been occupied. Rockets had hit buildings in Deir el-Balah and Rafah in the central and southern Gaza Strip, respectively. The Committee was extremely worried by the illegal incursion of IDF into the areas of the Gaza Strip that were under full Palestinian control. The Committee emphasized that the Israeli reoccupation of those parts of the Gaza Strip constituted a clear and serious violation of the agreements signed by the parties as part of the peace process. The Chairman added that the Committee had again urged the Secretary-General to intensify contacts with all the parties concerned in order to help bring the crisis to an end and restart the Israeli-Palestinian dialogue. In view of a particularly tense and volatile situation on the ground, efforts within the United Nations to ensure the protection of Palestinian civilians had acquired special urgency.

47. In a letter dated 22 August 2001 addressed to the Secretary-General (A/ES-10/106-S/2001/819), the Acting Chairman of the Committee emphasized that the Committee was extremely worried by the latest dramatic escalation of tensions and violence in and around East Jerusalem and in areas under full Palestinian control. He said that Israel had no intention of respecting agreements signed with the Palestinian side and had firmly decided on continuing wide-scale military operations in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, as well as in areas under full control of the Palestinian Authority. The latest and most striking incidents included the taking over of Orient House and other Palestinian institutions in East Jerusalem and Abu Dis, and the massive IDF incursion into Jenin. Also, Israel continued to use sophisticated weapons, including helicopter gunships, in the extrajudicial killings of suspected Palestinian activists. The Acting Chairman expressed the Committee's position that the Mitchell Committee report, with its sensible and even-handed recommendations, offered a practicable way out of the impasse. He added that resolute steps were needed with a view to implementing the recommendations in their entirety and without further delay. A realistic plan for such implementation should be agreed upon within a reasonable time span and with workable ways for its monitoring. Negotiations on security, as well as on interim and permanent status issues, should be restarted as a matter of urgency. The Committee was of the view that a permanent status agreement, long overdue, should be finally reached on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and the principles of the Madrid Peace Conference.

48. On the first anniversary of the Al-Aqsa intifadah, in a letter dated 28 September 2001 addressed to the Secretary-General (A/ES-10/113-S/2001/920), the Chairman of the Committee, *inter alia*, brought to the attention of the Secretary-General the Committee's position with respect to the various developments that had taken place since the beginning of the uprising on 28 September 2000. In particular, he stated that, during those months, over 800 people had lost their lives and thousands had been injured, many incapacitated for life, the vast majority of them Palestinian civilians, including children. The Chairman said that Israel had reacted to the explosion of grievances and frustration by the Palestinians by using excessive force, including combat helicopter gunships, fighter aircraft and other sophisticated materiel, as well as by imposing a stifling economic blockade in order to crush the uprising. In addition to the tragic loss of human life, large parts of the Palestinian infrastructure had been systematically destroyed in the course of the year. Tens of thousands of people had lost their livelihoods and hundreds of thousands had

become dependent for their survival on emergency humanitarian assistance offered by the international community. This had led to a virtual dismantling of the peace process. International efforts to end the violence and bring the parties back to the negotiating table had continued over the past year, regrettably without a lasting effect. The Chairman recalled the intensive international efforts which had led to the establishment of the Sharm el-Sheikh Fact-Finding Committee headed by former United States Senator George Mitchell. He also referred to the attempts by the United States Director of Central Intelligence to achieve a ceasefire and resume security cooperation between the two sides. The Chairman saluted the close personal engagement of the Secretary-General in efforts to end the violence and resume the peace process. He expressed the hope that the September 2001 meeting between Chairman Arafat and Foreign Minister Peres would become the first step leading to a cessation of violence and the resumption of a sustainable dialogue. He also emphasized that Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), along with the principle of "land for peace", should be the basis of any solution of the question of Palestine. On behalf of the Palestinian Rights Committee, the Chairman called upon the Government of Israel to abide by the principles of the Fourth Geneva Convention and the provisions of all relevant Security Council and General Assembly resolutions. Illegal Israeli policies such as settlement activity, extrajudicial killings of suspected Palestinian activists, closures of and incursions into Palestinian areas should be stopped forthwith and faits accomplis on the ground should be reversed. In the Chairman's view, as the crisis persisted and the parties continued to lack mutual trust and confidence, assistance by key international actors, including the co-sponsors of the peace process, the European Union and leaders in the regions, remained crucial. He reiterated the position of the Palestinian Rights Committee that, at the current critical juncture, the United Nations should continue to maintain its permanent responsibility with respect to all aspects of the question of Palestine.

3. Participation by the Chairman of the Committee at international conferences and meetings

49. In the course of the year, the Chairman of the Committee participated in meetings of intergovernmental and other bodies and other meetings relevant to the question of Palestine and contributed to their deliberations in support of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, as follows:

(a) Joint Meeting of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Non-Aligned Movement Committee on Palestine and the Non-Aligned Movement Security Council Caucus, Pretoria, 3 and 4 May 2001;

(b) International Media Encounter on the Question of Palestine, UNESCO headquarters, Paris, 18 and 19 June 2001;

(c) Seventy-fourth Ordinary Session of the Council of Ministers of the Organization of African Unity and 37th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government, Lusaka, 5-11 July 2001 (A/56/457).

50. As in previous years, the Committee continued to follow the activities relevant to the question of Palestine of other intergovernmental organizations, as well as decisions and resolutions of United Nations bodies and agencies, including the Economic and Social Council, the Commission on Human Rights, and the positive efforts made by many Governments. The Committee took note of the declarations of

concern on the part of the international community over the continuing violence on the ground and the lack of progress in the peace process during the year. It was encouraged by the readiness of the international community to remain engaged in the peace efforts and to help the parties out of the crisis of 2000-2001.

B. Action taken by the Committee and the Division for Palestinian Rights in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 55/52 and 55/53

51. In its programme of meetings organized in the various regions, the Committee continued to give priority to promoting the exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, supporting the peace process and stressing the need for timely and scrupulous implementation by the parties of the bilateral agreements. The Committee also urged the international community to continue to provide political support as well as broad economic assistance to the Palestinian people.

52. On the basis of the provision contained in General Assembly resolution 55/52, the Committee adjusted its programme of work, as necessary, in order to meet the evolving situation in the most effective and constructive manner, while keeping in mind the continuing financial constraints facing the Organization. The Committee expressed its great appreciation to the Governments of Cuba and Spain for having provided venues and facilities for the events sponsored by the Committee.

53. During the year, the Committee, through its Bureau, continued to maintain its cooperation on the question of Palestine with States members of the European Union. In February 2001, the Bureau held an important and useful meeting of consultations with representatives of EU (under the Presidency of Sweden) as part of the continued effort to build a constructive relationship with EU members on issues of common concern. In accordance with established practice, the Chairman of the Committee briefed the members of the EU delegation on the Committee's ongoing activities and explained the position of the Committee with regard to the situation on the ground, the stalemate in the peace process and the state of the Palestinian economy. He expressed the hope that the two sides would continue consultations.

54. Throughout the year, the staff of the Division for Palestinian Rights met at United Nations Headquarters, as well as away from Headquarters, with members of the general public and student groups and briefed them on the various aspects of the question of Palestine and the involvement of the United Nations in this issue.

1. United Nations Seminar on Assistance to the Palestinian People

55. The United Nations Seminar on Assistance to the Palestinian People was held at the United Nations Office at Vienna on 20 and 21 February 2001. The Seminar was attended by representatives of Governments, Palestine, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, United Nations system organizations and agencies, and experts. Four Palestinian officials invited to speak at the Seminar and a number of NGO participants from the Occupied Palestinian Territory were unable to travel to Vienna owing to the general closure imposed by Israel. The Committee delegation expressed its utmost concern and issued a statement denouncing the illegal actions of the occupying Power in that regard.

56. The following topics were discussed by the participants: the crisis of 2000-2001; the impact of Israeli policies on the Palestinian economy; the role of the United Nations system: assessment and efforts to alleviate hardships; assistance by Arab and Islamic States and intergovernmental organizations to the Palestinian people; and efforts by international donors and other sectors of the international community to alleviate the economic hardships of the Palestinian people.

57. In his concluding remarks of the Seminar, the Chairman of the Committee emphasized that the change of leadership in Israel at the beginning of February had undercut the momentum for reaching a final and comprehensive agreement. Since September 2000, the Occupied Palestinian Territory had been suffering under repeated closures, tight restrictions on the movement of people and goods, customs and tax withholding, and other measures of collective punishment imposed by the occupying Power. As a result, the Palestinian economy had suffered greatly and had come to the verge of collapse. The Palestinian people had been reduced to fighting for their survival and for the satisfaction of their basic day-to-day needs rather than working for long-term development. The consequences of that situation were fraught with danger for peace throughout the region. The Committee requested the donor community to contribute the funds needed to remedy the serious budgetary crisis faced by the Palestinian Authority. The Chairman stressed that Palestinian economic rehabilitation and development were prerequisites for peace in the Middle East. For peace to return and take root, a comprehensive, just and lasting political settlement must be coupled with a substantial improvement in the living conditions of the Palestinian people.

58. The report of the Seminar was issued as a document of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council (A/56/89-E/2001/89) for consideration under the relevant agenda items. It was also issued as a publication of the Division for Palestinian Rights.

2. United Nations Latin American and Caribbean Meeting on the Question of Palestine

59. The United Nations Latin American and Caribbean Meeting on the Question of Palestine was held at Havana from 12 to 14 June 2001. The participants included representatives of Governments, Palestine, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, United Nations bodies and agencies, special guests from the host country and representatives of the media, the academic community and students. Two invited Palestinian speakers and a number of Palestinian NGO representatives from the Occupied Palestinian Territory were unable to travel to Havana due to the general closure imposed by Israel. The Committee delegation expressed deep regret at their absence and, in a statement, denounced the illegal actions by the occupying Power, which had, among their many grave consequences, a negative effect on international efforts to find a solution to the current crisis.

60. The participants discussed the following topics: the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem; upholding international legitimacy — the path to a comprehensive, just and lasting solution of the conflict; and international support for the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. The coverage the Meeting received by the Cuban and the international media was very prominent. Some of the invited experts participated in a TV round table, which was also attended by Fidel Castro, President of the Council of State and of the Council of

Ministers of Cuba. On the last day of the Meeting, Cuban NGOs organized a mass rally in support of the Palestinian people with the participation of some 10,000 Cubans, with the Cuban President among them.

61. At the conclusion of the Meeting, the participants adopted the Havana Declaration, in which the participants, *inter alia*, declared their broad and determined commitment to support the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and the establishment of an independent and sovereign Palestinian State and the right to return to their homeland. They emphasized that the excessive use of force by Israel, the closures and the economic blockade must be brought to an end and that international protection, in the form of a United Nations observer force, must be provided. Participants urged the parties to implement swiftly the recommendations contained in the Mitchell report in their entirety as a way of ending the violence, restoring confidence and resuming the peace talks. They reiterated that the Latin American and Caribbean States, having had a broad experience in the struggle for decolonization and national sovereignty, should continue their moral, political and material support for the exercise by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights.

62. The Committee delegation met with President Fidel Castro. It was received by Ricardo Alarcón Quesada, President of the National Assembly of Cuba, who welcomed the efforts of the Committee aimed at bringing about a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine. The delegation also met with Felipe Pérez Roque, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba, who delivered the opening address of the Meeting.

63. The report of the Meeting was issued as a publication of the Division for Palestinian Rights.

3. Workshop of Latin American and Caribbean NGOs

64. An NGO Workshop organized in connection with the United Nations Latin American and Caribbean Meeting on the Question of Palestine was held at Havana on 14 June 2001. Its theme was "Action by civil society in Latin America and the Caribbean in solidarity with the Palestinian people". NGO representatives and experts reviewed regional NGO action in the light of the Plan of Action adopted at the 1998 Meeting in Santiago de Chile and efforts by NGOs, religious groups and the media aimed at mobilizing public opinion in support of the Palestinian people and discussed action-oriented proposals and mechanisms for their implementation.

65. In the Plan of Action adopted at the Workshop, NGOs pledged to increase the publication of information materials on the reality of the Palestinian situation and denounce any double standard applied to protect Israel from international condemnation for its human rights violations. NGOs should provide the United Nations Commission on Human Rights with all pertinent information. The Plan called for worldwide observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People on 29 November 2001. The United Nations should provide effective protection for the Palestinian people and demand compliance with the Fourth Geneva Convention. NGOs would lobby their Governments to increase their financial contributions to UNRWA to enable it to continue its services to Palestine refugees. Special emphasis should be given to the situation of Palestinian women living under occupation. NGOs should monitor the information broadcast by the mass media in their respective countries and counter disinformation campaigns that

called into question the justice of the Palestinian cause. The Federation of Arab Entities of the Americas (FEARAB) was called upon to establish an economic assistance fund for the Palestinian people. NGO action in support of the Palestinian people would be reviewed at the Second International Conference of Solidarity with the Palestinian People to be held in Mexico City in the first half of 2002.

66. The report on the NGO Workshop is part of the report on the Havana Meeting issued as a publication of the Division for Palestinian Rights.

4. United Nations International Meeting on the Question of Palestine

67. The United Nations International Meeting on the Question of Palestine: "The Road to Israeli-Palestinian Peace" was held at Madrid on 17 and 18 July 2001. The Meeting was attended by international experts, eminent political personalities from Spain and other countries, representatives of Governments, intergovernmental organizations, United Nations system entities, the Palestinian Authority, civil society organizations and the media.

68. The following topics were discussed by the participants: the Israeli-Palestinian peace efforts: an overview; the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem; and the road to peace.

69. In the General Remarks of the Meeting, participants expressed their strong conviction that the recommendations contained in the Mitchell Committee report and the subsequent United States-brokered ceasefire agreement should be swiftly implemented as a whole; that the excessive use of force by Israel, the closures and the economic blockade of Palestinian population centres, the incursions into Palestinian-controlled areas and all other illegal measures of collective punishment against the Palestinian people should be brought to an end immediately; that, in view of the excessive use of force against Palestinian civilians and continued Israeli illegal settlement activity, the High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention should expedite the reconvening of the Conference of the High Contracting Parties; and that an international presence must be established to protect innocent civilians and to monitor the implementation of agreements and understandings reached, with the United Nations Security Council fully discharging its responsibilities under the Charter in this respect. Participants also discussed the role played in the peace process by the co-sponsors, the European Union, the United Nations, regional organizations and other interested international actors and stressed that the role of all those States and multilateral institutions in support of the Middle East peace process remained crucial and had to be closely coordinated for better results, particularly in the current critical period.

70. The Committee delegation was received by Josep Piqué, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Spain, who stressed the importance of supporting the Middle East peace process and the rights of the Palestinian people. The Committee delegation expressed its deep appreciation of the active and constructive role played by Spain in the search for a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the region.

71. The report of the Meeting was issued as a publication of the Division for Palestinian Rights.

5. United Nations NGO Meeting in Solidarity with the Palestinian People

72. The United Nations NGO Meeting in Solidarity with the Palestinian People was held on 19 July 2001 in Madrid, immediately following the International Meeting on the Question of Palestine: “The Road to Israeli-Palestinian Peace”. The participants included representatives of NGOs from all regions, Governments, United Nations bodies and agencies, intergovernmental organizations, a delegation of Palestine and a number of panellists.

73. In the course of the Meeting, the participants considered action by international civil society in solidarity with the Palestinian people; mobilizing public opinion in support of the Palestinian people — efforts by NGOs, other civil society organizations and the media; also reviewed NGO action worldwide, and developed action-oriented proposals as well as mechanisms for their implementation.

74. In the NGO Statement and Plan of Action, the participants urged the United Nations Security Council to place an international protection force in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and decided to undertake advocacy steps in that regard. In addition, public awareness campaigns should focus on crucial elements of the occupation and the situation of the Palestinians on the ground. NGOs would explore the possibility of establishing an International Civil Society Corps of volunteers, including universities, academics as well as Palestinian and Israeli NGOs, to express solidarity with the Palestinian people, to monitor events on the ground and to participate in appropriate actions opposing the occupation. The participants expressed their conviction that the relevant United Nations resolutions offered the clearest pathway to a true and just peace for all in the region.

75. The report of the NGO Meeting was issued as a publication of the Division for Palestinian Rights.

6. Cooperation with civil society organizations

76. The Committee continued to emphasize throughout the year that the role of civil society in educating their respective constituencies about the fundamental issues of the question of Palestine and in mobilizing public support for the Palestinian cause remained very important. NGOs continued to participate in all meetings organized by the Committee away from Headquarters and in the observance of the International Day of Solidarity in New York and elsewhere. Aware of the challenges of the current circumstances, the Committee was particularly appreciative of those NGO contributions that were focused on mobilizing international solidarity with the Palestinian people and support for the achievement of its inalienable rights, as well as supporting the peace process and the work and objectives of the Committee. The Committee highly appreciated the work of those NGOs that provided concrete emergency relief at a difficult time for the Palestinian people. It appealed to the Israeli NGOs and activists that are part of the peace camp and encouraged them to continue and to invigorate their crucial activities to inform public opinion and to provide an alternative to the dangerous course embarked upon by the Israeli Government. The Committee stressed that there was a greater need for sustained campaigns aimed at informing public opinion about the root causes of the conflict and promoting national and international action in support of the peace process, the effective implementation of the Israeli-Palestinian agreements, and of a just and lasting peace in the region.

77. The Committee encouraged cooperation, coordination and networking among civil society organizations. It maintained and developed its liaison with national, regional and international coordinating mechanisms accredited to it, in addition to the already established liaison with a large number of individual NGOs. Consultations between the delegation of the Committee and representatives of coordinating committees of NGOs were held on 22 February 2001 at the United Nations Office at Vienna, following the United Nations Seminar on Assistance to the Palestinian People. The Palestinian NGO representatives were unable to participate due to the general closure imposed by Israel on the Occupied Territory. The participating NGO representatives provided information about their initiatives, campaigns and projects and stressed the need for close cooperation with the Committee. The delegation of the Committee asked the NGOs to focus their current work on the mobilization of emergency relief and other assistance by the international donor community; and lobbying their Governments to live up to their responsibilities under the Fourth Geneva Convention and to support initiatives at the United Nations and elsewhere to establish a protection force to be deployed in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

78. The Division for Palestinian Rights maintained the Internet web site entitled "NGO Network on the Question of Palestine" as a permanent tool of mutual information and cooperation between civil society and the Committee. The web site can be found at www.un.org/depts/dpa/ngo. The Division also continued to issue its bimonthly newsletter entitled *NGO Action News* covering the activities of civil society on the various aspects of the question of Palestine.

7. Research, monitoring and publications

79. The Committee continued to attach great importance to the essential contribution of the Division for Palestinian Rights and requested it to continue its established programme of work, including studies, information notes and other publications; the further development of the United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine (UNISPAL); the annual training programme for staff of the Palestinian Authority; and the annual observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

80. Accordingly, the Division continued to respond to requests for information and to prepare and disseminate to its worldwide network the following publications:

- (a) Monthly bulletin covering action by the Committee, United Nations bodies and agencies, and intergovernmental organizations concerned with the question of Palestine;
- (b) Monthly chronology of events relating to the question of Palestine, based on media reports and other sources;
- (c) Reports of meetings organized under the auspices of the Committee;
- (d) Special bulletin on the observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People;
- (e) Annual compilation of relevant resolutions, decisions and statements of the General Assembly and the Security Council relating to the question of Palestine;
- (f) Update of a study entitled "Origins and Evolution of the Palestine Problem, 1917-1988".

8. United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine

81. The Division for Palestinian Rights, in cooperation with relevant technical and library services of the United Nations Secretariat, continued to develop UNISPAL, as mandated by the General Assembly since 1991. This included the required ongoing upgrading of the system's hardware and software components; the scanning, retyping or downloading, editing, reformatting and inclusion in the system of new and old documents; the improvement of quality control mechanisms; and the further development and improvement of access to the "UNISPAL" and "Question of Palestine" sites on the Internet, in particular, as requested, to enhance the user-friendliness of the system.

9. Training programme for staff of the Palestinian Authority

82. Two staff members from the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation of the Palestinian Authority participated in a training programme conducted by the Division from September to December 2000, in conjunction with the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly. They familiarized themselves with various aspects of the work of the United Nations Secretariat and other organs. The programme included, among other things, attendance at various briefings and meetings of relevant committees and bodies of the United Nations, meetings with representatives of delegations to the General Assembly and members of the staffs of permanent missions to the United Nations. The trainees also conducted research and prepared studies on specific topics.

10. International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People

83. The International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People was observed on 29 November 2000 at United Nations Headquarters and at the United Nations Office at Geneva and the United Nations Office at Vienna. On the occasion of the observance at Headquarters, in addition to a solemn meeting of the Committee and other activities, an exhibit entitled "The Land" was presented by the Permanent Observer Mission of Palestine, under the auspices of the Committee. The Committee noted with appreciation that the International Solidarity Day had also been observed in many other cities throughout the world. Details on the observance are contained in the special bulletin issued by the Division.

84. In adopting its programme of work, the Committee decided that a similar event would be organized in connection with the observance of the Day in 2001.

VI. Action taken by the Department of Public Information in accordance with General Assembly resolution 55/54

85. In pursuance of General Assembly resolution 55/54 of 1 December 2000, the Department of Public Information continued its special information programme on the question of Palestine, which included, among other things, the organization of its annual training programme for Palestinian broadcasters and journalists and the organization of an international media encounter on the question of Palestine at the headquarters of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in Paris.

86. In October-November 2000, the Department organized a training programme at United Nations Headquarters for a group of nine Palestinian media practitioners with a view to strengthening their professional capacity as information media personnel. As was the case since the beginning of the programme in 1995, the Department arranged a series of briefings and workshops at the Columbia University School of International and Public Affairs in New York and at CNN headquarters in Atlanta. Briefings for the participants were also organized at United Nations Headquarters, at international organizations and at institutions of the Government of the United States of America in Washington, D.C. As part of their training, the participants covered meetings of the General Assembly and transmitted radio, TV and print reports back to their news organizations in the Middle East.

87. Since January 2001, the Department has been displaying at the United Nations Office at Geneva, on a semi-permanent basis, the French-language version of the exhibit entitled “The United Nations and the Question of Palestine”, containing photographs, maps and text on the history and situation of the Palestinian people and tracing the search for a solution to the question of Palestine. Its English-language version is a permanent part of the guided tour route at United Nations Headquarters.

88. In April 2001, the Department produced a poster entitled “Palestine: Self-determination — An Inalienable Right of the Palestinian People” in Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish. The poster has been distributed worldwide through the network of the United Nations field offices.

89. On 18 and 19 June 2001, the Department organized at UNESCO headquarters, Paris, the International Media Encounter on the Question of Palestine designed as a forum, at which international media representatives and experts discussed the status of the peace process and ways and means of breaking the deadlock. The Encounter discussed the role of the United Nations in the question of Palestine and in the overall search for peace in the Middle East. The Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, among other participants, addressed the Encounter. It attracted international media coverage, including daily dispatches by major wire services and contributions by participating correspondents. A separate web site created on the occasion was posted on the Department’s home page. The Encounter was the ninth in a series launched by the Department in 1991 to support the search for peace in the Middle East and raise international awareness about the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.

90. In its PeaceWatch section, the quarterly publication *UN Chronicle* (issue No. 3, 2000) reported on the resumed tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly; the Secretary-General’s trip to the Middle East in October 2000 and his reports to the General Assembly and the Security Council; and meetings and

resolutions of the Security Council on the subject. It also reported on the three-day special session of the Commission on Human Rights on the Middle East. In its issue No. 4, 2000, it reported on the reaffirmation by the General Assembly's Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) of the importance of UNRWA. The issue also contained an article on how UNRWA, through its various projects, had helped both men and women take steps towards achieving sustainable development, along with a summary of the achievements of UNRWA for the past 50 years. An article reviewing peacekeeping events in 2000 reported on Security Council meetings on the situation in the Middle East. The PeaceWatch section contained an account of the Secretary-General's visit to the Middle East in June 2001 and the recommendations of the international Fact-Finding Committee as well as an appeal by UNRWA for funds to bring food, medical supplies and other assistance to the Palestinian people in the West Bank and Gaza.

91. The Department produced and distributed one "UN in Action" TV programme entitled "Palestine Football Makes its Mark with United Nations Support". It was broadcast on the CNN World Report programme and on other networks worldwide.

92. The Radio News Unit continued to cover extensively various aspects of the question of Palestine and related issues in its daily broadcasts and current affairs magazines in various languages. Also, the Middle East Radio Unit continued to cover all United Nations activities related to the question of Palestine in its 15-minute daily broadcast in Arabic. Some of the topics covered included: the extraordinary special session of the General Assembly and its subsequent resumed sessions on the applicability of the Fourth Geneva Convention to the Occupied Palestinian Territory; the Secretary-General's three visits to the area, two to the Occupied Palestinian Territory and one to the Sharm el-Sheikh Summit; the visit of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mary Robinson, to the Occupied Palestinian Territory and the follow-ups to her report; the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People; the Security Council debate on agenda item entitled "The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question"; the Arab summit calling for a protection force for the Occupied Palestinian Territory; the United Nations reaction to the developments in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, in particular, the emergency measures adopted by UNRWA, UNDP, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the World Food Programme (WFP) and the World Health Organization (WHO); the effects of violence on refugees, children and women in the Occupied Territory; and the analysis of the situation by think tanks, scholars and experts on both sides. A two-part series of an English-language feature programme entitled "The Question of the Right of Return for Palestinian Refugees" was adapted into Hindi, Indonesian and Urdu. A magazine entitled *How has the violence in Israel and Palestine affected the children?* was produced in English.

93. As has been the case in recent years, the activities of United Nations information centres (UNICs), information services (UNIS) and other United Nations offices have primarily focused on the observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. The UNICs in Athens, Beirut, Bonn, Cairo, Dar es Salaam, Dhaka, Harare, Islamabad, Kathmandu, Lisbon, New Delhi, Ouagadougou, Prague, Pretoria, Rabat, Rome, Tehran, Tripoli, Tunis, Vienna and Warsaw observed the Day with wide range of activities. Among other activities undertaken by UNICs was UNIC Harare's launch of the UNESCO Bethlehem 2000 roving photo exhibit in May 2001. The Director of the Centre and the Ambassador

of Palestine delivered welcoming statements at the three-week event, which was officially opened by the Vice-President of Zimbabwe. In Colombo, the UNIC Director delivered a speech on the theme of “The United Nations and the Question of Palestine” to a group of university students in an event organized in cooperation with the Department of International Relations Studies of the University of Colombo. UNIC Madrid provided assistance to the Commissioner-General of UNRWA during his two-day visit to Spain and arranged for interviews with two main dailies, *El País* and *El Mundo*. The Centre also assisted the Division for Palestinian Rights and conference services in their planning mission to Madrid in preparation for the United Nations International Meeting on the Question of Palestine: “The Road to Israeli-Palestinian Peace”. UNIC Panama City arranged for the publication of a supplement entitled “The United Nations and the Question of Palestine” in the international section of a monthly newsmagazine. In March 2001, UNIC Sana’a translated and disseminated to the local media an appeal by UNRWA for humanitarian assistance to the Palestinian people. The Director of UNIC Tehran gave an interview to the national radio of the Islamic Republic of Iran on the outbreak of violence between Israelis and Palestinians and focused on the Secretary-General’s efforts to try to restore the Middle East peace process. In November 2000, two publications, “United Nations Seminar on Prospects for Palestinian Economic Development” and “The Middle East Peace Process”, were produced by UNIC Tunis and distributed to media and government officials. In coordination with the Department, UNIC Paris contributed to the organization of the International Media Encounter on the Question of Palestine. UNICs have also taken advantage of the Internet as an important public outreach vehicle to promote a better understanding of the question of Palestine. A number of centres, such as UNIC Tunis and UNIC Rome, created special pages on their web sites carrying the Secretary-General’s message, as well as press releases and other information material covering the various aspects of the issue.

94. UNIS Geneva has regularly disseminated information on the question of Palestine. At the weekly briefings to journalists, the Director of the Information Service highlights statements from the Secretary-General and the Security Council on the Palestine question. UNIS Vienna provided public information support for the United Nations Seminar on Assistance to the Palestinian People and disseminated the statement of the representative of the Secretary-General, Kieran Prendergast, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs. It also assisted in organizing interviews and the issuance of daily press releases.

95. From 28 to 30 August 2000, the NGO Section, in its fifty-third Annual Conference for Non-governmental Organizations associated with the Department entitled “Global Solidarity: The Way to Peace and International Cooperation”, invited as a keynote speaker Ms. Hanan Ashrawi, Secretary-General, Palestinian Initiative for the Promotion of Global Dialogue and Democracy, at the opening session of the Conference.

96. The Department created a United Nations archival database on Palestine, covering the period from 1947 to 2000, for the automation of the card catalogue of the Department’s collection of films and videos on Palestine. The overall objective of the project is to transform the current archive materials into a searchable database.

97. The Department continued to cooperate with the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and the Division for Palestinian Rights in implementation of the mandate entrusted to it by the General Assembly.

VII. Conclusions and recommendations of the Committee

98. At the start of the twenty-first century and more than five decades after the adoption by the General Assembly of its resolution 181 (II) of 29 November 1947, the Palestinian people is yet to see the promise of its own State fulfilled. Thirty-four years after the illegal occupation by Israel of its land, the Palestinians are yet to see their aspirations for self-determination and the exercise of their inalienable and natural rights realized. Ten years after the Middle East Peace Conference held at Madrid and in spite of the progress made in the first few promising years, the peace process relapsed and now remains at a standstill, with both sides far apart on key issues. To this day, millions of Palestine refugees carry on with their dismal existence in refugee camps, deprived of their natural right of return to the places from which they have been displaced. The gains that the Palestinian economy experienced when the peace process was advancing are now all but gone. The economy, already in a disastrous state, is being gradually destroyed by the occupying Power. In these circumstances, the Committee intends to persist in its efforts to contribute, through its varied programme of activities, to international endeavours aimed at stopping the violence and bringing the parties back on the peace track. Its overriding and fundamental objective and mandate — the exercise by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights — will remain key to all its activities.

99. In the course of the year, the Committee has been greatly distressed by the intensification of the crisis and, as a result, the tragic loss of innocent lives, the wide-scale destruction of Palestinian property and the alarmingly steady deterioration of the economy. The Committee joined the international community in expressing grave concern over the policies and actions of Israel, the occupying Power, in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem, namely the illegal settlement policy; military incursions unprecedented in scope into the various parts of the Palestinian Territory, including areas under full Palestinian control, as stipulated in relevant bilateral agreements; excessively harsh and disproportionate attacks by IDF against the Palestinians protesting the occupation; the widespread policy of targeted extrajudicial assassinations of Palestinian activists; and the harmful effect of the occupation on the living conditions of the Palestinian people. As the core of the conflict remains the continuing illegal occupation by Israel of the Palestinian Territory, the Committee reiterates its position of principle that the problem should be resolved based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), as well as other relevant United Nations resolutions and the exercise by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights, including its right to self-determination and its own independent State.

100. The deplorable events since September 2000 have also underscored the urgency of pressing forward with efforts to bring calm, stabilize the situation and enable the parties to resume their dialogue. The Committee views with great regret and growing alarm the breakdown in the Israeli-Palestinian peace negotiations. It welcomed the Sharm el-Sheikh and Taba understandings with a measure of anticipation and hope that those small but important steps would allow the parties to overcome their differences and restore the dialogue. The Committee called for the immediate and comprehensive implementation of the Mitchell Committee recommendations, as offering the most practicable route back to the peace process. Although both sides have accepted the report, the crisis persisted, preventing the

parties from resuming their negotiations on critical interim and permanent status issues. The Committee calls upon the co-sponsors of the peace process and all concerned to continue to pursue their efforts, looking for innovative approaches that would allow the parties to implement the Mitchell Committee recommendations and resume their negotiations. The Committee believes that a stepped-up and concrete engagement on the part of key international parties, regional and extra-regional, is now needed more than ever.

101. In the light of these developments, the Committee shares the view that action aimed at addressing the present situation is also required by the High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention. It supports the ongoing effort to reconvene the Conference of the High Contracting Parties in order to ensure respect for the Convention and provide the necessary protection to the Palestinian people.

102. At this critical crossroads in the peace process, the Committee reaffirms its long-standing position that the United Nations should continue to maintain its permanent responsibility with respect to all aspects of the question of Palestine until it is resolved in a satisfactory manner, in conformity with relevant United Nations resolutions, in accordance with international legitimacy and until the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people are fully realized. In this context, the Committee strongly believes that both the General Assembly and the Security Council should do everything in their power to help resolve this five-decades-old conflict, allowing the Palestinian people, at long last, to exercise its rights, including the right to self-determination and the establishment of an independent State of its own. The Committee welcomes and strongly supports the increasingly important and highly instrumental role in the overall peacemaking efforts played in the course of the year by the Secretary-General of the United Nations. The Committee also expresses its appreciation of the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General to the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Palestinian Authority for his persistent efforts aimed at bringing the parties together and for his important work of coordinating international assistance to the Palestinian people carried out by his Office. The Committee considers it unacceptable that UNRWA, which has provided generations of Palestinians with social services, schooling and health care, is now experiencing serious financial difficulties. In this connection, the Committee strongly urges the international donor community to assist the Agency and contribute generously to its budget. This should enable UNRWA to continue to deliver its vital humanitarian services to some 3.8 million Palestine refugees registered with it.

103. The Committee considers that its programme of meetings in various regions continues to play a useful role in heightening international awareness of the relevant issues and in achieving wider support for the achievement by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights. The Committee also highly appreciates the contribution made by a large number of NGOs working untiringly to mobilize solidarity with the Palestinian people, provide emergency relief under difficult circumstances to the population in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and raise international awareness of its inalienable rights, in particular the right of return. There is a greater need for sustained campaigns at various levels aimed at informing public opinion about the root cause of the conflict — the illegal occupation by Israel of Palestinian land. In addition to civil society initiatives and given the tense and volatile situation on the ground, special emphasis should be laid on mobilizing wide public support for measures aimed at protecting the Palestinian people, such as action by the United

Nations and its Security Council or by the High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention. In its programme of work for the next year, the Committee will strive to involve to a greater extent other sectors of civil society, such as parliamentarians and their regional and international organizations and the media. Its cooperation with the wide network of NGOs on the question of Palestine will be intensified and focused on issues of common concern. The Committee will continue to review and assess its programme with a view to making it more responsive to the developments on the ground and in the peace process. It will focus its work in the next year on the question of the exercise by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights, on efforts to revive the Israeli-Palestinian peace negotiations and the role of the United Nations therein, and on international assistance to the Palestinian people.

104. The Committee stresses the essential contribution of the Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat in support of the Committee's objectives and requests it to continue its programme of publications and other informational activities, in particular the further development of the UNISPAL documents collection. The Committee also considers that the annual training programme for staff of the Palestinian Authority has demonstrated its usefulness and requests that it be continued.

105. The Committee is of the view that the special information programme on the question of Palestine of the Department of Public Information has made an important contribution to informing the media and public opinion on the relevant issues. The Committee requests the programme's continuation, with the necessary flexibility, as warranted by developments relevant to the question of Palestine.

106. Wishing to make its contribution to the achievement of a just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine and in view of the many difficulties facing the Palestinian people and besetting the peace process, the Committee calls on all States to join in this endeavour and invites the General Assembly again to recognize the importance of its role and to reconfirm its mandate with overwhelming support.

Notes

¹ *Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-first Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/31/35).*

² *Ibid., Thirty-second Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/32/35); ibid., Thirty-third Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/33/35); ibid., Thirty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/34/35 and Corr.1); ibid., Thirty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/35/35); ibid., Thirty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/36/35); ibid., Thirty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/37/35 and Corr.1); ibid., Thirty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/38/35); ibid., Thirty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/39/35); ibid., Fortieth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/40/35); ibid., Forty-first Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/41/35); ibid., Forty-second Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/42/35); ibid., Forty-third Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/43/35); ibid., Forty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/44/35); ibid., Forty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/45/35); ibid., Forty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/46/35); ibid., Forty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/47/35); ibid., Forty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/48/35); ibid., Forty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/49/35); ibid., Fiftieth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/50/35); ibid., Fifty-first Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/51/35); ibid., Fifty-second Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/52/35); ibid., Fifty-third Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/53/35); ibid., Fifty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/54/35); and ibid., Fifty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/55/35).*

³ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 75, No. 973.

⁴ *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/55/35)*, chap. VII.

⁵ A/AC.183/2001/CRP.1.

⁶ The observers at the Committee meetings were as follows: Algeria, Bangladesh, Bulgaria, China, Ecuador, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Mauritania, Morocco, Nicaragua, Niger, Qatar, Sri Lanka, Syrian Arab Republic, United Arab Emirates, Viet Nam, Yemen, League of Arab States, Organization of the Islamic Conference and Palestine.

⁷ See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/55/35)*, paras. 29-31.



General Assembly

Official Records

Fifty-sixth Session

Supplement No. 35 (A/56/35)

17 June 2002

Arabic, Chinese, English, Russian
and Spanish only

Report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

Corrigendum

Paragraph 24, eighth sentence

The sentence *should read*

In the same period, 112,900 olive trees were uprooted and 3,669,000 square metres of cultivated land destroyed.



United Nations

**Report of the
Committee on the
Exercise of the
Inalienable Rights of
the Palestinian People**

**General Assembly
Official Records
Fifty-seventh Session
Supplement No. 35 (A/57/35)**

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United Nations • New York, 2002

Note

Symbols of United Nations documents are composed of capital letters combined with figures. Mention of such a symbol indicates a reference to a United Nations document.

Contents

<i>Chapter</i>	<i>Paragraphs</i>	<i>Page</i>
Letter of transmittal		iv
I. Introduction	1–6	1
II. Mandate of the Committee	7–10	3
III. Organization of work	11–15	5
A. Membership and officers	11–13	5
B. Participation in the work of the Committee	14–15	5
IV. Review of the situation relating to the question of Palestine	16–31	6
V. Action taken by the Committee	32–78	13
A. Action taken in accordance with General Assembly resolution 56/33	32–59	13
1. Action in the General Assembly and the Security Council	33–54	13
2. Communications to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council	55–56	16
3. Statements by the Committee	57	17
4. Participation by the Chairman of the Committee at international conferences and meetings	58–59	17
B. Action taken by the Committee and the Division for Palestinian Rights in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 56/33 and 56/34	60–78	17
1. United Nations International Meeting in Support of Middle East Peace	64	18
2. United Nations NGO Meeting in Solidarity with the Palestinian People	65	18
3. United Nations African Meeting in Support of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People	66	18
4. United Nations International Conference of Civil Society in Support of the Palestinian People	67–68	19
5. Cooperation with civil society	69–72	19
6. Research, monitoring and publications	73–74	20
7. United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine	75	21
8. Training programme for staff of the Palestinian Authority	76	21
9. International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People	77–78	21
VI. Action taken by the Department of Public Information in accordance with General Assembly resolution 56/35	79–92	22
VII. Conclusions and recommendations of the Committee	93–98	25

Letter of transmittal

10 October 2002

Mr. Secretary-General,

In 1975, the General Assembly established the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and mandated it to work towards the realization by the Palestinian people of their inalienable rights — the right to self-determination without external interference; the right to national independence and sovereignty; and the right to return to their homes and property. In the 27 years that have passed since, the Committee, through its various activities, has continued to work tirelessly to help achieve this goal.

In the course of the past year, I have shared with you, the General Assembly, the Security Council, as well as with various international gatherings the growing concern of the Committee over the distressing events in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem, and the vast humanitarian disaster facing the Palestinian people. Regrettably, violence, destruction and human suffering have not ended. The situation remains extremely tense and volatile. The Palestinian people have lived under the occupation for far too long. The continuing Israeli occupation remains the core of the conflict and must come to an end.

The Committee has repeatedly called for concerted efforts by all aimed at stopping the escalation of the conflict. Our position is that the international community cannot afford to stand idle in the face of this tragedy. Steps to revive the political process are urgently needed. We, in the Committee, welcome and highly appreciate the work done by the Quartet, as well as your personal close involvement in the peace efforts. The Committee will continue to support you in your mission of peace.

In the hope that the work of our Committee will make a constructive contribution to the deliberations of the General Assembly, I have the honour to enclose herewith the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for submission to the General Assembly in accordance with paragraph 5 of its resolution 56/33 of 3 December 2001. The report covers the period from 11 October 2001 to 10 October 2002.

Accept, Sir, the assurances of my highest consideration.

(Signed) Papa Louis **Fall**
Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the
Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

His Excellency Mr. Kofi Annan
Secretary-General of the United Nations
New York

Chapter I

Introduction

1. The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People was established by the General Assembly by resolution 3376 (XXX) of 10 November 1975, with the task of recommending a programme designed to enable the Palestinian people to exercise its inalienable rights as recognized by the Assembly in resolution 3236 (XXIX) of 22 November 1974.

2. The recommendations made by the Committee in its first report to the General Assembly¹ were endorsed by the Assembly as a basis for the solution of the question of Palestine. In its subsequent reports,² the Committee has continued to stress that a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, must be based on the relevant United Nations resolutions and the following essential principles: the withdrawal of Israel from the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, and from the other occupied Arab territories; respect for the right of all States in the region to live in peace within secure and internationally recognized boundaries; and the recognition and exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, primarily the right to self-determination. The Committee's recommendations could not be implemented, and the Assembly each year renewed the Committee's mandate and requested it to intensify efforts in pursuit of its objectives.

3. The Committee welcomed the historic breakthrough in the peace process in 1993 and the subsequent important steps towards the achievement of a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine, based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). At the same time, the Committee continued to work towards the full realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including the right to self-determination and to its own independent State. The Committee also continued to mobilize international assistance for and solidarity with the Palestinian people.

4. The year under review was characterized by the continuation of the Al-Aqsa intifada in opposition to the Israeli occupation. Since the start of the intifada, thousands of Palestinians, including women and children, had been killed and wounded by the Israeli army. The occupation continued to bring misery and suffering to the Palestinian people. The Committee reiterated its grave concern at the destructive effects of the Israeli military campaigns on the livelihood of the Palestinian people. Also, the Israeli actions dealt a severe blow to the capacity of the Palestinian Authority and its institutions to function, and have devastated the Palestinian economy. Reoccupation by the Israeli forces of areas under full Palestinian control, recurrent incursions of the army into Palestinian population centres, including refugee camps, the demolition of houses, tight internal and external closures, curfews and other restrictions, including those imposed on international agencies and donor missions, have caused tremendous suffering to the Palestinian people, resulting in a humanitarian crisis. The full scale of the physical destruction of the Palestinian infrastructure perpetrated in the course of this military onslaught is yet to be assessed by the international community. The Committee was much perturbed by the tragedy that unfolded during the two-week-long operation in Jenin, by the massive Israeli attack on the Palestinian Authority headquarters in Ramallah and the virtual house arrest of Chairman Arafat, and by the siege of the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem. As the crisis escalated, the Security Council

acted by adopting a series of resolutions, namely resolutions 1402 (2002), 1403 (2002), 1405 (2002) and 1435 (2002), seeking a cessation of violence and efforts at resuming the peace process. In spite of the worldwide criticism of its actions, Israel has shown disrespect for its obligations under the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949 (the Fourth Geneva Convention),³ international humanitarian law and United Nations resolutions. The Committee reaffirmed the applicability of the Convention to the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and called upon the occupying Power to fully and effectively respect its provisions.

5. Continuing violence over the year left virtually no room for the resumption of a meaningful political dialogue between the parties. At the same time, a number of significant political developments took place. The Committee strongly supported the objective, outlined by the President of the United States of America and subsequently affirmed in Security Council resolution 1397 (2002), of two States, Israel and Palestine, living side by side within secure and recognized borders. The Committee viewed the Beirut Summit peace initiative as an important contribution by Arab States to the overall peace efforts. The Committee welcomed the sustained peacemaking efforts by the diplomatic “Quartet”, composed of the United States, the Russian Federation, the European Union and the United Nations, aimed at putting an end to violence and bringing the two sides back to the negotiating table. The Committee also noted the greater involvement in the issue on the part of the Security Council. During the year, a broad consensus emerged on the need to address the question of security in parallel with steps in the political, economic and humanitarian areas.

6. The Committee remained hopeful that the international community would intervene as a matter of great urgency in order to help the parties restore normality, return to the political process and move forward towards a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine, on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 1397 (2002) and the fundamental principle of “land for peace”. As the organ of the General Assembly mandated to deal with the question of Palestine, the Committee continued to support all initiatives aimed at resolving the question of Palestine in all its aspects until the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people are fully realized.

Chapter II

Mandate of the Committee

7. The mandate of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People was again renewed by the General Assembly in resolution 56/33 of 3 December 2001, in which the Assembly, inter alia: (a) endorsed the conclusions and recommendations of the Committee⁴ and requested it to continue to keep under review the situation relating to the question of Palestine and to report and make suggestions to the Assembly or the Security Council, as appropriate; (b) authorized the Committee to continue to exert all efforts to promote the exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, and to report thereon to the Assembly at its fifty-seventh session and thereafter; and (c) requested the Committee to continue to extend its cooperation and support to Palestinian and other civil society organizations in order to mobilize international solidarity and support for the achievement by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights and for a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine.

8. In its resolution 56/34 of 3 December 2001, on the Division for Palestinian Rights of the United Nations Secretariat, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to continue to provide the Division with the necessary resources and to ensure that it continues to carry out its programme of work as detailed in the relevant earlier resolutions, including, in particular, the organization of meetings in various regions with the participation of all sectors of the international community, the further development and expansion of the documents collection of the United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine, the preparation and widest possible dissemination of publications and information materials on various aspects of the question of Palestine, and the provision of the annual training programme for staff of the Palestinian Authority. The Assembly also requested Member States to continue to give the widest possible publicity to the observance, on 29 November, of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, and requested the Committee and the Division to continue to organize, as part of the observance, an annual exhibit on Palestinian rights in cooperation with the Permanent Observer Mission of Palestine to the United Nations.

9. In its resolution 56/35 of 3 December 2001, on the special information programme on the question of Palestine, the General Assembly requested the Department of Public Information of the United Nations Secretariat, in full cooperation and coordination with the Committee, to continue, with the necessary flexibility as may be required by developments affecting the question of Palestine, its special information programme for the biennium 2002-2003, including the preparation and dissemination of publications; expansion, continuation of production and preservation of audio-visual material on the question of Palestine; organization of international, regional and national seminars or encounters for journalists; and assistance to the Palestinian people in the field of media development.

10. In carrying out its programme of work, the Committee also took into account General Assembly resolution 56/36 of 3 December 2001, in which the Assembly, inter alia, reaffirmed the necessity of achieving a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine in all its aspects; expressed its full support for the ongoing peace process; stressed the necessity for commitment to the principle of land for peace and the implementation of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973),

which form the basis of the Middle East peace process; and stressed the need for the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, primarily the right to self-determination; the need for the withdrawal of Israel from the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967; and the need for resolving the problem of the Palestine refugees.

Chapter III

Organization of work

A. Membership and officers

11. The Committee is composed of the following Member States: Afghanistan, Belarus, Cuba, Cyprus, Guinea, Guyana, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mali, Malta, Namibia, Nigeria, Pakistan, Romania, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Tunisia, Turkey and Ukraine.

12. At its 262nd meeting, on 12 February 2002, the Committee re-elected Mr. Papa Louis Fall (Senegal) as Chairman, and re-elected Mr. Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla (Cuba) and Mr. Ravan A. G. Farhâdi (Afghanistan) as Vice-Chairmen, and Mr. Walter Balzan (Malta) as its Rapporteur.

13. At the same meeting, the Committee adopted its programme of work for the year 2002.⁵

B. Participation in the work of the Committee

14. As in previous years, the Committee reconfirmed that all States Members of and permanent observers to the United Nations wishing to participate in the work of the Committee as observers were welcome to do so. In accordance with established practice, Palestine participated in the work of the Committee as an observer, attended all its meetings and made observations and proposals for consideration by the Committee and its Bureau.

15. In 2002, the Committee again welcomed as observers all the States and organizations that had participated in its work in the preceding year.⁶

Chapter IV

Review of the situation relating to the question of Palestine

16. In pursuance of its mandate, the Committee continued to keep under review the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem, as well as the relevant political developments. The year was marked by an unprecedented intensification of the Israeli military activity, reoccupation by the army of areas under full Palestinian control, disintegration of the Palestinian economy, and as a result, a burgeoning humanitarian crisis. The number of Palestinians killed and injured since the start of the intifada in late September 2000 has steadily increased. Over 1,800 Palestinians have lost their lives and more than 37,000 have been injured, of whom some 2,500 have been left with permanent disabilities. The number of deaths of children under 18 has exceeded 300.

17. During the year, the Committee has observed with growing concern the steady escalation and expansion of the geographic scope of Israeli military operations in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. In this period, the focus of Israeli actions moved to areas under full Palestinian control. The Committee was much troubled by the extensive use of armour, attack aircraft, air-to-surface and other types of high-yield ordnance, and the use of the particularly deadly “flechette” munitions in areas of dense civilian presence, which resulted in a heavy death toll among innocent civilians and caused irreparable damage to the Palestinian infrastructure. The army and special units continued to carry out extrajudicial assassinations of Palestinian activists. The international community was profoundly disturbed by reports of the Israeli army practising the so-called “neighbour procedure”, whereby Palestinian civilians were used as human shields in army search operations during incursions. In reaction to these illegal actions, the Committee joined the international community in calling upon Israel to stop such practices and respect the principles of the Fourth Geneva Convention and the provisions of relevant Security Council and General Assembly resolutions.

18. As the intensity of the Israeli military activity in the Occupied Palestinian Territory continued to increase and the humanitarian situation rapidly deteriorated, the High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention convened a Conference on 5 December 2001, focusing on the applicability of the Convention to the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. At the conclusion of the Conference the High Contracting Parties approved a Declaration, in which, inter alia, they deplored the great number of civilian victims due to the indiscriminate or disproportionate use of force and the lack of respect for international humanitarian law; reaffirmed the applicability of the Fourth Geneva Convention to the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem; recalled the obligations of all concerned, as well as the specific obligations of the occupying Power; expressed their support for the endeavours of humanitarian organizations and United Nations bodies and took note of their reports and recommendations; and encouraged the resumption of negotiations with a view to finding a just and lasting peace. The Committee, for its part, stressed the importance for the High Contracting Parties to respect their obligations under the Convention.

19. Last year, the Committee in its report to the General Assembly indicated its concern over what it described as “an emerging pattern of Israeli military incursions into areas under full Palestinian control”.⁷ Since October 2001, these incursions have become systematic. Until March 2002, Israel had been concentrating its attacks

on the Palestinian Authority infrastructure. Scores of Palestinian Authority facilities, such as security installations, administrative buildings, the Gaza International Airport and the seaport had been seriously damaged, with many of them completely destroyed. However, in late March 2002, Israel further scaled up its military actions by launching “Operation Defensive Shield”. Following a series of incursions, the Israeli army reoccupied almost all the major Palestinian cities, refugee camps and many Palestinian villages in the West Bank. That operation marked the beginning of a massive targeting of the Palestinian civilian infrastructure. Nablus, Jenin and Ramallah were damaged the most. By some accounts, a total of 497 Palestinians were killed in the course of the reoccupation of Area “A” from 1 March to 7 May 2002 and in the immediate aftermath, and 1,447 persons wounded. In response to the deterioration of the situation on the ground, the Security Council adopted resolutions 1402 (2002) and 1403 (2002), calling for a meaningful ceasefire and withdrawal of Israeli troops from Palestinian cities, including Ramallah. In Ramallah, the target of the military offensive was the Palestinian Authority infrastructure, including the muqataa, headquarters of Chairman Arafat. The international community was outraged by a month-long siege of the compound, its further destruction in September 2002 and the threat these actions posed to Chairman Arafat’s personal safety and his ability to exercise political leadership. The Security Council expressed serious concern for the safety of Chairman Arafat, and called for the lifting of the siege and for a non-violent resolution of the situation around his headquarters in Ramallah.⁸ The 39-day military siege of the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem — one of the holiest Christian sites — also raised wide-ranging international criticism of the occupation forces. In June 2002, the Israeli army launched “Operation Determined Path”, in the course of which Israel reoccupied seven West Bank cities and seized security control through sweeping arrests of suspected militants and their relatives, house demolitions, a tight regime of internal and external closures and stringent on-and-off curfews, stifling the movement of people and goods and the work of the international humanitarian agencies.

20. Israel’s massive operation in the Jenin refugee camp has brought vast devastation and untold suffering to some 14,000 refugees. The camp sustained a very high death and injury toll, exacerbated by extensive property damage. Events in the Jenin camp resulted in international condemnation of the Israeli actions and led, on 19 April 2002, to the adoption by the Security Council of resolution 1405 (2002), in which the Council, inter alia, welcomed the initiative of the Secretary-General to develop accurate information regarding events in the Jenin refugee camp through a fact-finding team. On 22 April 2002, the Secretary-General established a fact-finding team headed by Mr. Marti Ahtisaari of Finland. However, Israel failed to cooperate with the team. As a consequence, the team was not able to prepare a balanced and thorough report without the full cooperation of the Government of Israel. As such cooperation had not been forthcoming, the Secretary-General decided to disband the fact-finding team. The seventh resumption of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, which ensued, took note of the report of the Secretary-General and, in resolution ES-10/10 of 7 May 2002, requested him to present a report on the events. The report was subsequently issued on 30 July 2002 without a visit to Jenin (A/ES-10/186). The Assembly, at the eighth resumption of the emergency special session, considered the report of the Secretary-General on the events in Jenin and in other Palestinian cities. The Committee was

appalled by the lack of cooperation on the part of Israel and regretted the fact that the events in Jenin could not be thoroughly investigated.

21. Months of Israeli military operations, a high death and injury toll among the civilian population, protracted closures, curfews and other forms of restriction of movement, heavy infrastructural and institutional damage inflicted on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem, have ravaged the Palestinian economy and led to a humanitarian emergency. Physical damage resulting from the Israeli incursions of March-April 2002 alone was estimated at US\$ 361 million. In Nablus, many of the historic old town buildings, including a mosque, were destroyed. In Ramallah, many of the Palestinian Authority ministries were damaged beyond repair, with their offices left ransacked. In some cases, irreplaceable civilian records and documents were destroyed or lost. Instances of looting of Palestinian property by Israeli forces were reported. Road, electricity and water networks sustained significant damage. The Palestinian private sector has suffered substantial losses as well. Over the year, the Palestinian economic activity in all sectors sharply declined. Internal and external closures and rolling curfews had a most debilitating impact on the Palestinian economy. For most of the summer of 2002, between 500,000 and 900,000 Palestinians were under curfew. These harsh forms of collective punishment have led, in particular, to a rapid loss of income and an upsurge in the levels of unemployment and poverty. Daily Palestinian income losses were estimated at some \$7.6 million. Since the start of the current intifada, overall income losses have been estimated at \$3.3 billion. The unemployment rate rose from 11 per cent in the third quarter of 2000 to 78 per cent in the second quarter of 2002. In the absence of alternative sources of income, the number of Palestinians living below the poverty line rose dramatically and reached 70 per cent in the Gaza Strip and 55 per cent in the West Bank. The productive sectors of the Palestinian economy, such as agriculture, industry, commerce and tourism, were practically obliterated. In addition, Israel should return in full the VAT and customs revenues it owes to the Palestinian Authority. To be able to maintain its operations, the Palestinian Authority is forced to rely on external aid.

22. The military offensive was accompanied by a methodical destruction of Palestinian housing and property, which left a great number of families homeless and caused considerable internal displacement of the population. Serious concern was expressed by international agencies for the health situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory caused by the military actions. More than half of the Palestinians were forced to decrease food consumption because of a lack of income and military curfews. Malnutrition among Palestinian children under 5 reached emergency levels and ranked among the highest in the world. Some 22.5 per cent of Palestinian children suffered from acute or chronic malnutrition. Because of the magnitude of the problem, the World Food Programme, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and others have organized emergency food aid to the malnourished Palestinian families, including Palestine refugees. In the course of the military actions, the Israeli forces often hindered the work of humanitarian teams and medical crews. Such deliberate attacks on medical personnel, ambulances and infrastructure constituted a grave breach by the occupying Power of international humanitarian law. In the light of the dire humanitarian situation, the Committee welcomed the appointment by the Secretary-General and dispatch to the region of his Personal Humanitarian Envoy, Ms. Catherine Bertini, with the mandate to assess the nature and the scale of the

humanitarian crisis facing the civilian population in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

23. In early September 2002, Israel's High Court of Justice approved the forcible transfer from Nablus to the Gaza Strip for a period of two years of Kifah and Intisar Ajuri — family members of a Palestinian accused of organizing attacks against Israel and assassinated by the Israeli forces. The Committee was greatly disquieted by this arbitrary action and believes that it contravened international humanitarian law and resolutions of the United Nations. The Fourth Geneva Convention prohibits this form of collective punishment by the occupying Power.

24. Throughout the year, the Committee observed with growing concern attempts by the Government of Israel to establish a physical barrier between Israel and the occupied West Bank, including Jerusalem. The plan envisages the construction of an approximately 225-mile-long "security fence", running along the Green Line, equipped with multiple obstacles, surveillance outposts and electronic sensors. The army and the border police intend to patrol the barrier on both sides. Construction has already begun on a first 71-mile stretch, which would run mostly east of the Green Line from the northern tip of the West Bank to settlement blocks south of Qalqilya. Moreover, in many places, the barrier would cut well into the Palestinian territory in order to protect Jewish settlements. The separation line approved by the Israeli security cabinet would put at least six settlements inside the Occupied Palestinian Territory, off limits to Palestinians. The Israeli Government was also considering the creation of what it called the "Seam Line plan" or the "Jerusalem envelope"— a wall separating the city from the West Bank. Moreover, it was reported that the barrier would be erected south of Rachel's Tomb. The position of the Committee has always been that matters pertaining to the delineation of boundaries between the two sides belonged in the permanent status negotiations. Therefore, the Committee opposed all Israeli schemes aimed at creating artificial boundaries. Such actions are illegal and predetermine the outcome of any future negotiations on permanent status issues.

25. Violence and extremely high levels of tension on the ground have considerably complicated attempts by various parties to restore political contacts between the two sides and gradually resuscitate the peace process. Despite the largely disappointing lack of progress in peacemaking efforts, some international moves aimed at helping the parties resume a political process have been undertaken in this period. The Committee welcomed a landmark statement made before the General Assembly on 10 November 2001 by the President of the United States, in which he presented a vision of two States, Israel and Palestine, living peacefully together within secure and recognized borders. This statement was received throughout the world with hope that concrete steps would follow. As the crisis on the ground continued to worsen, the issue was brought before the Security Council, which on 12 March 2002 adopted resolution 1397 (2002), affirming the objective outlined in the statement of the United States President. The Committee strongly supported this action by the Council and considered the resolution to be as fundamental and significant as were resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). An important next step was taken in late March 2002 by the League of Arab States, which, at its summit in Beirut, adopted a plan for resolving the Arab-Israeli conflict based on the principle of land for peace (A/56/1026-S/2002/932). The initiative endorsed an earlier proposal by Crown Prince Abdullah of Saudi Arabia, expressing the readiness of the Arab States to establish normal relations with Israel in exchange for its withdrawal from all

territories occupied since 1967. The Committee was much encouraged by the strong commitment of the Quartet to help the parties move away from violence and confrontation and restart meaningful negotiations. In this connection, the Committee considered the three-phase plan outlined in the Quartet communiqué of 17 September 2002 an important step in the right direction. Ideas for resolving the conflict through convening an international peace conference, drawing up a road map towards a final settlement, have also been broached over the year, including by the Quartet. The Committee supported the United Nations Secretary-General's close involvement in all stages of the peace efforts. The Palestinian leadership's readiness to develop and implement a comprehensive plan of political and economic reforms and hold elections early in 2003 was welcomed and supported by the international community. At the same time, the Committee firmly believed that such reforms should only be carried out by the Palestinian people themselves without external interference. In the past year, the Committee took note of the increased engagement of the Security Council on matters relevant to the question of Palestine, especially in response to the various developments on the ground. Having welcomed the stepped-up action by the Council, the Committee, however, was disappointed by the fact that the Council had been stymied in its ability to follow up on its own resolutions, most notably concerning events in the Jenin refugee camp.

26. Illegal settlement and road construction in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem, continued. Between February 2001 and March 2002, 34 new settlements and outposts were established in the West Bank, excluding East Jerusalem. Although the Israeli Defence Ministry announced in late July 2002 that 19 outposts had been evacuated, 8 new ones were reported established during August 2002. Most of the new settlement sites are located some 700 yards or more from existing settlements, with some as much as a mile away. By mid-May 2002, 957 tenders had been issued for new construction in the settlements of "Efrat", "Beitar Ilit", "Ma'ale Adumim", "Geva Binyamin" and "Har Adar". Settlement and bypass road construction was in progress or in various planning stages in several East Jerusalem neighbourhoods, such as Ras al-Amud, Jabal al-Mukabbar, Sheikh Jarrah, Jabal Abu Ghneim and Musrarra. Construction of bypass roads, linking West Bank settlements with each other and with the Israel road network, was an important part of the settlement activity. As of May 2002, nine such roads were under construction, at a total cost of \$50 million. Five more roads were scheduled for construction. The settlement activity continued to receive support from the Knesset. In November 2001, the Knesset approved \$13 million for the construction of roads in the occupied West Bank. In March, the Knesset Finance Committee approved \$29 million for settlement projects, including \$25 million to subsidize home purchases and "manufacturing activities", \$2.4 million to repair water networks at the "Itamar", "Kiryat Arba" and "Yitzhar" settlements and \$1 million to renovate some of the 1,000 Government-owned caravans located in settlements. A total of 41.9 per cent of the West Bank area is controlled by settlements. The Committee remains of the view that the Israeli settlement activity dangerously changes the status quo, predetermines the outcome of the permanent status negotiations and is a major obstacle to peace.

27. Throughout the year, attacks by Israeli settlers against Palestinian civilians persisted. Groups of armed settlers, often protected by Israeli soldiers, used their firearms and continued to assault Palestinians, including children. The settler tactics includes the destruction, vandalizing or forceful takeovers of Palestinian houses,

setting up roadblocks to disrupt Palestinian traffic, shooting at roof-top water heaters, setting cars on fire, smashing windows, destroying crops and uprooting trees, and harassing merchants. The Committee felt strongly that the presence of the settlers constituted a serious violation of international humanitarian law, in particular article 49 of the Fourth Geneva Convention.

28. The Committee was greatly concerned over the situation with regard to Palestinian prisoners. Since the outbreak of the Al-Aqsa intifada, some 15,000 Palestinians have been arrested by the Israeli authorities. As of late July 2002, approximately 5,000 Palestinian and Arab prisoners were held in 21 Israeli detention facilities. During its military operations, the Israeli forces have routinely rounded up, arbitrarily arrested and detained, without charge for varying periods of time, large numbers of Palestinians between the ages of 15 and 45. During interrogation, many of the detainees were deprived of adequate shelter, food and water before being either released or transferred to detention facilities. Palestinian prisoners are kept in severely overcrowded jails, often exposed to extremes of temperature with inadequate nutrition and poor hygiene and sanitation conditions, which fail to meet minimum international standards of conditions of detention, including those specified in article 85 of the Fourth Geneva Convention. Access to medical care is also unsatisfactory. Juvenile detainees are often not informed of their legal rights. A number of restrictions, making attorney or family visits virtually impossible, have been put in place. Palestinian minors are at times confined with Israeli criminals, which may pose a physical danger and cause a serious psychological trauma. The Committee was particularly distressed by reports of the continued use of torture and other forms of ill-treatment of Palestinian detainees.

29. The unfair division of water resources between the Israelis and Palestinians has created a severe water shortage in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. This chronic problem has been compounded by the Israeli army incursions and closures. The Palestinian water supply infrastructure has been disrupted or destroyed. Pipelines, including the ones used for agricultural needs, private roof-top water tanks, water wells, pumps, meters and other equipment have been badly damaged by the Israeli forces. Lack of funds in Palestinian municipalities has resulted in their inability to purchase fuel for water pumps. In addition, settlers have disrupted water supplies by closing water valves. The plight of some 200,000 Palestinians who do not have access to a water network and rely mostly on rainfall remains especially difficult. The water they use is of extremely poor quality and has a detrimental effect on their health, in particular on the most vulnerable population group — children, women and the elderly.

30. The Israeli military offensives in the Occupied Palestinian Territory have had a profoundly negative impact on UNRWA and its ability to provide assistance to Palestine refugees. The Committee noted with gratitude and appreciation that, despite the extremely difficult situation on the ground, the Agency managed to continue its emergency humanitarian assistance to more than 3.9 million refugees. Because of closures and restrictions on movement, UNRWA's food deliveries to the poorest of the refugees were greatly hampered. International donations for humanitarian aid had to be spent on storing that aid in Israeli ports rather than distributing it to the needy. In addition, the military operations resulted in a wholesale destruction of shelters, water supplies, electricity lines and the sewage system. The Agency made it clear that the refugees needed the support of the international community. In January 2002, UNRWA launched an appeal to cover its

needs for the whole year. However, in the light of the rapid deterioration of the situation, in March and April, it was forced to ask the international community for additional financial assistance in the form of a supplementary appeal. In its various activities in the course of the year, the Committee has consistently supported the vitally important work carried out by UNRWA, calling upon the international community to continue to provide financial assistance to the Agency.

31. The Committee was also grateful to the Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP/PAPP), which carried on its humanitarian and developmental aid in the difficult circumstances of the present crisis. During the year, UNDP/PAPP dispatched convoys with various supplies to Palestinian cities, villages and refugee camps. It also assisted sister United Nations agencies, such as UNRWA, with transportation and staff, greatly facilitating their work. The United Nations Volunteers programme in the Occupied Palestinian Territory also made an important contribution by responding to the crisis in many Palestinian communities devastated by the military activity. The Committee is of the view that the work carried out by UNDP/PAPP remains central to providing emergency humanitarian relief and improving the living conditions of the Palestinian people.

Chapter V

Action taken by the Committee

A. Action taken in accordance with General Assembly resolution 56/33

32. In pursuance of its mandate and in response to the difficulties experienced by the peace process and in the search for a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine, the Committee continued to mobilize the international community in support of the Palestinian people, in cooperation with United Nations bodies, Governments, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and others, as indicated below.

1. Action in the General Assembly and the Security Council

(a) Resumed tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly

33. Since October 2001, the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly has convened three times (sixth, seventh and eighth resumptions) to discuss the deteriorating situation on the ground under the item entitled "Illegal Israeli actions in occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory".

34. On 20 December 2001, the emergency special session was resumed at the request of the Permanent Representative of Egypt, in his capacity as Chairman of the Group of Arab States for the month of December 2001 (A/ES-10/130), and the Permanent Representative of South Africa, in his capacity as Chair of the Non-Aligned Movement (A/ES-10/131). The Chairman of the Committee took part in the debate and made a statement (see A/ES-10/PV.15). At the end of the debate, on 20 December 2001, the General Assembly adopted resolutions ES-10/8 and ES-10/9.

35. On 7 May 2002, the session was resumed at the request of the Chargé d'affaires of the Permanent Mission of Sudan, in his capacity as Chairman of Group of Arab States for the month of May 2002 (A/ES-10/170), and the Permanent Representative of South Africa, in his capacity as Chairman of the Coordinating Bureau of the Non-Aligned Movement (A/ES-10/171). The Chairman of the Committee took part in the debate and made a statement (see A/ES-10/PV.16). At the conclusion of the debate, on 7 May 2002, the General Assembly adopted resolution ES-10/10.

36. On 5 August 2002, the session was resumed at the request of the Permanent Representative of Oman, in his capacity as Chairman of the Group of Arab States for the month of August 2002 (A/ES-10/187), and the Permanent Representative of South Africa, in his capacity as Chairman of the Coordinating Bureau of the Non-Aligned Movement (A/ES-10/188). The General Assembly discussed the report of the Secretary-General prepared pursuant to General Assembly resolution ES-10/10 on the events in Jenin and in other Palestinian cities in the period from the beginning of March to 7 May 2002. The Chairman of the Committee took part in the debate and made a statement (see A/ES-10/PV.16). At the conclusion of the debate, on the same day, the General Assembly adopted resolution ES-10/11.

(b) Security Council meetings

37. During the year, against the backdrop of the rapidly deteriorating situation on the ground, the Security Council has been involved in finding ways to defuse the crisis. The Council held numerous informal consultations and public meetings under agenda item entitled “The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question”. The action by the Security Council in that regard is briefly described below.

38. On 25 October 2001, following informal consultations of the Security Council, the President of the Council issued a press statement on the situation in the Middle East (SC/7188).

39. On 14 December 2001, the Security Council met at the request of the Permanent Representative of Egypt, in his capacity as Chairman of the Arab Group for the month of December 2001 (S/2001/1191). The Chairman of the Committee took part in the debate and made a statement. At its 4438th meeting, the Council voted on a draft resolution submitted by Egypt and Tunisia (S/2001/1199). The draft received 12 votes in favour, and 1 against, with 2 abstentions. The draft resolution was not adopted owing to the negative vote of a permanent member of the Council (S/PV.4438).

40. At the request of the Permanent Representative of Yemen, in his capacity as Chairman of the Arab Group for the month of February 2002 (S/2002/184), and the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Observer Mission of Palestine to the United Nations (S/2002/182), the Security Council met on 21, 26 and 27 February 2002 (S/PV.4474 and S/PV.4478 and Resumption 1). The Chairman of the Committee took part in the debate and made a statement (see S/PV.4478).

41. On 12 March 2002, the Security Council met again and, at its 4489th meeting, adopted resolution 1397 (2002). In the preamble to the resolution, the Council, inter alia, affirmed a vision of a region where two States, Israel and Palestine, would live side by side within secure and recognized borders. The Council demanded the immediate cessation of all acts of violence, including all acts of terror, provocation, incitement and destruction; called upon the Israeli and Palestinian sides and their leaders to cooperate in the implementation of the Tenet work plan and Mitchell Report recommendations with the aim of resuming negotiations on a political settlement; expressed support for the efforts of the Secretary-General and others to assist the parties to halt the violence and to resume the peace process; and decided to remain seized of the matter (S/PV.4488 and S/PV.4489).

42. At the request of the Permanent Representative of Jordan, in his capacity as Chairman of the Group of Arab States for the month of March 2002 (S/2002/329), and the Permanent Representative of Qatar (S/2002/331), the Security Council resumed its consideration of the agenda item. At its 4503rd meeting, on 30 March 2002, the Council adopted resolution 1402 (2002), in which it called upon both parties to move immediately to a meaningful ceasefire, called for the withdrawal of Israeli troops from Palestinian cities, including Ramallah and called upon the parties to cooperate fully with Special Envoy Zinni, and others, to implement the Tenet security work plan as a first step towards implementation of the Mitchell Committee recommendations, with the aim of resuming negotiations on a political settlement; reiterated its demand in resolution 1397 (2002) of 12 March 2002 for an immediate cessation of all acts of violence, including all acts of terror, provocation, incitement

and destruction; expressed support for the efforts of the Secretary-General and the special envoys to the Middle East to assist the parties to halt the violence and to resume the peace process; and decided to remain seized of the matter (see S/PV.4503).

43. At the request of the Permanent Representative of Tunisia, in his capacity as Chairman of the Group of Arab States for the month of April 2002 (S/2002/336), and the Permanent Representative of South Africa, in his capacity as Chairman of the Coordinating Bureau of the Non-Aligned Movement (S/2002/342), the Security Council met on 3 and 4 April 2002. At its 4506th meeting, on 4 April 2002, the Council adopted resolution 1403 (2002), in which, inter alia, it demanded the implementation of its resolution 1402 (2002) without delay (see S/PV.4506 and Resumptions 1 and 2).

44. In the light of the further deterioration of the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and following its consultations on 7 April 2002, the President of the Security Council issued a press statement outlining the position of the Council in that regard.⁹

45. At the request of the Permanent Representative of Tunisia, in his capacity as Chairman of the Group of Arab States for the month of April 2002 (S/2002/359), the Security Council met on 8, 9 and 10 April (S/PV.4509, S/PV.4510 and Resumption 1 and S/PV.4511). At the 4511th meeting, on 10 April, in connection with the Council's consideration of the aforementioned item, the President of the Security Council made a statement on behalf of the Council. The presidential statement was subsequently issued as a document of the Council (S/PRST/2002/9), the annex to which contained the text of a joint Statement made by the Quartet at Madrid on the same day.

46. On 18 and 19 April 2002, at the request of the Permanent Representative of Tunisia, in his capacity as Chairman of the Group of Arab States for the month of April 2002 (S/2002/431), the Security Council resumed its consideration of the agenda item. At its 4516th meeting, on 19 April, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 1405 (2002), in which it emphasized the urgency of access of medical and humanitarian organizations to the Palestinian civilian population; welcomed the initiative of the Secretary-General to develop accurate information regarding recent events in the Jenin refugee camp through a fact-finding team and requested him to keep the Security Council informed; and decided to remain seized of the matter (see S/PV.4515, S/PV.4516 and Resumption 1).

47. On 25 and 28 April 2002, the President of the Security Council issued press statements in connection with developments on the ground.¹⁰

48. The Security Council met again on 3 May 2002 at the request of the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Sudan, in his capacity as Chairman of the Group of Arab States for the month of May 2002 (S/2002/510). The Vice-Chairman of the Committee (Afghanistan) took part in the debate and made a statement (S/PV.4525 and Resumption 1).

49. At the request of the Permanent Representative of Bahrain to the United Nations, in his capacity as Chairman of the Group of Arab States for the month of June 2002 (S/2002/655), the Security Council, on 13 June 2002, resumed its consideration of the agenda item. The Chairman of the Committee took part in the debate and made a statement (S/PV.4552 and Resumption 1).

50. Following the 4556th (closed) meeting of the Security Council on 20 June 2002, a statement on the situation in the region made at the meeting by the Secretary-General was made public (the full electronic version of text can be found at the United Nations News Centre web site, at www.un.org/News).

51. At the 4578th meeting of the Security Council, held on 18 July 2002, the President of the Council made a statement on behalf of the Council (S/PRST/2002/20).

52. On 24 July 2002, at the request of the Permanent Representative of Saudi Arabia to the United Nations, in his capacity as Chairman of the Group of Arab States for the month of July 2002 (S/2002/828), the Security Council met to consider agenda item entitled "The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question". The Vice-Chairman of the Committee (Cuba) took part in the debate and made a statement (see S/PV.4588).

53. In view of the dramatic worsening of the situation around the headquarters of the President of the Palestinian Authority in Ramallah, its reoccupation and the further demolition of the compound by the Israeli army, the Security Council met on 23 and 24 September 2002, in response to the request of the Permanent Observer of Palestine, in his capacity as Chairman of the Group of Arab States for the month of September 2002 (S/2002/1055), and the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic (S/2002/1056), and resumed its consideration of the agenda item. The Chairman of the Committee took part in the debate and made a statement (see S/PV.4614, Resumption 1). At its 4614th meeting, on 24 September 2002, the Council adopted resolution 1435 (2002), in which it reiterated its demand for the complete cessation of all acts of violence, including all acts of terror, provocation, incitement and destruction; demanded that Israel immediately cease measures in and around Ramallah, including the destruction of Palestinian civilian and security infrastructure; demanded also the expeditious withdrawal of the Israeli occupying forces from Palestinian cities towards the return to the positions held prior to September 2000; called on the Palestinian Authority to meet its expressed commitment to ensure that those responsible for terrorist acts were brought to justice by it; expressed its full support for the efforts of the Quartet and called upon the Government of Israel, the Palestinian Authority and all States in the region to cooperate with those efforts and recognized in that context the continuing importance of the initiative endorsed at the Arab League Beirut Summit; and decided to remain seized of the matter.

54. On 27 September 2002, the President of the Security Council issued a press statement calling for the full implementation of resolution 1435 (2002) (SC/7516).

2. Communications to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

55. In the course of the year, the Chairman of the Committee continued to bring to the attention of the Secretary-General the Committee's concerns over the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem (A/ES-10/120-S/2001/1000, A/ES-10/127-S/2001/1147, A/ES-10/153-S/2002/234 and A/ES-10/191-S/2002/933).

56. On 23 April 2002, the Chairman of the Committee addressed a letter to the President of the Security Council concerning the list of items of which the Council was seized (S/2002/477).

3. Statements by the Committee

57. On 5 April and 15 May 2002, in reaction to events on the ground, the Bureau of the Committee made statements that were issued as press releases (GA/PAL/879 and GA/PAL/889, respectively).

4. Participation by the Chairman of the Committee at international conferences and meetings

58. During the year, the Chairman of the Committee participated in meetings of intergovernmental bodies relevant to the question of Palestine and contributed to their deliberations in support of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, as follows:

(a) Seventy-fifth session of the Council of Ministers of the Organization of African Unity/African Union, Addis Ababa, 9-15 March 2002;

(b) Ministerial Meeting of the Coordinating Bureau of the Non-Aligned Movement, Durban, South Africa, 27-29 April 2002;

(c) Seventy-sixth Session of the Council of Ministers of the Organization of African Unity/African Union and 38th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government, Durban, South Africa, 4-10 July 2002.

59. As in previous years, the Committee continued to follow the activities relevant to the question of Palestine of other intergovernmental organizations, as well as decisions and resolutions of United Nations bodies and agencies.

B. Action taken by the Committee and the Division for Palestinian Rights in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 56/33 and 56/34

60. In its programme of meetings in the various regions, the Committee continued to give priority to promoting the exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, supporting the peace process and stressing the need for the timely and scrupulous implementation by the parties of the bilateral agreements. The Committee also urged the international community to continue to provide political support as well as economic assistance to the Palestinian people.

61. On the basis of the provision contained in General Assembly resolution 56/33, the Committee adjusted its programme of work, as necessary, in order to meet the evolving situation in the most effective and constructive manner, while keeping in mind the continuing financial constraints facing the Organization. The Committee expressed its great appreciation to the Governments of Cyprus and Morocco for having provided venues and facilities for events sponsored by the Committee.

62. During the year, the Committee, through its Bureau, continued to maintain its cooperation on the question of Palestine with States members of the European Union (EU). In March 2002, the Bureau held a useful meeting of consultations with representatives of EU (under the Presidency of Spain) as part of the continued effort to build a constructive relationship with EU members on issues of common concern. In accordance with established practice, the Chairman of the Committee briefed the members of the EU delegation on the Committee's ongoing activities and explained

the position of the Committee with regard to the situation on the ground, the stalemate in the peace process and the state of the Palestinian economy. He expressed the hope that the two sides would continue consultations.

63. Throughout the year, the staff of the Division for Palestinian Rights met at United Nations Headquarters, as well as away from Headquarters with members of the general public and briefed them on the various aspects of the question of Palestine and the involvement of the United Nations in this issue.

1. United Nations International Meeting in Support of Middle East Peace

64. The United Nations International Meeting in Support of Middle East Peace was held at Nicosia on 16 and 17 April 2002. The participants discussed the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory since September 2000, international efforts at containing the crisis and resuming the peace dialogue, as well as the urgency of ending the Israeli occupation and establishing a Palestinian State. Three Palestinian speakers invited from the Occupied Palestinian Territory to address the Meeting were unable to travel to Nicosia due to the general closure imposed by Israel. The Committee delegation at the Meeting issued a statement, expressing its utmost concern and denouncing the Israeli policy of closures and other forms of collective punishment of the Palestinian people. The Meeting adopted the Nicosia Declaration, highlighting the main points of the discussion. In the course of the Meeting, the Committee delegation was received by Glafcos Clerides, President of the Republic of Cyprus, and Ioannis Kasoulides, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cyprus, both of whom stressed the importance of supporting peace in the Middle East at the current extremely difficult stage and welcomed the efforts of the Committee in that regard.

2. United Nations NGO Meeting in Solidarity with the Palestinian People

65. The United Nations NGO Meeting in Solidarity with the Palestinian People was held at Nicosia on 18 April 2002. The participants reviewed the role of civil society in time of crisis and action by international civil society in support of the Palestinian people. At the end of the Meeting, they adopted an NGO Statement and a Plan of Action. Participating NGOs also conveyed an urgent appeal to the United Nations International Meeting in Support of Middle East Peace that had been held prior to the NGO Meeting. Due to the Israeli closure of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, a number of Palestinian NGO representatives were unable to attend the Meeting.

3. United Nations African Meeting in Support of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

66. The United Nations African Meeting in Support of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People was held at Rabat from 24 to 26 June 2002. The theme of the African Meeting was "Achieving the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people — a key to peace in the Middle East". The participants discussed the impact of the Israeli military offensive in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem; the challenges to a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine; and international efforts at salvaging the peace in the Middle East and African support for the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. The Meeting included a workshop for African NGOs, which considered possible action by civil society in Africa in

solidarity with the Palestinian people. The Chairman of the Committee deplored the absence of an invited Palestinian NGO speaker due to curfews imposed by Israel in a number of Palestinian cities. For the same reason, numerous Palestinian NGO representatives had been prevented from travelling to Rabat. The main points of the deliberations were highlighted in the Final Communiqué. Participating NGOs adopted a Plan of Action. The Committee delegation was granted an audience with His Majesty King Mohammed VI of Morocco.

4. United Nations International Conference of Civil Society in Support of the Palestinian People

67. The United Nations International Conference of Civil Society in Support of the Palestinian People was held at United Nations Headquarters in New York on 23 and 24 September 2002. The theme of the Conference was "End the Occupation!". The participants discussed the various aspects of life under occupation, in particular the current situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, and civil society action to oppose the occupation. The Conference concluded with the participants adopting an NGO Declaration and a Plan of Action.

68. All the aforementioned events were attended by representatives of Governments, Palestine, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, entities of the United Nations system, as well as experts, media representatives, academics and students. The reports of the meetings were issued as publications of the Division for Palestinian Rights and were made available through UNISPAL and the Division's web site.

5. Cooperation with civil society

69. The Committee continued and strengthened its cooperation with NGOs, academic institutions, parliamentarians and media representatives. Representatives of civil society participated in all meetings organized under the auspices of the Committee, including the observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People on 29 November. The Committee commended civil society organizations for the many initiatives and activities organized worldwide in support of the Palestinian people. The Committee highly appreciated the work of those NGOs that provided emergency relief at a difficult time for the Palestinian people. It noted the courage and activism of those NGO volunteers who, through their physical presence in Palestinian cities and villages under military siege, had demonstrated solidarity with the Palestinian people. The Committee stressed that there was a greater need for sustained campaigns aimed at informing public opinion about the root causes of the conflict and the legitimate rights of the parties and promoting national and international action in support of the peace process, the effective implementation of the Israeli-Palestinian agreements, and of a just and lasting peace in the region. The Committee was of the view that, given the tense and highly volatile situation on the ground, special attention should be given to mobilizing wide support for measures to protect the Palestinian people.

70. The Committee maintained and developed its liaison with national, regional and international coordinating mechanisms accredited to it, in addition to the already established liaison with a large number of individual NGOs. The Committee also reviewed the entitlements and responsibilities of the accredited and observer NGOs and formulated new guidelines in that regard. The Chairman of the

Committee and members of Committee delegations in Nicosia and Rabat met with groups of NGOs and individual representatives in order to discuss specific activities in support of the Palestinian people. The United Nations International Conference of Civil Society in Support of the Palestinian People provided ample opportunity for discussions on the future of cooperation between the Committee and civil society.

71. The Committee continued to develop its liaison with national and regional parliaments and their organizations. Of particular significance in that regard was the United Nations African Meeting in Support of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, where members of the Palestinian Council, among them its Secretary-General, an Arab Israeli Knesset member, the Vice-President of the National Assembly of Senegal and the Secretary-General of the African Inter-Parliamentary Union discussed ways and means of furthering the role and contribution of national parliaments and inter-parliamentary organizations in shaping public opinion and formulating policy guidelines.

72. The Division for Palestinian Rights maintained and continued to develop its Internet web site entitled "NGO Network on the Question of Palestine" as a permanent tool of mutual information and cooperation between civil society and the Committee. The web site can be found at: www.un.org/depts/dpa/ngo. The Division also continued to issue its bimonthly newsletter entitled *NGO Action News* covering the activities of civil society on the various aspects of the question of Palestine.

6. Research, monitoring and publications

73. The Committee continued to attach great importance to the essential contribution of the Division for Palestinian Rights in support of its mandate and implementation of its annual programme of work. The Committee requested the Division to continue its established programme of work, including studies, information notes and other publications; the further development of the United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine (UNISPAL); the annual training programme for staff of the Palestinian Authority; and the annual observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

74. Accordingly, the Division continued to respond to requests for information and briefings on the question of Palestine, and to prepare for dissemination, including through UNISPAL, the following publications:

(a) Monthly bulletin covering action by the Committee, United Nations bodies and agencies, and intergovernmental organizations concerned with the question of Palestine;

(b) Monthly chronology of events relating to the question of Palestine, based on media reports and other sources;

(c) Reports of meetings organized under the auspices of the Committee;

(d) Special bulletin on the observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People;

(e) Annual compilation of relevant resolutions, decisions and statements of the General Assembly and the Security Council relating to the question of Palestine;

(f) Two updated information notes entitled "The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and The Division for Palestinian

Rights” and “The United Nations and non-governmental organizations on the question of Palestine”.

7. United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine

75. The Division for Palestinian Rights, in cooperation with relevant technical and library services of the United Nations Secretariat, continued to maintain and develop UNISPAL, as mandated by the General Assembly since 1991. This included the required ongoing upgrading of the system's technical components to ensure its uninterrupted presence on the Internet under the United Nations home page and expansion of the documents collection with relevant new and old documents. In particular, initial steps were taken to enhance the user-friendliness of the system. This exercise involved redesigning the UNISPAL user interface and simplifying the user's access to the UNISPAL collection and related external documents, including the non-English-language versions of some United Nations documents.

8. Training programme for staff of the Palestinian Authority

76. Two staff members from the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation of the Palestinian Authority participated in a training programme conducted by the Division, from September to December 2001, in conjunction with the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly. They familiarized themselves with various aspects of the work of the United Nations Secretariat and other organs. The programme included, among other things, attendance at various briefings and meetings of relevant committees and bodies of the United Nations, meetings with representatives of delegations to the General Assembly, staff of permanent missions to the United Nations, and of the Secretariat. The trainees also conducted research and prepared studies on specific topics.

9. International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People

77. The International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People was observed, on 29 November 2001, at United Nations Headquarters and at the United Nations Offices at Geneva and Vienna. However, due to the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and the enhanced security measures in New York and at Headquarters, the traditional Palestinian exhibit could not be organized. The Committee noted with appreciation that the International Day of Solidarity had also been observed in many other cities throughout the world. Details on the observance are contained in the special bulletin issued by the Division.

78. In adopting its programme of work, the Committee decided that a similar observance of the International Day of Solidarity should be organized in 2002.

Chapter VI

Action taken by the Department of Public Information in accordance with General Assembly resolution 56/35

79. The Department of Public Information, in pursuance of General Assembly resolution 56/35 of 3 December 2001, continued to implement its special information programme on the question of Palestine. Activities carried out from August to July 2002 included the organization of its annual training programme for Palestinian media practitioners at United Nations Headquarters, and the organization of an international media seminar on the question of peace in the Middle East in Copenhagen. Work on the digital conversion of films and videotapes on the question of Palestine also began during the year.

80. The Radio Section provided extensive coverage of various aspects of the question of Palestine and related issues in its daily live broadcasts in all six official languages of the United Nations. The Middle East Radio Unit continued to cover all the relevant issues in its daily live 15-minute broadcast in Arabic.

81. The United Nations Information Service in Geneva produced radio and television programmes covering the discussions on the question of Palestine at the fifty-eighth session of the Commission on Human Rights, which were sent to United Nations Radio in New York and to radio and television stations around the world. Significant quantities of audio material in Arabic, English and French were transmitted to *Palestine Radio*. When their facilities in the West Bank were rendered non-operational, the audio material was transmitted to the Palestine Broadcasting Corporation in Gaza. Audio materials were also offered to *Kol Israel Radio* in Jerusalem.

82. The Department revised and updated its booklet on the question of Palestine entitled "The Question of Palestine and the United Nations", incorporating information on recent political and other developments.

83. The various aspects of the question of Palestine continued to be covered by the Department's quarterly magazine *UN Chronicle*. In the course of the year, the magazine reported on relevant action taken by the General Assembly, the Security Council and entities of the United Nations system.

84. In October-December 2001, the Department held its annual training programme for Palestinian media practitioners at United Nations Headquarters. Nine Palestinian broadcasters and journalists took part.

85. The question of peace in the Middle East was the subject of the International Media Seminar on the Question of Peace in the Middle East organized by the Department on 17 and 18 July 2002 in Copenhagen. The event, co-hosted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark, brought together present and former policy makers from Israel, the Palestinian Authority and the European Union, as well as senior United Nations officials, international experts and representatives of the world media. With the overall theme "Ending confrontation: Building peace in the Middle East", the Seminar provided an opportunity for media representatives and international experts to discuss the lessons learned since the signing in 1993 of the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements by Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization. The participants discussed issues that continued to divide the Israelis and the Palestinians and the role of third parties,

especially the United Nations, in restoring confidence and building trust. A separate session was devoted to discussing the role of the media as a partner for peace.

86. The Department's Dag Hammarskjöld Library continued its cooperation with the Division for Palestinian Rights on digitizing relevant United Nations documents on the question of Palestine to expand the UNISPAL collection.

87. The Department, in cooperation with the Committee, has undertaken a project involving the conversion and remastering of United Nations films and videos on the question of Palestine covering the period 1947-2000.

88. As part of their regular activities, the United Nations information centres (UNICs) and services (UNIS) disseminated information on the situation in the Middle East in general, and on Palestine in particular. Press releases, op-ed pieces, statements, documents, audio-visual material, reports and studies were brought to the attention of target audiences, posted on web sites and made available to the visitors to the reference libraries maintained by these offices.

89. In connection with the fifty-eighth session of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, UNIS Geneva produced nine press releases in English and French on the question of Palestine. In addition, it produced one press release on the work and annual visit of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories and seven in English and five in French on different statements by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. It also organized briefings for delegations, NGOs and journalists with the Special Rapporteur.

90. In April-May 2002, UNIS Geneva provided full support to the spokesperson and other members of the Jenin Fact-Finding Team established by the Secretary-General in accordance with Security Council resolution 1405 (2002).

91. UNICs worldwide carried out numerous activities in connection with the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People (29 November 2001). The Director of UNIC Athens delivered a speech at the Chamber of Commerce of Piraeus. UNIC Cairo, together with the United Nations Association of Egypt, held a ceremony attended by representatives of the League of Arab States, ministries, the diplomatic corps, NGOs and educational institutions. UNIS Geneva, in collaboration with the Office of the Director-General, organized a special commemorative event involving members of civil society. UNIC Dhaka and the United Nations Association of Bangladesh held a seminar, at which the Acting Foreign Secretary was the guest of honour. UNIC Harare attracted 260 guests to its observance of the Day and its staff gave a radio interview. UNIC Jakarta and the Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs organized a solemn meeting and the Centre held a two-day photo exhibition entitled "United Nations and Palestine". UNIC Mexico City organized a ceremony for Foreign Ministry officials, the media and NGOs and exhibited Palestinian posters, handicrafts and historical information. UNIC Moscow co-organized a ceremony at the Press Centre of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, attended by the acting Deputy Foreign Minister. UNIC Tunis, together with the Tunisian Journalists' Association, held a panel discussion attended by ambassadors, government officials, the media and NGOs.

92. Several UNICs reissued in local languages special features and op-ed articles written by senior United Nations officials. The op-ed article by the Commissioner-General of UNRWA entitled "The World Must Help Palestinians" was translated and

placed in a significant number of newspapers around the world. UNICs also organized press briefings/encounters for senior United Nations officials dealing with the issue. UNIC Bonn organized a press luncheon and a radio and newspaper interview in connection with the visit to Berlin of the UNRWA Commissioner-General. UNIC Cairo organized a press conference and a TV interview for the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process. UNICs also undertook a number of special outreach activities aimed at broadening local knowledge about the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Staff of UNIC Lisbon gave a lecture to 300 students; staff of UNIC Lomé spoke before an NGO audience; UNIC Mexico City provided a keynote speaker at a “Model UN” meeting; staff of UNIC Paris made a keynote address to an NGO conference on the Middle East; and UNIC Rome addressed a conference organized by the University of Catania. UNIC Cairo organized a media encounter on its premises and its Director gave a radio interview to *Sawt El Arab*; the Director of UNIC Mexico City gave an interview to the daily *El Universal*; the Director of UNIC Moscow was interviewed by *REN TV*; and the Director of UNIC Paris participated in a briefing on the Middle East conflict on *France 2 TV*. The Director of UNIC Rome was interviewed by two local TV stations in Sicily; UNIC Tunis participated in a round-table discussion organized by the daily *Achourouq* and also delivered a speech during a two-day meeting for Arab journalists, organized by the Arab Institute for Human Rights.

Chapter VII

Conclusions and recommendations of the Committee

93. The greatest concern of the Committee since its last report to the General Assembly remained the most deplorable and increasingly dangerous situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem. The Committee was appalled by the intensity of Israeli military offensives, growing human losses among the Palestinians, the scope of devastation left by the occupying forces and the enormity of the humanitarian catastrophe that ensued. The fabric of Palestinian society has been badly damaged. Attempts to contain the violence, stabilize the situation and resolve the crisis have not been very successful. To complicate the situation, efforts at resuming a political dialogue have not produced desirable results. The Committee reiterates that the continuing Israeli occupation remains at the core of the conflict and must be addressed without further delay. At the same time, the Committee unreservedly condemns all acts of violence against civilians, from whatever quarter. It firmly believes that the solution to the question of Palestine should be achieved on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973), 1397 (2002) and other relevant resolutions, the exercise by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights, and the coexistence of two States, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace, within secure and recognized borders. The Committee will continue to work towards this objective by carrying out its General Assembly mandate. Through its programme of activities, the Committee will continue to contribute to international efforts at bringing peace to the region.

94. Pending a political settlement, the parties will need assistance in steering away from escalating violence and confrontation. In this regard, a central role should be played by members of the international community, individually and collectively. The United Nations should maintain its permanent responsibility with respect to all aspects of the question of Palestine until it is resolved in a satisfactory manner, in conformity with relevant United Nations resolutions, in accordance with international legitimacy, and until the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people are fully realized. The Committee is much encouraged by and fully supports the role played within the framework of the Quartet by the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process. Disturbed by the Israeli attacks on Palestine refugee camps run by UNRWA and by the Agency's persistent financial crisis, the Committee reiterates its call on the international donor community to help UNRWA overcome the present severe crisis in order to continue its vital humanitarian work.

95. The Committee considers that its programme of meetings in various regions continues to play a useful role in heightening international awareness of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. It helps promote a constructive analysis and discussion of the various aspects of the question of Palestine and mobilize international assistance. The Committee also highly appreciates the contribution made by a large number of civil society organizations working untiringly to mobilize solidarity with the Palestinian people, provide some form of protection, as well as emergency relief under difficult circumstances to the population in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, and raise international awareness of the illegal occupation by Israel of Palestinian land. In addition to civil society initiatives and given the situation on the ground, special emphasis should be laid on mobilizing wide public support for measures aimed at protecting the Palestinian people, such as

action by the United Nations and the Security Council or by the High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention. In its programme of work for the next year, the Committee will strive to involve to a greater extent other sectors of civil society, such as academic institutions and think tanks, parliamentarians and the media. Its cooperation with the wide network of NGOs on the question of Palestine will be intensified on the basis of the new guidelines for accredited organizations. The Committee will continue to review and assess its programme with a view to making it more responsive to developments on the ground and in the peace process. It will focus its work in the next year on the question of the exercise by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights, international initiatives aimed at resolving the question of Palestine and the role of the United Nations therein, and on international assistance to the Palestinian people.

96. The Committee stresses the essential contribution of the Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat in support of the Committee's objectives and requests it to continue its programme of publications and other informational activities, including the further development of the UNISPAL documents collection. The Committee also considers that the annual training programme for staff of the Palestinian Authority has demonstrated its usefulness and requests that it be continued.

97. The Committee is of the view that the special information programme on the question of Palestine of the Department of Public Information has made an important contribution to informing the media and public opinion on the relevant issues. The Committee requests the programme's continuation, with the necessary flexibility, as warranted by developments relevant to the question of Palestine.

98. Wishing to make its contribution to the achievement of a just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine and in view of the many difficulties facing the Palestinian people and besetting the peace process, the Committee calls upon all States to join in this endeavour and invites the General Assembly once again to recognize the importance of its role and to reconfirm its mandate with overwhelming support.

Notes

- ¹ *Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-first Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/31/35).*
- ² *Ibid., Thirty-second Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/32/35);* *ibid., Thirty-third Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/33/35);* *ibid., Thirty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 35 and corrigendum (A/34/35 and Corr.1);* *ibid., Thirty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/35/35);* *ibid., Thirty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/36/35);* *ibid., Thirty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 35 and corrigendum (A/37/35 and Corr.1);* *ibid., Thirty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/38/35);* *ibid., Thirty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/39/35);* *ibid., Fortieth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/40/35);* *ibid., Forty-first Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/41/35);* *ibid., Forty-second Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/42/35);* *ibid., Forty-third Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/43/35);* *ibid., Forty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/44/35);* *ibid., Forty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/45/35);* *ibid., Forty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/46/35);* *ibid., Forty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/47/35);* *ibid., Forty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/48/35);* *ibid., Forty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/49/35);* *ibid., Fiftieth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/50/35);* *ibid., Fifty-first Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/51/35);* *ibid., Fifty-second Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/52/35);* *ibid., Fifty-third Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/53/35);* *ibid., Fifty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/54/35);* *ibid., Fifty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/55/35);* and *ibid., Fifty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 35 and corrigendum (A/56/35 and Corr.1).*
- ³ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 75, No. 973.
- ⁴ *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 35 and corrigendum (A/56/35 and Corr.1)*, chap. VII.
- ⁵ A/AC.183/2002/CRP.1.
- ⁶ The observers at the Committee meetings were: Algeria, Bangladesh, Bulgaria, China, Ecuador, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Mauritania, Morocco, Nicaragua, Niger, Qatar, Sri Lanka, Syrian Arab Republic, United Arab Emirates, Viet Nam, Yemen, League of Arab States, Organization of the Islamic Conference and Palestine.
- ⁷ *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 35 and corrigendum (A/56/35 and Corr.1)*, para. 21.
- ⁸ Press releases SC/7374 and SC/7378.
- ⁹ Press release SC/7357.
- ¹⁰ Press releases SC/7378 and SC/7382.



United Nations

**Report of the
Committee on the
Exercise of the
Inalienable Rights of
the Palestinian People**

**General Assembly
Official Records
Fifty-eighth Session
Supplement No. 35 (A/58/35)**

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United Nations • New York, 2003

Note

Symbols of United Nations documents are composed of capital letters combined with figures. Mention of such a symbol indicates a reference to a United Nations document.

Contents

<i>Chapter</i>	<i>Paragraphs</i>	<i>Page</i>
Letter of transmittal		iv
I. Introduction	1–6	1
II. Mandate of the Committee	7–10	3
III. Organization of work	11–16	5
A. Membership and officers	11–13	5
B. Participation in the work of the Committee	14–16	5
IV. Review of the situation relating to the question of Palestine	17–27	6
V. Action taken by the Committee	28–53	11
A. Action taken in accordance with General Assembly resolution 57/107	28–37	11
1. Action in the General Assembly and the Security Council	29–33	11
2. Communications to the Secretary-General	34	12
3. Statements by the Committee	35	12
4. Participation by the Chairman of the Committee at international conferences and meetings	36–37	12
B. Action taken by the Committee and the Division for Palestinian Rights in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 57/107 and 57/108	38–53	12
1. Programme of international meetings and conferences	38–41	12
2. Cooperation with intergovernmental organizations	42–43	12
3. Cooperation with civil society	44–47	13
4. Research, monitoring and publications	48–49	13
5. United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine	50	15
6. Training programme for staff of the Palestinian Authority	51	15
7. International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People	52–53	15
VI. Action taken by the Department of Public Information in accordance with General Assembly resolution 57/109	54–70	17
VII. Conclusions and recommendations of the Committee	71–78	20

Letter of transmittal

9 October 2003

Mr. Secretary-General,

I have the honour to enclose herewith the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for submission to the General Assembly in accordance with paragraph 6 of its resolution 57/107 of 3 December 2002.

The report covers the period from 11 October 2002 to 9 October 2003.

Accept, Sir, the assurances of my highest consideration.

(Signed) Papa Louis **Fall**
Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise
of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

His Excellency Mr. Kofi Annan
Secretary-General of the United Nations
New York

Chapter I

Introduction

1. The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People was established by the General Assembly by resolution 3376 (XXX) of 10 November 1975, with the task of recommending a programme designed to enable the Palestinian people to exercise its inalienable rights as recognized by the Assembly in resolution 3236 (XXIX) of 22 November 1974.

2. The recommendations made by the Committee in its first report to the General Assembly¹ were endorsed by the Assembly as a basis for the solution of the question of Palestine. In its subsequent reports,² the Committee has continued to stress that a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, must be based on the relevant United Nations resolutions and the following essential principles: the withdrawal of Israel from the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, and from the other occupied Arab territories; respect for the right of all States in the region to live in peace within secure and internationally recognized boundaries; and the recognition and exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, primarily the right to self-determination. The Committee's recommendations could not be implemented, and the Assembly each year renewed the Committee's mandate and requested it to intensify efforts in pursuit of its objectives.

3. The Committee welcomed the historic breakthrough in the peace process in 1993 and the subsequent important steps towards the achievement of a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine, based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 1397 (2002). At the same time, the Committee continued to work towards the full realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including the right to self-determination and to its own independent State. The Committee also continued to mobilize international assistance for and solidarity with the Palestinian people.

4. During the year, the Al-Aqsa intifada continued and the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, remained very tense, with violence escalating steeply in August 2003. Fostered by the continuing Israeli occupation, violence and mutual mistrust between Israelis and Palestinians kept chances of resuming a political process firmly on hold. Three years of Israel's military campaign against the Palestinian people have resulted in horrific human and material losses. The campaign has brought misery and destruction, creating a humanitarian emergency on an unprecedented scale.

5. The Quartet continued to work with the parties in an effort to defuse the crisis and breathe life into the political process in pursuance of ideas stipulated in Security Council resolution 1397 (2002). The appointment of Mr. Mahmoud Abbas as the first Palestinian Prime Minister and the confirmation by the Palestinian Legislative Council of his Cabinet were followed by the formal presentation, on 30 April 2003, of "A Performance-Based Road Map to a Permanent Two-State Solution to the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict", known as the Road Map. These promising events helped catalyse the political process and triggered a number of changes, albeit tentative, in the situation, including the resumption of security coordination between the two sides and the withdrawal of Israeli forces from some positions in the Gaza

Strip and Bethlehem. The positive momentum created on the ground earlier in the year was scuttled by renewed Israeli operations in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, repeated incursions into most Palestinian cities, extrajudicial executions of Palestinians, continued construction of settlements and the separation wall, closures and suicide bombings by Palestinian groups against Israeli civilians. The escalation of violence and counter-violence has substantially impeded progress in negotiations on security-related issues, led to the resignation of Prime Minister Abbas and threatened the implementation of the Road Map. The humanitarian situation remained grave and required serious attention of donor, international relief and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

6. The Committee continued to encourage the parties to resume the political process and move vigorously towards a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine, on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 1397 (2002), the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and the vision of two States, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security. As the organ of the General Assembly mandated to deal with the question of Palestine, the Committee continued to support all initiatives aimed at resolving the question of Palestine in all its aspects until the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people are fully realized.

Chapter II

Mandate of the Committee

7. The mandate of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People was again renewed by the General Assembly in resolution 57/107 of 3 December 2002, in which the Assembly, *inter alia*, expressed its appreciation to the Committee for its efforts in performing the tasks assigned to it and took note of its annual report, including the conclusions and recommendations.³ The Assembly requested the Committee to continue to exert all efforts to promote the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, to support the Middle East peace process and to mobilize international support for and assistance to the Palestinian people and authorized it to make such adjustments in its approved programme of work as it may consider appropriate and necessary in the light of developments and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its fifty-eighth session and thereafter. The Assembly requested it to continue to keep under review the situation relating to the question of Palestine and to report and make suggestions to the Assembly, the Security Council or the Secretary-General, as appropriate. The Assembly also requested the Committee to continue to extend its cooperation and support to Palestinian and other civil society organizations in order to mobilize international solidarity and support for the achievement by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights and for a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine, and to involve additional civil society organizations in its work.

8. In its resolution 57/108 of 3 December 2002, on the Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to continue to provide the Division with the necessary resources and to ensure that it continues to carry out its programme of work as detailed in the relevant earlier resolutions, including, in particular, the organization of meetings in various regions with the participation of all sectors of the international community, the further development and expansion of the documents collection of the United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine, the preparation and widest possible dissemination of publications and information materials on various aspects of the question of Palestine and the provision of the annual training programme for staff of the Palestinian Authority. The Assembly also requested the Committee and the Division, as part of the observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People on 29 November, to continue to organize an annual exhibit on Palestinian rights in cooperation with the Permanent Observer Mission of Palestine to the United Nations and encouraged Member States to continue to give the widest support and publicity to the observance of the International Day of Solidarity.

9. In its resolution 57/109 of 3 December 2002, on the special information programme on the question of Palestine of the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat, the General Assembly requested the Department in full cooperation and coordination with the Committee, to continue, with the necessary flexibility as may be required by developments affecting the question of Palestine, its special information programme for the biennium 2002-2003, including: the preparation and dissemination of publications; continuation of production, expansion and preservation of audio-visual material on the question of Palestine; organization and promotion of fact-finding missions for journalists to the area, including the territory under the jurisdiction of the Palestinian Authority and the Occupied Territory; organization of international, regional and national seminars or encounters for

journalists; and assistance to the Palestinian people in the field of media development.

10. In carrying out its programme of work, the Committee also took into account General Assembly resolution 57/110 of 3 December 2002, in which the Assembly, inter alia: reaffirmed the necessity of achieving a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, in all its aspects; expressed its full support for the ongoing peace process and welcomed in this regard the efforts of the Quartet; welcomed the Arab Peace Initiative adopted by the Council of the League of Arab States at its fourteenth session, held in Beirut on 27 and 28 March 2002; stressed the necessity for a commitment to the vision of the two-State solution and the principle of land for peace, as well as the implementation of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 1397 (2002); stressed the need for the withdrawal of Israel from the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967 and the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, primarily the right to self-determination and the right to their independent State and the need for resolving the problem of the Palestine refugees in conformity with its resolution 194 (III) of 11 December 1948.

Chapter III

Organization of work

A. Membership and officers

11. The Committee is composed of the following Member States: Afghanistan, Belarus, Cuba, Cyprus, Guinea, Guyana, Hungary, India, Indonesia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mali, Malta, Namibia, Nigeria, Pakistan, Romania, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Tunisia, Turkey and Ukraine.

12. At its 269th meeting, on 14 February 2003, the Committee re-elected Mr. Papa Louis Fall (Senegal) as Chairman, and re-elected Mr. Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla (Cuba) and Mr. Ravan A. G. Farhâdi (Afghanistan) as Vice-Chairmen and Mr. Walter Balzan (Malta) as Rapporteur. At its 271st meeting, the Committee elected Mr. Victor Camilleri (Malta) as Rapporteur, replacing Walter Balzan, former Rapporteur of the Committee, who had been assigned by his Government to another post.

13. At the same meeting, the Committee adopted its programme of work for 2003.⁴

B. Participation in the work of the Committee

14. As in previous years, the Committee reconfirmed that all States Members of and permanent observers to the United Nations wishing to participate in the work of the Committee as observers were welcome to do so. In accordance with established practice, Palestine participated in the work of the Committee as an observer, attended all its meetings and made observations and proposals for consideration by the Committee and its Bureau.

15. On 18 March 2003, the Commission of the African Union, in a note verbale addressed to the Chairman of the Committee, informed him of its decision to join the Committee as an Observer. The Committee welcomed the decision of the African Union and approved the request at its 270th meeting, on 26 March 2003.

16. In 2003, the Committee again welcomed as observers all the States and organizations that had participated in its work in the preceding year.⁵

Chapter IV

Review of the situation relating to the question of Palestine

17. In pursuance of its mandate, the Committee continued to keep under review the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, as well as the relevant political developments. In January and February 2003, the Committee took note of the constructive outcome of a series of meetings on Palestinian civil reform held in London. It welcomed the presentation of the Road Map, a performance-based plan encompassing parallel and reciprocal steps by Israel and the Palestinian Authority in the political, security, economic, humanitarian and institution-building areas monitored and facilitated by the Quartet. The plan was drawn up to assist the parties in realizing the vision of two States, Israel and Palestine, living side by side within secure and recognized borders, as affirmed in Security Council resolution 1397 (2002). The Committee expressed concern, however, that, while the Palestinian Authority had accepted the Road Map without reservations, the Government of Israel had not fully endorsed it, putting forward a series of conditions for its acceptance that threatened to render most of the plan ineffective. A new hope was created by other important developments, including the reform undertaken by the Palestinian Authority and the confirmation by the Palestinian Legislative Council of a new Cabinet headed by Prime Minister Abbas. The Prime Minister, however, had not been in a position to continue his work and had resigned. His Cabinet was confronted with a serious escalation of violence and Israel's failure to implement its Road Map obligations, in particular those related to ceasing attacks on civilians, freezing settlement construction, halting confiscation or demolition of houses and property and taking other steps to normalize Palestinian life. Efforts by Palestinian organizations to achieve a truce were not reciprocated by Israel. Continuing Israeli military operations led to a breakdown of the truce. Subsequent ceasefire proposals by the Palestinian Authority were rejected by the Israeli Government. Faced with these challenges, the new Prime Minister-designate, Ahmed Qurei, was tasked with forming a Government with a view to continuing the Palestinian reform process and the implementation of the Road Map.

18. Throughout the year, the Committee strongly supported the work of the Quartet, which remained actively engaged with the parties and others with a view to charting a course towards a peaceful settlement of the conflict by 2005. In the Committee's view, the presentation of the Road Map created grounds for cautious optimism that the process would move forward and that the two sides, assisted by the Quartet, would press ahead with the implementation of the plan.

19. Despite some tentative signs of progress, the Committee noted a most disappointing lack of any serious improvement in the security situation, which remained extremely volatile, with a potential for further escalation. The death toll since September 2000 had risen to over 3,600, of whom more than 2,800 were Palestinians and more than 800 Israelis. Over 46,600 Palestinians had been wounded. Most tragically, more than 590 Palestinian and 100 Israeli children had been killed in this period. During the year the Israeli army conducted regular military raids in the Occupied Territory, repeatedly reoccupying Palestinian cities, imposing closures and curfews and using disproportionate and indiscriminate force, including flechette munitions, in civilian areas. Human rights organizations had petitioned Israel's High Court of Justice to ban this type of munitions as causing unnecessary human suffering. In April 2003, however, the Court rejected their

petition. The army operations were often backed up by heavy armour, helicopters and fighter jets. Under the pretext of fighting against suspected Palestinian militants, the army continued its illegal policy of extrajudicial executions of Palestinians. While recognizing Israel's right to security, the Committee vigorously condemned the policy and practice of targeted assassinations, emphasizing that such actions were inadmissible under international humanitarian law. It also strongly condemned all terrorist attacks against civilians in Israel, which had no moral justification and harmed the cause of peace and reconciliation between the parties.

20. The Committee remained greatly concerned about the continuing restrictions placed on the movement of Chairman Arafat, who had been confined for the Israeli army to his Headquarters, the *Muqataa*, in Ramallah, and called upon the lifting of the siege. Chairman Arafat's ability to exercise his political leadership and supervise the work of the Palestinian Authority had been affected by these illegal measures of the occupying Power. The Committee was alarmed by the decision of the Israeli Security Cabinet, on 14 September 2003, to "remove" Chairman Arafat. The Committee was particularly worried by the explicit calls made by members of the Israeli Government and senior government officials to kill Chairman Arafat. In this connection, the Committee emphasized that the Israeli Government should refrain forthwith from making any statements that might incite violence, especially from making direct threats to Chairman Arafat's personal safety. The occupying Power should also abide by international law, including the Fourth Geneva Convention, recognize that Chairman Arafat remained the elected leader of the Palestinian people and allow him full freedom of movement.

21. Israel continued its territorial expansion through the illegal construction of settlements and outposts, road networks and the demolition of Palestinian homes and property. The Road Map required that Israel immediately dismantle settlement outposts erected since March 2001 and, consistent with the Mitchell Report, freeze all settlement activity, including natural growth of settlements. The removal of some outposts was quickly followed by the construction of new ones by settlers. There was no real improvement in the situation concerning the outposts. Over the year, the Committee followed with growing concern the construction of new and expansion of existing settlements and infrastructure in violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention and Israel's obligations under the Road Map. According to reports available to the Committee, in January 2003, the "Aperion" settlement was established, east of Salfit in the West Bank. In February and March 2003, tenders were published by the Israeli Ministry of Housing and Construction for the construction of 51 housing units in the Olive Hill section of "Efrat" and 24 units in "Ariel". Another tender was published in *Yediot Ahronot* for the sale of 28 housing plots in "Elkana". In early May 2003, the cornerstone for 72 new units was laid in "Beit El", north of Ramallah. Also in May 2003, the Ministry of Housing and Construction announced plans for the construction of 11,806 units in "Givat Ze'ev", "Ariel", "Betar Ilit", "Geva Binyamin" and "Ma'ale Adumim". In June 2003, the Israeli army began construction of a settlement road leading to a bridge linking the Al-Matahin road in the Gaza Strip to the bridge between the "Katif" block of settlements with "Kissufim". In late June 2003, a new bypass road connecting West Bank settlements of "Ariel" and "Rehelim" was opened, as well as a new settlement road north of "Morag" in the Gaza Strip. At the end of July 2003, the Israel Lands Authority issued a tender to build 22 new housing units in "Neveh Dekalim" in the Gaza Strip. In August, the Israeli Government issued a tender for the construction of 72

apartments in the “Har Homa” settlement in the Jabal Abu Ghneim neighbourhood of East Jerusalem. In early September 2003, the Ministry of Housing and Construction issued a tender for 102 new housing units in “Efrat”. In early October 2003, the Ministry issued another tender for 604 units in “Ma’ale Adumim”, “Betar Ilit” and “Ariel”. The illegal settlement activity has already dramatically changed the status quo and adversely affected the implementation of the Road Map.

22. The Israeli Government’s stepped up illegal construction of a wall in the West Bank, which, in many sections, runs to the east of the Green Line. In some areas, the wall is located as deep as 6 kilometres inside the West Bank. In addition to the construction of the wall itself, there were plans for depth barriers, 150 metres in length, to be erected a few kilometres away from the main wall, designed to funnel access into communities east of the wall through a limited number of checkpoints. The work on the structure, carried out in phases, was especially intensive in the Tulkarm and Qalqilya Governorates. Qalqilya has been almost completely surrounded by the wall. On 31 July 2003, the Israeli Ministry of Defence announced that the construction of Phase 1 of the barrier had been completed. Its 145 kilometre route runs from the village of Salem in the north to the “Elkana” settlement, south-east of Qalqilya. During the construction, Palestinian homes were demolished and swathes of lands were bulldozed and seized. The completed construction has already resulted in the unlawful confiscation of 2,850 acres of high-income Palestinian land. Over 50 communities along the wall’s path have been affected. In August 2003, the Israeli authorities issued land expropriation orders for the “Jerusalem Envelope” barrier, which could leave some 50,000 Palestinians isolated on the Israeli side. In early September 2003, the Treasury decided to provide an additional 500 million new shekels (about \$112 million) to complete the separation barrier in the Jerusalem area. The construction of the wall and the de facto annexation of Palestinian land will have serious economic and social consequences for the over 210,000 Palestinians living in 67 towns and villages. On 1 October 2003, the Israeli Cabinet approved the second phase of the wall, running from “Elkana” to Jerusalem, where a separate network of barriers was being built. The Committee was especially concerned about dangerous plans to erect the wall east of the settlements of “Ariel”, “Kedumim” and “Immanuel”, extending the wall in these areas some 20 kilometres into the West Bank. The construction, carried out in violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention, will disrupt the delivery of basic social services and impoverish the affected communities. It is also bound to exacerbate tensions and heighten resentment among the Palestinian population. In the longer term, like the settlements and bypass roads, it could prejudice the outcome of future permanent status negotiations and inhibit the establishment of a contiguous Palestinian State.

23. According to the Israeli Interior Ministry figures released in July 2003, 5,415 new settlers have moved into the Occupied Palestinian Territory since January 2003, bringing the total number to 231,443. The settler population continued to increase, in flagrant violation of article 49 of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949 (the Fourth Geneva Convention).⁶ Some 10,000 weapons are in the hands of settlers. In addition, the settlers’ “territorial units” possess heavy arms, machine-guns and mortars. During the past year, in particular, attacks by settlers on Palestinians have become increasingly aggressive and violent, taking many forms. Their actions were intended to intimidate, deter or punish Palestinians, using firearms and ammunition provided by the Israeli army. There were reports of settlers killing and beating Palestinians

who were going about their daily chores. Settlers frequently attacked and harassed Palestinian farmers, merchants, schoolchildren and clerics. They also opened fire on farmers, destroyed or damaged property by cutting down trees, sprayed cultivated fields with chemicals, shot at roof-top water heaters and set cars and other property on fire. Some of their actions were intended to force Palestinians to abandon their land so that it could be confiscated or annexed to settlements. There were disturbing reports that an underground vigilante settler network had emerged in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. In July 2003, a group of nine settlers from the Hebron area was arrested on suspicion of carrying out roadside shootings of at least nine Palestinians and wounding dozens of others. Members of this violent underground cell were skilled snipers who had acquired skills in the use of firearms and explosives during their military service. In late September 2003, another group of settlers belonging to an anti-Palestinian terrorist network was arrested. Members of the group had planned to perpetrate mass killing of Palestinians in retaliation for anti-Israeli attacks. The Committee reiterated that the presence of the settlers violated international humanitarian law, in particular article 49 of the Fourth Geneva Convention.

24. The Committee noted that the situation with respect to Palestinian prisoners remained unresolved. It was estimated that some 6,500 prisoners were kept in Israeli detention facilities. The Israeli army was also holding 687 Palestinians in administrative detention. Children remained the most vulnerable group affected by the occupation. The Committee was particularly disquieted by the fact that at the end of June 2003 some 350 child prisoners were held in Israeli prisons. More than 9 per cent were 13 and 14-year-olds. The minors were subjected to various kinds of mistreatment and torture. The question of Palestinian prisoners held in Israeli detention facilities remained largely unresolved and required the most urgent and serious attention of the Israeli Government. The Committee also stressed that the issue of prisoners was a highly important and painful one for thousands of Palestinian families. Its resolution was seen by the Committee as a major step towards building confidence between the parties. The Committee has repeatedly called upon the Government of Israel to abide by its obligations under the Fourth Geneva Convention and to find a solution to the issue of prisoners.

25. The humanitarian situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory remained dire. The most significant impediment to the recovery of the Palestinian economy and improvement in the humanitarian situation was the closure regime. Because of the closures, both internal and external, many Palestinian cities and villages experienced considerable access problems, with Palestinians having to use long detours to reach their jobs, medical facilities or schools. Although the movement of people and goods in recent months was eased in some areas, frequent incursions by the Israeli army into Palestinian areas, the reestablishment of roadblocks and the imposition of closures and curfews continued to stifle the Palestinian livelihood. Following the transfer of security responsibilities to the Palestinian Authority in the Gaza Strip, Palestinians were still unable to move around freely. Such restrictions, combined with Israeli military operations, have virtually paralyzed economic life in the Occupied Territory. The Palestinian economy remained in a precarious state. Closures made jobs and markets in Israel completely inaccessible to Palestinians. The tourism sector, traditionally one of the most important revenue-generating sectors of the Palestinian economy, has sustained serious damage, since tourists have stayed away because of the violence. Vast areas of agricultural land have been

destroyed and many fields classified as off limits to Palestinians. Great damage has been inflicted on the physical infrastructure. All economic indicators continued to decline steeply. Overall national income losses between September 2000 and May 2003 reached \$5.4 billion, and unemployment and poverty rates have reached unprecedented levels. By conservative estimates, the unemployment rate stood at 53 per cent. The financial situation of the Palestinian Authority was extremely difficult and its capacity to function was greatly weakened. A total collapse of the Palestinian economy was only prevented owing to the infusion of substantial foreign assistance.

26. Water in the Occupied Palestinian Territory remained a scarce commodity. Some 178 Palestinian communities had no water distribution networks. There was evidence that the number of water-related diseases had increased in communities using contaminated water. Constant water shortages and the worsening hygiene situation affected health and living conditions of thousands of families. The problem has become even more acute with the construction of the separation wall. The route of the wall would limit Palestinian access to water wells, some of the best in the West Bank. Because of its position atop the western groundwater basin, the wall would have a severe impact on water access, use and allocation. Phase 1 of the wall has already affected at least 50 communal wells, meaning that they are either isolated west of the wall or in the “buffer zone” east of the wall. It has also led to the destruction of some 35 kilometres of water pipes.

27. The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) continued to provide Palestinian refugees with a broad range of essential services, although its vitally important work was hampered by closures, curfews and chronic funding shortages. UNRWA needed the sustained support of the donors, as it struggled to cope with budget shortfalls and increased requests for services. The Committee reaffirmed its position that it was the occupying Power that had the prime responsibility for the humanitarian well-being of the Palestinian population under occupation. Underfunding of its emergency appeals was a growing concern for the Agency. Funds were needed to preserve vital programmes in numerous areas, including food aid, shelter repair and reconstruction, temporary job creation, remedial health and education and psychosocial support. The Committee continued to support the Agency and called upon donors to contribute generously so that UNRWA could maintain its important activities for the benefit of Palestine refugees. The Committee also noted the crucial role played by the Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in rendering various forms of humanitarian and developmental assistance to the Palestinian people. The Committee noted with appreciation that, through allocation of funds, UNDP also supported the Road Map and the Palestinian reform plan. The Committee was appreciative to other United Nations system entities for providing assistance and essential services to the Palestinian people.

Chapter V

Action taken by the Committee

A. Action taken in accordance with General Assembly resolution 57/107

28. In pursuance of its mandate, the Committee continued to mobilize the international community in support of the Palestinian people, in cooperation with United Nations bodies, Governments, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and others, as indicated below.

1. Action in the General Assembly and the Security Council

(a) *Resumed tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly*

29. On 19 September 2003, the emergency special session was resumed (ninth resumption) at the request of the Permanent Representative of the Sudan, in his capacity as Chairman of the Group of Arab States for the month of September 2003 (A/ES-10/237), to discuss the situation on the ground under the item entitled "Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory". The Vice-Chairman of the Committee (Cuba) took part in the debate and made a statement (A/ES-10/PV.20). At the end of the debate, on the same day, the Assembly adopted resolution ES-10/12.

(b) *Security Council meetings*

30. During the year, against the backdrop of the highly dangerous situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, the Security Council has followed the situation on the ground and efforts to implement the Road Map. Throughout the year, the Council held monthly briefings under agenda item "The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question".

31. At its 4681st meeting, on 20 December 2002, the Council considered the agenda item and voted on a draft resolution submitted by the Syrian Arab Republic (S/2002/1385). The draft received 12 votes in favour, 1 against and 2 abstentions. The draft was not adopted owing to the negative vote of a permanent member of the Council (S/PV.4681).

32. On 12 September 2003, the President of the Council issued a press statement under the agenda item, and in particular in connection with the Israeli decision in principle to expel Chairman Arafat (SC/7871).

33. At the request of the Permanent Representative of the Sudan, in his capacity as Chairman of the Arab Group for the month of September 2003 (S/2003/880), the Security Council met on 15 and 16 September 2003. The Chairman of the Committee took part in the debate and made a statement. At its 4828th meeting on 16 September 2003, the Council voted on a draft resolution submitted by Pakistan, South Africa, the Sudan and the Syrian Arab Republic (S/2003/891). The draft received 11 votes in favour, 1 against and 3 abstentions. The draft resolution was not adopted owing to the negative vote of a permanent member of the Council (S/PV.4828).

2. Communications to the Secretary-General

34. The Chairman of the Committee has continued to bring to the attention of the Secretary-General the Committee's concerns about the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem (A/ES-10/214-S/2003/120, A/ES-10/218-S/2003/202 and A/ES-10/230-S/2003/730).

3. Statements by the Committee

35. At its 271st meeting, on 6 May 2003, the Committee adopted a statement welcoming the presentation of the Road Map, and other important developments, including the confirmation by the Palestine Legislative Council of a new Palestinian Cabinet headed by Prime Minister Abbas. The statement was issued as a press release (GA/PAL/912).

4. Participation by the Chairman of the Committee at international conferences and meetings

36. During the year, the Chairman of the Committee participated in meetings of intergovernmental bodies and contributed to their deliberations in support of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, as follows:

(a) Thirteenth Conference of Heads of State or Government of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, Kuala Lumpur, 20 to 25 February 2003;

(b) Third Ordinary Session of the Executive Council and the Second Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union, Maputo, 4 to 12 July 2003;

(c) Ministerial meeting of the Committee on Palestine of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, Headquarters, 26 September 2003.

37. As in previous years, the Committee continued to follow the activities relevant to the question of Palestine of other intergovernmental organizations, as well as decisions and resolutions of United Nations bodies and agencies.

B. Action taken by the Committee and the Division for Palestinian Rights in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 57/107 and 57/108

1. Programme of international meetings and conferences

38. In its programme of international meetings and conferences, the Committee continued to give priority to promoting the exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, supporting the political process and stressing the need for the implementation of the Road Map. The Committee urged the international community to continue to provide political support, as well as humanitarian relief and economic assistance to the Palestinian people.

39. In the reviewed period, the following international events have been held under the auspices of the Committee:

(a) United Nations International Meeting in Support of Middle East Peace, Kyiv, 13 and 14 May 2003;

(b) Public Forum in Support of Middle East Peace, Kyiv, 15 May 2003;

(c) United Nations Seminar on Assistance to the Palestinian People, United Nations Office at Geneva, 15 and 16 July 2003;

(d) Consultations of the Committee with Civil Society Organizations, United Nations Office at Geneva, 16 July 2003;

(e) United Nations International Conference of Civil Society in Support of the Palestinian People, United Nations Headquarters, 4 and 5 September 2003.

40. All the aforementioned events were attended by representatives of Governments, Palestine, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and United Nations system entities, as well by experts, media representatives, academics and students. The reports of the meetings were issued as publications of the Division for Palestinian Rights and were made available through the United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine (UNISPAL) and the Division's web site.

41. In the course of the meetings in Kyiv, the Committee delegation was received by Leonid Kuchma, President of Ukraine, and Anatoliy Zlenko, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, both of whom stressed the importance of supporting peace in the Middle East and welcomed the efforts of the Committee in that regard. The Committee expressed its great appreciation to the Government of Ukraine for having provided a venue and facilities for events sponsored by the Committee.

2. Cooperation with intergovernmental organizations

42. During the year, the Committee, through its Bureau, continued to maintain its cooperation on the question of Palestine with States Members of the European Union. In September 2003, the Bureau held a meeting of consultations with representatives of the European Union (under the Presidency of Italy) as part of the continued effort to build a constructive relationship with members of the Union on issues of common concern.

43. Throughout the year, the staff of the Division for Palestinian Rights met, both at and away from United Nations Headquarters, with members of the general public to brief them on the various aspects of the question of Palestine and the involvement of the United Nations in this issue.

3. Cooperation with civil society

Civil society organizations

44. The Committee continued to enhance its cooperation with NGOs, academic institutions, think tanks and media representatives. It followed with interest the manifold activities of civil society organizations in various parts of the world, including in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and in Israel, and expressed its appreciation for their useful and committed work. The Committee highly appreciated the work of those NGOs that provided emergency relief at a difficult time for the Palestinian people. It commended the courage and imaginative activism of those NGO representatives who went to Palestinian towns and villages under Israeli military siege. It encouraged all of them to continue their activities and to engage vigorously to ensure that the implementation of the Road Map truly

addresses the issue of Palestinian self-determination in a State free of occupation. The Committee stressed that there was a greater need for sustained campaigns aimed at informing public opinion about the root causes of the conflict and the legitimate rights of the parties and promoting national and international action in support of effective steps to end the crisis and to resume negotiations.

45. The Committee also maintained and developed its liaison with national, regional and international coordinating mechanisms accredited to it, in addition to the already established liaison with a large number of individual NGOs. Representatives of civil society participated in all meetings organized under the auspices of the Committee, including the observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian people on 29 November. In the reviewed period, the Committee has also accredited additional NGOs. Consultations between the delegation of the Committee and representatives of civil society organizations accredited to the Committee were held on 16 July 2003 at the United Nations Office at Geneva, following the United Nations Seminar on Assistance to the Palestinian People. The participating NGO representatives provided information about their initiatives, campaigns and projects, described the obstacles they are facing on the ground in implementing their projects and asked the Committee to support concerted international action in support of the Palestinian people. The delegation of the Committee recommended to the NGO representatives to base their initiatives on international law, in particular the Fourth Geneva Convention, as well as Security Council and General Assembly resolutions. The Chairman of the Committee met throughout the year with representatives of civil society organizations either in New York or at the site of meetings organized under the auspices of the Committee. The International Conference of Civil Society in Support of the Palestinian People, held at United Nations Headquarters in New York, once again provided ample opportunities for numerous discussions of the future cooperation between the Committee and civil society.

46. The Division for Palestinian Rights maintained its Internet web site entitled "NGO Network on the Question of Palestine" as a permanent tool of mutual information and cooperation between civil society and the Committee. The web site can be found at: www.un.org/depts/dpa/ngo. The Division also continued to issue its bimonthly newsletter, *NGO Action News*, covering the activities of civil society on the various aspects of the question of Palestine.

Parliaments and inter-parliamentary organizations

47. The Committee continued to develop its liaison with national and regional parliaments and their organizations and invited a number of parliamentarians to speak at its meetings. The Chairman of the Committee welcomed the decision by the General Assembly to grant observer status to the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU). The delegation of the Committee met on 16 July 2003 at the United Nations Office at Geneva with the Secretary-General of IPU and the Chairman and members of its Committee on Middle East Questions. The Chairman of the Committee commended the IPU efforts in support of the Palestinian people, in particular in promoting a dialogue between Israeli and Palestinian parliamentarians. It was agreed to continue periodic consultations between the two sides and to invite parliamentarians to address the different meetings organized under the auspices of the Committee.

4. Research, monitoring and publications

48. The Committee continued to attach great importance to the essential contribution of the Division for Palestinian Rights in support of its mandate and implementation of its annual programme of work. The Committee requested the Division to continue its established programme of work, including studies, information notes and other publications; the further development of UNISPAL; the annual training programme for staff of the Palestinian Authority; and the annual observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

49. Accordingly, the Division continued to respond to requests for information and briefings on the question of Palestine and to prepare for dissemination, including through UNISPAL, the following publications, the continued relevance of which was acknowledged by the Committee:

- (a) Monthly bulletin on United Nations and intergovernmental organization action relating to the question of Palestine;
- (b) Monthly chronology of developments relating to the question of Palestine based on media reports and other sources;
- (c) Reports of meetings organized under the auspices of the Committee;
- (d) Special bulletin and note on the observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People;
- (e) Periodic reviews of developments relating to Middle East peace efforts;
- (f) Annual compilation of resolutions and decisions of the General Assembly and the Security Council relating to the question of Palestine.

5. United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine

50. The Division for Palestinian Rights, in cooperation with relevant technical and library services of the Secretariat, continued to maintain and develop UNISPAL, as mandated by the General Assembly since 1991. This included the ongoing upgrading of the system's technical components to ensure its uninterrupted presence on the Internet, notably via UNISPAL's "Question of Palestine" interface on the United Nations home page, under "Peace and Security", and involved the expansion of the documents collection with relevant documents, both new and old. In addition, steps were taken to enhance the user-friendliness of accessing and navigating the system, leading to the launching of a substantially redesigned UNISPAL Internet presence (<http://domino.un.org/unispal.nsf>).

6. Training programme for staff of the Palestinian Authority

51. Two staff members from the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation of the Palestinian Authority participated in a training programme conducted by the Division, from September to December 2002, in conjunction with the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly. They familiarized themselves with various aspects of the work of the United Nations Secretariat and other organs, and conducted research and prepared papers on specific topics.

7. International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People

52. The International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People was observed on 29 November 2002 at United Nations Headquarters and at the United Nations Offices at Geneva and Vienna. On the occasion of the observance at Headquarters, in addition to a solemn meeting of the Committee and other activities, an exhibit entitled "Palestinian cities: Images of life from the turn of the 20th century" was presented by the Permanent Observer Mission of Palestine, under the auspices of the Committee. The Committee noted with appreciation that the International Day of Solidarity had also been observed in many other cities throughout the world. Details on the observance are contained in the special bulletin issued by the Division.

53. In adopting its programme of work, the Committee decided that a similar observance of the International Day of Solidarity should be organized in 2003.

Chapter VI

Action taken by the Department of Public Information in accordance with General Assembly resolution 57/109

54. The Department of Public Information, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 57/109, continued to implement its special information programme on the question of Palestine. It carried out this work in close cooperation with the Division for Palestinian Rights of the Department of Political Affairs and, through the Division, with the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People.

55. The question of Palestine continued to be extensively covered by the United Nations News Service and featured prominently on the United Nations News Centre web site (www.un.org/news). The launch in January 2003 of the Arabic version of the web site was an important step in bringing the latest information about United Nations action on the question of Palestine to Arabic-speaking readers in the region and around the world.

56. Various aspects of the question of Palestine are covered on the global issues web site on the United Nations home page (www.un.org), including United Nations system programmes, activities and statements, news and events, documents, educational and promotional resources and partnerships with civil society.

57. The Radio Section provided extensive coverage of the various aspects of the question of Palestine and related issues in its daily live broadcasts in the official and non-official languages.

58. The Television Section of the United Nations Information Service at the United Nations Office at Geneva gave wide coverage to discussions on the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, notably during the session of the Commission on Human Rights.

59. From 3 March to 11 April 2003, the Department organized a training programme at Headquarters, in Washington, D.C., and in Geneva for a group of eight Palestinian broadcasters and journalists, with a view to strengthening their professional capacity as information media personnel.

60. The Department's revised and updated publication, "The Question of Palestine and the United Nations" (DPI/2276), was issued in Arabic, English, French, Russian, and Spanish, disseminated to all United Nations offices and placed on the United Nations web site.

61. The Dag Hammarskjöld Library continued its cooperation with the Division for Palestinian Rights on digitizing relevant United Nations documents on the question of Palestine to expand the UNISPAL collection. The Department, in cooperation with the Committee, has completed a project involving the conversion and remastering of United Nations films and videos on the question of Palestine covering the period from 1947 to 2000.

62. The updated permanent exhibit "The United Nations and the Question of Palestine" is now on display in the General Assembly Hall at United Nations Headquarters. Its French-language is on semi-permanent display at the Palais des Nations in Geneva.

63. The *UN Chronicle* reported on events related to the question of Palestine and action taken by the General Assembly and Security Council.

64. The question of Palestine was the subject of briefings organized by the Department of Public Information for eight visiting groups, primarily university students.

65. In January 2003, over 200 people attended a briefing organized by the Department's NGO Section entitled "Prejudice: Psychoanalytic perspectives on Arab-Israeli relations".

66. DPI's Video Section produced a *World Chronicle* programme with Mr. Peter Hansen, Commissioner-General of UNRWA, entitled "Palestine Refugees: Present and Future Challenges".

67. The network of United Nations information centres, services and offices continued to disseminate information on the question of Palestine and to organize special outreach activities. Press releases, Op-Ed pieces, statements, documents, audio-visual material, reports and studies were brought to the attention of target audiences, posted on web sites and made available to visitors of the reference libraries maintained by their offices.

68. A major focus of this work was the promotion of the International Day for Solidarity with the Palestinian People. Special events and activities to observe the event were organized by information centres, services and offices in Accra, Bonn, Brussels, Cairo, Geneva, Harare, Jakarta, Kyiv, Lisbon, London, Madrid, Mexico City, Pretoria and Vienna.

69. The United Nations information centres in London and Pretoria assisted the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East, Mr. Terje Rød-Larsen, during his visits to South Africa and the United Kingdom, in December 2002 and January 2003, respectively. The information centre in London organized a media encounter with the Special Coordinator and arranged meetings with journalists from *The Financial Times*, *Reuters* and the *BBC*. The centre also provided assistance to the Special Coordinator and his delegation during a meeting of the Task Force on Palestinian Reform and a donors meeting organized by the Foreign Office in London in February 2003. The information centre in Paris provided assistance to the Commissioner-General of UNRWA during his visit to France. The centre in Cairo provided support to the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories during its mission to the region from 13 to 17 June 2003. As a result of media outreach by the information centre in Cairo, there was extensive coverage of the Special Committee's visit and activities in Egypt. The information centres in Jakarta, Lisbon, Mexico City, New Delhi, Panama City, Paris, Pretoria, Rabat, Rome, and Vienna translated, widely disseminated and arranged for the placement in local newspapers of Op-Eds and articles by the Commissioner-General of UNRWA, including one entitled "Hunger in Palestine" and another entitled "Intifada, curfews rob Palestinian children of an education". The centre in Tunis participated in an academic seminar on peace in the Middle East and added a special page on its web site, providing detailed information on the Road Map.

70. The annual training programme for Palestinian media practitioners at Headquarters was postponed from 2002 to 2003 due to delays in obtaining entry visas. The Department was unable to conduct a news mission to the region in 2003

because of the difficult circumstances in the region. The Department is organizing an international media seminar on peace in the Middle East in Seville, Spain, on 21 and 22 October 2003, in cooperation with the Foundation of the Three Cultures of the Mediterranean, and has decided not to hold a regional encounter in 2003.

Chapter VII

Conclusions and recommendations of the Committee

71. During the period under review, and especially since the presentation of the Road Map, the Committee has remained concerned about the lack of serious headway in the political process. The Committee has also been dismayed by the absence of any tangible improvement in the security area. It noted with much regret that the initial positive steps aimed at creating confidence between the parties had collapsed, stalling the political process. The Committee remained hopeful that the situation could be redressed through the efforts of the Quartet, its individual members and other regional and international players. It also emphasized that the United Nations should maintain its permanent responsibility with respect to all aspects of the question of Palestine until it is resolved in a satisfactory manner, in conformity with relevant United Nations resolutions, in accordance with international legitimacy and until the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people are fully realized. The Committee also stressed the critical peacemaking role played by the Security Council. It was of the view that the Council could and should, *inter alia*, encourage steps towards creating an effective mechanism for monitoring the implementation of the Road Map and for protection of the Palestinian population, including through authorizing the deployment of international observers.

72. In all its activities, the Committee intends to continue to promote support for the Road Map and the important work of the Quartet in pursuance of a comprehensive, just and lasting solution of the question of Palestine based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 1397 (2002) and other relevant resolutions and the exercise by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights.

73. The Committee stresses its strong opposition to the illegal construction by the occupying Power of the wall in the Occupied West Bank and in areas close to East Jerusalem. The Committee reminds the Government of Israel that this construction has devastating immediate and longer-term implications for the livelihood of the Palestinian people. The construction also endangers international efforts aimed at resolving the conflict and realizing the vision of a region where two States, Israel and Palestine, would live side by side in peace and security, as outlined in the Road Map. With these concerns in mind, the Committee calls upon the international community, most notably the Security Council and the General Assembly, to attach the necessary importance to this issue, with a view to stopping the *de facto* annexation of Palestinian land and the construction of the wall by the occupying Power.

74. The Committee considers that its programme of international and regional meetings and conferences helps to promote a constructive analysis and discussion of the various aspects of the question of Palestine and mobilize international assistance to the Palestinian people as well as contributing to heightening awareness of the root cause of the conflict, namely the occupation by Israel of the Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. The programme is also aimed at mobilizing international efforts to resolve the conflict by peaceful means. The Committee highly appreciates the involvement

in these meetings of Governments, intergovernmental organizations and civil society. It will continue its programme of meetings to foster support for the attainment by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights in accordance with international law and the resolutions of the Security Council and General Assembly. In its meetings next year, the Committee intends to address such issues as the status of the peace process and the implementation of the Road Map, the security situation and the importance of protecting the Palestinian people, the illegal construction of the wall and its implications, the humanitarian and socio-economic situation, including the plight of Palestinian women, and the further involvement of civil society.

75. The Committee commends civil society organizations for their efforts at upholding international legitimacy with regard to the question of Palestine through advocacy and the mobilization of public opinion, as well as for their unremitting initiatives to provide relief and assistance to the Palestinian people. It encourages NGOs to enhance cooperation and coordination of their activities on the ground, as well as at the national and international levels, through forming national platforms or campaigns and international coordinating mechanisms. The Committee invites accredited civil society organizations, academic institutions, think tanks and the media to share their insights into and reports on the situation on the ground and other relevant initiatives, including at meetings organized under the Committee's auspices. In its programme of meetings, the Committee, will pay special attention to enhancing the involvement of parliamentarians and their regional and international organizations.

76. The Committee stresses the essential contribution of the Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat in support of the Committee's objectives and requests it to continue its programme of publications and other informational activities, including the further development of the UNISPAL documents collection. The Committee also considers that, in spite of the difficulties on the ground, the annual training programme for staff of the Palestinian Authority has continued to demonstrate its usefulness and requests that it be continued.

77. The Committee is of the view that the special information programme on the question of Palestine of the Department of Public Information has made an important contribution to informing the media and public opinion on the relevant issues. The Committee requests the programme's continuation, with the necessary flexibility, as warranted by developments relevant to the question of Palestine.

78. Wishing to make its contribution to the achievement of a just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine, and in view of the many difficulties facing the Palestinian people and besetting the peace process, the Committee calls on all States to join in this endeavour and invites the General Assembly once again to recognize the importance of its role and to reconfirm its mandate with overwhelming support.

Notes

- ¹ *Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-first Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/31/35).*
- ² *Ibid., Thirty-second Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/32/35); ibid., Thirty-third Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/33/35); ibid., Thirty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 35 and corrigendum (A/34/35 and Corr.1); ibid., Thirty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/35/35); ibid., Thirty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/36/35); ibid., Thirty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 35 and corrigendum (A/37/35 and Corr.1); ibid., Thirty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/38/35); ibid., Thirty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/39/35); ibid., Fortieth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/40/35); ibid., Forty-first Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/41/35); ibid., Forty-second Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/42/35); ibid., Forty-third Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/43/35); ibid., Forty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/44/35); ibid., Forty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/45/35); ibid., Forty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/46/35); ibid., Forty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/47/35); ibid., Forty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/48/35); ibid., Forty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/49/35); ibid., Fiftieth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/50/35); ibid., Fifty-first Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/51/35); ibid., Fifty-second Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/52/35); ibid., Fifty-third Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/53/35); ibid., Fifty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/54/35); ibid., Fifty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/55/35); ibid., Fifty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 35 and corrigendum (A/56/35 and Corr.1); and ibid. Fifty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/57/35).*
- ³ *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/57/35), chap. VII.*
- ⁴ A/AC.183/2003/CRP.1.
- ⁵ The observers at the Committee meetings were as follows: Algeria, Bangladesh, Bulgaria, China, Ecuador, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Mauritania, Morocco, Nicaragua, Niger, Qatar, Sri Lanka, Syrian Arab Republic, United Arab Emirates, Viet Nam, Yemen, African Union, League of Arab States, Organization of the Islamic Conference and Palestine.
- ⁶ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 75, No. 973.



United Nations

Report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

General Assembly
Official Records
Fifty-ninth Session
Supplement No. 35 (A/59/35)

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**Report of the Committee on the Exercise
of the Inalienable Rights of the
Palestinian People**



United Nations • New York, 2004

Note

Symbols of United Nations documents are composed of capital letters combined with figures. Mention of such a symbol indicates a reference to a United Nations document.

Contents

<i>Chapter</i>	<i>Paragraphs</i>	<i>Page</i>
Letter of transmittal		iv
I. Introduction	1–8	1
II. Mandate of the Committee	9	3
III. Organization of work	10–15	4
A. Membership and officers	10–13	4
B. Participation in the work of the Committee	14–15	4
IV. Review of the situation relating to the question of Palestine	16–30	5
V. Action taken by the Committee	31–63	11
A. Action taken in accordance with General Assembly resolution 58/18	31	11
1. Action taken in the General Assembly and the Security Council	32–42	11
2. Statements by the Committee	43–45	13
3. Participation by the Chairman of the Committee in international conferences and meetings	46–47	13
B. Action taken by the Committee and the Division for Palestinian Rights in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 58/18 and 58/19	48–63	14
1. Programme of international meetings and conferences	48–51	14
2. Cooperation with intergovernmental and other organizations	52–54	15
3. Cooperation with civil society	55–58	15
4. Research, monitoring and publications	59	16
5. United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine	60	17
6. Training programme for staff of the Palestinian Authority	61	17
7. International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People	62–63	17
VI. Action taken by the Department of Public Information in accordance with General Assembly resolution 58/20	64–76	18
VII. Conclusions and recommendations of the Committee	77–84	21

Letter of transmittal

6 October 2004

Mr. Secretary-General,

I have the honour to enclose herewith the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for submission to the General Assembly in accordance with paragraph 7 of its resolution 58/18 of 3 December 2003.

The report covers the period from 10 October 2003 to 6 October 2004.

Accept, Sir, the assurances of my highest consideration.

(Signed) Paul **Badji**

Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of
the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

His Excellency
Mr. Kofi Annan
Secretary-General of the United Nations
New York

Chapter I

Introduction

1. The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People was established by the General Assembly by resolution 3376 (XXX) of 10 November 1975, with the task of recommending a programme designed to enable the Palestinian people to exercise its inalienable rights as recognized by the Assembly in resolution 3236 (XXIX) of 22 November 1974.

2. The recommendations made by the Committee in its first report to the General Assembly¹ were endorsed by the Assembly as a basis for the solution of the question of Palestine. In its subsequent reports,² the Committee has continued to stress that a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, must be based on the relevant United Nations resolutions and the following essential principles: the withdrawal of Israel from the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, and from the other occupied Arab territories; respect for the right of all States in the region to live in peace within secure and internationally recognized boundaries; and the recognition and exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, primarily the right to self-determination. The Committee's recommendations could not be implemented, and the Assembly each year renewed the Committee's mandate and requested it to intensify efforts in pursuit of its objectives.

3. The Committee welcomed the historic breakthrough in the peace process in 1993 and the subsequent important steps towards the achievement of a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine, based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973), 1397 (2002) and 1515 (2003). At the same time, the Committee continued to work towards the full realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including the right to self-determination and to its own independent State. The Committee also continued to mobilize international assistance for and solidarity with the Palestinian people.

4. In the past few years, the Al-Aqsa intifada against the Israeli occupation continued in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. The Government of Israel intensified its military raids, particularly in the Gaza Strip, resulting in an unprecedented destruction of homes and infrastructure and a rapidly rising number of civilian deaths and injuries. The momentum achieved in 2003 has been lost owing to Israeli actions on the ground, the continuing Israeli army operations in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, the expansion of settlements and the construction of a wall on Palestinian land. On the other hand, suicide bombings and Qassam rocket attacks by Palestinian groups against civilians in Israel also contributed to the cycle of violence and exacerbated tensions. There was particularly strong criticism among members of the international community of the continued construction of the wall, which has asphyxiated and divided Palestinian communities and where residents have lost homes, farmland and access to jobs, schools and medical care. The horrific effects of constant military incursions and the hindrance of free movement has had a devastating effect on the humanitarian situation. The hope for a political settlement between the parties generated by the road map has dimmed, with deeper mistrust and despair taking its place.

5. The Committee welcomed the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice, which found that the construction of the wall being built by Israel, the

occupying Power, in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including in and around East Jerusalem, and its associated regime, were contrary to international law³ and that the construction of the wall severely impeded the exercise by the Palestinian people of its right to self-determination.⁴ The Committee emphasized adherence to the rules and principles of international law as the sine qua non for a negotiated solution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

6. The Committee expressed grave concern at the lack of implementation of the road map, despite the efforts of the Quartet and the international community to bring the parties back to the negotiating table. In the period under review, the Government of Israel has not begun meeting its road map obligations. Since the start of the intifada, the Palestinian Authority has faced the destruction by the occupying Power of its institutions and infrastructure, severe fiscal crisis and continued confinement of its President. These challenges notwithstanding, the Palestinian Authority has clearly stated its commitment to reform.

7. The Committee also expressed concern over Israel's announcement of a so-called unilateral disengagement plan from the Gaza Strip, and parts of the West Bank. Its position is that any withdrawal from the Gaza Strip must be full, done in coordination with the Palestinian Authority and must be accompanied by similar steps in the West Bank.

8. The Committee urged the Quartet and the international community to intensify their engagement as a matter of great urgency to help the parties to commence implementing their obligations under the road map, which provides for the way to achieve a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine, on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973), 1397 (2002) and 1515 (2003), and the principle of a permanent two-State solution to the conflict, based on 1967 borders, the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and the right of all States to live in peace and security.

Chapter II

Mandate of the Committee

9. On 3 December 2003, the General Assembly renewed the mandate of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (resolution 58/18), requested the Secretary-General to continue to provide the Division for Palestinian Rights of the United Nations Secretariat with the necessary resources to carry out its work (resolution 58/19) and requested the continuance of the special information programme on the question of Palestine of the Department of Public Information of the United Nations Secretariat (resolution 58/20). On the same date, the Assembly adopted resolution 58/21, entitled "Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine".

Chapter III

Organization of work

A. Membership and officers

10. The Committee is composed of the following Member States: Afghanistan, Belarus, Cuba, Cyprus, Guinea, Guyana, India, Indonesia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mali, Malta, Namibia, Nigeria, Pakistan, Romania, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Tunisia, Turkey and Ukraine.

11. In a letter dated 28 April 2004, the Permanent Representative of Hungary to the United Nations had informed the Chairman of the Committee of the decision of his Government to resign its membership of the Committee as at 1 May 2004 and the Committee took note of the decision. The General Assembly, at its 91st plenary meeting on 18 June 2004, had before it a letter dated 10 June 2004 from the Chairman of the Committee addressed to the President of the Assembly (A/58/841) and took note of the decision of the Government of Hungary, as relayed therein (see A/58/PV.91).

12. At its 277th meeting, on 12 March 2004, the Committee elected Paul Badji (Senegal) as Chairman and Orlando Requeijo Gual (Cuba) as Vice-Chairman. It re-elected Ravan A. G. Farhâdi (Afghanistan) as Vice-Chairman and Victor Camilleri (Malta) as Rapporteur.

13. At its 277th meeting, the Committee adopted its programme of work for 2004.⁵

B. Participation in the work of the Committee

14. As in previous years, the Committee reconfirmed that all States Members of and permanent observers to the United Nations wishing to participate in the work of the Committee as observers were welcome to do so. In accordance with established practice, Palestine participated in the work of the Committee as an observer, attended all of its meetings and made observations and proposals for consideration by the Committee and its Bureau.

15. In 2004, the Committee again welcomed as observers all States and organizations that had participated in its work in the preceding year.⁶

Chapter IV

Review of the situation relating to the question of Palestine

16. In pursuance of its mandate, the Committee continued to keep under review the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, as well as relevant political developments. The unremitting Israeli military incursions in areas under Palestinian control continued during the year, dramatically increasing the numbers of those killed and wounded, and resulting in the devastation of Palestinian cities and communities. The Committee was deeply troubled by the disproportionate and indiscriminate use of force by the Israeli army and the practice of collective punishment, in grave breach of international humanitarian law. The expansion of settlements and outposts and the construction of the wall in the West Bank continued at a brisk pace, along with the demolition of houses, confiscation of Palestinian property and unprecedented restrictions of movement. The number of Palestinians killed, in the four years of the intifada, has reached a total of over 3,700, with some 35,700 injured. The growing number of children directly harmed by the ongoing violence has been especially worrying. The number of deaths of children under 18 years of age has exceeded 690.

17. The Committee remained concerned over Israeli military operations in densely populated residential areas in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, especially the Gaza Strip. Army operations were routinely backed up by armoured vehicles and the air force. In December 2003, the Israeli Defense Forces carried out almost daily incursions into Nablus, resulting in deaths and injury to Palestinian civilians and the destruction of historic buildings and homes in the Old City. In May 2004, the Rafah area in the Gaza Strip was subjected to a major military operation, "Operation Rainbow", aimed at preventing weapon-smuggling operations between the Gaza Strip and Egypt. On 13 May, Israeli officials announced a plan to demolish hundreds of houses in order to widen the border area (the "Philadelphi corridor") between Rafah and Egypt. Military bulldozers flattened huge swathes of the city, resulting in a humanitarian crisis in Rafah. In response to the deterioration of the situation on the ground, the Security Council adopted resolution 1544 (2004), calling on Israel to respect its obligations under international humanitarian law and not to undertake demolition of homes contrary to that law. A month-long siege in Beit Hanoun in July 2004, known as operation "Forward Shield", left behind broken buildings and flattened citrus orchards. On 28 September 2004, a massive military operation code-named "Days of Penitence" was launched in the northern Gaza Strip, particularly in the densely populated towns of Beit Lahiya, Beit Hanoun and the Jabaliya refugee camp, home to over 100,000 refugees. Over 80 Palestinians were killed and more than 300 were injured within a week. Other Palestinian cities, towns and refugee camps (Bethlehem, Jenin, Khan Yunis, Zeitoun, Balata refugee camp) were not spared the deadly incursions and blockades, intensifying the crisis. The raids seriously hindered the work of humanitarian aid workers. Ambulances were shot at by Israeli snipers and delayed or blocked by Israeli authorities. Since the start of the intifada, more than 65,998 Palestinian buildings, including homes, were fully destroyed or partially damaged. In Rafah alone, some 2,500 buildings were completely destroyed. Since January 2000, 184 dwellings have been demolished in East Jerusalem, 149 belonging to Palestinians.

18. The Israeli army intensified extrajudicial killings, including the assassination of the leader of Hamas in March 2004, followed by the killing of his successor in

April 2004. The international community voiced its strong indignation at the killings, leading to the Security Council holding public debates in the aftermath of both executions (see S/PV.4929, S/PV.4934 and S/PV.4945). The Committee has repeatedly condemned the policy and practice of targeted assassinations as it is inadmissible under international humanitarian law. At the same time, it strongly condemned all terrorist attacks against civilians in Israel, which cannot be justified and destroyed prospects of reconciliation between the two parties.

19. The Committee has strongly condemned Israel's continued siege on Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat at the muqataa in Ramallah for almost three years, seriously preventing him from properly carrying out his duties as elected leader of his people. A worsening fiscal crisis has likewise affected the Authority's effectiveness in delivering core services to the population. Four years into the crisis, the Palestinian Authority was facing acute economic and fiscal challenges, with a financing gap estimated at US\$ 890 million for 2004. However, it managed to continue providing for basic needs, including education, health, water, electricity and sewerage, although the standards of such services have declined. Efforts by the Palestinian Authority at introducing reforms continued in the finance and public administration areas. Since March 2004, members of the security services have received their salaries through bank accounts, replacing payment in person. Progress has been made in areas of local government reform and restructuring of the Ministry of National Economy. In August 2004, the Palestinian Authority announced the holding of simultaneous presidential, parliamentary and municipal elections by spring 2005. The Palestinian Central Elections Committee expressed concern about the registration of voters, given the curfews and Israeli military incursions.

20. In February 2004, the Government of Israel announced that it would withdraw military installations and all settlements from the Gaza Strip, as well as certain military installations and four settlements from the West Bank. The plan, which was approved by the Cabinet on 6 June 2004, stipulated that the Government would convene periodically to approve each step of the evacuation, with the process to be completed by the end of 2005. In its statement of 22 September 2004, the Quartet reiterated its view that no party should undertake unilateral actions which could prejudice issues that could only be resolved through negotiation and agreement between the parties. It also emphasized that an Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip should be full and complete and be undertaken in a manner consistent with the road map, as a step towards ending the Israeli occupation that began in 1967. It urged both Israel and the Palestinian Authority to coordinate closely in the preparation and implementation of the Israeli withdrawal initiative.

21. The Committee noted with growing concern that, during the period under review, the Israeli Government continued the expansion of settlements and the establishment and consolidation of so-called outposts in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, in violation of its obligation under the road map. Based on a survey carried out in June 2004, settlement expansion activity was under way at 73 of 211 settlement locations, including 12 of the 21 settlements in the Gaza Strip. The total area of expansion was close to 500,000 square metres and included new and continuing land development for settlement, new infrastructure, new and continuing construction within the settlements, internal road works and the placement of new caravans. In and around East Jerusalem, settlement activity proceeded at a rate unmatched since 1992. Settlement activity connecting East Jerusalem and "Ma'ale Adumim" could result in splitting the West Bank into two

separate Palestinian cantons, having serious implications for the territorial contiguity of the West Bank. In December 2003, Israel began constructing a new settlement, "Nof Zahav", in East Jerusalem. It would comprise 550 housing units, hotel and schools, and would divide the village of Jabal Mukabbar, home to 10,000 Palestinians. During the same month, the Ministry of Housing and Construction published tenders for 64 housing units in "Pisgat Ze'ev", 180 housing units in "Givat Ze'ev" and 153 units in "Karnei Shomron". On 16 February 2004, the Knesset Finance Committee voted to allocate NIS 96 million (US\$ 22 million) for housing projects, almost entirely in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. On 17 August 2004, the Housing and Construction Ministry issued tenders for the construction of some 1,000 new housing units in the settlements of "Betar Ilit", "Ariel", "Ma'ale Adumim", and "Karnei Shomron". The Defence Ministry confirmed that it was part of the policy to increase the size of the large settlements which Israel planned to keep after the unilateral disengagement. An additional 301 new settler homes were to be built beyond the municipal line of the "Har Gilo" and "Har Adar" settlements. In September 2004, 100 outposts were identified in the West Bank, 51 of them established since March 2001. Existing outposts were reinforced with new infrastructure, such as paved roads, running water and electricity in the first four months of 2004. Since October 2003, there has been no serious effort made by the Government of Israel to remove the outposts, as required by the road map.

22. The construction by Israel of the wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including in and around East Jerusalem, continues to cause great hardship to the Palestinians. Some 875,000 Palestinians in the West Bank, 38 per cent of the population, have been affected by the wall. Some 263,200 living in 81 localities have become isolated. The wall creates a *fait accompli* on the ground that could well become permanent and lead to the *de facto* annexation of Palestinian land. In June 2004, construction began east of the settlement of "Ariel", linking it to "Kedumim" and "Karnei Shomron". This will result in the seizure of land from one dozen villages, driving a wedge deep into the West Bank and rendering the establishment of a contiguous Palestinian State very difficult. In October 2003, the General Assembly had demanded that Israel stop and reverse the construction of the wall and had requested the Secretary-General to report periodically on its compliance (resolution ES-10/13). In a report dated 24 November 2003, the Secretary-General stated that Israel was not in compliance with the Assembly's demand (A/ES-10/248, para. 3). The Assembly subsequently requested the International Court of Justice to render urgently an advisory opinion on the legal consequences arising from the construction of the wall (resolution ES-10/14).

23. The Committee welcomed the advisory opinion of the Court, issued on 9 July 2004, in which the Court determined that the wall and its associated regime were contrary to international law, that Israel was under an obligation to cease the construction and to dismantle portions built on Palestinian land, and to provide reparations to Palestinians whose lives had been harmed by the wall. On 20 July 2004, the Assembly, by an overwhelming majority, adopted resolution ES-10/15 demanding that Israel heed the Court's opinion. Israel vowed to continue building the wall despite the Assembly vote. On 30 June 2004, the Israeli High Court of Justice ordered changes in the trajectory of the wall along a 30-kilometre segment north of Jerusalem, stating that the separation from their agricultural land injured local inhabitants in a severe and acute way. In response to the ruling of the Israeli High Court of 30 June, the Defence Ministry presented changes in the route of the

wall south of Hebron, which would be closer to the Armistice Line of 1949 (more commonly known as the Green Line). Settlements such as “Karmel”, “Maon”, and “Susia” would remain on Palestinian land, with fortifications to be built around them. However, 15 square kilometres of Palestinian land remained on the Israeli side of the wall.

24. According to the Israeli Interior Ministry, from June 2003 to June 2004, the settler population grew by 12,306, an increase of 5.32 per cent, with a total of 243,749 living in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. The fastest growth in Gaza was seen in the settlements slated for evacuation under the disengagement plan: “Kfar Darom” (21.5 per cent), “Netzarim” (13 per cent) and “Morag” (12.3 per cent). Two thirds of the overall growth (some 8,100) was attributed to the high 3.5 per cent fertility rate among settlers. Official Israeli population in the Gaza Strip now stands at 8,158. Assaults by settlers on Palestinians, including murder, the destruction of vehicles and crops, physical and verbal assaults, and other actions have continued and have become more vicious.

25. The harsh system of curfews and closures imposed by Israel, which severely restricts the movement of Palestinian people, goods and services, remained the central impediment to economic stabilization and recovery. The border between Gaza and Egypt was closed for three weeks in July 2004, stranding some 3,400 Palestinians on the Egyptian side, where a number of pregnant women suffered miscarriages. Refugees, women and children bore the brunt of Israeli measures and malnutrition was on the rise. Unemployment stood at 26 per cent by the end of 2003 but was as high as 70 per cent in some areas. Over 60 per cent of Palestinians currently live below the poverty line, with two million living on less than US\$ 2.1 a day. Damage to public structures and properties has reached an estimated US\$ 1.2 billion. The current Palestinian recession is among the worst in modern history, according to a World Bank study. Israel’s disengagement plan would have little impact since it proposed a limited easing of closure.

26. The Committee expressed grave concern over the devastating effects of the Israeli occupation on the lives of the most vulnerable members of Palestinian society, women and children. The hardship of daily life was felt most acutely by Palestinian women, who carried the burden of responsibility within the household owing to the death, imprisonment or unemployment of its male members. At least 38 per cent reported increased difficulties in gaining access to health services. Delays at checkpoints have resulted in 46 women delivering their babies while waiting for permission to pass. As a result, 24 women and 27 newborn babies have died since June 2003. The violence that children witness has a severe impact on their general behaviour and on their ability to concentrate in school. At least 69 per cent have received psychological counselling to help to alleviate symptoms caused by constant exposure to traumatic incidents, including the harassment and humiliation endured by their parents. Schoolchildren have been subjected to hours of waiting at checkpoints to get to their schools, particularly since the construction of the wall. During the past year, around 1,500 school days have been lost and pass rates in schools run by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East have sharply declined. More than 25 per cent of children suffer from chronic malnutrition.

27. In August 2004, about 4,000 Palestinian prisoners participated in an 18-day hunger strike protesting the systematic violation of their rights, including torture or

other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment, harsh solitary confinement, neglect of prisoners' medical needs and denial of family visitation rights. Over 7,000 Palestinians were being held in Israeli prisons, detention and interrogation centres. This figure included more than 200 children who turned 18 while in prison and were then classified as adults. Some 370 children (under 18 years) remained incarcerated. Over 100 women, including girls, were also in Israeli prisons. Approximately 700 prisoners were being held in administrative detention, not charged with any offence and yet to face trial. The Committee has repeatedly called on Israel to abide by its obligations under the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949 (the Fourth Geneva Convention)⁷ and find a solution to the issue of Palestinian prisoners. In a statement issued on 24 August 2004 (see para. 45 below), the Bureau of the Committee urged Israel to heed the strikers' demands, to ensure that the detainees were treated in a humane manner and that proper detention conditions were immediately established and basic human rights restored.

28. Many Palestinian towns and villages continue to suffer from severe water shortage. In the Gaza Strip, the problem is compounded by the poor quality of the water, exposing residents to severe health risks. On average, a Palestinian is allowed 83 cubic metres of water per year, whereas each Israeli uses 333 cubic metres per year. Many villages are suffering from a serious water shortage owing to the Israeli siege which prevents water tanks from reaching villages. The construction of the barrier in some of the most fertile areas of the West Bank has affected local access to water and has serious implications for longer-term water use. Without urgent modification of its route, the wall will dramatically increase Palestinian impoverishment by reducing access to irrigation water. Any disengagement process in which electricity or water supplies are terminated will further exacerbate the living conditions of the Palestinians.

29. The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) remained the main provider of education, health care, social services, and emergency aid to over 4 million Palestine refugees in Lebanon, Jordan, the Syrian Arab Republic and the West Bank and Gaza. The deteriorating situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, where UNRWA served a population of approximately 1.6 million refugees, further stretched the dwindling emergency funds of the Agency as assistance to the refugees had to be stepped up. Furthermore, operations in the West Bank and Gaza Strip continued to suffer from restrictions on humanitarian access and other disruptive measures. For example, troops from the Israeli Defense Forces broke into the UNRWA office in Jenin on one occasion, handcuffing and blindfolding the Jenin Reconstruction Project Manager. In June 2004, gunfire from Israeli positions hit an UNRWA office in the Tel es-Sultan area near the Rafah camp and damaged the water tanks of its office near the Khan Yunis refugee camp. On separate occasions, three children were hit by Israeli gunfire as they sat in UNRWA classrooms. At times, staff found themselves caught in the crossfire between the Israeli Defense Forces and the Palestinians. On 14 July 2004, an UNRWA convoy, which included the Commissioner-General of UNRWA, was fired at during a delivery of food to some 20,000 residents of Beit Hanoun. The Agency appealed to all parties to respect the integrity of its facilities and the neutrality of its staff. Its field operations in Gaza continued to provide all services despite the relocation of some staff owing to safety concerns. The Committee continued to express its gratitude to the UNRWA staff for their dedication to their

work and repeatedly appealed to the international donor community to give generously to all international aid agencies that pursue their work in the Occupied Palestinian Territory under increasingly perilous conditions.

30. The Committee also continued to express its gratitude to the Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The new UNDP office, inaugurated in the Gaza Strip in November 2003, continued to provide technical and development assistance to the Palestinian people as it has done for over 25 years. Its work did not only focus on the restoration of damaged infrastructure, but on institution-building and the strengthening of a partnership for years to come. The Committee expressed its appreciation to all other entities of the United Nations system for their continued assistance to the Palestinian people.

Chapter V

Action taken by the Committee

A. Action taken in accordance with General Assembly resolution 58/18

31. In pursuance of its mandate, the Committee continued to mobilize the international community in support of the Palestinian people, in cooperation with United Nations bodies, Governments, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and others, as indicated below.

1. Action taken in the General Assembly and the Security Council

(a) Resumed tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly

32. On 14 October 2003, a draft resolution on the construction of a wall by Israel was not adopted by the Security Council in the light of the negative vote of a permanent member. At the request of the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic in his capacity as Chairman of the Group of Arab States for the month of October 2003 (see A/ES-10/242), the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly was resumed to discuss the situation on the ground, under the item entitled "Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory". The Permanent Representative of Malaysia, in his capacity as Chairman of the Coordinating Bureau of the Non-Aligned Movement, conveyed the support of the Movement for the resumption of the session (see A/ES-10/243). The session was resumed on 20 October, when the Vice-Chairman of the Committee, Ravan A. G. Farhâdi (Afghanistan), took part in the debate and made a statement (see A/ES-10/PV.21). On the following day, the Assembly adopted resolution ES-10/13.

33. The tenth emergency special session of the Assembly was resumed on 8 December 2003 (eleventh resumption) to consider the report of the Secretary-General on compliance with Assembly resolution ES-10/13, at the request of the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of Kuwait in his capacity as Chairman of the Group of Arab States for the month of December (see A/ES-10/249). The Permanent Representative of Malaysia, in his capacity as Chairman of the Coordinating Bureau of the Non-Aligned Movement, conveyed the support of the Movement for the resumption of the session (see A/ES-10/251). The Chairman of the Committee, Papa Louis Fall, took part in the debate and made a statement (see A/ES-10/PV.23 and Corr.1). At the end of the debate on the same day, the Assembly adopted resolution ES-10/14 and a draft decision.⁸

34. On 16 July 2004, the tenth emergency special session was again resumed (twelfth resumption) to consider the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice, at the request of the Permanent Representative of Jordan in his capacity as Chairman of the Group of Arab States for the month of July (see A/ES-10/274). The Chargé d'affaires a.i. of Malaysia, on behalf of the Chairman of the Coordinating Bureau of the Non-Aligned Movement, conveyed the support of the Movement for the resumption of the session (see A/ES-10/275). The Chairman of the Committee, Paul Badji, took part in the debate and made a statement (see A/ES-10/PV.24). On 20 July 2004, the Assembly adopted resolution ES-10/15.

(b) General Assembly meeting on agenda item “Question of Palestine”

35. On 6 May 2004, the Assembly met to consider a draft resolution on the status of the Occupied Palestinian Territory (A/58/L.61/Rev.1). The Chairman of the Committee, Mr. Badji, took part in the debate and made a statement (A/58/PV.86). At the end of the debate, the Assembly adopted resolution 58/292 of 6 May 2004.

(c) Security Council meetings

36. During the year, against the backdrop of the highly dangerous situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, the Security Council has monitored the situation on the ground and the efforts to implement the road map. Throughout the year, the Council heard monthly briefings under agenda item “The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question”.

37. The Security Council met on 14 October 2003, at the request of the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic in his capacity as Chairman of the Group of Arab States for the month of October (see S/2003/973). The Chairman of the Committee, Mr. Fall, took part in the debate and made a statement (see S/PV.4841). At its 4842nd meeting, on the same day, the Council voted on a draft resolution submitted by Guinea, Malaysia, Pakistan and the Syrian Arab Republic (S/2003/980). The result of the vote was 10 votes in favour, 1 against and 4 abstentions. The draft resolution was not adopted in the light of the negative vote of a permanent member of the Council (see S/PV.4842).

38. At its 4862nd meeting, on 19 November 2003, the Council considered the agenda item and voted on a draft resolution submitted by Bulgaria, Chile, China, France, Germany, Guinea, Mexico, the Russian Federation, Spain and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (S/2003/1100), which was adopted unanimously (resolution 1515 (2003)).

39. The Security Council met on 23 and 25 March 2004, at the request of the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya in his capacity as Chairman of the Group of Arab States for the month of March (see S/2004/233). The Chairman of the Committee, Mr. Badji, took part in the debate and made a statement (see S/PV.4929). At its 4934th meeting, on 25 March 2004, the Council voted on a draft resolution submitted by Algeria and the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya (S/2004/240). The result of the vote was 11 votes in favour, 1 against and 3 abstentions. The draft resolution was not adopted in the light of the negative vote of a permanent member of the Council (see S/PV.4934).

40. The Security Council met on 19 April 2004, at the request of the Permanent Representative of Egypt in his capacity as Chairman of the Group of Arab States for the month of April (see S/2004/303). The Chairman of the Committee, Mr. Badji, took part in the debate and made a statement (see S/PV.4945).

41. The Security Council met on 19 May 2004, at the request of the Permanent Representative of Yemen in his capacity as Chairman of the Group of Arab States for the month of May (see S/2004/393). At its 4972nd meeting, the Council voted on a draft resolution submitted by Algeria and Yemen (S/2004/400), which was adopted by 14 votes in favour, none against and 1 abstention (resolution 1544 (2004)). The Chairman of the Committee, Mr. Badji, made a statement (see S/PV.4972).

42. The Security Council met on 4 October 2004, at the request of the Permanent Representative of Tunisia in his capacity as Chairman of the Group of Arab States for the month of October (S/2004/779). At its 5051st meeting, on 5 October 2004, the Council voted on a draft resolution submitted by Algeria, Pakistan and Tunisia (S/2004/783). The result of the vote was 11 votes in favour, 1 against and 3 abstentions. The draft resolution was not adopted in the light of the negative vote of a permanent member of the Council (see S/PV.5051).

2. Statements by the Committee

43. On 20 November 2003, the Bureau of the Committee issued a statement (see GA/PAL/934) welcoming the unanimous adoption by the Security Council of resolution 1515 (2003), in which the Council endorsed the Quartet's performance-based road map to a permanent two-State solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (S/2003/529).

44. On 13 July 2004, the Bureau of the Committee issued a statement (see GA/PAL/962) welcoming the advisory opinion issued by the International Court of Justice on 9 July 2004, in which the Court stated that the construction of the wall being built by Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem and its associated regime are contrary to international law.

45. On 24 August 2004, the Bureau of the Committee issued a statement (see GA/PAL/964) expressing grave concern at the systemic violation of the rights of Palestinian prisoners in Israeli prisons and was alarmed at the growing number of prisoners who were on a hunger strike.

3. Participation by the Chairman of the Committee in international conferences and meetings

46. During the year, the Chairman of the Committee participated in meetings of intergovernmental bodies and contributed to their deliberations in support of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, as follows:

(a) Tenth session of the Islamic Summit Conference, Putrajaya, Malaysia, 16 to 18 October 2003;

(b) Thirty-first session of the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers, Istanbul, 14 to 16 June 2004;

(c) Fifth ordinary session of the Executive Council and third ordinary session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union, Addis Ababa, 30 June to 3 July and 6 to 8 July 2004, respectively;

(d) Fourteenth Ministerial Conference of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (Mid-term Review), Durban, South Africa, 19 August 2004.

47. As in previous years, the Committee continued to follow the activities of other intergovernmental organizations relevant to the question of Palestine, as well as the decisions and resolutions adopted by United Nations bodies and agencies.

B. Action taken by the Committee and the Division for Palestinian Rights in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 58/18 and 58/19

1. Programme of international meetings and conferences

48. In its programme of international meetings and conferences, the Committee continued to foster support for the attainment by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights in accordance with international law and relevant resolutions of the Security Council and the General Assembly. The meetings addressed such issues as the situation on the ground and the importance of protecting the Palestinian population; the construction of the wall and its implications; the need to resume the political process and to implement the road map; and the further involvement of civil society.

49. In the period under review, the following international events were held under the auspices of the Committee:

(a) United Nations Meeting for Asia and the Pacific on the Question of Palestine, Beijing, 16 and 17 December 2003;

(b) Public Forum in Support of Middle East Peace, Beijing, 18 December 2003;

(c) United Nations International Meeting on the Impact of the Construction of the Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including in and around East Jerusalem, United Nations Office at Geneva, 15 and 16 April 2004;

(d) United Nations African Meeting in Support of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, Cape Town, South Africa, 29 and 30 June 2004;

(e) United Nations Forum of Civil Society in Support of Middle East Peace, Cape Town, South Africa, 1 July 2004;

(f) United Nations International Conference of Civil Society in Support of the Palestinian People, United Nations Headquarters, 13 and 14 September 2004.

50. All of the above-mentioned events were attended by representatives of Governments, Palestine, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and United Nations system entities, as well as experts, representatives of the media, academics and students. The reports of the meetings were issued as publications of the Division for Palestinian Rights and were made available through the United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine (UNISPAL) and the Division's web site.

51. In the course of the meetings held in Beijing and Cape Town, the delegation of the Committee held discussions with high-ranking host Government officials who welcomed the efforts of the Committee geared towards mobilizing support for the resumption of the political dialogue between the parties and the implementation of the road map. The Committee expressed its great appreciation to the Governments of China and South Africa for having provided the venues and facilities for the events sponsored by the Committee. It expressed particular gratitude to the President of South Africa, Thabo Mbeki, for his personal support of the African meeting.

2. Cooperation with intergovernmental and other organizations

52. During the year, the Committee continued its close cooperation with the African Union, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and the Organization of the Islamic Conference, through the participation of the Chairman in their meetings and through periodic consultations held at United Nations Headquarters.

53. The Committee continued to maintain its cooperation on the question of Palestine with States members of the European Union. The Bureau held consultations with representatives of the European Union in June 2004 (under the Presidency of Ireland) as part of the continued effort to build a constructive relationship with European Union members on issues of common concern.

54. On 14 April 2004, the Bureau of the Committee met with staff members of the International Committee of the Red Cross in charge of operations in the Near East. The Chairman expressed the Committee's appreciation for the work done on the ground by the International Committee. It was agreed to continue consultations on issues of mutual interest.

3. Cooperation with civil society

Civil society organizations

55. The Committee continued to develop its cooperation with non-governmental organizations, academic institutions, think tanks and media representatives. It followed attentively the manifold activities of civil society organizations in various parts of the world, including in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and in Israel, and expressed its appreciation for their useful and committed work. The Committee welcomed the Peoples' Voice and Geneva initiatives, which had generated genuine interest in their visionary approach to the core issues of the conflict. It also noted with interest the numerous initiatives taken on the ground, and internationally, against the construction of the wall. The Committee was deeply appreciative of the work of many civil society organizations which were providing emergency relief under the most difficult circumstances. It encouraged all of the organizations to continue their activities and to engage vigorously in order to ensure that Israel, the occupying power, and all Governments and intergovernmental organizations live up to their legal obligations as spelled out in the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice. The Committee stressed that there was greater need for sustained campaigns aimed at informing public opinion of the applicable rules and regulations of international law and the legitimate rights of the parties, which should lead to national and international action in support of a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the question of Palestine.

56. The Committee maintained and developed its liaison with the national, regional and international coordinating mechanisms accredited to it, in addition to its established liaison with a large number of individual non-governmental organizations. Representatives of civil society participated in all meetings organized under the auspices of the Committee, including the observance of the International Day of Solidarity on 29 November 2003. In the period under review, the Committee also accredited 16 additional non-governmental organizations. Consultations between the delegation of the Committee and representatives of civil society organizations accredited to the Committee were held at United Nations

Headquarters on 15 September, following the United Nations International Conference of Civil Society in Support of the Palestinian People. Participating representatives of non-governmental organizations provided information about their initiatives, campaigns and projects, described the obstacles that they are facing on the ground in implementing the projects and asked the Committee to support concerted international action in support of the Palestinian people. The delegation of the Committee recommended to the representatives that their initiatives be based on international law as laid out in the advisory opinion, the Fourth Geneva Convention, in particular, and on resolutions of the Security Council and General Assembly. The Chairman of the Committee met throughout the year with representatives of civil society organizations either in New York or at the meetings organized under the auspices of the Committee away from Headquarters.

57. The Division for Palestinian Rights maintained the Internet web site “NGO Network on the Question of Palestine” as a permanent tool of mutual information and cooperation between civil society and the Committee. The web site can be found at <http://www.un.org/depts/dpa/ngo>. The Division also continued to issue its bimonthly newsletter, *NGO Action News*, covering the activities of civil society on the various aspects of the question of Palestine.

Parliaments and inter-parliamentary organizations

58. The Committee continued to develop its liaison with national and regional parliaments and their organizations and invited a number of parliamentarians to speak at its meetings. On 14 April 2004, the delegation of the Committee met at the United Nations Office at Geneva with members of the Committee on Middle East Questions of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and the IPU secretariat. The Chairman of the Committee commended the IPU efforts in support of the Palestinian people, in particular in promoting a dialogue between Israeli and Palestinian parliamentarians.

4. Research, monitoring and publications

59. The Division continued to carry out research and monitoring activities, respond to requests for information and briefings on the question of Palestine, and prepare for dissemination, including through UNISPAL, the following publications, the continued relevance of which was reiterated by the Committee:

- (a) Monthly bulletin on action taken by the United Nations and intergovernmental organizations in relation to the question of Palestine;
- (b) Monthly chronology of developments relating to the question of Palestine, based on media reports and other sources;
- (c) Reports of meetings organized under the auspices of the Committee;
- (d) Special bulletin and note on the observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People;
- (e) Periodic reviews of developments relating to Middle East peace efforts;
- (f) Annual compilation of resolutions and decisions of the General Assembly and the Security Council relating to the question of Palestine.

5. United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine

60. The Division for Palestinian Rights, in cooperation with relevant technical and library services of the United Nations Secretariat, continued to maintain, expand and develop UNISPAL, as mandated by the General Assembly since 1991. This included the ongoing upgrading of the system's technical components to ensure its uninterrupted presence on the Internet, notably via the UNISPAL "Question of Palestine" interface on the United Nations home page, under "Peace and Security", and involved the expansion of the documents collection to include relevant new and old documents. In addition, steps continued to be taken to enhance the user-friendliness of accessing and navigating the system (<http://domino.un.org/unispal.nsf>) as preparations for the graphic enhancement of the "Question of Palestine" site progressed.

6. Training programme for staff of the Palestinian Authority

61. One staff member from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Palestinian Authority participated in a training programme conducted by the Division, from October to December 2003, in conjunction with the fifty-eighth session of the General Assembly. The trainee familiarized himself with various aspects of the work of the Secretariat and other organs, and conducted research on specific topics.

7. International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People

62. The International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People was observed at United Nations Headquarters and at the United Nations offices at Geneva and Vienna on 1 December 2003. On the occasion of the observance at Headquarters, in addition to a solemn meeting of the Committee and other activities, an exhibit entitled "Palestine: Reflections of Resilience and Hope" was presented by the Permanent Observer Mission of Palestine, under the auspices of the Committee. The Committee noted with appreciation that the International Day of Solidarity had also been observed in many cities throughout the world. Details on the observance are contained in the special bulletin issued by the Division.

63. In adopting its programme of work, the Committee decided that a similar observance of the International Day of Solidarity should be organized in 2004.

Chapter VI

Action taken by the Department of Public Information in accordance with General Assembly resolution 58/20

64. The Department of Public Information, in pursuance of General Assembly resolution 58/20 of 3 December 2003, continued to implement its special information programme on the question of Palestine. It carried out this work in close cooperation with the Division for Palestinian Rights of the Department of Political Affairs and, through the Division, with the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People.

65. The United Nations web site maintained the web page on the question of Palestine under the “Global Issues” site. The page features events, documents and learning materials, as well as statements on the subject made by the Secretary-General, the Deputy Secretary-General and the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process. The question of Palestine is also featured under the “Peace and Security” and “Refugees” pages of the United Nations web site. Links are available to UNISPAL and other web pages created by the Division for Palestinian Rights. In addition, the United Nations Web Site Section webcast all meetings of the Security Council and the General Assembly and most press conferences on the question of Palestine held at United Nations Headquarters.

66. Also on the United Nations web site, the United Nations News Centre continued to feature extensive coverage of the question of Palestine and a broad range of developments related to the situation in the Middle East in all official languages. During the reporting period, the Arabic web site was visited approximately 112,000 times, registering 2.12 million hits on various pages and files within the site. The news stories on these issues were also distributed throughout the world to over 27,000 subscribers to the e-mail service of the United Nations News Service in English and French. To facilitate user access to United Nations resources on the question of Palestine, a special “Focus” page on the news portal provided links to key reports, statements, resolutions and other related material.

67. The Department issued 49 press releases in English and 48 in French on the question of Palestine. In addition, the completely updated edition of the popular and best-selling *Basic Facts about the United Nations*, expected to be issued in September 2004, will include an extensive section on the Middle East, in which all aspects of the Palestinian question are addressed.

68. United Nations Radio continued to cover various aspects of the question of Palestine and related issues in its news bulletins and current affairs magazines in the six official languages, as well as in a number of non-official languages. The Department facilitated the dissemination of UNWRA footage of the destruction of Palestinian housing to international broadcasters.

69. The Department organized a training programme for five young Palestinian television and radio broadcasters at United Nations Headquarters, the United Nations Information Centre in Washington, D.C., and the United Nations Office at Geneva, from 10 November to 19 December 2003, with a view to strengthening their capacity as media professionals.

70. The Department organized an international media seminar on peace in the Middle East in Seville, Spain, on 21 and 22 October 2003, in cooperation with the Foundation of the Three Cultures of the Mediterranean. A similar seminar was organized in Beijing, from 16 to 17 June 2004, in cooperation with the Foreign Ministry of the People's Republic of China. The proceedings of the Seville seminar were published in New York early in June 2004.

71. The Department arranged three briefings on the question of Palestine for visiting students in March and April 2004. One of the briefings was on the United States national model United Nations, which was attended by 2,000 students. During the reporting period, the Department responded to approximately 2,000 public inquiries relating to the Middle East.

72. The Dag Hammarskjöld Library continued its cooperation with the Division for Palestinian Rights on the digitization of documentation for UNISPAL.

73. The *UN Chronicle* and *UN Chronicle Online* reported on a regular basis on relevant events and issues and action taken by the General Assembly and the Security Council. Press releases, Op-Ed pieces, statements, documents, audio-visual material, reports and studies were brought to the attention of target audiences, posted on web sites and made available to visitors to the reference libraries maintained by their offices.

74. The network of United Nations information centres, services and offices continued to disseminate information on the question of Palestine and to organize special outreach activities.

75. A major focus of their work was the promotion of the International Day for Solidarity with the Palestinian People. The Department organized the installation of the annual exhibit on Palestine at United Nations Headquarters during the observance of the Day. Special events and activities to observe the event were organized, and the Secretary-General's message for the Day was widely disseminated by the centres, services and offices, in particular those in Accra, Geneva, Lisbon, Mexico City, Moscow, New Delhi, Ouagadougou, Pretoria, Rabat, Sana'a, Tehran, Tunis, Vienna and Warsaw.

76. A representative of the United Nations Information Centres in Cairo participated in a seminar on the issue of the barrier, organized by the Afro-Asian Lawyers Federation in February 2004, and its Director gave a number of television interviews on issues relating to Palestine. The Centre in Beirut provided information support to a newspaper columnist regarding the passage of United Nations humanitarian supplies to the poverty-stricken Palestinian areas. The Centre in Ouagadougou organized a briefing session for students on Palestinian rights. The Centre in Rio de Janeiro published a main feature story on the United Nations and the question of Palestine in the July/August 2003 edition of its bi-monthly magazine, "UNews-Brazil". The Centre in Tokyo organized a press conference for the visiting Commissioner-General of UNRWA and issued a press release on the conference in January 2004. It also organized a two-month long exhibition on UNRWA in the public lobby of the United Nations University in Tokyo from mid-January to mid-March 2004. The Centre in Washington, D.C., arranged the Washington segment of the Department's training programme for Palestinian media practitioners and accompanied them on their briefing visits. The United Nations Information Service in Geneva organized the Geneva segment of the training

programme, which included interaction with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, other United Nations agencies and the European Broadcasting Union, and prepared a press kit in English and Arabic. In her twice-weekly press briefings, the Director of the Service updated the press on the activities and statements of the Secretary-General, his special envoys and senior United Nations officials on the question of Palestine. Press releases were issued on the proceedings of the Human Rights Commission and human rights treaty bodies. The Radio and Television Section of the Service covered Palestine-related discussions, notably of the Human Rights Commission. Various information centres assisted in the identification of journalists to participate in the international media seminars on peace in the Middle East, held in Seville, Spain, and in Beijing.

Chapter VII

Conclusions and recommendations of the Committee

77. The Committee's utmost concern during the period under review has been the failure of efforts to reawaken the peace process against the backdrop of continuing violence, tragic loss of life and deepening humanitarian crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. Attempts to establish a ceasefire and stabilize the security situation did not achieve lasting results. The Israeli military's disproportionate and indiscriminate use of force, the practice of collective punishment, extrajudicial killings, and the detention and imprisonment of thousands of Palestinians have resulted in the further destruction of the fabric of Palestinian society. The Committee is strongly opposed to the continued construction of the wall on Palestinian land and the expansion of settlements, which jeopardize international efforts to resolve the conflict. It maintains that the continuing Israeli occupation remains at the core of the conflict. A negotiated solution that would end the occupation and enable the Palestinian people to exercise its inalienable rights is urgently needed.

78. The Committee continues to believe that the road map remains the best way to achieve the goal of a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the question of Palestine through the establishment of two States, Israel and Palestine, based on the 1967 borders. A settlement should be based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973), 1397 (2002) and 1515 (2003) in particular, and other relevant resolutions. Any unilateral moves by either party will not contribute to a durable settlement unless they are based on negotiations between the two sides and are part of the implementation of the road map. The Committee expresses the hope that the Quartet and the international community will continue to work towards the achievement of this goal.

79. While welcoming the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice and the position of the General Assembly in that regard, the Committee remains concerned that the illegal construction of the wall has not stopped. Its harmful effects continue to plague the daily lives of the thousands of Palestinians. The existence of the wall will hamper efforts to resolve the conflict and renders the vision of a two-State solution almost impossible. The Committee's position is that the international community must ensure that the occupying Power abide by the provisions of the Court's ruling and immediately stop and reverse the construction.

80. The Committee considers that its programme of international meetings and conferences facilitates the discussion and analysis of the various aspects of the question of Palestine. The meetings highlight the most pressing issues, such as the need to end violence, stop settlement activities and improve the living conditions of the Palestinian population. They contribute to heightening international awareness of the root cause of the conflict, namely, the occupation by Israel of the Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. They also mobilize international support for efforts to resolve the conflict and implement the road map. The Committee is deeply appreciative of the involvement in these meetings of Governments, intergovernmental organizations, United Nations entities and civil society. It expresses its satisfaction with the level of dialogue, engagement and support from the international community achieved at those meetings. It will continue this programme to foster support for the attainment

by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights in accordance with international legitimacy. In its meetings in 2005, the Committee intends to address such issues as the application of international law to all aspects of the question of Palestine, the significance of the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice, the implementation of the road map, the adverse consequences of the settlement policy and of the construction of the wall for the achievement of a two-State solution, the need to protect the Palestinian people, the humanitarian and socio-economic situation, including the plight of Palestinian women and children, and the further involvement of civil society.

81. The Committee commends civil society organizations for their efforts to uphold international legitimacy with regard to the question of Palestine through advocacy and the mobilization of public opinion and for their unremitting initiatives to alleviate the suffering of the Palestinian people. It notes the support it receives from the Secretariat in strengthening its cooperation with civil society. The Committee encourages civil society organizations to focus their advocacy efforts at the local, national, regional and international levels on the legal obligations of Governments, as emphasized in the advisory opinion of the Court, and to coordinate their activities. It supports all humanitarian and assistance initiatives geared towards improving the daily lives of the Palestinians. The Committee will also strive to enhance the involvement of parliamentarians in various regions in its programme of meetings.

82. The Committee emphasizes the essential contribution of the Division for Palestinian Rights in support of its mandate and the implementation of its programme of work. The Committee, therefore, requests the Division to continue its substantive and secretariat support; the programme of publications and other informational activities, such as the further expansion and development of UNISPAL, and the graphic enhancement of the "Question of Palestine" web site; the annual training programme for staff of the Palestinian Authority; and the annual observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. The Committee expects the Division to continue to heighten international awareness of the question of Palestine, and to strengthen support for the rights of the Palestinian people and a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine. In this regard, the Committee notes with satisfaction (a) the level of dialogue, engagement and support of the international community for its programme objectives, for instance, in terms of both participation at the meetings convened and use of printed and electronic information materials provided by the Division; (b) the number of civil society organizations that have received accreditation to the Committee; and (c) the number of pages viewed on the United Nations web site on the question of Palestine. The Committee also considers that the annual training programme for the staff of the Palestinian Authority has proved its usefulness and requests that it be continued.

83. The Committee is of the view that the special information programme on the question of Palestine of the Department of Public Information has made an important contribution to informing the media and public opinion of the relevant issues. The Committee requests the programme's continuation, with the necessary flexibility, as warranted by developments relevant to the question of Palestine.

84. Wishing to make its contribution to the achievement of a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine and in view of the many difficulties facing the Palestinian people and besetting the peace process, the Committee calls upon all States to join in this endeavour and invites the General Assembly again to recognize the importance of its role and to reconfirm its mandate with overwhelming support.

Notes

¹ *Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-first Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/31/35).*

² *Ibid., Thirty-second Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/32/35); ibid., Thirty-third Session, Supplement No. 35 and corrigendum (A/33/35 and Corr.1); ibid., Thirty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 35 and corrigendum (A/34/35 and Corr.1); ibid., Thirty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/35/35); ibid., Thirty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/36/35); ibid., Thirty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 35 and corrigendum (A/37/35 and Corr.1); ibid., Thirty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/38/35); ibid., Thirty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/39/35); ibid., Fortieth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/40/35); ibid., Forty-first Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/41/35); ibid., Forty-second Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/42/35); ibid., Forty-third Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/43/35); ibid., Forty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/44/35); ibid., Forty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/45/35); ibid., Forty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/46/35); ibid., Forty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/47/35); ibid., Forty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/48/35); ibid., Forty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/49/35); ibid., Fiftieth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/50/35); ibid., Fifty-first Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/51/35); ibid., Fifty-second Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/52/35); ibid., Fifty-third Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/53/35); ibid., Fifty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/54/35); ibid., Fifty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/55/35); ibid., Fifty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 35 and corrigendum (A/56/35 and Corr.1); ibid., Fifty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/57/35); and ibid., Fifty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/58/35).*

³ A/ES-10/273 and Corr.1, "Advisory opinion", para. 142.

⁴ *Ibid.*, para. 122.

⁵ A/AC.183/2004/CRP.1.

⁶ The observers at the Committee meetings were as follows: Algeria, Bangladesh, Bulgaria, China, Ecuador, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Mauritania, Morocco, Nicaragua, Niger, Qatar, Sri Lanka, Syrian Arab Republic, United Arab Emirates, Viet Nam, Yemen, African Union, League of Arab States, Organization of the Islamic Conference and Palestine.

⁷ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 75, No. 973.

⁸ The text of the decision is contained in A/ES-10/L.17.



United Nations

Report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

**General Assembly
Official Records
Sixtieth Session
Supplement No. 35 (A/60/35)**

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Exercise of the Inalienable Rights
of the Palestinian People**



United Nations • New York, 2005

Note

Symbols of United Nations documents are composed of capital letters combined with figures. Mention of such a symbol indicates a reference to a United Nations document.

Contents

	<i>Paragraphs</i>	<i>Page</i>
Letter of transmittal		iv
I. Introduction	1–9	1
II. Mandate of the Committee	10	3
III. Organization of work	11–16	4
A. Membership and officers	11–14	4
B. Participation in the work of the Committee	15–16	4
IV. Review of the situation relating to the question of Palestine	17–32	5
V. Action taken by the Committee	33–56	12
A. Action taken in accordance with General Assembly resolution 59/28	33	12
1. Action taken in the General Assembly and the Security Council	34–37	12
2. Communications to the Secretary-General	38	12
3. Statements by the Committee	39–40	12
4. Participation by the Chairman of the Committee in international conferences and meetings	41–42	13
B. Action taken by the Committee and the Division for Palestinian Rights in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 59/28 and 59/29	43–56	13
1. Programme of international meetings and conferences	43–45	13
2. Cooperation with intergovernmental organizations	46–47	13
3. Cooperation with civil society	48–51	14
4. Research, monitoring and publications	52	15
5. United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine	53	16
6. Training programme for staff of the Palestinian Authority	54	16
7. International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People	55–56	16
VI. Action taken by the Department of Public Information in accordance with General Assembly resolution 59/30	57–70	17
VII. Conclusions and recommendations of the Committee	71–77	19

Letter of transmittal

5 October 2005

Mr. Secretary-General,

I have the honour to enclose herewith the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for submission to the General Assembly in accordance with paragraph 7 of its resolution 59/28 of 1 December 2004.

The report covers the period from 7 October 2004 to 5 October 2005.

Accept, Sir, the assurances of my highest consideration.

(Signed) Paul **Badji**
Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the
Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

His Excellency
Mr. Kofi Annan
Secretary-General of the United Nations
New York

Chapter I

Introduction

1. The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People was established by the General Assembly by resolution 3376 (XXX) of 10 November 1975, with the task of recommending a programme designed to enable the Palestinian people to exercise its inalienable rights as recognized by the Assembly in its resolution 3236 (XXIX) of 22 November 1974.

2. The recommendations made by the Committee in its first report to the General Assembly¹ were endorsed by the Assembly as a basis for the solution of the question of Palestine. In its subsequent reports,² the Committee has continued to stress that a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, must be based on the relevant United Nations resolutions and the following essential principles: the withdrawal of Israel from the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem, and from the other occupied Arab territories; respect for the right of all States in the region to live in peace within secure and internationally recognized boundaries; and the recognition and exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, primarily the right to self-determination. The recommendations of the Committee contained in its first report could not be implemented, and the Assembly each year renewed the Committee's mandate and requested it to intensify efforts in pursuit of its objectives.

3. The Committee strongly supported the vision of two States, Israel and Palestine, living side by side within secure and recognized borders on the basis of the 1949 armistice lines, in accordance with relevant United Nations resolutions, including Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973), 1397 (2002) and 1515 (2003). The Committee welcomed and supported the Quartet's road map and called on the parties to implement it. At the same time, the Committee continued to work towards promoting the full realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including the right to self-determination and to its own independent State, on all Palestinian territory occupied in 1967, including East Jerusalem. The Committee also continued to mobilize international assistance for and in solidarity with the Palestinian people.

4. The passing in November 2004 of the Palestinian Authority President and Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization, Yasser Arafat, represented a real challenge to the Palestinian people and institutions. However, the Palestinian people and institutions succeeded in achieving a peaceful, democratic and responsible transition. President Mahmoud Abbas was elected as the new Palestinian Authority President in fair and free elections, which were internationally monitored.

5. With the assistance of the international community, especially Egypt, the first summit meeting in years was held in Sharm el-Sheikh between the Israeli Prime Minister, Ariel Sharon, and Palestinian Authority President Abbas. The commitments declared by the parties, in particular as regards the cessation of all acts of violence, the return to Palestinian Authority control of five Palestinian cities in the West Bank and the release of a number of Palestinian prisoners created a new momentum towards the resumption of the peace process. However, continued Israeli raids into Palestinian population centres, combined with extrajudicial killings, house demolitions, arrests and acts of violence and counter-violence, including three suicide bombings, severely diminished hopes of progress in implementing the Sharm el-Sheikh understandings and the road map.

6. The removal of all Israeli settlements from the Gaza Strip and parts of the northern West Bank and the withdrawal of the Israeli army from the Gaza Strip were the most significant political developments in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict of recent years. The pull-out, carried out by the Israeli Government in a swift and determined manner, was completed on 12 September 2005. The Committee recognized the Palestinian Authority's determined efforts to coordinate the pull-out with the Israeli side so that it would be carried out in a calm and peaceful manner. That contributed to a resumption of security coordination between the parties, an experience that should be built upon and widened. The international community, including the Quartet, considered the dismantling of settlements and the pull-out an important step towards achieving the vision of two democratic States, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security. The Quartet declared its readiness to support efforts by the Palestinian Authority in rehabilitating the Gaza economy and to create hope and confidence for the Palestinian people.

7. In the course of the year, the Committee remained deeply concerned about the intensified expansion of Israeli settlements in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the acceleration in the completion of the illegal wall built in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. New facts on the ground were accompanied by alarming reports of plans for intensified construction in West Bank settlements, including in and around East Jerusalem, in contravention of Israel's obligations under the road map and in violation of international law and the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice, threatening to upset the positive momentum of the Gaza withdrawal and the understandings reached at Sharm el-Sheikh. The Committee reminded Israel, the occupying Power, that its settlement activities, the annexation of East Jerusalem, any actions to strengthen its hold on the city and the construction of the wall on occupied land were contrary to international law. It called upon all Governments to fulfil their obligations under international law, in particular the Fourth Geneva Convention, and to take the necessary steps to ensure that Israel complied with its international obligations. The Committee was alarmed by public pronouncements by Israeli officials in September 2005 concerning the future of Jerusalem and borders, the two issues that were to be resolved in the course of the permanent status negotiations between the parties. It viewed such statements as counterproductive, unhelpful and as ones that would predetermine the outcome of the permanent status talks.

8. The Committee was encouraged by the efforts of the Quartet aimed at helping the parties to move towards the implementation of the road map. The Quartet met regularly to help the Israeli Government and the Palestinian Authority to take specific steps required under the road map, which provided for the way to achieve a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine, on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973), 1397 (2002) and 1515 (2003), and the principle of a permanent two-State solution to the conflict, based on 1967 borders, the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and the right of all States to live in peace and security.

9. The Committee noted the serious efforts by the Palestinian Authority, President Mahmoud Abbas and the Palestinian leadership to end violence, strengthen the national unity of the Palestinian people and achieve a solution of the question of Palestine through exclusively peaceful means. The Committee called upon the international community to extend all possible cooperation to the Palestinian leadership in its quest for the realization of the inalienable rights of its people.

Chapter II

Mandate of the Committee

10. On 1 December 2004, the General Assembly renewed the mandate of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (resolution 59/28), requested the Secretary-General to continue to provide the Division for Palestinian Rights of the United Nations Secretariat with the necessary resources to carry out its programme of work (resolution 59/29), and requested the continuation of the special information programme on the question of Palestine of the Department of Public Information (resolution 59/30). On the same date, the Assembly adopted resolution 59/31 entitled "Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine".

Chapter III

Organization of work

A. Membership and officers

11. The Committee is composed of the following Member States: Afghanistan, Belarus, Cuba, Cyprus, Guinea, Guyana, India, Indonesia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mali, Malta, Namibia, Nigeria, Pakistan, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Tunisia, Turkey and Ukraine.

12. In a letter dated 31 May 2005, the Permanent Representative of Romania to the United Nations informed the Chairman of the Committee of the decision of his Government to discontinue its membership of the Committee. The Committee took note of the decision at its 286th meeting on 21 June 2004. In a letter, the Chairman informed the President of the General Assembly of the decision of the Government of Romania. The letter from the Chairman and its annex were circulated in document A/59/891 of the General Assembly.

13. At its 284th meeting, on 7 February 2005, the Committee re-elected Paul Badji (Senegal) as Chairman, Orlando Requeijo Gual (Cuba) as Vice-Chairman, Ravan A. G. Farhâdi (Afghanistan) as Vice-Chairman and Victor Camilleri (Malta) as Rapporteur.

14. At its 284th meeting, the Committee adopted its programme of work for 2005.³

B. Participation in the work of the Committee

15. As in previous years, the Committee reconfirmed that all United Nations Member States and observers wishing to participate in the work of the Committee as observers were welcome to do so. In accordance with established practice, Palestine participated in the work of the Committee as an observer, attended all of its meetings and made observations and proposals for consideration by the Committee and its Bureau.

16. In 2005, the Committee again welcomed as observers all States and organizations that had participated in its work in the preceding year.⁴

Chapter IV

Review of the situation relating to the question of Palestine

17. In pursuance of its mandate, the Committee continued to monitor the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, as well as relevant political developments. The passing of Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat on 11 November 2004 marked the end of a historic and remarkable leadership for the Palestinian people. After a period of mourning, the Palestinian people organized presidential elections that brought Mahmoud Abbas to office in a vote that was reported to have been conducted in a fair, free and peaceful atmosphere. A total of 775,146 Palestinians cast their votes in the poll held on 9 January 2005. Some 800 international observers and 7,000 national observers monitored the election process and declared it free and fair. On 15 January, Mr. Abbas was sworn in as the new President of the Palestinian Authority. Palestinian voters in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip took part in the first-ever municipal elections, the first of which were held in December 2004. In August 2005, President Abbas decreed that legislative elections would be held on 25 January 2006.

18. During the period under review, the Committee closely monitored the situation on the ground and was concerned by the continuing violence in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Casualties continued to mount, mostly among Palestinians, as a result of the use of excessive force by the occupying Power, but also among Israeli civilians in Israel from actions by Palestinian militants, including suicide bombers. In October 2004, a major Israeli military operation in the Gaza Strip resulted in the death of a large number of Palestinians. Many of the victims were civilians, a number of whom were children. By 15 October, 135 Palestinians had been killed in the Gaza Strip, at least 34 of them children. Four Palestinian children were killed as a result of Israeli military fire on schools of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). At the end of 2004 and in early 2005, repeated Israeli incursions into the Gaza Strip caused the number of Palestinian fatalities to rise. By February, the number of violent acts had dropped as a result of an informal ceasefire agreed and adhered to by various Palestinian organizations. By mid-2005, the ceasefire had eroded owing to continual Israeli incursions into Palestinian cities and refugee camps, resulting in the killing and arrest of Palestinian militants. Rocket and mortar attacks by Palestinian militants had intensified. Suicide bombings on 25 February in Tel Aviv, 12 July in Netanya and 28 August in Beersheba killed at least 10 Israeli civilians. Israel resumed its practice of extrajudicial executions, killing seven Hamas militants on 15 July. Shortly after the Israeli withdrawal in September, there was a worrying upsurge of violence in the Gaza Strip. Qassam rocket attacks intensified and Israel conducted missile strikes in the Gaza Strip. The Israeli army also conducted large-scale search and arrest operations in the West Bank. The Committee has repeatedly condemned the policy and practice of extrajudicial executions as being inadmissible under international humanitarian law. At the same time, it has strongly condemned all terrorist attacks against Israeli civilians in Israel, which cannot be justified and undermined any prospect of reconciliation between the two parties. Close to 4,000 Palestinians have been killed and 40,000 wounded since the start of the intifada. The growing number of children directly harmed by the violence has been especially worrying. The number of deaths of children under 18 exceeded 720.

19. The Committee was greatly concerned by the fact that housing demolitions had continued during the year, particularly in East Jerusalem. By the end of 2004, 152 buildings had been demolished in East Jerusalem and 39 houses in Khan Yunis. By February 2005, an additional 10 buildings had been demolished in East Jerusalem, including a seven-storey building, while another 2,000 demolition orders were outstanding. UNRWA reported that, over the past four years, some 2,990 homes in the Gaza Strip alone had been destroyed or damaged beyond repair by the Israeli army, leaving some 28,483 people homeless. Over 4,000 Palestinian homes have been destroyed since the beginning of the current intifada.

20. Over the course of 2005, the international community continued its efforts to revitalize the peace process. Sponsored by Egypt, the Sharm el-Sheikh summit was held on 8 February between Prime Minister Sharon and President Abbas. The main outcome of the summit was the parties' commitment to cease all acts of violence. Messrs. Abbas and Sharon discussed a number of other important issues related to overcoming the confrontation and resuming a dialogue based on the fulfilment by both sides of their obligations under the road map. It was agreed that negotiating contacts between the Israelis and Palestinians would continue. The parties also agreed on further confidence-building measures. Israel announced that it would release 900 prisoners (see para. 27), withdraw its troops from five West Bank cities within three weeks and stop the arrest and assassination of Palestinian militants if the latter agreed to lay down their arms. On 12 February, President Abbas met in Cairo with the leaders of various Palestinian organizations to secure a temporary informal ceasefire. The factions agreed to adhere to a period of calm on the condition that Israel fulfilled its own commitments. The implementation of the Sharm el-Sheikh understandings was slow and incomplete. Five hundred Palestinian prisoners were released on 21 February, and another 398 on 2 June. In March, Israel handed back security control over Jericho and Tulkarm to the Palestinian Authority, while the withdrawal from the other three cities (Qalqilya, Bethlehem and Ramallah) to be handed back to Palestinian Authority control was yet to take place. By early May, the Palestinian Authority had reported 4,200 Israeli violations of the Sharm el-Sheikh understandings, including 1,230 incursions into Palestinian cities and villages, causing the death of 20 Palestinians, the wounding of 290 others and the arrest of more than 600. At the same time, Qassam rocket and mortar shelling of Israeli targets by Palestinian militants continued.

21. On 20 February, the Israeli Cabinet approved the evacuation of settlements under the unilateral disengagement initiative announced one year earlier. In August, all 21 settlements in the Gaza Strip and four settlements in the northern West Bank were evacuated and dismantled. The Committee noted with satisfaction that the operation, conducted by the Israeli military with the limited coordination of the Palestinian Authority, had proceeded smoothly and had been completed ahead of schedule. The evacuation of approximately 8,500 Gaza Strip and West Bank settlers had been completed by 23 August; the Israeli military withdrew from the Gaza Strip on 12 September and from the four West Bank settlements on 20 September. The Committee viewed the pull-out as a promising step that could revive negotiations within the framework of the road map aimed at the emergence of an independent, unified and territorially contiguous Palestinian State living side by side in peace and security with Israel and its other neighbours. The Committee emphasized that the withdrawal should be complete and irreversible and be followed by firm action to complete the implementation of the Sharm el-Sheikh understandings, including the

withdrawal from cities in the West Bank, the release of more prisoners and the cessation of all acts of violence. The Committee also considered that an early agreement was needed on a number of urgent actions (including the removal of the huge amount of rubble left after the pull-out) that would allow the Palestinian Authority to exercise control over its borders, crossing points, territorial sea and airspace and the establishment of a permanent and direct link to the West Bank. These actions are absolutely vital for the Palestinian economy (see para. 40).

22. The Committee welcomed the initiative by the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to convene, on 1 March 2005, the London meeting on supporting the Palestinian Authority, which led to a strengthening of international commitments in support of the plans of the Palestinian Authority for institutional renewal. On 14 April, the Quartet appointed the former World Bank President, James Wolfensohn, as special envoy to coordinate the support of the international community for the Gaza withdrawal plan. His priority was to set up a quick-impact programme aimed at bringing about tangible economic change for the Palestinian people.

23. Since January 2005, the newly appointed Palestinian Cabinet has taken specific steps as part of the comprehensive reform of the security services and consolidated various Palestinian security services into three agencies under the authority of the Minister of the Interior. However, Palestinian security services lacked equipment, ammunition and adequate means of communication. Another problem was the methodical destruction, since September 2000, of the Palestinian security apparatus by the Israeli army and security services. While the Palestinian Authority has shown resolve in fulfilling its obligations under the road map, it has nevertheless faced a number of serious challenges in its efforts to introduce comprehensive security reform. The Committee welcomed the important contribution to security reform by Egypt and the members of the Quartet.

24. During the period under review, the Committee noted that, in defiance of the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice and the position of the international community, Israel continued the construction of the wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. On 20 February, the Israeli High Court of Justice amended the route of the wall to bring it closer to the Green Line, though a large area of Palestinian land was still included. In the Jerusalem area, the route remained the same, with an addition of 40 kilometres that would surround the "Ma'ale Adumim" settlement and the nearby settlements of "Kfar Adumim", "Antut", "Nofei Prat" and "Kedar". The wall, when completed, would place "Ma'ale Adumim", its industrial zone, Rachel's Tomb in Bethlehem and most of East Jerusalem on the Israeli side. It would cut 25 kilometres into Occupied Palestinian Territory, separating the northern and southern parts of the West Bank. A new road being planned to connect Ramallah, north of Jerusalem, with Bethlehem in the south would still deny access for Palestinians to East Jerusalem, because the road would bypass the city. Some 60,000 Palestinians with Jerusalem identity documents would be on the east side of the wall, while incorporating some 30,000 "Ma'ale Adumim" settlers into Jerusalem. Checkpoints along the wall would regulate the movement of Palestinians to and from East Jerusalem and would likely lead to a further reduction in the number of Palestinians entering Jerusalem. To the south of Jerusalem, the new route put the "Gush Etzion" settlement block on the Israeli side, surrounding four Palestinian villages with some 18,000 residents, plus a sizeable amount of Palestinian agricultural land. On 16 May, the High Court rescinded temporary

injunctions on the construction of the wall around “Ariel”. With the addition of the so-called “Ariel Loop”, the wall would cut more than 20 kilometres deep into the Occupied Palestinian Territory, annexing “Ariel” and other smaller settlements to Israel, together with over 6,243 acres of Palestinian land. On 15 September, in his address to the High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly, Prime Minister Sharon pledged to continue building the wall until it was completed, stating that it was indispensable for the security of Israel. The Committee reiterated its concern that, apart from considerably hampering Palestinian economic development and worsening the humanitarian situation, the decision to proceed with the construction was an attempt to unilaterally define the borders of the future Palestinian State. In the view of the Committee, that decision would prejudice the outcome of final status negotiations. On 21 August, Israeli troops started handing military orders to Palestinians to confiscate some 67 square kilometres of Palestinian land in addition to 396 acres of privately owned Palestinian land in Al-Azzariyeh, Abu Dis and Sawahra al-Sharkiyeh, which had been confiscated to build the wall. As requested by the General Assembly in its resolution ES-10/15 on the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice, the Secretary-General was in the process of administrative and budgetary preparations to establish the register of damage caused by the building of the wall. The Committee believed that it was imperative that the Secretary-General expedite the establishment of the said register and begin the important work in this regard. Pursuant to the same resolution, Switzerland issued a report based on consultations with all the High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention. The Committee expressed the hope that proposals raised in the report would help efforts to uphold international law.

25. The Committee noted that settlement construction and expansion in the West Bank continued apace. The Israeli Prime Minister’s plan (the “E-1 plan”) to enlarge settlements in the West Bank would be, if implemented, the largest expansion project ever witnessed and would confiscate an area larger than the Gaza Strip. The aim of the E-1 plan was to link “Ma’ale Adumim” to Jerusalem. Approved by the Israeli Civil Administration in February, it would include the construction of 3,500 dwelling units, hotels and commercial facilities. According to the Israeli Civil Administration, the construction of a new police headquarters in the E-1 area was also authorized. With the expansion, the radius of “Ma’ale Adumim” would double that of Tel Aviv. Overall, Israel planned to build no less than 4,891 new housing units in the Occupied Palestinian Territory in 2005, not including the 1,500 housing units for the Jahalin tribe to be relocated from the area near “Ma’ale Adumim”, which would bring the total to 6,391 units. Though the Israeli Government decided to freeze the E-1 plan, it reiterated its intention to build in that area in due course, in violation of the road map. The Committee was worried that the separation of the north from the south of the West Bank would lead to the expansion of “Ma’ale Adumim”, while planned construction in the E-1 area, being contrary to international law, would render the main objective of the road map meaningless. Three settlements — “Beitar Illit” west of Bethlehem, “Tal Zion” near Ramallah and “Modi’in Illit” west of Ramallah — were the fastest growing in the West Bank. New construction was planned for the settlements of “Modi’in Illit” (1,500 housing units), “Beitar Illit” (500), “Har Gilo” (35), “Giv’at Ze’ev” (132), “Geva Binyamin” (200), “Etz Efraim” (240), “Elkana” (90) and “Alon Shvut” (24). The “Tzufim” settlement would receive another 1,500 housing units. The Israel Lands Administration issued a tender on 1 April for the construction of 40 dwelling units at “Har Homa”. In July, the Israeli local planning committee of the Jerusalem

municipality approved the construction of a new settlement in the Muslim quarter of Jerusalem's Old City, while the Knesset approved assistance for the improvement of the infrastructure of and agriculture in Jordan Valley settlements. In a letter to the Secretary-General, the Committee expressed serious concerns over Israel's decision to expand and consolidate its settlements in the West Bank (see para. 38).

26. In March, a report submitted by former Israeli State Prosecutor Talia Sasson to the Israeli Prime Minister indicated that the Housing and Construction Ministry had been actively involved in setting up outposts, supplying more than 400 mobile homes for them. As at June 2005, there were 101 outposts in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, 51 of them built after February 2001. The population of West Bank settlements grew by 12,800 people over the past year, bringing the total to 246,000, not including East Jerusalem. Verbal and physical harassment by settlers of Palestinians have become more vicious, especially in the run-up to the removal of settlements and Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip. Attacks have included shooting at the tyres of ambulances transporting injured Palestinians, damaging olive harvests of Palestinian farmers, poisoning their sheep and other animals, contaminating Palestinian fields in the Hebron area with poison and setting fire to acres of cultivated land. In the West Bank settlement of "Shiloh", a settler fired at a group of Palestinians, killing four and wounding two others.

27. A report issued by the Palestinian Authority's Ministry of Detainees and Ex-Prisoners Affairs in March 2005 stated that a total of 35,000 Palestinian arrests had been made by Israel since September 2000. Four hundred prisoners sentenced before the Oslo Peace Accords remained in prison, despite the call by the Accords for their release. By March 2005, Israeli forces had arrested and imprisoned 128 women, 20 of whom were mothers and 2 of whom gave birth while in prison. Female prisoners faced torture, humiliation and harsh prison conditions. As at April, 312 Palestinian children were in Israeli custody. As at September, there were seven girls under the age of 18 in Israeli detention, in addition to the number of women who had turned 18 while under imprisonment. Of the child prisoners, 174 were still awaiting trial and 124 had been tried and sentenced. More than 450 Palestinian prisoners were arrested when they were children but reached the age of 18 while in prison, where most of them remain. Some 55 per cent of child prisoners were arrested for throwing stones at Israeli soldiers. Israel released 159 prisoners on 27 December 2004. Pursuant to the understandings reached at Sharm el-Sheikh, Israel has released close to 900 prisoners in 2005. However, Palestinians complained that the majority of those released were administrative detainees or prisoners who were already due to be released. Furthermore, the release was not coordinated with the Palestinian Authority through a joint committee, as agreed at Sharm el-Sheikh. It also did not address the urgency of releasing prisoners who were ill, elderly or child prisoners. As at September, over 8,000 Palestinians remained in Israeli detention facilities distributed among 20 Israeli prisons and interrogation centres.

28. According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), the living conditions of workers and their families in the Occupied Palestinian Territory continued to be extremely hard. While domestic output had grown in 2004 following four years of recession in the Palestinian economy, there was little improvement in the dire Palestinian economic situation in the period under review. ILO reported that fewer than half of all men of working age and only 10 per cent of women of working age were employed. Youth unemployment was particularly high (40 per cent) among 15- to 24-year-olds. ILO called for a rapid lifting of closures,

better access to the Israeli labour market and improved trade facilities. Most movement restrictions for Palestinians remained in place, despite some initial measures taken by Israel. Checkpoints, curfews and the permit system continued to have an impact on the humanitarian operations. The Israel disengagement plan, aimed at reducing the number of Palestinian workers in Israel to zero by 2008, could severely restrict income opportunities and the prospects of poverty alleviation. Already, 77.3 per cent of Palestinians (more than 1 million people) in the Gaza Strip live below the poverty line, with more than 300,000 of them in "deep poverty" (i.e. barely surviving). Restriction of movement of Palestinian workers through closures, including the wall, has thrown some 150,000 of them into unemployment since September 2000. The Palestinian Authority's gross national product was \$3.7 billion in 2004, a slight increase on the \$3.6 billion in 2003, though below the pre-2000 figure estimated at \$5.0 billion.

29. The Committee expressed its grave concern at the deterioration of the health and nutritional status of the Palestinian population, particularly women and children. Since 2000, over 60 Palestinian women have given birth at Israeli checkpoints owing to delays in checkpoint procedures; 36 babies have died as a result. Studies revealed that anaemia rates in the Gaza Strip were as high as 54.7 per cent among children, 35.7 per cent among pregnant women and 45.7 per cent among nursing mothers. Years of chronic insecurity and violence have had a deep psychological impact on the population. Almost 50 per cent of children have experienced conflict-related violence or witnessed violent acts affecting immediate family members, generating high rates of psychological problems among children. Some 36 per cent of parents reported aggressive behaviour among their children, 31 per cent noticed bad school results and 28 per cent reported that their children had nightmares.

30. Palestinian towns and villages faced severe problems with the water supply. The shortage of water in the Gaza Strip has increased its price to five times that in Israel. Israeli army incursions have seriously damaged water, sewage and power networks. Physical damage from Israeli military actions to the Occupied Palestinian Territory's water and waste-water sector was estimated at about \$140 million by the end of 2004. With the construction of the wall, Israel would effectively annex most of the western aquifer system, which provided 51 per cent of West Bank water resources. On 3 May, a settler from "Kedumim" chemically contaminated agricultural wells belonging to Palestinian farmers from Qalqilya.

31. UNRWA continued to provide education, health care, social services, microcredit and relief assistance to 4.2 million Palestine refugees in Jordan, Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. It also continued to address the worst effects of the conflict in the Occupied Palestinian Territory on refugees and other communities in need, within available means, through a package of measures, which comprised employment programmes; cash and in kind assistance; food aid; reconstruction and repair of conflict-damaged shelters and infrastructure; emergency medical care; and psychological counselling and support. One of the main challenges facing UNRWA over the past four years was sustaining emergency assistance to over 1.1 million Palestinians while funding for emergency operations declined, and restrictions on humanitarian access threatened to undermine health, education and other essential services throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Since October 2000, UNRWA has raised some \$520 million to support its programme of emergency humanitarian assistance.

UNRWA has set its regular budget for 2006 and 2007 at \$489 million and \$506 million respectively. If fully funded, the Agency will be able to implement its medium-term plan to improve services for refugees and their living conditions. UNRWA reported a projected deficit of \$11.1 million for 2005. UNRWA staff undertook its tasks under dangerous circumstances. Since September 2000, 13 UNRWA staff members have been killed.

32. The Committee was appreciative of the work of the Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). In July, the Ministry of Planning of the Palestinian Authority and the Programme office agreed to coordinate the issuance of a Palestinian national poverty report. The Programme, together with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the Ministry of Planning, was also establishing a uniform system for monitoring the Millennium Development Goals and the progress made towards the "A world fit for children" declaration and the National Plan of Action for Palestinian Children in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Donor countries have continued to finance various projects, such as the rehabilitation of municipal structures; the restoration of the devastated agricultural sector; the paving of roads; the upgrading of the water supply; the construction of new schools and additional classrooms; and the protection of cultural and architectural heritage.

Chapter V

Action taken by the Committee

A. Action taken in accordance with General Assembly resolution 59/28

33. In pursuance of its mandate, the Committee continued to mobilize the international community in support of the Palestinian people, in cooperation with United Nations bodies, Governments, intergovernmental and civil society organizations and others, as indicated below.

1. Action taken in the General Assembly and the Security Council

34. On 11 November 2004, the General Assembly met to pay tribute to the memory of Yasser Arafat, late President of the Palestinian Authority. The Chairman of the Committee took part in the tribute and made a statement (A/59/PV.52).

35. During the period under review, the Security Council has continued to monitor the situation on the ground and the efforts to implement the road map. Throughout the year, the Council held monthly briefings under the agenda item entitled "The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question".

36. The Security Council met on 4 October 2004, at the request of the Permanent Representative of Tunisia in his capacity as Chairman of the Group of Arab States for the month of October (see S/2004/779). The Vice-Chairman of the Committee, Mr. Farhâdi, took part in the debate and made a statement (see S/PV.5049). At its 5051st meeting, on 5 October 2004, the Council voted on a draft resolution submitted by Algeria, Pakistan and Tunisia (S/2004/783). The result of the vote was 11 votes in favour, 1 against and 3 abstentions. The draft resolution was not adopted owing to the negative vote of a permanent member of the Council (see S/PV.5051).

37. The Security Council met on 21 July 2005, at the request of the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of Kuwait in his capacity as Chairman of the Group of Arab States for the month of July (see S/2005/469). The Chairman of the Committee, Mr. Badji, took part in the debate and made a statement (see S/PV.5230 (RESUMPTION1)).

2. Communications to the Secretary-General

38. The Chairman of the Committee has continued to bring the Committee's concerns about the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, to the attention of the Secretary-General (see A/ES-10/301-S/2005/262; A/ES-10/306-S/2005/556).

3. Statements by the Committee

39. On 11 November 2004, the Bureau of the Committee issued a statement concerning the passing of President Arafat (see GA/PAL/970).

40. On 30 August 2005, the Bureau of the Committee issued a statement concerning the Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and parts of the northern West Bank (GA/PAL/990).

4. Participation by the Chairman of the Committee in international conferences and meetings

41. During the year, the Chairman of the Committee participated in events organized by civil society in support of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and contributed to their deliberations. The Chairman participated in the Peace in Palestine Conference, held from 28 to 30 March 2005 in Putrajaya, Malaysia.

42. As in previous years, the Committee continued to monitor the activities of other intergovernmental organizations relevant to the question of Palestine, as well as the decisions and resolutions adopted by United Nations bodies and agencies.

B. Action taken by the Committee and the Division for Palestinian Rights in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 59/28 and 59/29

1. Programme of international meetings and conferences

43. In its programme of international meetings and conferences, the Committee addressed issues such as the application of international law to all aspects of the question of Palestine; the significance and impact of the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice; the resumption of the political process and the implementation of the road map; the effects of the settlement policy and the construction of the wall on efforts to achieve a two-State solution; the need to protect the Palestinian people; and the further involvement of civil society.

44. In the period under review, the following international events were held under the auspices of the Committee:

(a) United Nations International Meeting on the Question of Palestine, United Nations Office at Geneva, 8 and 9 March 2005;

(b) Consultations with civil society, United Nations Office at Geneva, 10 March 2005;

(c) United Nations International Conference of Civil Society in Support of Middle East Peace, UNESCO Headquarters, Paris, 12 and 13 July 2005.

45. All of the above-mentioned events were attended by representatives of Governments, Palestine, intergovernmental and civil society organizations and United Nations system entities, as well as experts, representatives of the media, academics and students. The reports of the meetings were issued as publications of the Division for Palestinian Rights and were made available through the United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine (UNISPAL) and the Division's website.

2. Cooperation with intergovernmental organizations

46. During the year, the Committee continued its close cooperation with the African Union, the Non-Aligned Movement and the Organization of the Islamic Conference, through the participation of the Chairman in their meetings and through periodic consultations at United Nations Headquarters.

47. The Committee continued its cooperation on the question of Palestine with States members of the European Union. The Bureau held consultations with representatives of the European Union in March 2005 (under the Presidency of Luxembourg) as part of the ongoing effort to build a constructive relationship with European Union members on issues of common concern.

3. Cooperation with civil society

Civil society organizations

48. The Committee expanded its cooperation with non-governmental organizations, academic institutions, think tanks and media representatives through the International Civil Society Conference held at UNESCO headquarters, formal and informal consultations with civil society representatives, participation in meetings organized by non-governmental organizations and the accreditation of new organizations. It received briefs on the activities of civil society organizations in various parts of the world, including in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and in Israel, and expressed its appreciation for their useful work and commitment. It noted, in particular, the civil society initiatives against the construction of the wall that kept the focus of the general public on new facts on the ground brought about by the occupying Power. The Committee was deeply appreciative of the work done by many civil society organizations in providing emergency relief under the most difficult circumstances. It encouraged all of the organizations to continue their activities.

49. The Committee maintained and developed its liaison with the national, regional and international coordinating mechanisms accredited to it, in addition to its established liaison with a large number of individual non-governmental organizations. Representatives of civil society participated in all meetings organized under the auspices of the Committee, including the observance of the International Day of Solidarity on 29 November 2004. In the period under review, the Committee also accredited eight new non-governmental organizations. Consultations between the delegation of the Committee and representatives of civil society organizations accredited to the Committee were held at the United Nations office at Geneva on 10 March, following the United Nations International Meeting on the Question of Palestine. Participating representatives of non-governmental organizations provided information about their initiatives, campaigns and projects. The delegation of the Committee recommended to the representatives that their initiatives be based on international law, as set out in the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice, the Fourth Geneva Convention and on the resolutions of the Security Council and General Assembly. The Chairman of the Committee met throughout the year with representatives of civil society organizations in New York and at the meetings organized under the auspices of the Committee away from Headquarters. The Chairman also participated in the Peace in Palestine Conference held in Putrajaya, Malaysia, on the initiative of a Malaysian umbrella organization that brings together over 400 non-governmental organizations from 35 countries, mainly from Asia and the Pacific.

50. The Division for Palestinian Rights maintained the Internet website “NGO Network on the Question of Palestine” as a permanent tool for mutual information and cooperation between civil society and the Committee. The website can be found at <http://www.un.org/depts/dpa/ngo>. The Division also continued to issue its

bimonthly newsletter, *NGO Action News*, covering the activities of civil society on the various aspects of the question of Palestine.

Parliaments and inter-parliamentary organizations

51. The Committee continued to develop its liaison with national and regional parliaments and their organizations and invited a number of parliamentarians to speak at its meetings. In Geneva in March 2005, the delegation of the Committee paid a visit to the headquarters of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and met with its Secretary-General, Anders Johnsson. The Chairman of the Committee commended the IPU efforts in support of the Palestinian people, in particular in promoting a dialogue between Israeli and Palestinian parliamentarians. The IPU Secretary-General informed the Committee delegation of efforts by the IPU to assist the Palestinian Authority in finalizing the electoral law and strengthening the oversight role of the Palestinian Legislative Council, its budget committees and its activities in the field of human rights. It remained crucial for the IPU to bring together members of the Knesset and the Council. It was agreed to continue and expand the involvement of parliamentarians of different backgrounds in the meetings organized under the auspices of the Committee.

4. Research, monitoring and publications

52. The Division carried out research and monitoring activities and responded to requests for information and briefings on the question of Palestine. Under the guidance of the Committee, which reiterated the relevance of the research, monitoring and publications programme, it also prepared the publications listed below for dissemination, including through UNISPAL:

- (a) Monthly bulletin on action taken by United Nations and intergovernmental organizations in relation to the question of Palestine;
- (b) Monthly chronology of developments relating to the question of Palestine, based on media reports and other sources;
- (c) Reports of meetings organized under the auspices of the Committee;
- (d) Special bulletins and notes on the observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People;
- (e) Periodic reviews of developments relating to Middle East peace efforts;
- (f) Annual compilation of resolutions and decisions of the General Assembly and the Security Council relating to the question of Palestine.

5. United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine

53. The Division for Palestinian Rights, in cooperation with relevant technical and library services of the United Nations Secretariat, continued to administer, maintain, expand and develop UNISPAL, pursuant to successive annual General Assembly mandates. This included the ongoing upgrading of technical components of the system to ensure its uninterrupted presence on the Internet, notably via the UNISPAL "Question of Palestine" interface on the United Nations home page, under "Peace and Security", and involved the expansion of the documents collection to include relevant new and old documents. In addition, steps were continued to enhance the user-friendliness of accessing and navigating the system

(<http://domino.un.org/unispal.nsf>) — including to facilitate “bookmarking” of documents on the situation of Palestinian women — as work for the graphic enhancement of the “Question of Palestine” site progressed.

6. Training programme for staff of the Palestinian Authority

54. Three staff members from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Palestinian Authority participated in a training programme conducted by the Division, from September to December 2004, in conjunction with the fifty-ninth session of the General Assembly. The trainees familiarized themselves with various aspects of the work of the Secretariat and other organs and conducted research on specific topics.

7. International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People

55. The International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People was observed at Headquarters and at the United Nations Offices at Geneva and Vienna on 29 November 2004. On the occasion of the observance at Headquarters, in addition to a solemn meeting of the Committee and other activities, an exhibit entitled “Steadfast in Palestine” was presented by the Permanent Observer Mission of Palestine under the auspices of the Committee. The Committee noted with appreciation that the International Day of Solidarity had also been observed in many cities throughout the world. Details on the observance are contained in the special bulletin issued by the Division.

56. In adopting its programme of work, the Committee decided that a similar observance of the International Day of Solidarity should be organized in 2005.

Chapter VI

Action taken by the Department of Public Information in accordance with General Assembly resolution 59/30

57. The Department of Public Information, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 59/30 of 1 December 2004, continued to implement its special information programme on the question of Palestine. It used various tools to disseminate information on the question of Palestine to the international community.

58. The Department's television, radio, press, photo and Internet news operations regularly covered the question of Palestine, providing live and archived coverage of open meetings of the General Assembly, the Security Council and other intergovernmental bodies on the issue. They also covered other programmes and activities in which the situation was addressed.

59. The Arabic Radio Unit produced a number of programmes covering the activities of UNRWA, the Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East, UNICEF, UNDP, the United Nations Population Fund and other United Nations agencies working in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. The Unit also conducted interviews with Palestinian participants in various intergovernmental meetings, including the 10-year review of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (Beijing + 10) and the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. A sequential series of radio programmes produced in the Territory were placed on a special page on the Arabic Radio Unit website. The question of Palestine was also regularly covered in all other official languages, as well as in non-official languages, such as Bahasa Indonesia, Bangla, Hindi, Turkish and Urdu.

60. The United Nations website continued to host a page on the question of Palestine under the "Global Issues" site, as well as the "Peace and Security" and "Refugees" pages. Links are available to the UNISPAL database, as well as to the web pages created by the Department of Political Affairs. In addition, the Website Section webcast all meetings of the Security Council and the General Assembly and most press conferences on the question of Palestine held at United Nations Headquarters, which were available immediately afterwards as archived webcasts.

61. The question of Palestine and a broad range of developments relating to the situation in the Middle East were given extensive coverage by the United Nations News Centre website in all official languages. The Arabic website continued to gain visitors over the past 12 months, receiving over 193,000 visits and registering 849,000 page views on various pages and files within the site. The news stories on these issues were also distributed throughout the world to some 40,000 subscribers to the e-mail service of the United Nations News Service in English and French. A special "News Focus" page on the news portal provided users with easy access to United Nations resources on the question of Palestine, including links to key reports, statements, resolutions and other related material.

62. During the period under review, the Department issued 149 press releases on the question of Palestine (77 in English, 72 in French). In addition, the completely updated 2004 edition of *Basic Facts about the United Nations* included an extensive section on the Middle East, in which all aspects of the Palestinian question were

addressed. The newly revised 2005 edition of the smaller booklet, *UN in Brief*, also highlighted United Nations efforts to promote a peaceful resolution of the situation through a two-State solution.

63. The Department held a two-week workshop for Arab journalists in November and December 2004, which included sessions on the question of Palestine.

64. As part of its special information programme on Palestine, the Department organized a training programme for 10 young Palestinian journalists at United Nations Headquarters, in Washington, D.C., and at the United Nations Office at Geneva, from 25 October to 10 December 2004. The programme was aimed at strengthening their capacity as media professionals.

65. In cooperation with the Foreign Ministry of Egypt, the Department organized an international media seminar on peace in the Middle East in Cairo, on 13 and 14 June 2005. The proceedings of the previous international media seminar, held in Beijing in June 2004, were published.

66. The permanent exhibit on Palestine at United Nations Headquarters (English) and at the Palais des Nations in Geneva (French) was updated in late 2004 and early 2005. A brochure accompanying the exhibit and entitled "The United Nations and the Question of Palestine" was published in Arabic, English, French and Spanish. The Graphic Design Unit of the Department of Public Information designed the brochure, as well as the booklet containing the proceedings of the Beijing media seminar.

67. The *UN Chronicle* (in the six official languages) and the *UN Chronicle Online* (in English and French) reported on events and issues relating to the question of Palestine and on action taken by the General Assembly. Articles were redistributed through *UN Chronicle* E-Alerts and the *UN Chronicle* Feature Service.

68. The Dag Hammarskjöld Library digitized documents pertaining to the United Nations Palestine Commission (A/AC.21 series) for UNISPAL document collections.

69. The network of United Nations information centres, services and offices continued to disseminate information on the question of Palestine and to organize special outreach activities. Press releases, statements, documents and audio-visual material were brought to the attention of target audiences, posted on their websites and made available to visitors of the reference libraries maintained by their relative offices.

70. A major focus of activities was the promotion of the International Day for Solidarity with the Palestinian People. The Department organized the installation of the annual exhibit on the question of Palestine at United Nations Headquarters during the observance of the Day. Special events and activities, including television and radio interviews, were organized by the centres, services and offices individually or jointly with United Nations associations and regional organizations, such as the League of Arab States. The Secretary-General's message for the Day was widely disseminated by the centres, particularly those in Accra, Brussels, Bucharest, Buenos Aires, Cairo, Dar es Salaam, Geneva, Lima, Mexico City, New Delhi, Pretoria, Rabat, Sana'a, Tehran, Tripoli, Tunis, Vienna and Warsaw.

Chapter VII

Conclusions and recommendations of the Committee

71. The year under review was marked by promise and hope, as well as by developments on the ground that complicated efforts to resume the peace process within the framework of the road map. The Committee is encouraged by the resumption of dialogue at the highest level between Israeli and Palestinian leaders. The Committee welcomes the Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and four small settlements in the northern West Bank as a rare opportunity to revive negotiations within the framework of the road map and restart the stalled political process. It should be noted that Israel remains in control of the borders of the Gaza Strip, including its territorial sea and airspace and the movement of people and goods into and out of Gaza, thus hampering any meaningful economic development. The Committee is strongly opposed to the expansion of settlements in the West Bank and efforts to complete the construction of the wall on Palestinian land. It is particularly alarmed by the intention of the Israeli Government to expand large settlement blocks in the West Bank, which would separate East Jerusalem from the West Bank and the southern West Bank from its northern part. The Committee reiterates its position of principle that the settlements and the wall constructed by Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, are contrary to international humanitarian law and numerous resolutions of the Security Council and the General Assembly, adopted since 1967, as well as the provisions of the road map.

72. The Committee has been encouraged by renewed efforts of the international community — in particular the Quartet, but also Egypt and Jordan — to revitalize the road map, facilitate the dialogue between the parties and implement their commitments under the road map. The Committee reiterates that the road map remains the best way to achieve the goal of a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the question of Palestine through the establishment of two States, Israel and Palestine, based on the 1967 borders. A settlement should be based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973), 1397 (2002) and 1515 (2003) in particular, and other relevant resolutions. The Committee hopes that the Quartet and the international community will continue to work towards the achievement of this goal.

73. The Committee considers that its programme of international meetings and conferences contributes to focusing the attention of Governments, intergovernmental and civil society organizations and the general public on issues crucial for advancing a peaceful settlement of the conflict. The meetings highlight the most pressing concerns, such as the need to end violence, stop settlement activities and improve the living conditions of the Palestinian population. They contribute to raising international awareness of the root cause of the conflict, namely the occupation by Israel of the Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. They also mobilize international support for efforts to resolve the conflict and implement the road map. The Committee is deeply appreciative of the involvement in those meetings of Governments, intergovernmental organizations, United Nations entities and civil society. It expresses its satisfaction with the level of dialogue, engagement and support

from the international community achieved at those meetings. It will continue the programme to foster support for the attainment by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights in accordance with international legitimacy. In its meetings programme for 2006, the Committee intends to address such issues as the need to end the occupation of all Palestinian land; support of the efforts by the Palestinian Authority to rehabilitate the economy, especially that of the Gaza Strip; the responsibility of all Governments to apply international law to all aspects of the question of Palestine, in accordance with the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice; the implementation of the road map; the adverse consequences of the settlement policy and the construction of the wall for the achievement of a two-State solution; the need to protect the Palestinian people; the humanitarian and socio-economic situation, including the plight of Palestinian women and children; and the role of civil society.

74. The Committee commends civil society organizations for their efforts to uphold international legitimacy with regard to the question of Palestine through advocacy and the mobilization of public opinion and for their initiatives aimed at alleviating the plight of the Palestinian people. It notes the support it receives from the Secretariat in strengthening its cooperation with civil society. The Committee encourages civil society organizations to focus and synchronize their advocacy efforts at the local, national, regional and international levels on the legal obligations of Governments, as emphasized in the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice. It welcomes recent civil society initiatives, in particular in developing countries, to establish umbrella mechanisms to better coordinate their work. It supports all humanitarian and assistance initiatives geared towards improving the daily lives of the Palestinians. The Committee will also strive to enhance the involvement of parliamentarians in its programme of meetings and conferences.

75. The Committee emphasizes the essential contribution of the Division for Palestinian Rights in support of its mandate and the implementation of its programme of work. The Committee, therefore, requests the Division to continue its mandated activities, including substantive and secretariat support; the programme of research, monitoring and publications and other informational activities, such as the further expansion and development of UNISPAL, including the graphic enhancement of the "Question of Palestine" website; the annual training programme for staff of the Palestinian Authority; and the annual observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. The Committee expects the Division to continue to promote international awareness of the question of Palestine, as well as support for the rights of the Palestinian people and a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine. In this regard, the Committee notes with satisfaction (a) the level of dialogue, engagement and support of the international community for its programme objectives, for instance, in terms of both participation at the meetings convened and use of printed and electronic information materials provided by the Division; (b) the number of civil society organizations that have received accreditation to the Committee; and (c) the number of pages viewed on the United Nations website on the question of Palestine. The Committee also considers that the annual training programme for the staff of the Palestinian Authority has proved its usefulness and requests that it be continued.

76. The Committee is of the view that the special information programme on the question of Palestine of the Department of Public Information has made an important contribution to informing the media and public opinion of the relevant issues. The Committee requests the programme's continuation, with the necessary flexibility, as warranted by developments relevant to the question of Palestine.

77. Wishing to make its contribution to the achievement of a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine and in view of the many difficulties facing the Palestinian people and besetting the peace process, the Committee calls upon all States to join in this endeavour and invites the General Assembly again to recognize the importance of its role and to reconfirm its mandate with overwhelming support.

Notes

¹ *Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-first Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/31/35).*

² *Ibid., Thirty-second Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/32/35); ibid., Thirty-third Session, Supplement No. 35 and corrigendum (A/33/35 and Corr.1); ibid., Thirty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 35 and corrigendum (A/34/35 and Corr.1); ibid., Thirty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/35/35); ibid., Thirty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/36/35); ibid., Thirty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 35 and corrigendum (A/37/35 and Corr.1); ibid., Thirty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/38/35); ibid., Thirty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/39/35); ibid., Fortieth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/40/35); ibid., Forty-first Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/41/35); ibid., Forty-second Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/42/35); ibid., Forty-third Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/43/35); ibid., Forty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/44/35); ibid., Forty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/45/35); ibid., Forty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/46/35); ibid., Forty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/47/35); ibid., Forty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/48/35); ibid., Forty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/49/35); ibid., Fiftieth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/50/35); ibid., Fifty-first Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/51/35); ibid., Fifty-second Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/52/35); ibid., Fifty-third Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/53/35); ibid., Fifty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/54/35); ibid., Fifty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/55/35); ibid., Fifty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 35 and corrigendum (A/56/35 and Corr.1); ibid., Fifty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/57/35); ibid., Fifty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/58/35); and ibid., Fifty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/59/35).*

³ A/AC.183/2005/CRP.1.

⁴ The observers at the Committee meetings were as follows: Algeria, Bangladesh, Bulgaria, China, Ecuador, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Mauritania, Morocco, Nicaragua, Niger, Qatar, Sri Lanka, Syrian Arab Republic, United Arab Emirates, Viet Nam, Yemen, African Union, League of Arab States, Organization of the Islamic Conference and Palestine.



United Nations

Report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

**General Assembly
Official Records
Sixty-first Session
Supplement No. 35 (A/61/35)**

General Assembly
Official Records
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Report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People



United Nations • New York, 2006

Note

Symbols of United Nations documents are composed of capital letters combined with figures. Mention of such a symbol indicates a reference to a United Nations document.

Contents

<i>Chapter</i>	<i>Paragraphs</i>	<i>Page</i>
Letter of transmittal		iv
I. Introduction	1–11	1
II. Mandate of the Committee	12	4
III. Organization of work	13–18	5
A. Membership and officers	13–16	5
B. Participation in the work of the Committee	17–18	5
IV. Review of the situation relating to the question of Palestine	19–36	6
V. Action taken by the Committee	37–63	13
A. Action taken in accordance with General Assembly resolution 60/36	37–48	13
1. Action taken in the Security Council	38–45	13
2. Statements by the Committee	46–47	14
3. Participation by the Chairman of the Committee in international conferences and meetings	48	14
B. Action taken by the Committee and the Division for Palestinian Rights in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 60/36 and 60/37	49–63	14
1. Programme of international meetings and conferences	49–52	14
2. Cooperation with intergovernmental organizations	53–54	15
3. Cooperation with civil society	55–58	15
4. Research, monitoring and publications	59	16
5. United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine	60	17
6. Training programme for staff of the Palestinian Authority	61	17
7. International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People	62–63	17
VI. Action taken by the Department of Public Information in accordance with General Assembly resolution 60/38	64–77	18
VII. Conclusions and recommendations of the Committee	78–85	20

Letter of transmittal

4 October 2006

Mr. Secretary-General,

I have the honour to enclose herewith the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for submission to the General Assembly in accordance with paragraph 7 of its resolution 60/36 of 1 December 2005.

The report covers the period from 6 October 2005 to 4 October 2006.

Accept, Sir, the assurances of my highest consideration.

(Signed) Paul **Badji**
Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the
Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

His Excellency
Mr. Kofi Annan
Secretary-General of the United Nations
New York

Chapter I

Introduction

1. The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People was established by the General Assembly by resolution 3376 (XXX) of 10 November 1975, with the task of recommending a programme designed to enable the Palestinian people to exercise its inalienable rights, as recognized by the Assembly in resolution 3236 (XXIX) of 22 November 1974.

2. The recommendations made by the Committee in its first report to the General Assembly¹ were endorsed by the Assembly as a basis for the solution of the question of Palestine. In its subsequent reports,² the Committee has continued to stress that a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, must be based on the relevant United Nations resolutions and the following essential principles: the withdrawal of Israel from the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem, and from the other occupied Arab territories; respect for the right of all States in the region to live in peace within secure and internationally recognized boundaries; and the recognition and exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, primarily the right to self-determination. The recommendations of the Committee contained in its first report could not be implemented, and the Assembly each year renewed the Committee's mandate and requested it to intensify efforts in pursuit of its objectives.

3. Since 1991, the Committee has consistently supported the peace process. It welcomed the 1991 Madrid Peace Conference that launched the Middle East peace process based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). It also welcomed the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements (A/48/486-S/26560, annex) and subsequent implementation agreements. The Committee has strongly supported the vision of two States, Israel and Palestine, living side by side within secure and recognized borders on the basis of the 1949 armistice lines, in accordance with relevant United Nations resolutions, including Security Council resolutions 1397 (2002) and 1515 (2003). The Committee

¹ *Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-first Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/31/35).*

² *Ibid., Thirty-second Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/32/35); ibid., Thirty-third Session, Supplement No. 35 and corrigendum (A/33/35 and Corr.1); ibid., Thirty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 35 and corrigendum (A/34/35 and Corr.1); ibid., Thirty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/35/35); ibid., Thirty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/36/35); ibid., Thirty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 35 and corrigendum (A/37/35 and Corr.1); ibid., Thirty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/38/35); ibid., Thirty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/39/35); ibid., Fortieth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/40/35); ibid., Forty-first Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/41/35); ibid., Forty-second Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/42/35); ibid., Forty-third Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/43/35); ibid., Forty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/44/35); ibid., Forty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/45/35); ibid., Forty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/46/35); ibid., Forty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/47/35); ibid., Forty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/48/35); ibid., Forty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/49/35); ibid., Fiftieth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/50/35); ibid., Fifty-first Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/51/35); ibid., Fifty-second Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/52/35); ibid., Fifty-third Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/53/35); ibid., Fifty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/54/35); ibid., Fifty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/55/35); ibid., Fifty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 35 and corrigendum (A/56/35 and Corr.1); ibid., Fifty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/57/35); ibid., Fifty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/58/35); ibid., Fifty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/59/35); and ibid., Sixtieth Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/60/35).*

welcomed and supported the Quartet's road map and called on the parties to implement it. In keeping with its mandate, the Committee continued to work towards enabling the Palestinian people to realize its inalienable rights, including the right to self-determination and to its own independent State, on all Palestinian territory occupied in 1967, including East Jerusalem. The Committee also promotes support and assistance by the international community to the Palestinian people.

4. The reporting period began with a cautious hope that the removal in September 2005 of Israeli settlements from the Gaza Strip and parts of the northern West Bank and the withdrawal of the Israeli army from the Gaza Strip would create the much-needed momentum for the resumption of the political dialogue between the parties. There was no progress in the political area either immediately after the pull-out or in the course of the months that followed, however. While the overall situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, remained serious, the situation in Gaza has deteriorated significantly since June 2006.

5. In the course of the year, the Israeli army has continued to conduct its operations in Palestinian population centres, resorting to extrajudicial assassinations, house demolitions and arrests. Palestinian response included suicide attacks in Israel and regular rocket fire by Palestinian armed groups. During the year, chances for a return to the political process remained elusive.

6. The holding of the elections to the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) on 25 January 2006 became a pivotal point in Palestinian political life. The electoral victory of the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) confronted the Palestinian political system, the region and the wider international community with new challenges. In the period following the elections, the newly appointed Palestinian Cabinet and the Presidency have not been able to reach an agreement on a common political programme. While President Mahmoud Abbas fully embraced the platform of peace, the Cabinet remained reluctant to recognize Israel and accept all the previously signed bilateral agreements. This situation has persisted throughout the reviewed period, stymieing progress in the political area and negatively affecting efforts to address the rapidly deteriorating Palestinian humanitarian crisis. On 27 June, the major Palestinian factions reached an agreement to bolster national unity on the basis of the "Prisoners' Document"; however, Israeli military action delayed its taking effect.

7. While most Governments have treated the election results as a Palestinian domestic matter, some were not in a position to recognize and cooperate with the Hamas-led Cabinet. This has considerably undercut the prospects of delivering various forms of assistance to the Palestinian people. The decision by major international donors to cease direct assistance programmes has further exacerbated the humanitarian situation.

8. Israel responded to the electoral results by stepping up efforts at undermining the Palestinian Authority and by consolidating control over East Jerusalem, strategic parts of the West Bank and access to the Gaza Strip. The situation escalated dramatically at the end of June 2006 with major Israeli military incursions in the Gaza Strip following the capture of an Israeli soldier by Palestinian armed groups. Overshadowed by the hostilities in Lebanon that started in early July, Israeli military incursions, air strikes and artillery shelling, arbitrary arrests of Palestinian Authority and PLC officials, demolition of houses and crucial infrastructure continued unabated for months. The continued closure by Israel, the occupying Power, of the

crossing points to the Gaza Strip and in the West Bank constituted collective punishment of an entire innocent civilian population.

9. During the year, the Committee remained deeply concerned about the continuing expansion of Israeli settlements in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the acceleration in the completion of the wall built in the Occupied Palestinian Territory in contravention of the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice. The Committee cautioned that the Israeli plan to unilaterally draw its own permanent borders, incorporating large parts of the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, posed a grave threat to the prospects of a peaceful, negotiated solution of the question of Palestine. It precludes any possibility of improving the economic and humanitarian situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and made a two-State solution virtually impossible. The Committee reminded Israel, the occupying Power, that its settlement activities, the annexation of East Jerusalem, any actions to strengthen its hold on the city and the construction of the wall on occupied land were contrary to international law. The Secretary-General was encouraged to expedite the establishment of a register of damage caused to all natural or legal persons concerned by the construction of the wall. The Committee called upon all Governments to fulfil their obligations under international law, in particular the Fourth Geneva Convention, and to take the necessary steps to ensure that Israel complied with its international obligations.

10. The Committee continued to support the efforts by the Quartet to unblock the stalemate in the political process and resume meaningful negotiations between the parties. It noted that, in the course of the year, the Quartet has met at both the principals and envoys level to address the situation on the ground, restore a credible political process and encourage the parties to move forward towards the implementation of the objectives of the road map. The Quartet's meeting at the principals level in New York on 20 September and a high-level meeting of the Security Council the next day, convened at the initiative of the Council of the League of Arab States, were held with a view to advancing the peace process.

11. The Committee noted the serious efforts by the Palestinian Authority Presidency and the Palestinian leadership to end violence, strengthen the national unity of the Palestinian people and create conditions conducive to reviving the political process and to achieving a solution of the question of Palestine exclusively through peaceful means. It welcomed the signing in June of the National Conciliation Document by the major Palestinian political organizations, and the designation of the Palestinian President as the person in charge of negotiations with Israel, as well as the effort of President Abbas to form a Government of national unity. The Committee called upon the international community to extend all possible cooperation to the Palestinian leadership in its quest for the realization of the inalienable rights of its people.

Chapter II

Mandate of the Committee

12. On 1 December 2005, the General Assembly renewed the mandate of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (see resolution 60/36), requested the Secretary-General to continue to provide the Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat with the necessary resources to carry out its programme of work (see resolution 60/37), and requested the continuation of the special information programme on the question of Palestine of the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat (see resolution 60/38). On the same date, the Assembly adopted resolution 60/39 entitled “Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine”.

Chapter III

Organization of work

A. Membership and officers

13. The Committee is composed of the following Member States: Afghanistan, Belarus, Cuba, Cyprus, Guinea, Guyana, India, Indonesia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mali, Malta, Namibia, Nigeria, Pakistan, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Tunisia, Turkey and Ukraine.

14. In a letter dated 5 August 2005, the Permanent Representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to the United Nations requested that the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela be admitted as an observer to the Committee. At its 289th meeting, held on 10 November 2005, the Committee approved that request and welcomed the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to take part, as an observer, in the work of the Committee. In a letter, the Chairman informed the President of the General Assembly of the request of the Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. The letter from the Chairman and its annex were circulated as a document of the General Assembly (A/60/567).

15. At its 292nd meeting, on 10 February 2005, the Committee re-elected Paul Badji (Senegal) as Chairman, elected Rodrigo Malmierca Díaz (Cuba) as Vice-Chairman, and re-elected Ravan A. G. Farhâdi (Afghanistan) as Vice-Chairman and Victor Camilleri (Malta) as Rapporteur.

16. At the same meeting, the Committee adopted its programme of work for 2006.³

B. Participation in the work of the Committee

17. As in previous years, the Committee reconfirmed that all United Nations Member States and observers wishing to participate in the work of the Committee as observers were welcome to do so. In accordance with established practice, Palestine participated in the work of the Committee as an observer, attended all of its meetings and made observations and proposals for consideration by the Committee and its Bureau.

18. In 2006, the Committee again welcomed as observers all States and organizations that had participated in its work in the preceding year.⁴

³ A/AC.183/2006/CRP.1.

⁴ The observers at the Committee meetings were as follows: Algeria, Bangladesh, Bulgaria, China, Ecuador, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Mauritania, Morocco, Nicaragua, Niger, Qatar, Sri Lanka, Syrian Arab Republic, United Arab Emirates, Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, African Union, League of Arab States, Organization of the Islamic Conference and Palestine.

Chapter IV

Review of the situation relating to the question of Palestine

19. Pursuant to its mandate, the Committee continued to monitor the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, as well as relevant political developments. The Palestinian people exercised their right to vote in the PLC elections held on 25 January 2006 throughout the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. Overall, 77 per cent of registered voters cast their votes for a new legislature. Approximately 20,000 national and 1,000 international observers, including missions from the European Union, the National Democratic Institute, the Carter Centre and Canada observed the conduct of the election. The observers concluded that the campaign took place in a relatively calm atmosphere, with an absence of provocative rhetoric, although candidates, campaign and election workers were at times unable to move satisfactorily through Israeli checkpoints during the campaign period. Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas and the Palestinian people were congratulated by the Secretary-General, the Quartet and other officials within the international community for an election process that was free, fair and secure, and which marked an important milestone in the building of Palestinian democratic institutions. The Central Elections Commission announced the official results with Hamas winning a majority, consisting of 74 seats. Fatah won 45 seats, with the remaining 13 seats going to smaller parties and independents.

20. On 29 March, President Abbas swore in the new Palestinian Government which included Hamas members and independents, with Mr. Ismail Haniyeh as Prime Minister. In a letter to Mr. Haniyeh, President Abbas asked that the new Government programme be aligned with that of the Palestinian Presidency. The Quartet called on the new Government to commit to the principles of non-violence, recognition of Israel's right to exist and acceptance of previous agreements and obligations, including the road map. Since the illness of Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, Mr. Ehud Olmert on 4 January took over the reins of government as Acting Prime Minister, until his election on 28 March. On 19 February, Acting Prime Minister Olmert had announced that Israel would not hold contacts with a Palestinian Government which included Hamas, not transfer some US\$ 55 million a month in taxes and tariffs to it and ban the transfer of equipment to its security services. On 10 April, donors decided to freeze direct aid to the Palestinian Authority until it complied with the three principles outlined by the Quartet. In the run-up to and after the elections, Prime Minister Olmert declared his intention to set unilaterally Israel's borders in the West Bank, that would include major settlement blocks, as well as the Jordan River as a security border. In response, the Quartet called upon both parties to avoid unilateral measures which would prejudice final status issues.

21. Efforts were undertaken to find consensus among various Palestinian parties. Led by President Abbas and with the participation of Prime Minister Haniyeh, a Palestinian national dialogue conference took place on 25 and 26 May. Representatives of political parties, civil society, the private sector, the Palestinian Authority and the Palestine Liberation Organization participated. A final statement concluded that a Prisoners' Document (see para. 31 below) should serve as a basis for the continuation of the national dialogue. On 27 June, a National Conciliation Document was agreed upon. As of the beginning of October, efforts by President

Abbas to form a national unity Government that would reflect the principles put forward by the Quartet, remained inconclusive.

22. Internal Palestinian difficulties, the withholding of hundreds of millions of dollars of Palestinian tax money by Israel, coupled with its continuing military operation in the Occupied Territory, led to a serious political and financial crisis and total paralysis of efforts to restart the dialogue between the parties.

23. During the period under review, the Committee closely monitored the situation on the ground and was greatly alarmed by the intense escalation of violence in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Casualties continued to increase, mostly among Palestinians, as a result of the disproportionate use of force by the occupying Power, but also among Israeli civilians in Israel as a result of suicide bombings. During the month of June, Israel stepped up its policy of targeted killings of militants and shelling of the Gaza Strip. On 9 June, an explosion on a beach in the Gaza Strip killed seven civilians, all members of the same family. The Secretary-General called for a full investigation, while Human Rights Watch concluded that Israeli artillery fire was to blame. The Committee has repeatedly condemned the policy and practice of extrajudicial killings as being inadmissible under international law. At the same time, it has strongly condemned all attacks against Israeli civilians in Israel, which could not be justified and undermined any prospect of reconciliation between the parties. Suicide bombings occurred at the market of Hadera in Israel on 26 October 2005, in Netanya on 5 December, outside the settlement of "Kedumim" in the northern West Bank on 30 March and in central Tel Aviv on 17 April 2006, altogether killing at least 21 Israelis and 3 foreigners.

24. In late June and July 2006, the security situation worsened further, making July the deadliest month in the Gaza Strip in nearly two years. On 25 June, an armed Palestinian group attacked an army post near Karam Abu Slim (Kerem Shalom) crossing, killing two Israeli soldiers and capturing one. President Abbas called for the immediate release of the Israeli soldier while calling on the international community and the Quartet to prevent Israel from exploiting the situation to invade the Gaza Strip. On 27 and 28 June, the Israeli army expanded its military operation, code-named "Operation Summer Rains", attacking infrastructure in the Gaza Strip, including bombing the Gaza power station, cutting electricity to some 40 per cent of the Gaza Strip, leaving thousands of the Gaza residents without water. Three bridges were also destroyed, dividing the Gaza Strip into isolated units. The Secretary-General called upon Israel to show restraint and to avoid actions that damaged civilian infrastructure and aggravated the hardship of the Palestinian people. On 6 July, Israeli tanks pushed up to 6 kilometres into the northern Gaza Strip, taking position in three former settlements in an operation code-named "Oaks of Bashan". At least 12 Palestinians and 1 Israeli soldier were killed in the fighting. On 8 July, the Secretary-General called on Israel to restore and maintain the uninterrupted supply of fuel to Gaza and to ensure the passage of food and essential supplies through the Karni crossing. Israeli aircraft bombed the office of Prime Minister Haniyeh on 1 July and the Foreign Ministry building on 13 July. Because of the war in Lebanon, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) along with United Nations humanitarian agencies working

in the Occupied Palestinian Territory,⁵ on 3 August, expressed concern that with international attention focusing on Lebanon, the tragedy in Gaza that had started in June was being forgotten. The Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs reported in August to the Security Council that since Israel's disengagement from the Gaza Strip in September 2005 to August 2006, 450 Palestinians had been killed. Over 2,500 have been wounded. The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs reported 202 Palestinian deaths, including 44 children, since the beginning of the Israeli offensive in Gaza on 28 June. It was estimated that since the start of the second intifada in 2000, close to 4,400 Palestinians have been killed and some 31,000 wounded. As of July 2006, the number of deaths of children under 18 exceeded 850.

25. To improve the freedom of movement and economic activity of Palestinians living in the Gaza Strip, an Agreement on Movement and Access between Israel and the Palestinian Authority was reached on 15 November 2005. It provided for the reopening of the Rafah border crossing with Egypt and other crossing points. The Rafah terminal was transferred to the Palestinian Authority with oversight by European Union monitors. The Rafah and Al-Muntar (Karni) crossings have been only partially operational at rates far lower than foreseen by the Agreement, however. During 2006, less than 10 per cent of the Gaza Strip's minimum daily export targets have been achieved. The Rafah terminal has remained closed for all but two days for most of the months of July and August, preventing people from leaving or entering the Gaza Strip. There has been no progress on the other aspects of the Agreement, such as the Gaza-West Bank link and progress on the airport and seaport. Basic food commodities were severely depleted, bakeries closed and food rationing was introduced. The closure also seriously affected the export of produce from the Gaza Strip. The Al-Muntar (Karni) closures have cost Palestinians up to \$500,000 a day, according to United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs estimates. The combination of checkpoints, physical obstacles and a permit system has cut the West Bank into three distinct areas in addition to East Jerusalem. In the Jordan Valley, Israel has placed a series of checkpoints and roadblocks between the Valley and the rest of the West Bank, separating Palestinians from their land, their families and from their jobs. Physical obstacles include the separation wall, checkpoints, partial checkpoints, roadblocks, road gates, earth mounds, earth walls, trenches and fences. The number of physical obstacles increased from 376 in August 2005 to 547 in August 2006.

26. On 9 March 2006, Acting Prime Minister Ehud Olmert made public a "convergence plan", in accordance with which Israel would withdraw from parts of the West Bank, and annex "Gush Etzion", the "Jerusalem Envelope", "Ma'ale Adumim", the "Ariel" region and the Jordan River as a "security border". He pledged to build up the "E1" area (area between "Ma'ale Adumim" and Jerusalem). In its statement of 9 May the Quartet rejected any unilateral steps on final status issues by either party. In August 2006, Prime Minister Olmert stated that owing to the war in Lebanon and the significant damage caused to northern Israel, his plan was no longer at the top of his Government's agenda.

⁵ Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, World Food Programme, World Health Organization, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, United Nations Children's Fund, United Nations Population Fund and United Nations Development Fund for Women.

27. An issue of great concern to the Committee was the continued construction of the separation wall in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, in contravention of the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice rendered on 9 July 2004, which reaffirmed the illegality of the wall. On 30 April 2006, the Israeli Cabinet revised the route, which would further consolidate Israeli control over vital parts of the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. The revised route would incorporate over 370,000 settlers, or nearly 87 per cent of the settler population. The wall in the Jerusalem area annexed 228.2 sq km of the West Bank, severing East Jerusalem from the rest of the West Bank and isolating over 230,000 Palestinian Jerusalemites from the rest of the West Bank. It would further separate over 2 million Palestinians living on the eastern side of the wall from East Jerusalem. The wall would sever East Jerusalem from Bethlehem and Ramallah, communities that have been socially, culturally and economically interdependent. Bethlehem would be completely cut off from Jerusalem, while the “Etzion” block settlements would expand onto more Palestinian land. On 21 March, the Israel Defense Forces issued a military order to seize 81.6 dunums of Palestinian land in Beituniya in the West Bank for construction of the wall. In May, Israeli Justice Minister Haim Ramon committed to finishing construction on 95 per cent of the wall by the end of 2006. Forty-two per cent (336 km) of the planned 790 km structure has been completed. Some 102 km were in various stages of construction, and would be completed at year’s end. Sixty-seven kilometres were still at the paperwork level, and the building of a 285-kilometre-long section awaited Israeli court approval. The Committee noted the delay in establishing the register of damages to compensate those who had suffered any material damage as a result of the wall’s construction, and urged the Secretary-General to intensify his efforts in that direction.

28. During the year, the Committee also noted the relentless settlement expansion. Territorial contiguity of East Jerusalem settlements was being enhanced. In November 2005, the Israel Land Administration published tenders for 350 housing units in “Ma’ale Adumim”, bringing the total tenders for the settlement in 2005 to 665 units. In February 2006, the Israel Land Administration was working on a plan to expand “Pisgat Ze’ev”, which had 40,000 residents. It proposed 1,100 new housing units in a development of 18 buildings of five to nine storeys. In March, new housing construction continued in “Karmeit Tzur”, “Karmel”, “Kiryat Arba”, “Pnei Hever” and “Susiya”. Land levelling continued for a new security fence around “Adora” and “Pnei Hever”. Settlers evacuated from the Gaza Strip were settling in the West Bank settlements of “Eshkolot”, south of Hebron, “Ariel”, and in the Jordan Valley settlement of “Maskiyot”. The Jordan Valley is home to some 47,000 Palestinians, along with 8,300 settlers living in 31 settlements. Israel’s de facto annexation of this area accounted for an additional 28.5 per cent of the West Bank. On 14 March, the Israeli authorities confirmed the list of 2,000 Palestinians banned from returning to the Jordan Valley. Thousands of dunums of land there had been transferred to settlements and army bases. In April, the Israel Defense Forces requisitioned 25 dunums belonging to the Palestinian towns of Beit Ummar and Halhul to create a buffer zone around “Karmeit Tzur”. On 4 May, Prime Minister Olmert announced a plan to build thousands of new dwellings in settlements to house evacuees from isolated settlements. Defence Minister Amir Peretz has approved expanding the territorial jurisdiction of four settlements — “Givat Ze’ev”, “Oranit”, “Maskiyot”, and “Beitar Ilit”. In spring 2006, construction began for 3,500 new units in “Nof Adumim”, part of the “Adumim” settlement block. Construction of the Israeli police station in the E1 area had already been completed. The Israel

Defense Forces authorized plans to expand the municipal boundaries of “Beitar Ilit” by 500 dunums, connecting the settlement and the Green Line. An industrial zone was planned for the area. On 4 September 2006, the Israeli Construction and Housing Ministry solicited tenders for the construction of 690 apartments at “Beitar Ilit” and “Ma’ale Adumim”. On 21 September, the Ministry invited bids for construction of 164 housing units for the settlements of “Ariel”, “Alfei Menashe” and “Karnei Shomron”. The wall and the planned settlement expansion would place some 45.5 per cent of the West Bank under Israeli control.

29. The number of settlers in the West Bank had increased by 3 per cent in the first six months of 2006, from 253,748 to 260,932. Settlers were involved in various violent incidents including attacking Palestinian farmers working their land; attacking Palestinian shepherds and killing their sheep; injuring Palestinian children on their way home in Hebron; uprooting thousands of olive trees and destroying fruit trees in Palestinian farms in Yatta, Kfar Thulth, near Qalqilya; setting fire in the village of Awarta near Nablus; beating Palestinians in their car and damaging their vehicle; throwing stones at cars; blocking roads near Palestinian villages. The settlement of “Beitar Ilit” discharged sewage onto lands belonging to the villages of Wadi Fukin and Nahhalin while settlers from “Ariel” continued to pump sewage water onto Palestinian farmlands belonging to residents of Burkin and Kfer al-Diq. The municipality of Salfit declared an emergency after sewage dumped from “Ariel” had contaminated the sole water well supplying surrounding villages. There have also been attacks by Palestinians against Israeli settlers.

30. The weak financial situation of the Palestinian Authority severely worsened owing to Israeli and donors’ decisions to halt transfers of tariffs and direct aid, the contraction of Palestinian economic activity and reduced domestic tax revenues. Unpaid salaries to over 150,000 civil servants, 70,000 of whom were members of the security services, contributed to the deterioration of the security environment as frustrated civil servants vented their anger by protest demonstrations, strikes and taking over Government buildings and confrontations. Nearly 1 million Palestinians relied on Palestinian Authority wage earners whose salaries accounted for about 25 per cent of the gross domestic product. Responding to an urgent appeal of President Abbas, the European Commission in early July 2006 took action through setting up a temporary international mechanism. Its first steps were to provide fuel for hospitals in the Gaza Strip to enable the continued provision of essential health services. The Committee commended the efforts by many Governments to provide immediate financial relief to abate the fiscal crisis of the Palestinian Authority and expressed appreciation to the Arab League and international and regional financial institutions for their continued and augmented commitment. The Committee highly valued the efforts by James Wolfensohn as the Quartet’s Special Envoy for Gaza Disengagement in implementing his mandate, as well as his role in the conclusion of the Agreement on Movement and Access.

31. The issue of the continued incarceration of a large number of Palestinian prisoners and detainees in Israeli prisons and detention facilities remained an issue of serious concern for the Committee. In September 2006, the Palestinian Authority Ministry of Detainees and Ex-Detainees Affairs reported that, since 1967, a total of some 700,000 (25 per cent of the population) Palestinians had been taken prisoner in the Occupied Palestinian Territory by Israel. There were 10,100 detainees still held in 30 Israeli prisons and detention facilities. Since September 2000, the beginning of the second intifada, about 4,000 children and 500 women had been arrested or

detained. About 120 women remained in custody. Prisoners and detainees were subjected to practices that undermined their health, tortured and humiliated. Palestinian political detainees in Israeli prisons, including senior Fatah and Hamas members, announced on 10 May an agreement on common principles for national action and dialogue outlined in a Prisoners' Document. The document was regarded as a precursor to a Palestinian national dialogue (see para. 21 above). On 29 June, Israel arrested 64 Palestinian Authority officials, including cabinet ministers and PLC members. On 5 August, PLC speaker Abd al-Aziz Dweik was arrested in Ramallah by Israeli forces. The Secretary-General expressed concern at the detention of the Palestinian officials, including PLC members.

32. The humanitarian situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory has steadily worsened. Unemployment and poverty rates have increased dramatically. In May 2006, the rate of unemployment had been 34 per cent in the Occupied Palestinian Territory as a whole and 44 per cent in the Gaza Strip. This rate rose to 55 per cent during times of complete closure imposed by Israel. Similarly, the poverty rate was nearly 50 per cent, with the Gaza Strip rate at approximately 70 per cent. In June 2006, the World Food Programme increased the number of people it fed in the Occupied Palestinian Territory by 25 per cent, or from 480,000 to 600,000 non-refugees. Nearly 2 million Palestinians, 51 per cent of the population, were unable to meet their daily food needs without assistance. The plight of women has remained extremely difficult owing to the worsening security and economic situation. In the past six years, hundreds of women have been killed and injured on their way to and from work and as a result of being denied access to medical services. Half of all families living in Palestine refugee camps were headed by women. Female-headed households have been disproportionately affected by the rise in poverty that accompanied the violence and closures.

33. The Palestinian people have continued to suffer from low reserves and the quality of the drinking water available to them, a crisis caused by both the exhaustion of the Palestinian aquifer reservoirs by Israel and the over-drainage of thousands of illegal wells spread throughout the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. In the West Bank, Israel controlled 83 per cent of the Palestinian water. It also infringed on the Palestinian right to water in the Jordan Valley. The water crisis was further exacerbated by the security situation, which hindered projects aimed at improving the quality of water and providing alternatives to the available sources of water. More than 220 communities in the West Bank, around 320,000 people, were unconnected to water mains. Hundreds were forced to purchase water from expensive and unsanitary tankers. Farmers had to use expensive water to irrigate vegetable farms. Medical sources said diarrhoea, gastroenteritis, fever, kidney failure, infection and dermatological problems affected most Palestinian children and persisted to adulthood because of poor water supplies.

34. UNRWA officials expressed alarm that the general living conditions of the Palestine refugees in the Gaza Strip had become "deplorable and getting worse". In early June, authorities had not been able to pay suppliers, hospital staff and teachers, for three months, disrupting essential services, including medical care. Increasing restrictions imposed by Israel on Palestinian movement further stifled the economy. The Agency was caring for over 1.1 million people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory under its emergency programme, providing cash, food and temporary employment. In late July 2006, continued Israeli shelling drove over 1,500 Palestinians from their homes in the Beit Hanoun area to the Jabalya camp. Four

UNRWA schools at the camp were serving as makeshift shelters for those who had to flee their homes. While focused on the plight of Palestine refugees within its mandate, UNRWA also extended assistance to a number of non-refugee civilians affected by the war in Lebanon during July and August.

35. The Committee expressed appreciation for the work of the Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP/PAPP). With funding from Japan, UNDP played a central role in supporting the Palestinian legislative election through establishing a Liaison and Support Unit that served as a resource centre for the over 1,000 international observers monitoring the elections. To combat poverty and rehabilitate agricultural land in the worst hit areas, UNDP/PAPP signed an agreement with the Islamic Development Bank, with funding by the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC). The project, the first of its kind with OPEC, focused on the agricultural sector of the Tulkarm area in the West Bank, which had suffered from restricted mobility and damage to agricultural land and infrastructure. In December 2005, UNDP/PAPP was entrusted by the Palestinian Authority, Israel and the Office of the Special Envoy of the Quartet to carry out a task of clearing and recycling the rubble left behind as a result of the destruction of the settlements in the Gaza Strip. With over 1.2 million tons of rubble to be cleared, the project would cost \$24.7 million, which was being funded by Israel. Progress on this project was hampered by the heavy shelling of the former settlement areas. With funding from Japan and Norway, UNDP was taking a lead in assessing the damage to the infrastructure and assisting in alleviating the humanitarian crisis through employment generation schemes, removal of solid waste, and supplying essential fuel and equipment.

36. The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, established in the Occupied Palestinian Territory in 2000, was a response to the deteriorating humanitarian situation in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Its aim was to improve the humanitarian situation by enhancing coordination between agencies to ensure effective distribution of humanitarian assistance. It provides analytical reports on crucial issues to inform policymakers and help aid organizations in their operational decisions. It acts as guardian for the Consolidated Appeal Process. In September, donor nations pledged an additional \$116 million, although the humanitarian appeal remained 42 per cent underfunded.

Chapter V

Action taken by the Committee

A. Action taken in accordance with General Assembly resolution 60/36

37. In pursuance of its mandate, the Committee continued to mobilize the international community in support of the Palestinian people, in cooperation with United Nations bodies, Governments, intergovernmental and civil society organizations and others, as indicated below.

1. Action taken in the Security Council

38. During the period under review, the Security Council has continued to monitor the situation on the ground and the efforts to implement the road map. Throughout the year, the Council held monthly briefings under the agenda item entitled "The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question".

39. The Security Council met on 30 March 2006 for the monthly briefing, which was followed by a debate. The Chairman of the Committee, Mr. Paul Badji, took part in the debate and made a statement (see S/PV.5404).

40. The Security Council met on 17 April 2006, at the request of the Permanent Representative of Bahrain in his capacity as Chairman of the Arab Group for the month of April 2006 and on behalf of the States members of the League of Arab States (see S/2006/227), the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of Yemen in his capacity as Chairman of the Organization of the Islamic Conference Group (see S/2006/239), and the Permanent Representative of Malaysia in his capacity as Chairman of the Coordinating Bureau of the Non-Aligned Movement (see S/2006/240). The Chairman of the Committee took part in the debate and made a statement (see S/PV.5411).

41. The Security Council met on 30 June 2006 for the monthly briefing, which was followed by a debate (see S/PV.5481).

42. The Security Council met on 13 July 2006, at the requests of the Permanent Representative of Algeria, in his capacity as Chairman of the Arab Group for the month of June 2006, and on behalf of the States members of the League of Arab States (see S/2006/458), and the Permanent Representative of Qatar (see S/2006/462). The Council voted on a draft resolution submitted by Qatar (see S/2006/508). The result of the vote was 10 votes in favour, 1 against and 4 abstaining. The draft resolution was not adopted owing to the negative vote of a permanent member of the Council (see S/PV.5488).

43. The Security Council met on 21 July 2006 for a briefing from the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General and the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, which was followed by a debate. The Chairman of the Committee took part in the debate and made a statement (see S/PV.5493).

44. The Security Council met on 22 August 2006 for the monthly briefing, which was followed by a debate (see S/PV.5515).

45. The Security Council met on 21 September 2006, at the request of the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States (see S/2006/700). A debate, at the ministerial level, was held (see S/PV.5530).

2. Statements by the Committee

46. On 7 February 2006, the Bureau of the Committee issued a statement on the holding of the PLC elections (see GA/PAL/1000).

47. On 27 July 2006, the Bureau of the Committee issued a statement concerning the Israeli military operations in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (see GA/PAL/1017).

3. Participation by the Chairman of the Committee in international conferences and meetings

48. During the year, the Chairman of the Committee participated in events in support of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and contributed to their deliberations. The Chairman participated in the International Media Seminar on Peace in the Middle East, held from 8 to 9 June 2006 in Moscow, organized by the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat.

B. Action taken by the Committee and the Division for Palestinian Rights in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 60/36 and 60/37

1. Programme of international meetings and conferences

49. Through its programme of international meetings and conferences, the Committee continued to raise international awareness of the various aspects of the question of Palestine, and international support for the rights of the Palestinian people and the peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine.

50. In the period under review, the following international events were held under the auspices of the Committee:

(a) United Nations Latin American and Caribbean Meeting on the Question of Palestine, Caracas, 13 and 14 December 2005;

(b) United Nations Public Forum in Support of Israeli-Palestinian Peace, Caracas, 15 December 2005;

(c) United Nations Seminar on Assistance to the Palestinian People, Cairo, 26 and 27 April 2006;

(d) United Nations International Meeting in Support of Israeli-Palestinian Peace, United Nations Office at Vienna, 27 and 28 June 2006;

(e) Consultations with civil society organizations, United Nations Office at Vienna, 29 June 2006;

(f) United Nations International Conference of Civil Society in Support of the Palestinian People, United Nations Office at Geneva, 7 and 8 September 2006.

51. All of the above-mentioned events were attended by representatives of Governments, Palestine, intergovernmental organizations and United Nations system entities, as well as representatives of civil society and the media. The reports of the meetings were issued as publications of the Division for Palestinian Rights and were made available through the United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine (UNISPAL) and the Division's website.

52. In Cairo, during the United Nations Seminar on Assistance to the Palestinian People, the Committee delegation was received by Mr. Ahmed Aboul Gheit, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Arab Republic of Egypt, who stressed the urgency of supporting peace in the Middle East and welcomed the efforts of the Committee in that regard. At Vienna, in connection with the United Nations International Meeting in Support of Israeli-Palestinian Peace, the Committee delegation met with Ambassador Ralph Scheide, head of the Near and Middle East Department of the Austrian Foreign Ministry. On the sidelines of the United Nations International Conference of Civil Society in Support of the Palestinian People held in Geneva, the Committee delegation had meetings at the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs of Switzerland in Bern, with the International Committee of the Red Cross and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

2. Cooperation with intergovernmental organizations

53. Throughout the year, the Committee continued its close cooperation with the African Union, the Non-Aligned Movement and the Organization of the Islamic Conference, through the participation of the Chairman in their meetings and through periodic consultations at United Nations Headquarters.

54. The Committee continued its cooperation on the question of Palestine with States members of the European Union. The Bureau held consultations with representatives of the European Union in March 2006 (under the Presidency of Austria) as part of the ongoing effort to build a constructive relationship with European Union members on issues of common concern.

3. Cooperation with civil society

Civil society organizations

55. The Committee continued to work with civil society organizations, academic institutions, think tanks and media representatives, using consultations with civil society representatives, participation in meetings organized by civil society organizations and the accreditation of new organizations. This work was reviewed and further advanced at the United Nations International Conference of Civil Society in Support of the Palestinian People. It provided civil society organizations from all regions of the world with an opportunity to discuss the situation on the ground, promote their current programmes, develop action-oriented proposals in support of the Palestinian people and improve the coordination of their activities. The Committee was appreciative of the work done by many civil society organizations and encouraged them to continue their work towards a just and lasting peace in the Middle East.

56. The Committee maintained and developed its liaison with the national, regional and international coordinating mechanisms cooperating with it, in addition to its established liaison with a large number of individual organizations.

Representatives of civil society participated in all meetings organized under the auspices of the Committee, including the observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People on 29 November 2005. In the period under review, the Committee also accredited 13 new organizations, including 2 as observers. Consultations between the delegation of the Committee and representatives of organizations accredited to the Committee were held at the United Nations Office at Vienna on 29 June 2006, following the United Nations International Meeting in Support of Israeli-Palestinian Peace. Participating representatives of non-governmental organizations discussed the humanitarian crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and exchanged views with the Committee delegation on ways to improve their cooperation. The Chairman of the Committee has met throughout the year with representatives of civil society organizations in New York and at the meetings organized under the auspices of the Committee away from Headquarters.

57. The Division for Palestinian Rights maintained the Internet website “NGO Network on the Question of Palestine” as a tool for exchange of information and for cooperation between civil society and the Committee. The website can be found at <http://www.un.org/depts/dpa/ngo>. At the request of the Committee, the Division also continued to issue its bimonthly newsletter, *NGO Action News*, covering the activities of civil society on the various aspects of the question of Palestine.

Parliaments and inter-parliamentary organizations

58. The Committee continued to develop its liaison with national and regional parliaments and their organizations and invited a number of parliamentarians to speak at its meetings. During the year, the Bureau of the Committee has met with members of the PLC, the Knesset and other national parliaments.

4. Research, monitoring and publications

59. The Division carried out research and monitoring activities and responded to requests for information and briefings on the question of Palestine. Under the guidance of the Committee, which reiterated the relevance of the research, monitoring and publications programme, it also prepared the publications listed below for dissemination, including through UNISPAL:

(a) Monthly bulletin on action taken by United Nations and intergovernmental organizations relevant to the question of Palestine;

(b) Monthly chronology of events relating to the question of Palestine, based on media reports and other sources;

(c) Reports of international meetings and conferences organized under the auspices of the Committee;

(d) Special bulletins and information notes on the observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People;

(e) Periodic reviews of developments related to the Middle East peace process;

(f) Annual compilation of resolutions and decisions of the General Assembly and the Security Council relating to the question of Palestine.

5. United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine

60. The Division for Palestinian Rights, in cooperation with relevant technical and library services of the United Nations Secretariat, continued to administer, maintain, expand and develop UNISPAL, pursuant to successive annual General Assembly mandates. This included the ongoing upgrading of technical components of the system to ensure its uninterrupted presence on the Internet, notably via the UNISPAL “Question of Palestine” portal, also developed and maintained by the Division, which is located on the United Nations home page, under “Peace and Security”, and involved the expansion of the documents collection to include relevant new and old documents. In addition, steps continued to be taken to enhance the user-friendliness and usefulness of the system (<http://domino.un.org/unispal.nsf>) — including by incorporating additional multimedia content.

6. Training programme for staff of the Palestinian Authority

61. Two staff members from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Palestinian Authority participated in a training programme conducted by the Division, from September to December 2005, in conjunction with the sixtieth session of the General Assembly. The trainees familiarized themselves with various aspects of the work of the Secretariat and other organs and conducted research on specific topics.

7. International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People

62. The International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People was observed at Headquarters and at the United Nations Offices at Geneva and Vienna on 29 November 2005. On the occasion of the observance at Headquarters, in addition to a special meeting of the Committee and other activities, a performance by the El-Funoun dance troupe entitled “Dancing Tragedies and Dreams” was organized by the Permanent Observer Mission of Palestine under the auspices of the Committee. The Committee noted with appreciation that the International Day of Solidarity had also been observed in many cities throughout the world. Details on the observance are contained in the special bulletin issued by the Division.

63. In adopting its programme of work, the Committee decided that a similar observance of the International Day of Solidarity should be organized in 2006.

Chapter VI

Action taken by the Department of Public Information in accordance with General Assembly resolution 60/38

64. The Department of Public Information, pursuant to General Assembly resolutions 59/30 of 1 December 2004 and 60/38, continued to implement its special information programme on the question of Palestine, using various tools at its disposal to disseminate information on this issue to the international community.

65. The Department's television, radio, press, photo and Internet news operations regularly covered the question of Palestine, providing live and archived coverage of open meetings of the General Assembly, the Security Council and other intergovernmental bodies on the issue. They also covered other programmes and activities in which the situation was addressed.

66. During the period under review, the Department issued 148 press releases on the question of Palestine (78 in English and 70 in French). In May 2006, the Department published the revised edition of *Basic Facts about the United Nations* in French and Spanish, which included an extensive section on the Middle East and all aspects of the Palestinian question. A revised edition of the smaller, companion volume, *UN in Brief*, was simultaneously issued in all six official languages.

67. United Nations Radio regularly covered various aspects of the question of Palestine and related issues in the news bulletins and the current affairs magazines in the official and non-official languages. Among the themes and issues covered were: the food crisis in Gaza owing to the Karni crossing closure; the request by UNRWA for \$95.5 million to reconstruct Gaza and the West Bank; the World Food Programme warning on the deepening humanitarian crisis in Gaza; and the Secretary-General urging Israel to respect international humanitarian law.

68. The Arabic Language Unit covers all statements by the Security Council, the Secretary-General, the Special Envoy to the Middle East and the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs. It has contracted with two stringers who live in the West Bank and Gaza, and their reports from the region have improved the quality of the unit's outputs.

69. The United Nations website continued to host a page on the question of Palestine under the "Global Issues" page, as well as the "Peace and Security" and "Refugees" pages. Links are available to UNISPAL, as well as to the web pages created by the Department of Political Affairs. In addition, the Website Section webcast all meetings of the Security Council and the General Assembly and most press conferences on the question of Palestine held at Headquarters, which were available immediately afterwards as archived webcasts.

70. The *UN News Centre* portal continued to provide extensive coverage on the question of Palestine and a wide array of related developments and issues. The number of visitors to the portal (which is available in all official languages) continued to grow. Notably, the Arabic version has registered over 1 million page views in the last 12 months. On the English- and French-language versions of the portal, related issues were the subject of nearly 400 news stories, which were also distributed worldwide to some 43,000 e-mail subscribers through the United Nations News Service. The period under review also witnessed a considerable increase in the usage of the portal's special "News Focus" page, providing visitors with easy

access to the broad range of United Nations resources on the question of Palestine, including links to key reports, statements, resolutions and other related materials.

71. United Nations Television distributed 12 stories related to the question of Palestine via UNifeed, a daily satellite television news feed reaching hundreds of broadcasters around the world.

72. As part of its special information programme on Palestine, the Department organized a training programme for 10 young Palestinian journalists at Headquarters, in Washington, D.C., and at the United Nations Office at Geneva, from 24 October to 9 December 2005. The programme was aimed at strengthening the participants' capacity as media professionals.

73. In cooperation with the Foreign Ministry of the Russian Federation, the Department organized an International Media Seminar on Peace in the Middle East, in Moscow on 8 and 9 June 2006, in which 72 people participated. Press releases were issued on the proceedings of the two-day seminar. The seminar was covered by the *Jerusalem Post*, *Yediot Achronot*, *Ha'aretz*, *Al-Ayam* and *Al-Ahram* newspapers, as well as by *ITAR-TASS*, *Interfax*, *Wafa* (Palestinian News Agency) and major Russian television channels.

74. The Dag Hammarskjöld Library digitized documents pertaining to the United Nations Palestine Commission (A/AC.21 series) for the UNISPAL document collection.

75. The network of United Nations information centres, services and offices continued to disseminate information on the question of Palestine and to organize special outreach activities. Press releases, statements, documents and audio-visual material were brought to the attention of target audiences, posted on their websites and made available to visitors of their reference libraries.

76. A major focus of activities was the promotion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. The Department assisted in the installation of the annual exhibit on the question of Palestine at Headquarters. Special events and activities, including conferences and public forums, were organized by the centres, services and offices individually or jointly with academic institutions, foreign ministries or United Nations Associations. The Secretary-General's message for the Day was widely disseminated in official and non-official languages.

77. In addition, support was provided to the United Nations Latin American and Caribbean Meeting on the Question of Palestine, held in Caracas; the United Nations Seminar on Assistance to the Palestinian People, held in Cairo; the United Nations International Meeting in Support of Palestinian Peace, held in Vienna; and to the Commissioner-General of UNRWA during her visit to Brussels and Washington, D.C.

Chapter VII

Conclusions and recommendations of the Committee

78. The year was marked by a steady deterioration of the security and humanitarian situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. The Committee expressed particular concern at the Israeli incursions into Gaza during the recent months and its destructive effects on the Palestinian people and on their hopes for peace. The Committee calls upon Israel to end its military operations in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and to stop any other measures that further undermine Palestinian institutions. It reminds Israel, the occupying Power, that it is bound by the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Times of War, which obliges the parties to protect civilians during hostilities. The Convention's applicability to the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, has been repeatedly confirmed by the General Assembly and the Security Council. Israel must end its incursions into Gaza, cease offensive military operations in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, withdraw its forces to their original positions outside Gaza, and release, immediately and unconditionally, all imprisoned cabinet members and parliamentarians, as well as other Palestinian prisoners. The Committee strongly condemns the killing of innocent civilians by either side. It denounces rocket attacks on Israel and calls for a cessation of those activities by Palestinian armed groups. The Committee is strongly opposed to the expansion of settlements in the West Bank and efforts to complete the construction of the wall on Palestinian land. It is particularly alarmed by the intention of the Israeli Government to expand large settlement blocks in the West Bank, which would separate East Jerusalem from the West Bank and the southern West Bank from its northern part. The Committee reiterates its position of principle that the settlements and the wall constructed by Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, are contrary to international humanitarian law and numerous resolutions of the Security Council and the General Assembly, adopted since 1967, as well as the provisions of the road map. It reminds the Secretary-General of the urgency of establishing the register of damage caused by the construction of the wall.

79. The Committee welcomes the signing of the National Conciliation Document by the major Palestinian political organizations, the decision to form a national unity Government, and the designation of Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas as the person in charge of negotiations with Israel. These have been encouraging developments and should be supported by Israel and the international community. At the same time, the international community should focus on practical and meaningful benchmarks to engage all parties to achieve a mutual ceasefire and support major international peace efforts, including the Arab Peace Initiative and the road map. The Committee reiterates that only a negotiated solution can bring about the goal of a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine through the establishment of two States, Israel and Palestine, based on the 1967 borders. A settlement should be based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973), 1397 (2002) and 1515 (2003) in particular, and other relevant resolutions. The Committee hopes that the Security Council, the Quartet and the other actors of the international community will continue to work towards the achievement of this goal.

80. The Committee feels strongly that, through the programme of mandated activities of the Division for Palestinian Rights, it will be able to continue to generate heightened international awareness of the various aspects of the question of Palestine, as well as international support for the rights of the Palestinian people and the peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine. In that connection, the Committee emphasizes the essential contribution of the Division in support of its mandate aimed at enabling the Palestinian people to exercise their inalienable rights. In that regard, the Committee notes with satisfaction (a) the level of dialogue, engagement and support of the international community for its programme objectives, for instance, in terms of both participation at the meetings convened and the use of printed and electronic information materials provided by the Division; (b) the number of civil society organizations that have received accreditation to the Committee; and (c) the number of pages viewed on the United Nations website on the question of Palestine. The Committee also considers that the annual training programme for staff of the Palestinian Authority has proved its usefulness, and requests that it be continued.

81. The Committee considers that its programme of international meetings and conferences contributes to focusing the attention of Governments, intergovernmental and civil society organizations and the general public on issues crucial for advancing a peaceful settlement of the conflict. The meetings highlight the most pressing concerns, such as the need to end violence, stop settlement activities and improve the living conditions of the Palestinian population. They contribute to raising international awareness of the root cause of the conflict, namely the occupation by Israel of the Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. They also mobilize international support for efforts to resolve the conflict, including through the convening of an international peace conference. It will continue the programme to foster support for the attainment by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights in accordance with international legitimacy. In its meetings programme for 2007, the Committee intends to address such issues as the detrimental effects of unilateral steps by the occupying Power; the responsibility of all Governments to apply international law to all aspects of the question of Palestine, in accordance with the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice; the need to convene the Conference of High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention, in view of the systematic violation by the occupying Power of international humanitarian law; the adverse consequences of the settlement policy and the construction of the wall for the achievement of a two-State solution; the collective international responsibility to protect the Palestinian people; the need to alleviate humanitarian and socio-economic hardships, including the plight of Palestinian women and children; and the role of civil society.

82. The Committee commends civil society organizations for their efforts to uphold international legitimacy with regard to the question of Palestine through advocacy and the mobilization of public opinion and for their initiatives aimed at alleviating the plight of the Palestinian people. It notes the support it receives from the Secretariat in strengthening its cooperation with civil society. The Committee encourages civil society organizations to broaden their base and to focus and harmonize their advocacy efforts at the local, national, regional and international levels with respect to the legal obligations

of Governments, as emphasized in the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice. It supports all humanitarian and assistance initiatives geared towards improving the daily lives of the Palestinians. The Committee will continue to involve parliamentarians in its programme of international meetings and conferences.

83. The Committee requests the Division to continue its substantive and secretariat support; the programme of research, monitoring and publications and other informational activities, such as the further expansion and development of UNISPAL, including the graphic enhancement of the “Question of Palestine” website; the annual training programme for staff of the Palestinian Authority; and the annual observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

84. The Committee is of the view that the special information programme on the question of Palestine of the Department of Public Information has made an important contribution to informing the media and public opinion of the relevant issues. The Committee requests the programme’s continuation, with the necessary flexibility, as warranted by developments relevant to the question of Palestine.

85. Wishing to make its contribution to the achievement of a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine and in view of the many difficulties facing the Palestinian people and besetting the peace process, the Committee calls upon all States to join it in this endeavour and invites the General Assembly again to recognize the importance of its role and to reconfirm its mandate with overwhelming support.





United Nations

Report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

**General Assembly
Official Records
Sixty-second Session
Supplement No. 35 (A/62/35)**

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**Report of the Committee on the
Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of
the Palestinian People**



United Nations • New York, 2007

Note

Symbols of United Nations documents are composed of capital letters combined with figures. Mention of such a symbol indicates a reference to a United Nations document.

Contents

<i>Chapter</i>	<i>Paragraphs</i>	<i>Page</i>
Letter of transmittal		iv
I. Introduction	1–10	1
II. Mandate of the Committee	11	4
III. Organization of work	12–16	5
A. Membership and officers	12–14	5
B. Participation in the work of the Committee	15–16	5
IV. Review of the situation relating to the question of Palestine	17–35	6
V. Action taken by the Committee	36–65	13
A. Action taken in accordance with General Assembly resolution 61/22	36–50	13
1. Action taken in the General Assembly and the Security Council	37–45	13
2. Action taken by the Bureau of the Committee	46–50	14
B. Action taken by the Committee and the Division for Palestinian Rights in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 61/22 and 61/23	51–65	15
1. Programme of international meetings and conferences	51–54	15
2. Cooperation with intergovernmental organizations	55–56	16
3. Cooperation with civil society	57–60	16
4. Research, monitoring and publications	61	17
5. United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine	62	17
6. Training programme for staff of the Palestinian Authority	63	18
7. International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People	64–65	18
VI. Action taken by the Department of Public Information in accordance with General Assembly resolution 61/24	66–75	19
VII. Conclusions and recommendations of the Committee	76–85	21

Letter of transmittal

[4 October 2007]

Mr. Secretary-General,

I have the honour to enclose herewith the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for submission to the General Assembly in accordance with paragraph 2 of its resolution 61/22 of 1 December 2006.

The report covers the period from 4 October 2006 to 4 October 2007.

Accept, Sir, the assurances of my highest consideration.

(Signed) Paul **Badji**
Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the
Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon
Secretary-General of the United Nations
New York

Chapter I

Introduction

1. The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People was established by the General Assembly by its resolution 3376 (XXX) of 10 November 1975, with the task of recommending a programme designed to enable the Palestinian people to exercise its inalienable rights, as recognized by the Assembly in its resolution 3236 (XXIX) of 22 November 1974.

2. The recommendations made by the Committee in its first report to the General Assembly¹ were endorsed by the Assembly as a basis for the solution of the question of Palestine. In its subsequent reports,² the Committee has continued to stress that a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, must be based on the relevant United Nations resolutions and the following essential principles: the withdrawal of Israel from the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem, and from the other occupied Arab territories; respect for the right of all States in the region to live in peace within secure and internationally recognized boundaries; and the recognition and exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, primarily the right to self-determination. The recommendations of the Committee contained in its first report could not be implemented, and the Assembly each year renewed the Committee's mandate and requested it to intensify efforts in pursuit of its objectives.

3. Since 1991, the Committee has consistently supported the peace process. It welcomed the 1991 Madrid Peace Conference that launched the Middle East peace process based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). It also welcomed the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements (A/48/486-S/26560, annex) and subsequent implementation agreements. The Committee has strongly supported the vision of two States, Israel and Palestine, living side by side within secure and recognized borders on the basis of the 1949 armistice lines, in accordance with relevant United Nations resolutions, including Security Council resolutions 1397 (2002) and 1515 (2003). The Committee welcomed and supported the Quartet's road map and called on the parties to implement it. In keeping with its mandate, the Committee continued to work towards enabling the Palestinian people to realize its inalienable rights, including the right to self-determination and to its own independent State, on all Palestinian territory occupied in 1967, including East Jerusalem. The Committee also promotes support and assistance by the international community to the Palestinian people.

4. The reporting period was characterized by the reinforcement of the Israeli occupation policies and practices in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip, as well as by a further weakening of the institutions of the Palestinian Authority as a result of those policies and the decision by major international donors to cease direct assistance programmes to the Hamas-led cabinet that took office in March 2006. The period was also marked by the consistent efforts of major Palestinian political organizations and groups to achieve national unity, which was briefly achieved in March 2007 with the establishment of a National

¹ *Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-first Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/31/35).*

² Since the thirty-first session, the Committee has submitted annual reports to the General Assembly; all such reports have been issued as supplement No. 35 of the sessional documentation of the Assembly.

Unity Government following the Mecca agreement, but which collapsed soon thereafter.

5. The Israeli army continued to conduct military operations in Palestinian population centres, including by carrying out extrajudicial killings, house demolitions and arrests. The Palestinian response included regular rocket and mortar fire by armed Palestinian groups and a suicide attack within Israel. For most of the year the political process remained stalled. Only after the dissolution of the Palestinian national unity government in June, following the armed takeover of the Gaza Strip by Hamas, did diplomatic activities, including meetings between the President of the Palestinian Authority, Mahmoud Abbas, and the Prime Minister of Israel, Ehud Olmert, resume, leading to the release of a limited number of Palestinian prisoners, as well as part of the tax money collected by Israel in accordance with bilateral agreements but withheld since January 2006. Direct donor assistance to Palestinian Authority institutions in the West Bank also resumed.

6. Despite a certain diplomatic momentum achieved since June, mainly through the re-engagement of major international stakeholders, the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, remained complex and volatile. Due to the continued imposition of prolonged closures by Israel, the Gaza Strip remained isolated from other parts of the Palestinian Territory, solely allowing an inflow of basic humanitarian goods. Economic activity has been stifled. The humanitarian situation has reached crisis proportions. In the West Bank, normal life was being hampered by continuous Israeli military operations, hundreds of checkpoints, the settlements infrastructure, the construction of the wall and periodic closures.

7. Throughout the year, the Committee remained deeply concerned about the continuing illegal settlement activities in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the unlawful construction of the wall in contravention of the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice (see A/ES-10/273 and Corr.1). The Committee cautioned that the continuation of such policies posed a grave threat to the prospects of a peaceful, negotiated solution of the conflict. It precluded any possibility of improving the economic and humanitarian situation and was making a two-State solution virtually impossible.

8. The Secretary-General was encouraged to expedite the functioning of the United Nations Register of Damage Caused by the Construction of the Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, as requested by the General Assembly in its resolution ES-10/17. The Committee called upon all Governments to fulfil their obligations under international law, in particular the Fourth Geneva Convention, and to take the necessary steps to ensure that Israel complied with its obligations in this regard.

9. The Committee continued to support the efforts by the international community to unblock the stalemate in the political process and resume meaningful negotiations between the parties. It welcomed the renewed Arab Peace Initiative and concrete steps taken by the League of Arab States to implement it. The Committee supported the reinvigorated efforts by the Quartet and its individual members aimed at resuming the peace process.

10. The Committee called upon the Palestinian leadership, the leaders of all factions and all Palestinians to unite behind the elected President of the Palestinian Authority, Mahmoud Abbas, and his government and all democratically elected

Palestinian institutions and to resolve their political differences by peaceful means. The Committee reiterated its long-standing position that the Palestine Liberation Organization was the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people and, as such, an essential party to any negotiations aimed at resolving the question of Palestine by peaceful means. The Committee invited the international community to extend all possible cooperation to the Palestinian leadership in its quest for the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.

Chapter II

Mandate of the Committee

11. On 1 December 2006, the General Assembly renewed the mandate of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (see resolution 61/22), requested the Secretary-General to continue to provide the Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat with the necessary resources to carry out its programme of work (see resolution 61/23) and requested the continuation of the special information programme on the question of Palestine of the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat (see resolution 61/24). On the same date, the Assembly adopted resolution 61/25 entitled “Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine”.

Chapter III

Organization of work

A. Membership and officers

12. The Committee is composed of the following Member States: Afghanistan, Belarus, Cuba, Cyprus, Guinea, Guyana, India, Indonesia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mali, Malta, Namibia, Nigeria, Pakistan, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Tunisia, Turkey and Ukraine.

13. At its 299th meeting, on 27 February 2007, the Committee re-elected Paul Badji (Senegal) as Chairman, Rodrigo Malmierca Díaz (Cuba) as Vice-Chairman and Victor Camilleri (Malta) as Rapporteur. At the same meeting, the Committee elected Zahir Tanin (Afghanistan) as Vice-Chairman. At its 303rd meeting on 17 September 2007, the Committee elected Saviour F. Borg (Malta) as Rapporteur, replacing Victor Camilleri, who had been assigned by his Government to another post.

14. Also at the 299th meeting, the Committee adopted its programme of work for 2007.³

B. Participation in the work of the Committee

15. As in previous years, the Committee reconfirmed that all United Nations Member States and observers wishing to participate in the work of the Committee as observers were welcome to do so. In accordance with established practice, Palestine participated in the work of the Committee as an observer, attended all of its meetings and made observations and proposals for consideration by the Committee and its Bureau.

16. In 2007, the Committee again welcomed as observers all States and organizations that had participated in its work in the preceding year.⁴

³ A/AC.183/2007/CRP.1.

⁴ The observers at the Committee meetings were: Algeria, Bangladesh, Bulgaria, China, Ecuador, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Mauritania, Morocco, Nicaragua, Niger, Qatar, Sri Lanka, Syrian Arab Republic, United Arab Emirates, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam and Yemen, as well as the African Union, the League of Arab States, the Organization of the Islamic Conference and Palestine.

Chapter IV

Review of the situation relating to the question of Palestine

17. Pursuant to its mandate, the Committee continued to monitor the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, as well as relevant political developments. The Committee has emphasized that the Israeli occupation remained the root cause of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. For 40 years, the occupying Power has been systematically altering the Palestinian land through unlawful policies and practices, including settlement construction and, more recently, the construction of the wall in the West Bank. Continued closures, the sealing-off of the Gaza Strip, Israeli military operations in Palestinian population centres and the humiliating system of checkpoints throughout the West Bank have rendered the Palestinian Authority nearly dysfunctional, caused socio-economic decline and contributed to the polarization within Palestinian society. In addition, tensions among Palestinian factions continued to intensify.

18. Regional and international leaders have stepped up their engagement in the Israeli-Palestinian issue, intensifying efforts to achieve a peaceful settlement of the conflict. In late March, a meeting of Arab Foreign Ministers adopted the Riyadh Declaration (see A/61/922), which endorsed the Arab Peace Initiative (A/56/1026-S/2002/932, annex II, resolution 14/221), providing a framework for a comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict, consistent with Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). On 31 July, United States Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice signed an endorsement of the initiative. Egypt remained active in brokering a ceasefire among Palestinian factions in the Gaza Strip. Dialogue at the highest levels, which included discussions on the Arab Peace Initiative, took place between Israeli, Jordanian and Egyptian officials. Meanwhile, the Quartet met several times, and on 27 June it named former British Prime Minister Tony Blair as special envoy to lead the process of Palestinian institution-building. Norway proposed the reactivation of the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee for the Coordination of the International Assistance to Palestinians to oversee assistance management, financial support to the Palestinian Authority and Palestinian institutional reform. The Ad Hoc Liaison Committee met at United Nations Headquarters in New York on 24 September, prior to the meeting of donors planned for December 2007. On 16 July, United States President George Bush announced his intention to convene an international meeting later in the year to be chaired by the United States Secretary of State. It was envisaged that Israel, the Palestinians and regional neighbours would participate in the meeting. The Quartet and the League of Arab States welcomed President Bush's statement renewing the commitment of the United States to a negotiated two-State solution and for an international meeting. President Abbas and Prime Minister Olmert began to meet on a more regular basis. At their meeting on 10 September, they agreed to set up negotiating teams to work on key issues in preparation for the forthcoming international meeting set for November 2007. The idea of convening the meeting on Israeli-Palestinian peace was supported by the Quartet when it met in New York on 23 September.

19. During the period under review, the Committee remained extremely concerned about the Israeli military incursions into the Gaza Strip and military operation in the West Bank, which had resulted in a large number of deaths and injuries among Palestinian civilians. In early November 2006, a week-long operation, code-named "Autumn clouds", in Beit Hanoun in the Gaza Strip left 82 Palestinians dead, 21 of

them children. At least 18 homes, a mosque and the offices of a non-governmental organization were demolished, and 150 homes were damaged. In the early morning hours of 8 November, with most of the residents of Beit Hanoun still asleep, Israel Defense Forces (IDF) artillery struck a residential area, killing at least 19, including eight children and seven women. In late November 2006, a mutual ceasefire in the Gaza Strip was agreed upon between President Abbas and Prime Minister Olmert. However, the ceasefire did not extend to the West Bank, where Israeli military operations continued. As of February 2007, the number of IDF search-and-arrest operations in the West Bank had increased by 58 per cent over the previous month. Clashes between Israeli forces and Palestinians in the West Bank rose by 88 per cent during the same period.

20. In late February, in Nablus, the IDF launched a large-scale operation code-named "Hot winter". While uncovering sites used for preparing explosives, IDF imposed a curfew that disrupted civilian life and humanitarian operations and affected tens of thousands of Palestinians in the city. In May, some 54 Palestinians were killed in the Gaza Strip. The majority of the deaths occurred as a result of Israeli air strikes on Hamas bases and vehicles carrying members of Hamas or the Islamic Jihad. In May alone, the Israeli Air Force carried out 65 air strikes on Palestinian targets.

21. The Committee denounced the excessive and indiscriminate use of force, extrajudicial killings, the destruction of Palestinian homes, civilian infrastructure and agricultural lands and the attendant devastating effects on the Palestinian civilian population. At the same time, it strongly condemned all attacks against Israeli civilians. It is estimated that since the start of the second intifada in 2000, close to 4,800 Palestinians have been killed and some 31,500 wounded by the Israeli occupying forces. As of August 2007, there were over 950 Palestinian children under the age of 18 dead as a result of the violence. The number of Israelis killed during the same period was 1,024.

22. The restrictions on movement imposed by Israel in the West Bank continued to affect every aspect of Palestinian life, including access to medical facilities and schools and the ability of Palestinians to reach their places of work. These measures have also impaired family and social ties, have led to a decline in the provision of infrastructure services and law enforcement in areas under the control of the Palestinian Authority. Israeli commitments to ease movement and access in the West Bank remained unmet. Since the conclusion of the Agreement on Movement and Access entered into between Israel and the Palestinian Authority on 15 November 2005, closure levels have doubled and the number of checkpoints has increased. In September 2007, a total of 572 physical obstacles to movement were in place, a 52 per cent increase from August 2005. In the Gaza Strip, only about 10 per cent of the targets set out by the agreement, or 400 truckloads of exported goods per day, was reached as of April. The Al-Muntar (Karni) and Rafah crossings were open only sporadically.

23. The decision of Israel not to have contacts with a Palestinian government, that included Hamas, its withholding of taxes and tariffs owed to the Palestinian Authority, which total some \$50 million per month, and the halting of direct international financial aid to the Palestinian Authority has had a devastating effect on Palestinian institutions and on the provision of basic services to the Palestinian people. In April, strikes by Palestinian Authority employees and local municipal

workers were held to protest the lack of regular payment of salaries. Tensions among the various Palestinian factions intensified in mid-December 2006 and again in early January 2007. In February, under the auspices of King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia, the Mecca Agreement was reached between Fatah and Hamas on the formation of a national unity government. On 17 March, after being approved by the Palestinian Legislative Council, the Palestinian National Unity Government was sworn in, in accordance with the programme agreed at Mecca. With a lack of improvement in the security situation, particularly in the Gaza Strip, the new Minister of the Interior resigned on 14 May. Inter-factional fighting continued in the Gaza Strip, compounded by targeted Israeli air operations and rocket attacks by Palestinian groups against Israeli civilians. From 9 to 15 June, the military wing of Hamas and its executive force took control of the Gaza Strip. The armed takeover of the Gaza Strip by Hamas forces seriously damaged efforts to achieve national unity and left the intra-Palestinian dialogue in an inconclusive state. On 14 June, President Abbas dissolved the Government, dismissed Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh and declared a state of emergency for 30 days. A new Prime Minister, Salam Fayyad was appointed, in addition to a new Foreign Minister and Finance Minister.

24. The internal security situation in the Gaza Strip has had an adverse effect on the humanitarian situation and the provision of humanitarian aid. The daily lives of civilians were severely disrupted as people were afraid to leave their homes, affecting both the public sector and commercial life. The Al-Muntar (Karni) crossing and Rafah terminal have been progressively closed since the fighting broke out in mid-June, and the alternate entry points (Sufa and Kerem Shalom) have barely provided sufficient access for much-needed commercial and humanitarian supplies. The Beit Hanoun (Erez) crossing operated periodically for “urgent, special cases”, allowing exit from the Gaza Strip, but, as of September, at least 100,000 Gazans who might have been expected to enter or exit the Gaza Strip were denied passage. Some 3,500 Palestinians were stranded for almost two months on the Egyptian side of the Rafah crossing, including patients returning from medical treatment abroad. At least 30 Palestinians died while waiting to return. The continued closure of the Gaza Strip borders plunged the Palestinian economy into even further decline, dramatically increasing the already significant need for humanitarian assistance as well as the level of dependency. The Committee was greatly alarmed by the decision taken by the Israeli Security Cabinet on 19 September to consider the Gaza Strip a “hostile territory”, and to apply additional sanctions to the territory, in order to restrict the passage of various goods to the Gaza Strip and reduce the supply of vital services such as fuel and electricity. The Committee stated that the decision was a violation of international law, including international humanitarian law, and yet another form of collective punishment of the Palestinian people, which, if implemented, was bound to substantially worsen the already deplorable living conditions of the civilian population in the occupied Gaza Strip.

25. On 15 December 2006, the General Assembly adopted resolution ES-10/17, in which it requested the setting up of the United Nations Register of Damage Caused by the Construction of the Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory within six months. On 10 May 2007, the Secretary-General appointed three international experts to begin the work on the Register. The Committee expressed the hope that the Office of the Register of Damage would begin implementation of the Assembly

resolution as well as the conclusions contained in the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice.

26. Nevertheless, the construction of the wall continued in 2006-2007, in disregard of the advisory opinion. Parts of it extend deep into the West Bank. The wall has been completed along more than half of its planned route. Only 20 per cent of the wall's route correspond with the Green Line, the rest has been built on confiscated Palestinian land. About 10.7 per cent of the West Bank, 154,320 acres, is trapped between the wall and the Green Line. Of that, 141,974 acres (92 per cent) are in the Jerusalem area. In January, the Israeli media reported that Prime Minister Olmert had approved a change in the wall's route near the settlement of "Modi'in Illit", which would incorporate the settlements of "Nili" and "Na'aleh", effectively annexing them to Israel. If approved by the Cabinet, the decision would move the wall at least five kilometres east of the Green Line in this region. As a result, some 20,000 Palestinians living in five villages (Rantis, Shaqba, Qibya, Budrus and Ni'lin) would be surrounded by walls and security roads, creating an enclave in the West Bank. By April, the wall construction around the "Ateret" settlement had been completed. A wall now encircles the settlement on the land confiscated by IDF and belonging to Palestinians from Atara and Umm Safa. During the reporting period, the construction of the wall around East Jerusalem involved the confiscation of 3,360 acres, and the displacement of 1,150 households comprising 5,290 people. On 4 September, the Israeli High Court of Justice ordered a change in the route of the wall in the Bil'in area after Palestinian villagers protested that the route would annex their agricultural land.

27. Despite the resumption of payments of salaries by the Palestinian Authority in July 2007, poverty rates remain unacceptably high. The poverty line is defined based on a monthly income of \$501.2 United States dollars (\$) per month for a family of two adults and four children. At least 70 per cent of households in the Gaza Strip, 56 per cent of the West Bank and 19 per cent of East Jerusalem households are living below the poverty line. Poverty increased among Palestinian Authority employees from 46 per cent in May 2006 to 50 per cent in May 2007. The total accumulative and direct losses in the private sector since the closure of the Gaza Strip had been estimated at \$35 million, with a daily loss in the range of about half a million dollars. In the industrial sector, the vast majority (nearly 90 per cent) of import-dependent industries have closed down and over 66,000 workers have been temporarily laid off. The World Bank has estimated that if a third of those laid off do not return to work, the unemployment rate will reach unprecedented levels of about 44 per cent. With household income continuing to decrease, Palestinian households have resorted to negative coping mechanisms, such as borrowing money, selling possessions, reducing health care and food consumption and taking children out of school.

28. Over the year, the Committee continued to express concern over the illegal settlement activities in and around East Jerusalem, as well as in the rest of the West Bank. In November 2006, the Anata village council reported the issuance of military orders confiscating 1,328 dunams of land in East Jerusalem, for the expansion of the "Almon" settlement near "Ma'ale Adumim". In January, the Jerusalem municipality commission for planning and construction approved a plan to build 983 housing units in the Har Homa settlement in a new area between Sur Bahir and Bethlehem. In March, the Israel Land Administration published tenders to construct 44 housing units in the East Jerusalem settlement of Har Homa. A plan was approved in March

to expand the settlement of “Adam” (“Geva Binyamin”) as part of the larger expansion plan for the Jerusalem settlement of “Neve Ya’acov” and its connection with “Adam”. The plan included the construction of 1,200-unit neighbourhood for ultra-Orthodox Jews. Meanwhile, a request by Palestinian Jerusalemites living in the Silwan neighbourhood to construct 70 apartments was rejected on the basis that the land was a natural and historic area. Planned settlement expansion in the areas in and around Neve Ya’acov and the former site of the Atarot airport would link settlements in the area of East Jerusalem on both sides of the wall, establishing an unbroken belt of settlements along East Jerusalem’s northern perimeter to Road 60 settlements — from “Ma’ale Adumim” north to “Shilo” and “Eli” — to the Tel Aviv metropolis and the coastal plain. On 11 May, the Deputy Mayor of Jerusalem, Yehoshua Pollak, said the intention was to create a contiguous Jewish residential area linking East Jerusalem with major West Bank settlement blocks. In the West Bank, pressure from two settlements (“Na’ale” and “Nili”) resulted in Prime Minister Olmert ordering, on 31 January, that the two settlements be included west of the wall, necessitating a 12 kilometre addition to it. Some 20,000 Palestinians would be directly affected by the new construction, creating two Palestinian pockets accessible to areas east of the wall only through planned underground tunnels. In March 2007, approximately 3,500 settlers arrived at the site of the evacuated settlement of “Homesh” after the Israel Defense Forces had allowed them access, with the intention of resettling there after having been evacuated in 2005. Most construction continued to be associated with the largest settlements, such as “Beitar Ilit”, “Modi’in Ilit”, “Givat Ze’ev” and “Ma’ale Adumim”. In addition to the focus on large settlements, expansion continued in some smaller ones, including “Anatot”, “Givat Benjamin”, “Har Adar”, “Kochav Ya’acov”, “Oranit” and the hilltop settlements of “Itamar”, “Yitzhar”, and “Elon Moreh”. Despite the obligation of Israel under the road map, none of the additional 101 posts in the West Bank were removed. There were at least six roads, all on the eastern side of the wall, reaching some 33 kilometres in length, being paved or widened for the exclusive use of a small group of settlers.

29. Israel’s Interior Ministry has reported that during 2006, the settler population in the West Bank increased by 5.8 per cent, from 253,748 to 268,379. In East Jerusalem, the settler population has been stagnant for a decade, holding at around 200,000. The population of “Ma’ale Adumim” increased by 1,644 to 31,615. During 2007, “Modi’in Ilit”, which grew by 4,000 (11 per cent) to 30,425, might well emerge as the largest West Bank settlement (outside East Jerusalem). Settler violence in the West Bank increased in 2007, particularly in Hebron. Since the city was divided in 1997 under the Hebron agreement, 35,000 Palestinians living there have suffered from unending incidents of violence at the hands of some 500 settlers. Over 40 per cent of the Palestinians who once lived in Hebron have left their homes without compensation. About 2,500 Palestinians who owned shops and businesses have been forced to close them since the outbreak of the intifada. Settlers from Hebron’s “Beit Hadassah” settlement beat and injured a 13-year-old Palestinian and beat a Palestinian man with Down Syndrome. Elsewhere in the West Bank, settlers uprooted olive trees, damaged water pipes in Palestinian homes, ploughed Palestinian land, opened settlement sewage pipes on Palestinian agricultural lands, fired at Palestinians and destroyed plants and crops. On 2 August, two settlers attacked United Nations personnel driving in the South Hebron Hills. There have also been attacks by Palestinians against settlers, including a stabbing incident in February in which a settler from the “Bat Ayin” settlement was killed.

30. As of June 2007, over 10,400 Palestinians remained in 30 Israeli prisons, detention facilities and camps. Of those, 118 were women (including minors, pregnant women and mothers) and close to 376 were child prisoners under the age of 18. Israel regards Palestinian children as adults from the age of 12, in breach of its own juvenile law. A survey of former child detainees estimated that 60 per cent of the children interviewed were reported to have been subjected to physical coercion or inducement to collaborate with Israeli authorities. Some 970 Palestinians have been kept in administrative detention without trial, and 15 have been held in isolation for over five years. Moreover, prisons and detention centres often provide prisoners with little or no protection from summer heat or winter cold, and they are poorly maintained and overcrowded. At least 183 prisoners have died in Israeli prisons since 1967 and about 1,000 inmates have suffered from serious illnesses. On 20 July, Israel released 255 Palestinian prisoners after they signed a form promising not to engage in terrorist activities. On 1 and 2 October, Israel released another group of 86 prisoners. The former Minister of Higher Education of the Palestinian Authority, Nasr al-Sha'ir, and the former Minister of Prisoners' Affairs, Wasfi Kabaha, and 45 members of the Palestinian Legislative Council continue to be held in detention in Israel. The Committee reiterated its call for the release of Palestinian prisoners and for the safe release of captured Israeli corporal Gilad Shalit.

31. Women, children and the elderly continued to suffer under the occupation. Close to 30 per cent of pregnant women in the West Bank had difficulties in accessing antenatal care and safe delivery facilities, mostly due to closures, delays at checkpoints and the wall. The education sector is under increasing pressure since the cutting of aid to the Palestinian Authority. The wall and other movement restrictions impaired access of students and teachers to schools and universities. In the Sifa area, north-west of Beit Lahiya, the ongoing presence of the IDF forced a significant number of students to relocate to other villages to attend school.

32. In comparison to the 2006 average, the total water supply decreased by 12 per cent in the West Bank and 42 per cent in the Gaza Strip. Factional fighting damaged the electricity network for the wells in the Gaza Strip and increased the need for fuel to power backup generators. In addition, chemical stocks needed to maintain water quality were dangerously low, while several shipments of chlorine and other disinfecting agents were blocked at the Israeli border. Most of the work of humanitarian organizations, especially those working on water and sanitation, was also halted. Overall, some 70,103 households in the Occupied Palestinian Territory were not connected to a public water network, with 5 per cent of households depending on water wells. As for waste water, less than half of the total number of households (45.3 per cent) were connected to waste water networks, and only 4.5 per cent of households in the Gaza Strip considered their water to be of good quality.

33. Throughout the year, the work of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) became even more crucial as the situation, particularly in the Gaza Strip, turned increasingly desperate. Some 860,000 refugees in the Gaza Strip, almost two thirds of the overall population, depended on UNRWA emergency food assistance. In addition, one million people depended on its regular health services and 195,000 children were enrolled in its schools. The deteriorating internal security situation and periodic Israeli incursions caused UNRWA to scale back or suspend its operations several times. In early

February, UNRWA headquarters and field offices in the Gaza Strip, 83 schools and its food distribution centre in Beach Camp briefly closed as factional violence placed staff and thousands of children in school at risk. The violence escalated in mid-June, resulting in the deaths of two UNRWA workers. The takeover of the Gaza Strip by Hamas resulted in a further tightening of Israeli controls on the movement of persons and goods, deepening already severe unemployment and poverty and increasing the already heavy burden on the Agency. In early July, UNRWA was obliged to halt \$93 million in building projects because construction materials were not available on the local market. The halt affected the repair of shelters for 16,000 refugees. The humanitarian situation continued to deteriorate in the second half of 2007. In the West Bank, the continued construction of the separation barrier and associated land seizures, together with an increased number of Israeli checkpoints and movement barriers, severely affected the refugee population. By October, UNRWA had received pledges amounting to only half of its \$246 million Emergency Appeal for the Occupied Palestinian Territory in 2007.

34. The work of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People on crucial projects continued with the assistance of Governments and United Nations agencies. Projects on poverty alleviation were assisted by the Islamic Development Bank, including a \$30 million microfinance programme for deprived Palestinians. Efforts to rehabilitate the agricultural sector, particularly in the Gaza Strip, were enhanced with the assistance of the Government of Japan and the Arab Authority for Agricultural Investment and Development. To improve water supply, the UNDP programme launched a project providing support to the Bedouin community in the Jericho area. A mental health project was established, with assistance from the French Development Agency, to help relieve the negative psychological effects inflicted on Palestinian children and their families in the West Bank and Gaza. The construction of the Qalandiya Olympic stadium and the Qalandiya Road were made possible with the assistance of the Government of Germany.

35. The Committee expressed its appreciation for the increasingly important work of the United Nations Office of the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in the Occupied Palestinian Territory in enhancing its coordination in the distribution of humanitarian assistance. The Committee noted that its 2007 Consolidated Appeal, which had been set at \$453 million, focused on employment generation and food assistance; health and education; agriculture, livestock, water and sanitation; and the better assessment of humanitarian protection needs.

Chapter V

Action taken by the Committee

A. Action taken in accordance with General Assembly resolution 61/22

36. In pursuance of its mandate, the Committee continued to mobilize the international community in support of the Palestinian people, in cooperation with United Nations bodies, Governments, intergovernmental and civil society organizations and others, as indicated below.

1. Action taken in the General Assembly and the Security Council

Resumed tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly

37. On 17 November 2006, the emergency special session of the General Assembly was resumed (thirteenth resumption) at the request of the Permanent Representative of Qatar to the United Nations, in his capacity as Chairman of the Arab Group for the month of November 2006 and on behalf of the States members of the League of Arab States (A/ES-10/366), and the Permanent Representative of Cuba to the United Nations, in his capacity as Chair of the Coordinating Bureau of the Non-Aligned Movement in New York and on behalf of the States members of the Movement (A/ES-10/367), to address the Israeli attacks in the Gaza Strip, in particular the killing of Palestinian civilians in Beit Hanoun on 8 November 2006 under the item entitled "Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory". The Chairman of the Committee took part in the debate and made a statement (A/ES-10/PV.28). At the end of the debate, on the same day, the Assembly adopted resolution ES-10/16.

38. On 15 December 2006, the emergency special session of the General Assembly was resumed (fourteenth resumption) at the request of the Permanent Representative of Qatar to the United Nations, in his capacity as Chairman of the Group of Arab States for the month of November 2006 and on behalf of the States members of the League of Arab States (A/ES-10/370), the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Cuba to the United Nations, in her capacity as Chair of the Coordinating Bureau of the Non-Aligned Movement in New York (A/ES-10/371) and the Permanent Representative of Azerbaijan to the United Nations, in his capacity as Chairman of the Organization of the Islamic Conference Group in New York (A/ES-10/372) to consider the report of the Secretary-General pursuant to General Assembly resolution ES-10/15 (A/ES-10/361) under the item entitled "Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory". Twenty-eight speakers took part in the debate (see A/ES-10/PV.30 and 31). At the end of the debate, on the same day, the Assembly adopted resolution ES-10/17, in which it called for the expeditious establishment by the Secretary-General of the United Nations Register of Damage Caused by the Construction of the Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

39. In a letter dated 21 December 2006 addressed to the President of the General Assembly, the Secretary-General informed the Assembly of his efforts to implement General Assembly resolution ES-10/16 (A/ES-10/374).

Meetings of the Security Council

40. During the period under review, the Security Council continued to monitor the situation on the ground and the efforts to implement the road map.

41. The Security Council met on 9 November 2006, at the request of the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Qatar to the United Nations, in his capacity as Chairman of the Arab Group for the month of November 2006 and on behalf of the States members of the League of Arab States (S/2006/868), the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Azerbaijan to the United Nations, in his capacity as Chairman of the Organization of the Islamic Conference Group in New York and on behalf of the States members of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (S/2006/869), and the Permanent Representative of Cuba to the United Nations, in his capacity as Chairman of the Coordinating Bureau of the Non-aligned Movement and on behalf of the States members of the Movement (S/2006/871). The Chairman of the Committee, Mr. Badji, took part in the debate and made a statement (S/PV.5564 Resumption 1 and Corr. 1). At its 5565th meeting, on 11 November 2006, the Council voted on a draft resolution submitted by Qatar (S/2006/878). The result of the vote was 10 votes in favour, 1 against and 4 abstentions. The draft resolution was not adopted owing to the negative vote of a permanent member (S/PV.5565).

42. The Security Council held its 5584th meeting on 12 December 2006 for its monthly briefing on the situation in the Middle East. At the end of the meeting, the President of the Council read out a statement (S/PRST/2006/51) on behalf of the Council (S/PV.5584).

43. The Security Council also held monthly briefings throughout the year under the agenda item entitled "The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question". Some meetings were followed by a debate.

44. Debates following the monthly briefings were held on 13 February 2007, at which the Chairman of the Committee, Paul Badji, made a statement (S/PV.5629 Resumption 1); 25 April 2007 (S/PV.5667); and 29 August 2007 (S/PV.5736).

45. On 30 May 2007, the President of the Security Council issued a press statement on the breakdown of the ceasefire in the Gaza Strip (see SC/9028-PAL/2077).

2. Action taken by the Bureau of the Committee

46. On 26 April 2007, the Bureau of the Committee met with the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs and discussed the latest political developments and the Committee's programme of activities.

47. On 11 May 2007, the Bureau of the Committee issued a statement on the appointment of experts to the Board of the United Nations Register of Damage Caused by the Construction of the Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (GA/PAL/1053).

48. On 7 June 2007, the Bureau of the Committee issued a statement to mark 40 years of occupation by Israel of the Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem (GA/PAL/1056).

49. On 3 July 2007, the Bureau of the Committee issued a statement voicing its grave concern about the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem (GA/PAL/1058).

50. On 20 September, the Bureau of the Committee issued a statement on Israel's decision to declare the Gaza Strip "hostile territory" (GA/PAL/1064).

B. Action taken by the Committee and the Division for Palestinian Rights in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 61/22 and 61/23

1. Programme of international meetings and conferences

51. Through its programme of international meetings and conferences, the Committee continued to raise international awareness of the various aspects of the question of Palestine and international support for the rights of the Palestinian people and the peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine.

52. In the period under review, the following international events were held under the auspices of the Committee:

(a) United Nations Asian Meeting in Support of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, Kuala Lumpur, 15 and 16 December 2006;

(b) United Nations Forum of Civil Society in Support of the Palestinian People, Kuala Lumpur, 17 December 2006;

(c) United Nations Seminar on Assistance to the Palestinian People, Doha, 5 and 6 February 2007;

(d) United Nations International Meeting in Support of Israeli-Palestinian Peace, Rome, 22 and 23 March 2007;

(e) Consultations of the Committee delegation with civil society organizations on the question of Palestine, Rome, 24 March 2007;

(f) United Nations African Meeting on the Question of Palestine, Pretoria, 9 and 10 May 2007;

(g) Public Forum in Support of Israeli-Palestinian Peace, Pretoria, 11 May 2007;

(h) United Nations International Conference of Civil Society in Support of Israeli-Palestinian Peace, European Parliament, Brussels, 30 and 31 August 2007.

53. All of the above events were attended by representatives of Governments, Palestine, intergovernmental organizations and United Nations system entities, as well as representatives of civil society and the media. The reports of the meetings were issued as publications of the Division for Palestinian Rights and were made available through the United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine (UNISPAL) and the Division's website.

54. In Kuala Lumpur, during the United Nations Asian Meeting in Support of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, the Committee delegation was received by Dato' Seri Syed Hamid Albar, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Malaysia. In Doha, in connection with the United Nations Seminar on Assistance to the Palestinian

People, the Committee delegation met with Ahmad Bin Abdullah Al-Mahmoud, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of Qatar. On the margins of the United Nations International Conference of Civil Society in Support of the Palestinian People held in Brussels, the Committee delegation had a meeting with Ambassador Jan Grauls, Secretary-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Belgium.

2. Cooperation with intergovernmental organizations

55. Throughout the year, the Committee continued its close cooperation with the African Union, the Non-Aligned Movement and the Organization of the Islamic Conference through the participation of the Chairman in their meetings and through periodic consultations at United Nations Headquarters.

56. The Committee continued its cooperation on the question of Palestine with States members of the European Union. On the sidelines of the United Nations International Conference of Civil Society in Support of Israeli-Palestinian Peace in Brussels, the delegation held separate meetings with Belén Martínez Carbonell, Member of the Cabinet of European Commissioner for External Affairs, Benita Ferrero-Waldner; Leonidas Tezapsidis, Head of Near East Unit of the European Commission; and Ambassador Christian F. Jouret, Head of Unit, Task Force Mediterranean/Barcelona/Middle East, of the Council of the European Union.

3. Cooperation with civil society

Civil society organizations

57. The Committee continued its work with civil society organizations, academic institutions, think tanks and media representatives, including consultations with civil society representatives, participation in meetings organized by civil society organizations and the accreditation of new organizations. This work was reviewed and further advanced at the United Nations International Conference of Civil Society in Support of Israeli-Palestinian Peace. It gave the civil society representatives and other participants from all regions of the world, especially from Europe, an opportunity to highlight their work and coordinate their responses to recent developments. It provided civil society representatives with an opportunity to discuss the situation on the ground, and their programmes in support of the Palestinian people and to improve coordination of their activities. The Committee was appreciative of the work done by civil society organizations, encouraging them to continue contributing to efforts aimed at achieving a just and lasting peace between Israelis and Palestinians.

58. The Committee maintained and developed its liaison with national, regional and international coordinating mechanisms cooperating with it, in addition to its established liaison with a large number of individual organizations. Representatives of civil society participated in all meetings organized under the auspices of the Committee, including the observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People on 29 November 2006. During the period under review, the Committee also accredited three new organizations. Consultations between the delegation of the Committee and representatives of organizations accredited to the Committee were held at the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations in Rome on 24 March 2007, following the United Nations International Meeting in Support of Israeli-Palestinian Peace. Participating civil society representatives discussed the response of civil society to the continuing

humanitarian crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and exchanged views with the Committee's delegation on ways to strengthen their cooperation. Over the past year, the Chairman of the Committee met with representatives of civil society organizations in New York and at the meetings organized under the auspices of the Committee away from Headquarters.

59. The Division for Palestinian Rights maintained the Internet website "Civil society network on the Question of Palestine" (<http://www.un.org/depts/dpa/ngo>) as a tool for the exchange of information and for cooperation between civil society and the Committee. At the request of the Committee, the Division also continued to issue its bimonthly newsletter, NGO Action News, covering the activities of civil society on the various aspects of the question of Palestine.

Parliaments and inter-parliamentary organizations

60. The Committee continued to develop its liaison with national and regional parliaments and their organizations and invited a number of parliamentarians to speak at its meetings. During the year, the Bureau of the Committee has met with members of the Palestinian Legislative Council, the Knesset and other national parliaments. The holding of the annual United Nations International Conference of Civil Society in Support of Israeli-Palestinian Peace at the European Parliament in Brussels in August 2007 resulted in new synergies between the Committee, Parliamentarians and civil society, helping to advance the political process.

4. Research, monitoring and publications

61. The Division carried out research and monitoring activities and responded to requests for information and briefings on the question of Palestine. Under the guidance of the Committee, which reiterated the relevance of the research, monitoring and publications programme, it also prepared the publications listed below for dissemination, including through UNISPAL:

- (a) Monthly bulletin on action taken by United Nations and intergovernmental organizations relevant to the question of Palestine;
- (b) Monthly chronology of events relating to the question of Palestine, based on media reports and other sources;
- (c) Reports of international meetings and conferences organized under the auspices of the Committee;
- (d) Special bulletins and information notes on the observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People;
- (e) Periodic reviews of developments related to the Middle East peace process;
- (f) Annual compilation of resolutions and decisions of the General Assembly and the Security Council relating to the question of Palestine.

5. United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine

62. The Division for Palestinian Rights, in cooperation with relevant technical and library services of the United Nations Secretariat, continued to administer, maintain, expand and develop UNISPAL and the "Question of Palestine" website, which is

located on the United Nations home page under “Peace and Security”, pursuant to successive annual General Assembly mandates. This included the ongoing maintenance and upgrading of the technical components of the system to ensure the uninterrupted presence of UNISPAL on the Internet and involved the expansion of the document collection to include relevant new and old documents. In addition, steps continued to be taken to enhance the user-friendliness and usefulness of the system (<http://unispal.un.org>), including by incorporating additional multimedia content and a streamlined search facility.

6. Training programme for staff of the Palestinian Authority

63. Two staff members from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Palestinian Authority participated in a training programme conducted by the Division from September to December 2006, in conjunction with the sixty-first session of the General Assembly. The trainees familiarized themselves with various aspects of the work of the Secretariat and other organs and conducted research on specific topics.

7. International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People

64. The International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People was observed at Headquarters and at the United Nations Offices at Geneva and Vienna on 29 November 2006. On the occasion of the observance at Headquarters, in addition to a special meeting of the Committee and other activities, a cultural exhibit entitled “Contextualization: A Palestinian Narrative” was organized by the Permanent Observer Mission of Palestine to the United Nations under the auspices of the Committee. The Committee noted with appreciation that the International Day of Solidarity had also been observed in many cities throughout the world. Details on the observance are contained in the special bulletin issued by the Division.

65. In adopting its programme of work, the Committee decided that a similar observance of the International Day of Solidarity should be organized in 2007.

Chapter VI

Action taken by the Department of Public Information in accordance with General Assembly resolution 61/24

66. The Department of Public Information, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 61/24, continued to implement its special information programme on the question of Palestine in order to raise the awareness of the international community on this question and on the situation in the Middle East in such a way as to contribute effectively to an atmosphere conducive to dialogue and supportive of the peace process.

67. During the period under review, the Department covered intergovernmental meetings and related press briefings using all media at its disposal. The Department produced a total of 168 press releases, providing summaries in English and French of formal meetings and briefings, and distributed live television coverage to broadcasters around the world. Television coverage was also posted on the Internet (“webcast”) for easy viewing.

68. Two short television features were produced by UNTV for its “United Nations in Action” programme and a longer feature, focusing on the effects of the intifada on children, was produced for the Department’s new television magazine programme “21st Century”. Close to 30 video packages were distributed via satellite feed to broadcast points around the world on a range of issues related to the question of Palestine.

69. In news reports and features, United Nations Radio covered a number of issues, including the Organization’s humanitarian work, diplomatic engagement, the subject of inalienable human rights and critical events of the day, producing hundreds of radio programmes in the six official languages and in Portuguese for distribution to broadcast partners. The Arabic Language Unit reported on the meetings held in Doha and Rome and on other meetings organized by the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People.

70. The United Nations News Centre, the most heavily visited web portal managed by the Department, continuously highlighted stories related to the question of Palestine in the six official languages. In addition, a special focus page on the Middle East provided an in-depth and user-friendly venue for accessing information on the issue.

71. As part of its special information programme on Palestine, the Department organized a training programme for nine young Palestinian journalists at Headquarters and in Washington, D.C., from 6 November to 11 December 2006. The programme was aimed at strengthening the capacities of the participants as print media professionals.

72. In cooperation with the Foreign Ministry of Japan and the United Nations University, the Department organized the fifteenth International Media Seminar on Peace in the Middle East in Tokyo on 26 and 27 June 2007. Press releases were issued on the proceedings. The seminar was covered by all the major Japanese media and by select Israeli, Palestinian and international media.

73. The *UN Chronicle* magazine regularly reported on Palestine in its General Assembly coverage, in particular on the work of the Fourth and Sixth Committees,

and carried an opinion piece by Gregory Levey on the communication breakdown between the Israeli and the Palestinian authorities. It also featured a number of web articles on the difficult future of Gaza, the new humanitarian symbol of the red crystal and the Unlearning Intolerance Seminar on Cartooning for Peace organized by the Outreach Division, which included discussion on the question of Palestine.

74. The Dag Hammarskjöld Library continued to digitize relevant documents for the UNISPAL document collection.

75. The network of United Nations information centres, services and offices continued to disseminate information on the question of Palestine and to organize special outreach activities. The information centres engaged in over 20 activities in recognition of Palestinian rights. A major focus of activities was the promotion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. The Department assisted in the installation of the annual exhibit on the question of Palestine at Headquarters. The Secretary-General's message for the Day was widely disseminated in official and non-official languages. In Tunis, the information centre organized a weeklong public exhibition and an observance of the Day. A solemn meeting to commemorate the day was organized by the information centre in Dar-es-Salaam, in collaboration with the Embassy of Palestine. The Regional Information Centre in Brussels provided assistance and press coverage for the March mission of the Commissioner General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East to Brussels for three days of meetings with European Union officials. The information centre in Cairo translated and disseminated widely the press release issued by the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and other Arabs of the Occupied Territories and arranged a press conference for the Special Committee.

Chapter VII

Conclusions and recommendations of the Committee

76. The year 2007 marked 40 years of the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. The Committee emphasizes that the occupation is the root cause of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. For 40 years, the occupying Power has systematically altered the Palestinian land by implementing its illegal policy of building settlements and, more recently, constructing a wall in the West Bank, including around East Jerusalem. Continued closures, the sealing-off of the Gaza Strip, unrelenting Israeli incursions into Palestinian population centres and the humiliating system of checkpoints throughout the West Bank have had a most destructive effect on the lives of the Palestinian people and have rendered the Palestinian Authority nearly dysfunctional. The situation has further deteriorated owing to the polarization within Palestinian society, which led, in June 2007, to an armed takeover of the Gaza Strip by Hamas forces. The Committee noted rising international awareness of the fact that a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the region would remain elusive until the national rights of the Palestinian people have been realized. In addition, there appears to be greater consciousness that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is one of the major underlying factors of the rift between Western and Islamic societies.

77. The Committee calls upon Israel to end its military operations in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and to stop any other measures that further undermine Palestinian institutions. It again reminds Israel, the occupying Power, that it is bound by the Geneva Convention Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Times of War, which obliges parties to the Convention to protect civilians during hostilities. Its applicability to the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, has been repeatedly confirmed by the General Assembly and the Security Council. Israel must release, immediately and unconditionally, all imprisoned cabinet members and parliamentarians, as well as other Palestinian prisoners. The Committee strongly condemns the killing of innocent civilians by either side. It denounces rocket attacks on Israel and calls for a cessation of these activities by Palestinian armed groups. The Committee is strongly opposed to the expansion of settlements in the West Bank and to efforts to complete the construction of the wall. The Committee reiterates its position of principle that these activities are contrary to international humanitarian law and numerous resolutions of the Security Council and the General Assembly, adopted since 1967, as well as the provisions of the road map. Israel must cease and reverse all illegal actions in the Palestinian Territory it has occupied since 1967.

78. The Committee calls upon the Palestinian leadership, the leaders of all factions and all Palestinians to unite in support of President Abbas, his government and all democratically elected Palestinian institutions and to resolve their political differences by peaceful means. The Committee calls for the restoration of the situation in the Gaza Strip to that which existed prior to the June events and for measures to be taken to preserve the territorial unity and integrity of the Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. The Committee firmly believes that the unity of the Palestinian people is an essential condition for achieving a viable solution of the question of Palestine.

The Committee supports national dialogue among Palestinians to achieve national reconciliation. In this regard, the Committee reiterates its long-standing position that the Palestine Liberation Organization is the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people and, as such, an essential party to any negotiations aimed at resolving the question of Palestine by peaceful means.

79. The Committee reiterates that only a negotiated solution can bring about the goal of a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine through the establishment of two States, Israel and Palestine, based on the 1967 borders. A settlement should be based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973), 1397 (2002) and 1515 (2003) in particular, and other relevant resolutions. It is incumbent on the Security Council to ensure a speedy and full implementation of its own resolutions. The Council should decide on effective steps to protect the civilian population, end hostilities and guide the parties, with the active involvement of the Quartet and regional actors, to a negotiated settlement. The Committee notes the steps taken by the Board and its secretariat to commence the mandated work on the United Nations Register of Damage Caused by the Construction of the Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and requests all involved to expedite their efforts to render the Register operational. The Committee is encouraged by international efforts to relaunch the peace process. For it to succeed it is necessary to achieve concrete performance-based agreements relating to permanent status issues and the establishment of a timeline for their implementation. Any diplomatic process needs to be buttressed by urgent and meaningful steps on the ground. The continued support of the international community is crucial for advancing the process, namely a consistent dialogue between the Quartet and the parties, and the inclusion of regional partners. The Arab Peace Initiative remains a crucial element for advancing peace in the region. Member States of the European Union are encouraged to take a more proactive role in international efforts at resolving the conflict.

80. The Committee is convinced that, through the programme of mandated activities of the Division for Palestinian Rights, it will be able to continue to generate heightened international awareness of the various aspects of the question of Palestine, international support for the rights of the Palestinian people and the peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine. In this connection, the Committee emphasizes the essential contribution of the Division in support of its mandate aimed at enabling the Palestinian people to exercise their inalienable rights. It notes with satisfaction: (a) the level of dialogue, engagement and support of the international community for its programme objectives, for instance, in terms of both participation at the meetings convened and the use of printed and electronic information materials provided by the Division; (b) the number of civil society organizations that have received accreditation to the Committee; and (c) the number of pages viewed on the United Nations website on the question of Palestine. The Committee also considers that the annual training programme for staff of the Palestinian Authority has proved its usefulness and requests that it be continued.

81. The Committee considers that its programme of international meetings and conferences contributes to focusing the attention of Governments, intergovernmental and civil society organizations and the general public on

current issues and the need for advancing a peaceful settlement of the conflict. The meetings also contribute to raising international awareness of the root cause of the conflict, namely the occupation by Israel of the Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and to mobilizing international support for efforts to resolve the conflict. The Committee will continue the programme to foster support for the attainment by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights, the right to self-determination, national independence and sovereignty, and the right of Palestine refugees to return. The Committee, through its Bureau, will regularly assess the outcomes of the international meetings and conferences and, where required, decide on steps to enhance their contribution to the mandated goals of the Committee. In its meetings programme for 2008, the Committee intends to address issues such as the responsibility of all Governments to apply international law to all aspects of the question of Palestine, in accordance with the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice; the need to convene the Conference of High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention in view of the systematic violation by the occupying Power of international humanitarian law; the sixtieth anniversary of the Nakba and the need to find a just solution for the Palestine refugee issue; the adverse consequences of the settlement policy and the construction of the wall for the achievement of a two-State solution; the collective international responsibility to protect the Palestinian people; the need to alleviate humanitarian and socio-economic hardships, including the plight of Palestinian women and children; and continuing efforts of civil society to build an effective international solidarity movement.

82. The Committee commends civil society organizations for their efforts to uphold international legitimacy with regard to the question of Palestine through advocacy and the mobilization of public opinion and for their initiatives aimed at alleviating the plight of the Palestinian people. It welcomes the efforts by organizations worldwide to mark 40 years of the occupation, thus raising public awareness of the issue. The Committee appreciates the support it receives from the Secretariat in strengthening cooperation with civil society. The Committee encourages civil society organizations to broaden their base, involving trade unions and other large organizations, and to focus and harmonize their advocacy efforts at the local, national, regional and international levels with respect to the legal obligations of Governments, as emphasized in the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice. It supports all humanitarian and assistance initiatives geared towards improving the daily lives of the Palestinians. The Committee will continue to involve parliamentarians in its programme of international meetings and conferences. The Committee is of the opinion that the experience and political influence of lawmakers and their organizations can be instrumental in consolidating the democratic process and institution-building in the territory under the Palestinian Authority, strengthening political dialogue between the parties, and in applying norms of international law to efforts at resolving the conflict.

83. The Committee requests the Division to continue its substantive and secretariat support; the programme of research, monitoring and publications and other informational activities, such as the further expansion and development of UNISPAL, including the graphic enhancement of the "Question of Palestine" website; the annual training programme for staff of the

Palestinian Authority; and the annual observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

84. The Committee is of the view that the special information programme on the question of Palestine of the Department of Public Information has made an important contribution to informing the media and public opinion of the relevant issues. The Committee requests the continuation of the programme, with the necessary flexibility, as warranted by developments relevant to the question of Palestine.

85. Wishing to make its contribution to the achievement of a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine, and in view of the many difficulties facing the Palestinian people and besetting the peace process, the Committee calls upon all States to join it in this endeavour and to extend their cooperation and support to the Committee, and invites the General Assembly again to recognize the importance of its role and to reconfirm its mandate.





United Nations

Report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

**General Assembly
Official Records
Sixty-third Session
Supplement No. 35**

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**Report of the Committee on the
Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of
the Palestinian People**



United Nations • New York, 2008

Note

Symbols of United Nations documents are composed of capital letters combined with figures. Mention of such a symbol indicates a reference to a United Nations document.

Contents

<i>Chapter</i>	<i>Page</i>
Letter of transmittal	iv
I. Introduction	1
II. Mandate of the Committee	4
III. Organization of work	5
A. Membership and officers	5
B. Participation in the work of the Committee	5
IV. Review of the situation relating to the question of Palestine	6
V. Action taken by the Committee	14
A. Action taken in accordance with General Assembly resolution 62/80	14
1. Action taken in the Security Council	14
2. Action taken by the Bureau of the Committee	14
B. Action taken by the Committee and the Division for Palestinian Rights in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 62/80 and 62/81	15
1. Programme of international meetings and conferences	15
2. Cooperation with intergovernmental organizations	16
3. Cooperation with civil society	16
4. Research, monitoring and publications	17
5. United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine	17
6. Training programme for staff of the Palestinian Authority	17
7. International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People	17
VI. Action taken by the Department of Public Information in accordance with General Assembly resolution 62/82	19
VII. Conclusions and recommendations of the Committee	21

Letter of transmittal

[6 October 2008]

Mr. Secretary-General,

I have the honour to enclose herewith the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for submission to the General Assembly in accordance with paragraph 2 of its resolution 62/80 of 10 December 2007.

The report covers the period from 5 October 2007 to 6 October 2008.

Accept, Sir, the assurances of my highest consideration.

(Signed) Paul **Badji**
Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the
Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon
Secretary-General of the United Nations
New York

Chapter I

Introduction

1. The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People was established by the General Assembly by its resolution 3376 (XXX) of 10 November 1975, with the task of recommending a programme designed to enable the Palestinian people to exercise its inalienable rights, as recognized by the Assembly in its resolution 3236 (XXIX) of 22 November 1974.

2. The recommendations made by the Committee in its first report to the General Assembly¹ were endorsed by the Assembly as a basis for the solution of the question of Palestine. In its subsequent reports,² the Committee has continued to stress that a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, must be based on the relevant United Nations resolutions and the following essential principles: the withdrawal of Israel from the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem, and from the other occupied Arab territories; respect for the right of all States in the region to live in peace within secure and internationally recognized boundaries; and the recognition and exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. The recommendations of the Committee contained in its first report could not be implemented, and the Assembly each year renewed the Committee's mandate and requested it to intensify efforts in pursuit of its objectives.

3. Since 1991, the Committee has consistently supported the peace process. It welcomed the 1991 Madrid Peace Conference that launched the Middle East peace process based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). It also welcomed the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements (A/48/486-S/26560, annex) and subsequent implementation agreements. The Committee has strongly supported the vision of two States, Israel and Palestine, living side by side within secure and recognized borders on the basis of the 1949 armistice lines, in accordance with relevant United Nations resolutions, including Security Council resolutions 1397 (2002) and 1515 (2003). The Committee welcomed and supported the Quartet's road map and called on the parties to implement it. In keeping with its mandate, the Committee continued to work towards creating conditions that would allow the Palestinian people to realize its inalienable rights, including the right to self-determination and to its own independent State, on all of the Palestinian territory occupied in 1967, including East Jerusalem. The Committee also promotes support and assistance by the international community to the Palestinian people.

4. The reporting period was characterized by the dichotomy between the resumption of the Israeli-Palestinian political negotiations and intensified international engagement on the issue, and a deteriorating situation on the ground.

5. On 27 November 2007, representatives of more than 50 Governments and intergovernmental organizations met at a conference, spearheaded by the Quartet and convened by the United States of America, in Annapolis, Maryland, which led

¹ *Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-first Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/31/35).*

² Since the thirty-first session, the Committee has submitted annual reports to the General Assembly; all such reports have been issued as supplement No. 35 of the sessional documentation of the Assembly.

to a resumption of permanent status negotiations between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) with the declared goal of reaching a two-State solution. Israel and PLO also renewed their commitment to implementing their respective obligations under the road map. The conference marked a new level of involvement on the part of the international community, with major stakeholders from all regions supporting a rigorous timetable for the finalization of the negotiations between the parties. The Committee welcomed the outcome of the meeting and pledged to work towards creating a climate conducive to the advancement of the permanent status negotiations. The resumption of the negotiations was further bolstered by the Paris donors' conference held in December 2007, which resulted in substantial pledges towards the Palestinian Reform and Development Plan.

6. At the same time, throughout the reporting period, the Israeli army continued to conduct military operations in Palestinian population centres, causing the deaths of and injury to many Palestinian civilians. The actions of Israel included extrajudicial killings, house demolitions and arrests. The Gaza Strip remained sealed off by the occupying Power for the greater part of the year, with Israel allowing only the most basic supplies to pass through checkpoints to avoid a large-scale humanitarian catastrophe. The response by armed Palestinian groups included rocket and mortar fire, sniper shootings and a suicide attack within Israel, resulting in Israeli casualties, including among civilians.

7. The Palestinian Authority, pursuant to its road map obligations, continued to consolidate, reform and train its security services, deploying them in major West Bank cities. In June, through Egyptian mediation, a Gaza ceasefire was agreed that has been by and large observed by the parties. The calm resulting from the ceasefire has led to more frequent openings of Israeli checkpoints for the passage of goods. However, the ceasefire did not result in a significant improvement in the dire living conditions of the civilian population in Gaza.

8. The Government of Israel, in violation of international law, United Nations resolutions and its road map obligations, continued to expand Israeli settlements, including in and around East Jerusalem. The construction of the wall on Palestinian land also continued, in contravention of the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice (see A/ES-10/273 and Corr.1). The number of military checkpoints throughout the West Bank exceeded 600, stifling Palestinian economic activity and further worsening the daily hardships experienced by the Palestinian population. The lack of tangible progress in the situation on the ground had a negative effect on the ongoing negotiations between the parties.

9. Through its activities, the Committee sought to support the momentum created at Annapolis towards the successful conclusion of the permanent settlement negotiations. The Committee warned repeatedly that without visible improvement in the situation in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, the negotiations were doomed to fail and repeatedly reminded Israel, the occupying Power, of its obligations under international law. The Committee cautioned that the continuation of a policy of fait accompli on the ground posed a grave threat to the prospects for a peaceful, negotiated solution of the conflict. Moreover, it precludes any possibility of improving the economic and humanitarian situation and is making a two-State solution virtually impossible to achieve.

10. The Committee remained concerned about the internal Palestinian divisions blocking national reconciliation and the reunification of the West Bank and Gaza under the Palestinian Authority. It expressed support for all efforts of Arab and other countries, as well as the initiatives of the President of the Palestinian Authority, Mahmoud Abbas, aimed at restoring Palestinian national unity as a necessity on the path towards a permanent settlement of the question of Palestine.

11. At a meeting marking 60 years since the dispossession of the Palestinian people in the Nakba of 1948, the Chairman of the Committee, Paul Badji, urged the international community to live up to its responsibility to bring about a just solution of the question of Palestine. Support should be given to advancing the political process, bolstering it through real changes on the ground, thereby enabling the parties to make progress in negotiations on all the permanent status issues.

Chapter II

Mandate of the Committee

12. On 10 December 2007, the General Assembly renewed the mandate of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (see resolution 62/80), requested the Secretary-General to continue to provide the Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat with the necessary resources to carry out its programme of work (see resolution 62/81) and requested the continuation of the special information programme on the question of Palestine of the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat (see resolution 62/82). On the same date, the Assembly adopted resolution 62/83 entitled “Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine”.

Chapter III

Organization of work

A. Membership and officers

13. By General Assembly decision 62/553 of 11 September 2008, Nicaragua was appointed as a member of the Committee, increasing the membership to 23. The Committee is encouraged by this expression of growing support for its work. The Committee is accordingly composed of the following Member States: Afghanistan, Belarus, Cuba, Cyprus, Guinea, Guyana, India, Indonesia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mali, Malta, Namibia, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Pakistan, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Tunisia, Turkey and Ukraine.

14. At its 307th meeting, on 14 February 2008, the Committee re-elected Paul Badji (Senegal) as Chairman, Rodrigo Malmierca Díaz (Cuba) and Zahir Tanin (Afghanistan) as Vice-Chairmen and Saviour F. Borg (Malta) as Rapporteur.

15. Also at the 307th meeting, the Committee adopted its programme of work for 2008 (A/AC.183/2008/CRP.1).

B. Participation in the work of the Committee

16. As in previous years, the Committee reconfirmed that all United Nations Member States and observers wishing to participate in the work of the Committee as observers were welcome to do so. In accordance with established practice, Palestine participated in the work of the Committee as an observer, attended all of its meetings and made observations and proposals for consideration by the Committee and its Bureau.

17. In 2008, the Committee again welcomed as observers all States and organizations that had participated in its work in the preceding year.³

³ The observers at the Committee meetings were: Algeria, Bangladesh, Bulgaria, China, Ecuador, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Mauritania, Morocco, the Niger, Qatar, Sri Lanka, the Syrian Arab Republic, the United Arab Emirates, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam and Yemen, as well as the African Union, the League of Arab States, the Organization of the Islamic Conference and Palestine.

Chapter IV

Review of the situation relating to the question of Palestine

18. In pursuance of its mandate, the Committee continued to monitor the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, as well as relevant political developments. The Committee called to mind that 60 years had passed since the Nakba, when hundreds of thousands of Palestinians were forced to leave their homes and property following the Arab-Israeli hostilities of 1948. By the time armistice agreements were signed in 1949, Israeli forces had taken control of large parts of British Mandate Palestine, areas that became the new State of Israel. The Committee recalled that the conflict had resulted in the expulsion and mass flight of some 800,000 Palestine refugees, who left behind their homes, land and property. Today, the original Palestine refugees and their descendants are estimated to number more than 7 million persons and constitute the world's oldest and largest refugee population. The Committee maintained that the just resolution of the issue of Palestine refugees on the basis of General Assembly resolution 194 (III) of 1948 was central to a lasting solution of the question of Palestine, along with the other permanent status issues of Jerusalem, settlements, borders, water and security. Overall, the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, remained of great concern. Despite the continuation of the political process and the efforts of the parties to overcome their differences and move ahead towards the achievement of a peaceful settlement of the conflict, minimal progress has been made.

19. Late in 2007, international efforts for a resumption of the peace process intensified. Encouraged by the Quartet, a number of regional meetings were held, culminating in the international conference held at Annapolis on 27 November under the auspices of the United States of America. The conference resulted in a joint understanding between the Palestinian and Israeli sides, committing them to relaunching the permanent status negotiations, resolving all outstanding issues, making every effort to conclude an agreement before the end of 2008 and implementing their respective obligations under the road map. Members of the League of Arab States underlined their continued support for the Arab Peace Initiative (A/56/1026-S/2002/932, annex II, resolution 14/221) and their belief in the need to achieve comprehensive peace in the region. Following the Annapolis conference, on 12 December, Israeli-Palestinian negotiations formally began, with a meeting of the joint steering committee headed by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Israel, Tzipi Livni, and the Palestinian Chief Negotiator, Ahmed Qureia. The Prime Minister of Israel, Ehud Olmert, and the President of the Palestinian Authority, Mahmoud Abbas, held meetings frequently, starting on 27 December 2007. In 2008, the leaders met on 8 and 27 January, 7 and 13 April, 5 May, 2 June, 13 July, 6 and 31 August and 16 September.

20. The Annapolis conference, followed by the International donors' conference for the Palestinian State, held in Paris on 17 December, co-chaired by France, Norway, the European Union and Quartet representative Tony Blair, provided important impetus to the peace process. The Secretary-General, 68 States and international institutions participated in the Paris conference, which was aimed at securing financial support for the Palestinian Authority. Donors commended the Palestinian Reform and Development Plan presented by Palestinian Prime Minister Salam Fayyad, and pledged \$7.4 billion in assistance. The Quartet met members of

the League of Arab States on the margins of the conference. Subsequent Quartet meetings at the principals' level were held on 2 May (London) and 24 June (Berlin), expressing concern about the situation on the ground, including the continued closure of the Gaza Strip and continued Israeli settlement construction in the West Bank, and calling for implementation of the road map and continuation and intensification of negotiations between the two sides aimed at resolving all permanent status issues.

21. In the meantime, the situation on the ground remained a cause of great concern. The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) continued to conduct deadly military incursions into the Gaza Strip, targeting militants responsible for rocket attacks. On 15 January, IDF entered the Gaza Strip and engaged Hamas militants in a heavy battle, which included air and tank operations. Forty-two Palestinians, including civilians, were killed, and 117 were injured by IDF as a result of 8 ground incursions, 15 air strikes and the firing of 10 surface-to-surface missiles over a period of one week.

22. In February and March, there was another major escalation in violence, with heavy Israeli air and land assaults on the Gaza Strip. The IDF operation "Hot Winter", launched on 29 February, lasted for five days. The Bureau of the Committee issued a statement on 29 February (see para. 63 below). On 1 March, 59 Palestinians were killed, including 39 civilians, among them women and children. During the same five-day period, over 390 rockets and mortar rounds were fired at Israel. The Security Council held an emergency meeting on 1 March (see para. 57 below). The Secretary-General condemned the excessive and disproportionate use of force and the killing of civilians. He also condemned indiscriminate rocket fire and called for an immediate cessation of such rocket attacks. Violence also spread to Jerusalem and the West Bank. On 16 April, 12 Palestinian civilians, including children and a news cameraman, were killed in Israeli action against militants following the killing of three Israeli soldiers.

23. Attacks by Palestinian militants also continued, and included a suicide attack in Dimona on 4 February, which killed one Israeli, and a shooting at a Jewish seminary in West Jerusalem, in which eight Israeli students were killed. An attack on 9 April on the Nahal Oz fuel depot killed two Israeli civilians. On 19 April, an attack using armoured vehicles and explosives against the Kerem Shalom crossing injured 13 soldiers. On 22 May, a suicide bombing attack caused significant structural damage to the Beit Hanoun (Erez) crossing. The blast also damaged electricity lines between the Gaza Strip and Israel. Three Israeli civilians were killed on 2 July, when a Palestinian used a bulldozer to attack vehicles in West Jerusalem. In a similar incident on 22 July, at least 16 people were injured.

24. The Committee denounced the excessive and indiscriminate use of force by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian civilian population in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. The Committee strongly condemned extrajudicial killings, the destruction of Palestinian homes, civilian infrastructure and agricultural lands and the attendant devastating effects on the Palestinian population. At the same time, it strongly condemned all attacks against Israeli civilians and infrastructure. As of March, it was estimated that, since the start of the second intifada in 2000, nearly 5,500 Palestinians had been killed and some 32,600 wounded by Israeli forces. By June, at least 994 Palestinian children under

the age of 18 had died as a result of the violence. The number of Israelis killed during the same period was 1,130.

25. Complying with road map phase I obligations, the Palestinian Authority deployed 300 security forces in Nablus in November 2007, leading to a significant improvement in the security environment in the area. On 3 May 2008, some 480 security officers were deployed in Jenin. However, citing security concerns, IDF continued operations in the West Bank. Such actions were regarded as seriously undermining the Palestinian Authority's security efforts. Improved security performance would be sustainable only through intensified Israeli-Palestinian cooperation. The Berlin Conference in Support of Palestinian Civil Security and the Rule of Law, held on 24 June, focused on strengthening the Palestinian police and justice sectors.

26. On 19 June, an Egyptian-mediated ceasefire was declared, bringing about some improvement in the security situation in the Gaza Strip and southern Israel. However, Israel did not extend the ceasefire to the West Bank, as repeatedly called for by the Palestinian Authority, and continued to carry out military operations and arrest campaigns. An IDF raid into Nablus on 24 June, launched without any prior contact with Palestinian security forces in the area, killed two Palestinians. IDF also closed down and seized equipment belonging to alleged Hamas-affiliated institutions, including schools, medical centres, media outlets and civil society organizations. Thirty-six civil society organizations were outlawed in the city.

27. Despite its claim that it was removing physical obstructions to ease movement, Israel continued to impose sweeping restrictions on Palestinian movement in the West Bank. An increasing number of obstacles to movement and access and continued construction of the wall and settlement expansion served to worsen the humanitarian situation. In August, 608 closure obstacles were erected by Israel in the West Bank.

28. There has been a marked increase in Palestinian home demolitions by Israel in 2008. There were 138 demolitions in the West Bank between January and March, compared with 29 in the last three months of 2007. Some 400 Palestinians were displaced as a result. A significant portion of the demolition orders issued in the past two years related to structures in Bedouin villages in the Jordan Valley, including Al-Hadidiya, Al-Farsiya, Al-Jiftlik and Al-'Aqabah. Home demolitions have also continued in occupied East Jerusalem. In addition, in January alone, Israeli forces uprooted 3,200 trees and destroyed water cisterns and stone terraces/retaining walls in fields near Beit Ula, north-west of Hebron.

29. In the Gaza Strip, the continuing blockade imposed by Israel in response to the election of Hamas in 2006 and its de facto takeover in June 2007 continued to inflict a severe toll on the 1.5 million residents. The suffocating closure of border crossings continued to obstruct the movement of persons and goods into and out of the area, a collective punishment of the entire Palestinian civilian population there. Farmers have been crippled by continued border closures, which did not allow produce to reach markets. The agricultural sector has suffered owing to repeated incursions, which have destroyed orchards and fields, and as the Israeli authorities prevented the planting of anything over 40 cm high, farmers were limited to growing cash crops such as strawberries and potatoes. Driven by need and diminishing supplies, up to half of the population of the Gaza Strip poured across the border into Egypt on 23 January, reflecting the desperation felt by Gazans, who had been effectively

isolated for more than eight months. By January, imports into the Gaza Strip had dropped by 77 per cent, and exports from Gaza by 98 per cent. On 18 January, Israel imposed a comprehensive closure of the Gaza Strip, halting the import of fuel, food and medical and relief items. Some 40 per cent of the population of Gaza did not have regular access to running water. Gaza hospitals at times experienced power cuts for between 8 and 12 hours a day, hampering critical procedures. Hospitals were running on generators, limiting their activities to intensive care units only. Most Palestinians could not exit Gaza. By 8 August, at least 233 Palestinian patients had died after permission to exit Gaza for medical treatment had been denied or delayed. While the number of trucks entering through the Sufa and Al-Muntar (Karni) crossings increased by 54 per cent during the four weeks following the Egyptian-mediated ceasefire between Israel and Hamas agreed on 19 June, the import level stood at approximately 30 per cent of the level before June 2007, bringing little relief to Gazans.

30. Egypt continued its efforts aimed at defusing tensions between Fatah and Hamas, particularly in the Gaza Strip, and at facilitating the gradual reopening of crossings in coordination with the parties. On 5 June, President Abbas called for a national dialogue to implement the Yemen initiative on Palestinian national reconciliation, which called for a resumption of dialogue in line with the Mecca Agreement and for the return of the situation in the Gaza Strip to that existing before June 2007 (S/2008/201, annex). The Secretary-General stated that unity among Palestinians was very important and expressed the hope that the parties concerned would resolve all issues through dialogue in a peaceful manner.

31. The PLO Negotiations Affairs Department estimated that, as of August, almost 11,000 Palestinians were being held in Israeli prisons or detention camps, including 2,700 Palestinians arrested in 2008, most of them from the West Bank. Some 9,000 were identified as political prisoners, including 326 minors and 94 women. Some 49 Palestinian Legislative Council members have been detained for two years under administrative detention without charge or trial. About 85 per cent of the detainees, in particular children, had been subjected to abuse, beating and humiliation before and during questioning. It was also estimated that, since 1967, Israel had detained and imprisoned almost 700,000 Palestinians, constituting one fifth of the entire Palestinian population of the Occupied Palestinian Territory. On 3 December 2007, Israel released 429 prisoners, followed by the release of 198 prisoners on 25 August. Both releases were described as "goodwill gestures".

32. In contravention of the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice, Israel continued the illegal construction of the separation wall on Palestinian land in deviation from the armistice lines of 1949. As of May, 409 km of the wall, or 57 per cent of the planned route, had been built. Another 66 km (9 per cent) were under construction, and the construction of 248 km (34 per cent) had not yet begun. Upon completion of the wall, 11.9 per cent of the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, would lie west of the wall or be surrounded completely or partially by it. Those areas are home to 498,000 Palestinians (222,500 in East Jerusalem), living in 92 towns and villages. The wall would de facto annex 60 settlements (including 12 in East Jerusalem) in which 381,000 Israelis live. In July, the defence establishment agreed to dismantle a 2.4 km stretch of the separation wall north of Qalqilya. The move would return 2,600 dunums of agricultural land to its Palestinian owners. The dismantled stretch would be replaced by 4.9 km of fencing closer to the Green Line, as ordered by the Israeli High Court of Justice. In August, the Israeli Government

decided to re-route a section of the wall near the biggest West Bank settlement of “Ma’ale Adumim”, which would allow about 4,000 dunums of Palestinian land to remain on the eastern side of the wall.

33. In the period under review, Israel continued settlement activity in the West Bank, particularly in and around East Jerusalem. As of July 2008, there were approximately 4,000 settlement units under construction in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. Construction commenced on 275 new buildings in 53 settlements; 81 per cent were located in areas of the Occupied Palestinian Territory now west of the separation wall. It was estimated that 40 per cent of the West Bank was taken up by Israeli infrastructure — settlements, roads and military bases — which was largely off-limits to Palestinians. The rest of the land has been broken up into enclaves, which are separated from each other and controlled by checkpoints and roadblocks. On 15 October 2007, Jerusalem’s committee on planning and construction voted in favour of permitting settlers to reside in a five-storey building located in the middle of the East Jerusalem neighbourhood of Silwan, despite the fact that it had been built without a permit. The building had been slated for evacuation.

34. On 4 December 2007, the Israeli Construction and Housing Ministry published tenders for the construction of 307 housing units in the East Jerusalem settlement of “Har Homa” (Jabal Abu Ghneim), home to approximately 4,000 settlers. Also in “Har Homa”, plans to construct more than 1,000 housing units on “absentee land” belonging to Palestinians were approved by the Jerusalem municipal planning board on 7 January. Tenders for 120 more homes were approved for “Har Homa” on 30 May, and in July, the construction of 1,800 new housing units was approved for “Har Homa” and “Pisgat Ze’ev”.

35. On 1 January 2008, tenders for 440 units in East Jerusalem’s “East Talpiot” settlement were announced by the Israel Land Administration. On 7 January, the construction of 60 housing units in the East Jerusalem settlement of Ras al-Amud commenced. Prime Minister Olmert approved the construction of 750 homes in the West Bank settlement of “Givat Ze’ev” on 8 March 2008. Approximately 50 units were approved in the “Gilo” settlement following the Annapolis conference. On 31 March, the Jerusalem municipality announced plans to build 600 new houses in the “Pisgat Ze’ev” settlement in East Jerusalem. More Palestinian property was confiscated to build a light rail system connecting the settlements in occupied East Jerusalem with West Jerusalem, further isolating East Jerusalem from the rest of the West Bank. In all, 9,617 new housing units have been built in East Jerusalem in the short period following the Annapolis conference.

36. On 8 April, the Israeli Vice Premier, Haim Ramon, reportedly confirmed that the “Ofra” settlement had been built on privately owned Palestinian land. On 18 April, the Construction and Housing Ministry invited construction firms to bid for the rights to build 48 houses in the “Ariel” settlement and a further 52 houses in the “Elkana” settlement. On 30 April, Israeli police began operating in a new police station located in the so-called E1 area near the “Ma’ale Adumim” settlement.

37. On 9 May, the Israeli Interior Ministry established a new municipality in the West Bank that included the “Ariel” bloc settlements of “Elkana”, “Etz Efraim”, “Oranit” and “Sha’arei Tikva”, with a total population of more than 13,200 settlers. This measure removed the four settlements from their traditional authorities, paving the way for their further development and expansion.

38. On 21 May, the Construction and Housing Ministry announced a plan to build 286 new houses in the “Beitar Ilit” settlement near Bethlehem. On 14 July, the Israeli Ministry of Industry, Trade and Labour approved the expansion of the industrial park in the “Ariel” settlement, allowing for the construction of 27 factories and tripling the size of the settlement’s industrial park.

39. On 13 June, the Israeli Interior Ministry confirmed plans to build 1,300 additional apartments in the “Ramat Shlomo” settlement in East Jerusalem. On 19 June, in Al-Mazra’a Al-Qabaliya, north-west of Ramallah, Israeli military bulldozers razed about 500 dunums of land, which are slated to be used for settler agricultural projects and for a new settlement. On 24 July, the Foreign Affairs and Defence Committee of the Knesset approved the construction of 20 new housing units at “Maskiyot”, establishing a new settlement in the Jordan Rift Valley in the West Bank.

40. According to reports available to the Committee, the Israeli Government was responsible for much of the increase in settlement construction. According to some accounts, the number of Government tenders for building in the settlements in the first half of 2008 increased by 550 per cent.

41. More than 480,000 Israeli settlers reside in settlements in the West Bank, including more than 200,000 who live in occupied East Jerusalem. There are approximately 440 settlements, outposts, military bases and other occupation sites, including 144 settlements, 96 outposts inside settlement boundaries, 48 military bases and other sites in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. While Palestinians constitute over 50 per cent of the population of East Jerusalem, only 7.3 per cent of its land is available for Palestinian construction.

42. Settler violence, harassment and intimidation of Palestinian civilians have also continued. On 31 March, settlers in Hebron sealed with glue the entrances to six stores belonging to Palestinians. They also sealed off the entrance to the office of the Islamic Waqf at the Tomb of the Patriarchs. On 24 July, more than 20 settlers attacked the Palestinian village of Burin near Nablus, smashing cars and windows and cutting electrical wires. Israeli security officials on 18 August raised concerns about an increase in violence by settlers in the West Bank. On 13 September, armed settlers from “Yitzhar” fired at the residents of a Palestinian village, vandalizing property and agricultural land.

43. Israeli restrictions on the Palestinians continued to be the main cause of the economic downturn, with gross domestic product (GDP) increasingly driven by Government spending and donor aid. Limited resources were available for investment, further reducing the productive base for a self-sustaining economy. Real GDP was negative in the first half of 2007, but began to recover in the West Bank during the second half of the year. As a result of the situation in the Gaza Strip, however, real GDP growth in 2007 was estimated to be zero. During the reporting period, the socio-economic situation of residents in the Gaza Strip took a turn for the worse. Some 80 per cent of families were reliant on humanitarian aid, compared with 63 per cent in 2006, and unemployment was approaching 50 per cent. In 2006, some 3,900 factories employed 35,000 people, but by December 2007, there were just 195 factories left, employing 1,700. Construction projects estimated at \$240 million came to a halt, resulting in 42,000 workers being laid off. The number of households earning less than \$1.20 per person per day rose from 55 per cent to 70 per cent. As a result of border crossing closures, estimated lost income from

strawberry sales alone during the 2007-2008 season was approximately \$7 million. The reduction in fuel supplies began on 28 October 2007. In February, gasoline (diesel) supply dropped by approximately 67 per cent and benzine by about 80 per cent.

44. In the course of the year, in order to advance economic development, the Palestinian Authority finalized its 2008-2010 Reform and Development Plan and began implementing nearly 200 development projects, worth \$250 million. A further 226 projects were approved by the Government. On 13 May, Quartet representative Tony Blair announced a package of measures to stimulate economic development. Implementation advanced, with selected obstacles to movement being removed and a telecommunications contract being signed between Israel and the Palestinian Authority. However, progress in relaxing movement and access of persons and goods remained slow. The 2005 Agreement on Movement and Access has yet to be implemented. While the fiscal performance of the Palestinian Authority has improved somewhat, there was a budget shortfall of \$400 million for the period from October through the end of 2008, which means that salaries might not be paid for that period, unless donors fulfil outstanding pledges and direct assistance to budget support.

45. The isolation of the Gaza Strip has had the most dramatic impact on women and, in particular, children, who account for more than 56 per cent of the population. Restricted access to food, water and medicine seriously affected newborn babies and pregnant mothers. Many babies were born suffering from anaemia inherited from their mothers. Of every 1,000 born, 28 die from malnutrition, anaemia and other poverty-related diseases. In 2002, 19 per cent of Gazans suffered from anaemia. In 2008, the figure was 77.5 per cent. Children received on average only 61 per cent of their daily calorie requirement from United Nations supplies. There were approximately 25,000 deaf and hearing-impaired people, many of whom had no specialist support service. About 2,000 children dropped out of school. Electricity cuts disrupted teaching, shortening the school day. There was a nearly 80 per cent failure rate among students in grades four to nine, with the rate increasing to 90 per cent in mathematics.

46. Throughout the occupation, problems compounding the water crisis have included Israel's discriminatory policy in distributing joint water resources in the West Bank and the limits it placed on the ability of the Palestinian Authority to drill new wells. The crisis has worsened in 2008 because of a serious drought. West Bank per capita water use was about 66 litres a day, two thirds of the minimum of 100 litres recommended by the World Health Organization in order to ensure that all health concerns were met. Per capita water consumption by the settlers in the West Bank was 3.5 times that of Palestinians, or more than 200 litres per day. In the Gaza Strip, over-extraction from the coastal aquifer has led to seawater intrusion, and groundwater resources have been heavily contaminated. The blockade imposed on the Gaza Strip since January 2006 has pushed the water and sanitation sectors to the brink of collapse due to lack of investment. Some communities had access to only 14 litres of water per capita daily. Because of the lack of fuel, the Gaza Power Generating Company has had to cut the power supply, leaving Gaza's 1.5 million people with daily power cuts of up to eight hours, reducing access to drinking water.

47. The humanitarian situation of the 1.5 million people in the Gaza Strip has become increasingly grave, making the work of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) even more

critical. Gazans were caught between the Israeli closure, which amounted to collective punishment, and repeated militant attacks. The low levels of fuel delivery had an impact on all sectors of life, forcing UNRWA, for the first time, to suspend food distribution to 650,000 people.

48. In order to save fuel, UNRWA gave priority to food distribution, solid-waste removal and sewerage projects. Doctors, nurses, teachers and social workers were obliged to walk to work. Between 30 and 50 per cent of ambulances could not be used owing to the shortage of fuel and spare parts. Another consequence was the daily dumping of approximately 55,000 litres of raw and partially treated sewage into the Mediterranean Sea. In June 2008, new procedures applied to the movement of United Nations agencies in the West Bank, including property searches and refusal to accept United Nations identification documents, caused increasing operational concerns and difficulties among staff on the ground.

49. According to a survey conducted by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the World Food Programme and UNRWA in May 2008, soaring food prices, falling incomes and growing unemployment had brought Palestinian purchasing power to an all-time low, jeopardizing the livelihoods of Palestinians and leading to heavy debt and changes in family eating habits. Rising food and fuel prices, coupled with the closure regime imposed upon the Gaza Strip, meant that aid agencies found it increasingly expensive to deliver aid to the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. The consequences of the stepped-up violence in and around the Gaza Strip had dire consequences for civilians. Since January, 68 Palestinian children have been killed in the Gaza Strip, including UNRWA schoolchildren.

50. UNRWA implemented an emergency appeal to help approximately 170,000 refugee families cope with additional economic hardship. Owing to funding shortfalls, the Agency was able to provide only a fraction of the relief required to meet the ever-increasing needs.

51. The Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People of the United Nations Development Programme launched its midterm strategic framework 2008-2011, reinforcing its commitment to supporting socio-economic development in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, exploring new approaches and drawing on its corporate capacities and strategic partnerships. Priorities included poverty reduction and democratic governance. The document itself was the outcome of cooperation and coordination between UNDP and the Palestinian Authority. Since the establishment of the Palestinian Authority in 1994, the Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People, in partnership with public and private institutions, civil society and donors has invested more than \$700 million in support of the Palestinian people.

52. The Committee also continued to express appreciation for the work of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. It noted that the scope of the consolidated appeal for 2008 focused on delivering humanitarian assistance, increased protection of civilians, enhanced monitoring and reporting on the humanitarian situation and the strengthening of United Nations humanitarian coordination structures.

Chapter V

Action taken by the Committee

A. Action taken in accordance with General Assembly resolution 62/80

53. In pursuance of its mandate, the Committee continued to mobilize the international community in support of the Palestinian people, in cooperation with United Nations bodies, Governments, intergovernmental and civil society organizations and others, as indicated below.

54. On 20 June 2008, to mark the 60 years of dispossession of Palestine refugees, the Committee held a special meeting at United Nations Headquarters.

1. Action taken in the Security Council

Meetings of the Security Council

55. During the period under review, the Security Council continued to monitor the situation on the ground and the efforts to implement the road map. It held monthly briefings throughout the year under the agenda item entitled "The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question".

56. The Council held its 5824th meeting on 22 January 2008, at the request of the Chairman of the Arab Group (S/2008/31). Twenty-eight speakers took the floor during an open debate (S/PV.5824 and Resumption 1).

57. The Council held its 5847th meeting on 1 March 2008, at the request of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya (S/2008/142), to consider the deteriorating situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory due to continuing Israeli military attacks on the civilian population (S/PV.5847).

58. An open debate following a monthly briefing was held on 22 July 2008, at which the Chairman of the Committee, Paul Badji, made a statement (S/PV.5940 Resumption 1).

59. The Council held its 5983rd meeting on 26 September 2008, at the request of Saudi Arabia, to consider Israeli settlement activities in the occupied Palestinian territories (S/2008/615). A total of 18 speakers, including 10 Ministers for Foreign Affairs, took the floor during the debate (S/PV.5983).

2. Action taken by the Bureau of the Committee

60. On 20 November 2007, the Committee issued a statement on the occasion of the fortieth anniversary of the adoption by the Security Council of resolution 242 (1967) (GA/PAL/1067).

61. On 30 November 2007, the Bureau of the Committee issued a statement on the Annapolis conference (GA/PAL/1070).

62. On 4 February 2008, the Bureau of the Committee issued a statement on the deteriorating situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem (GA/PAL/1071).

63. On 29 February, the Bureau of the Committee issued a statement on the escalation of violence in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, especially in the Gaza Strip, and the killing of innocent civilians (GA/PAL/1080).

64. On 4 March 2008, the Chairman of the Committee, Paul Badji, met with the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs and discussed the latest political developments and the Committee's programme of activities.

B. Action taken by the Committee and the Division for Palestinian Rights in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 62/80 and 62/81

1. Programme of international meetings and conferences

65. Through its programme of international meetings and conferences, the Committee continued to raise international awareness of the various aspects of the question of Palestine and international support for the rights of the Palestinian people and the peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine.

66. In the period under review, the following international events were held under the auspices of the Committee:

(a) United Nations Seminar on Assistance to the Palestinian People, Amman, 19 and 20 February 2008;

(b) United Nations International Conference on Palestine Refugees, headquarters of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, Paris, 29 and 30 April 2008;

(c) United Nations International Meeting on the Question of Palestine, Qawra, Malta, 3 and 4 June 2008.

67. All of the above events were attended by representatives of Governments, Palestine, intergovernmental organizations and United Nations system entities, as well as representatives of civil society and the media. The reports of the meetings were issued as publications of the Division for Palestinian Rights and were made available through the United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine (UNISPAL) and the Division's website.

68. In Amman, during the United Nations Seminar on Assistance to the Palestinian People, the Committee delegation was received by the Prime Minister of Jordan, Nader Dahabi. The Committee delegation also visited the Palestine refugee camps of Husn and Irbid, in northern Jordan, where UNRWA provides social services to the refugees. While in Paris in connection with the United Nations International Conference on Palestine Refugees, the Committee delegation held meetings at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of France with the Directors of the United Nations and Middle East Departments. In Malta, during the United Nations Meeting on the Question of Palestine, the Committee delegation was received by the President of Malta, Edward Fenech-Adami, at the presidential palace, and by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Malta, Tonio Borg, at the Foreign Ministry. Following its visit to Malta, the Committee delegation was received in Vatican City by the Secretary for Relations with States of the Holy See, Archbishop Dominique Mamberti.

2. Cooperation with intergovernmental organizations

69. Throughout the year, the Committee continued its cooperation with the African Union, the Non-Aligned Movement and the Organization of the Islamic Conference.

70. The Committee also continued its cooperation on the question of Palestine with States members of the European Union. During the meeting at the French Foreign Ministry, the Bureau discussed issues of mutual interest in the light of the assumption by France of the presidency of the European Union. Those consultations were continued at a meeting on 10 September 2008 with the Permanent Representative of France to the United Nations in his capacity as representative of the presidency of the European Union.

3. Cooperation with civil society

Civil society organizations

71. The Committee continued its cooperation with civil society organizations worldwide. Representatives of civil society participated in all meetings organized under the auspices of the Committee, including the observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People on 29 November 2007. The meetings provided civil society representatives with an opportunity to discuss the situation on the ground and their programmes in support of the Palestinian people and to improve coordination of their activities. Numerous representatives of civil society organizations also attended the special meeting of the Committee held on 20 June 2008 to mark 60 years of dispossession of Palestine refugees, including expert speakers who shared with the Committee their analyses of the status of Palestine refugees. The Committee was appreciative of the work done by civil society organizations, encouraging them to continue contributing to efforts aimed at achieving a just and lasting peace between Israelis and Palestinians.

72. The Committee maintained and developed its liaison with national, regional and international coordinating mechanisms cooperating with it, in addition to its established liaison with a large number of individual organizations. Over the past year, the Chairman of the Committee met with representatives of civil society organizations in New York and at the meetings organized under the auspices of the Committee away from Headquarters.

73. The Division for Palestinian Rights maintained the Internet website "Civil society network on the Question of Palestine" (<http://www.un.org/depts/dpa/ngo>) as a tool for the exchange of information and for cooperation between civil society and the Committee. At the request of the Committee, the Division also continued to issue its bimonthly newsletter, NGO Action News, covering the activities of civil society on the various aspects of the question of Palestine.

Parliaments and inter-parliamentary organizations

74. The Committee continued to develop its liaison with national and regional parliaments and their organizations and invited a number of parliamentarians to speak at its meetings. In connection with the international meetings, the delegation of the Committee held meetings in Paris with deputies of the National Assembly and the Senate, as well as with members and officials of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean, headquartered in Saint Julians, Malta.

4. Research, monitoring and publications

75. The Division carried out research and monitoring activities and responded to requests for information and briefings on the question of Palestine. Under the guidance of the Committee, which reiterated the relevance of the research, monitoring and publications programme, it also prepared the publications listed below for dissemination, including through UNISPAL:

(a) Monthly bulletin on action taken by United Nations and intergovernmental organizations relevant to the question of Palestine;

(b) Monthly chronology of events relating to the question of Palestine, based on media reports and other sources;

(c) Reports of international meetings and conferences organized under the auspices of the Committee;

(d) Special bulletins and information notes on the observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People;

(e) Periodic reviews of developments related to the Middle East peace process;

(f) Annual compilation of resolutions and decisions of the General Assembly and the Security Council relating to the question of Palestine.

5. United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine

76. The Division for Palestinian Rights, in cooperation with relevant technical and library services of the United Nations Secretariat, continued to administer, maintain, expand and develop UNISPAL and the "Question of Palestine" website, which is located on the United Nations home page under "Peace and Security", pursuant to successive annual General Assembly mandates. This included the ongoing maintenance and upgrading of the technical components of the system to ensure the uninterrupted presence of UNISPAL on the Internet and involved the expansion of the document collection to include relevant new and old documents. In addition, steps continued to be taken to enhance the user-friendliness and usefulness of the system (<http://unispal.un.org>), including by incorporating additional multimedia content and a streamlined search facility. The Division undertook a redesign of the UNISPAL and "Question of Palestine" websites, which is nearing completion, and conducted an online survey of website users to assess ways in which the system could be further improved.

6. Training programme for staff of the Palestinian Authority

77. Two staff members from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Palestinian Authority participated in a training programme conducted by the Division from September to December 2007, in conjunction with the sixty-second session of the General Assembly. The trainees familiarized themselves with various aspects of the work of the Secretariat and other organs and conducted research on specific topics.

7. International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People

78. The International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People was observed at Headquarters and at the United Nations Offices at Geneva and Vienna on

29 November 2007. On the occasion of the observance at Headquarters, in addition to a special meeting of the Committee and other activities, a cultural exhibit entitled "Palestine: A Continuing Legacy" and a musical performance by Simon Shaheen and Qantara were organized by the Permanent Observer Mission of Palestine to the United Nations under the auspices of the Committee. The Committee noted with appreciation that the International Day of Solidarity had also been observed in many cities throughout the world. Details on the observance are contained in the special bulletin issued by the Division.

79. In adopting its programme of work, the Committee decided that a similar observance of the International Day of Solidarity should be organized in 2008.

Chapter VI

Action taken by the Department of Public Information in accordance with General Assembly resolution 62/82

80. The Department of Public Information, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 62/82, continued to implement its special information programme on the question of Palestine. The objective of the programme is to raise international awareness on this question and on the situation in the Middle East with a view to contributing effectively to an atmosphere conducive to dialogue and supportive of the peace process.

81. The Department covered intergovernmental meetings and related press briefings using all media at its disposal. The Department produced a total of 130 press releases, providing summaries in English and French of formal meetings and briefings, and distributed live television coverage to broadcasters around the world through United Nations Television. Television coverage was also posted on the Internet (webcast) for easy viewing. UNifeed produced and distributed 11 packages on the question of Palestine, including the United Nations response to developments on the ground, relief work and support for refugees, as well as activities of the Security Council and the Human Rights Council.

82. The United Nations Radio Arabic Language Unit reported on meetings organized by the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People.

83. The United Nations News Centre, a news portal of the United Nations website, regularly highlighted stories related to the question of Palestine in the six official languages. In addition, a special focus page on the Middle East provided an in-depth and user-friendly venue for accessing information on the issue.

84. The Department organized a training programme for five young Palestinian journalists at Headquarters, in Washington, D.C., and in Geneva from 5 November to 14 December 2007. The programme was aimed at strengthening the skills of the participants as broadcast media professionals and providing them with basic technical skills to maintain websites in Arabic.

85. The Department updated and displayed the permanent exhibit of the question of Palestine at Headquarters, in English, and at the United Nations Office at Geneva, in French. It also produced an updated edition of the booklet *The Question of Palestine and the United Nations* in English and in other official languages.

86. The network of United Nations information centres, services and offices continued to disseminate information on the question of Palestine and to organize relevant activities. A major focus of activities was the promotion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People on 29 November 2007. The Secretary-General's message for the Day was widely disseminated in official and non-official languages.

87. Information centres/services in Accra, Ankara, Asunción, Beirut, Brussels, Cairo, Dar es Salaam, Jakarta, Mexico City, Moscow, New Delhi, Prague, Pretoria, Rabat, Rio de Janeiro, Tokyo, Vienna and Washington, D.C., commemorated the Day by organizing events individually or jointly with Governments, regional organizations, civil society and the media.

88. During the period under review, some centres provided media-related assistance, including the organization of press conferences, to the Commissioner-General of UNRWA during her visits to their duty stations. They also placed opinion pieces (op-eds) by the Commissioner-General and the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator in newspapers. Some information centres translated and disseminated the statement of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict on the violence in Gaza.

89. In its *UN Chronicle* magazine, the Department featured full coverage of the sixty-second session of the General Assembly and the Fourth Committee (Special Political and Decolonization Committee), including the reports of UNRWA and the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories. It also published articles which covered issues related to the question of Palestine, including “Gaza border closures accompanied by fears of humanitarian crisis” and “Financing for development to reach the MDGs: the experience in the Arab region”.

90. *The United Nations Today*, the successor volume to *Basic Facts About the United Nations*, included a thorough review of United Nations action in the Middle East, including participation in the ongoing peace process, humanitarian assistance to Palestine refugees and advocacy for the needs of the Palestinian people and support for their human rights.

91. The Dag Hammarskjöld Library continued to digitize relevant documents for the UNISPAL document collection.

Chapter VII

Conclusions and recommendations of the Committee

92. The year 2008 marked 60 years of Palestinian dispossession, or the Nakba, as the Palestinians refer to the loss of their homeland. Hundreds of thousands of Palestinians were forced to leave their homes and properties as a result of the Arab-Israeli hostilities of 1948. At its special meeting to mark that event, the Committee reiterated the permanent responsibility of the United Nations towards the question of Palestine until it is resolved in all its aspects in accordance with international law and urged the international community to continue its support for the Middle East peace process.

93. The Committee was encouraged by the new level of engagement by major stakeholders from all regions that led to the Annapolis conference and Paris donors' conference resulting in a resumption of permanent status negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians and an outstanding degree of support for the Palestinian Authority and its economic reform programme. The Committee structured its activities throughout the year so as to support a climate conducive to the advancement of permanent status negotiations between the parties aimed at the achievement of the two-State solution and the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. The Committee stressed the need for a complete cessation of all acts of violence, including military attacks, destruction and acts of terror. It called upon Israel, the occupying Power, to end its illegal policies and oppressive practices in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, such as settlement activities, the construction of the wall and numerous measures of collective punishment. It emphasized the importance for both sides of implementing their road map obligations. The Committee welcomed the resumption of the negotiations between the parties, including at the highest level. It has repeatedly stressed that the political momentum provided by the Annapolis and Paris conferences must not be lost, and supported all efforts towards the goal of achieving a final status agreement by the end of 2008.

94. Regrettably, the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations were not supported by tangible improvements in the situation on the ground. The occupying Power continued to change the reality of life in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, through the expansion of settlements and related infrastructure, including the wall, and the fragmentation of the Occupied Palestinian Territory using checkpoints and other obstacles. This led to the stagnation of the political process and continued deterioration of Palestinian socio-economic conditions, further undermining efforts by the Palestinian Authority and the international community to bring about a two-State solution. The Committee is of the view that the illegal Israeli occupation of the Palestinian Territory must end without conditions, which should allow the Palestinian people to establish an independent State on all territories occupied in 1967, including East Jerusalem, and to exercise their inalienable rights, including the right to self-determination. The Committee firmly supports the two-State solution in accordance with Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973), 1397 (2002) and 1515 (2003). The Committee is convinced that only serious and sustained international engagement will bring about a peaceful and negotiated settlement of all outstanding issues and reverse the growing support

for radical forces that promote violent and unilateral approaches to ending the conflict. Any diplomatic process needs to be buttressed by urgent and meaningful steps on the ground. The continued support of the international community is crucial for advancing the process, namely, a consistent dialogue between the Quartet and the parties and the inclusion of regional partners. The Arab Peace Initiative remains a crucial element for advancing peace in the region. States members of the European Union are encouraged to take a more proactive role in international efforts to resolve the conflict. The Committee welcomes the unwavering and substantial budgetary support for the Palestinian Authority provided by the European Union and other major donors. At the same time, it calls upon all donors to live up to their pledges and ensure the continued functioning of the Palestinian Authority institutions.

95. It is also imperative that the parties live up to their road map obligations. In particular, the Committee calls upon Israel to end its military operations in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and to stop any other measures that further undermine Palestinian institutions. The Committee is strongly opposed to the illegal construction and expansion of settlements in the West Bank, as well as the unlawful construction of the wall, and finds these activities incompatible with negotiations on the permanent settlement. It again reminds Israel, the occupying Power, that it is bound by the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, which, inter alia, obliges parties to the Convention to protect civilians during hostilities. Israel must release, immediately and unconditionally, all Palestinian prisoners, including imprisoned Cabinet members and parliamentarians. The Committee strongly condemns the killing of innocent civilians by either side. It denounces rocket attacks on Israel and calls for the cessation of these activities by Palestinian armed groups. The Committee has welcomed the agreed upon ceasefire in Gaza and has demanded its extension to the West Bank. The ceasefire and the political process can be sustained only once Israel has stopped and reversed all illegal actions in the Palestinian Territory occupied since 1967.

96. The Committee calls upon the Palestinian leadership, the leaders of all factions and all Palestinians to unite in support of President Abbas, his Government and all democratically elected Palestinian institutions and to resolve their political differences by peaceful means. The Committee calls for a comprehensive national dialogue supported by confidence-building measures to start a process of regaining national unity and the reunification of Gaza and the West Bank under the Palestinian Authority. It is paramount that the various Palestinian factions put the national interests and aspirations of the Palestinian people ahead of any partisan concerns. The Committee firmly believes that the unity of the Palestinian people is an essential condition for achieving a viable solution of the question of Palestine.

97. The Committee is convinced that its own work and the programme of mandated activities of the Division for Palestinian Rights represent a significant contribution by the United Nations and its membership to the search for a comprehensive, just and lasting peaceful solution of the question of Palestine, in accordance with international law and relevant United Nations resolutions. It will continue to generate heightened international awareness of the various aspects of the question of Palestine, international support for the rights of the Palestinian people and the peaceful settlement of the question of

Palestine. In this connection, the Committee emphasizes the useful and constructive contribution of the Division in support of its mandate aimed at enabling the Palestinian people to exercise their inalienable rights. It notes with satisfaction: (a) the level of dialogue, engagement and support of the international community for its programme objectives, for instance, in terms of both participation at the meetings convened and the use of printed and electronic information materials provided by the Division; (b) the continued involvement of civil society organizations in support of the efforts of the Committee and the United Nations towards a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine; and (c) the increased international awareness of United Nations policies and activities on the question of Palestine as indicated by the growing number of documents and relevant information materials on the issue accessed by users worldwide at the websites maintained by the Division. The Committee also considers that the annual training programme for staff of the Palestinian Authority has proved its usefulness and requests that it be continued.

98. The Committee considers that its programme of international meetings and conferences contributes to focusing the attention of Governments, intergovernmental and civil society organizations and the general public on the need for advancing a peaceful settlement of the conflict and mobilizing much-needed assistance to the Palestinian people. The Committee, through its Bureau, will regularly assess the outcomes of the international meetings and conferences and, where required, decide on steps to enhance their contribution to the mandated goals of the Committee. In its meetings programme for 2009, the Committee intends to address issues such as the importance of the continuation of the political dialogue between the parties aimed at achieving a permanent settlement of the question of Palestine; the significance of realizing a tangible improvement in the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem; and the urgent need for all stakeholders to remain engaged in all aspects of the question of Palestine, to monitor and assess the developments and to use the available mechanisms, such as the main organs of the United Nations, to actively influence the process. The Committee will also highlight the adverse consequences of the settlement policy and the construction of the wall for the achievement of a two-State solution; the collective international responsibility to protect the Palestinian people; and the need to alleviate humanitarian and socio-economic hardships, including the plight of Palestinian women and children, with particular focus on the urgent need to improve the situation in Gaza.

99. The Committee commends civil society organizations for their efforts to uphold international legitimacy with regard to the question of Palestine through advocacy and the mobilization of public opinion and for their initiatives aimed at alleviating the plight of the Palestinian people. It has welcomed the efforts made by organizations worldwide to mark 60 years of Palestinian dispossession, raising public awareness of this long-standing and tragic issue. The Committee appreciates the support it receives from the Secretariat in strengthening cooperation with civil society. The Committee encourages civil society organizations to broaden their base, involving trade unions and other large organizations, and to focus and harmonize their advocacy efforts at the local, national, regional and international levels. The

Committee looks forward to further developing its cooperation with parliamentarians and their umbrella organizations. The Committee is of the opinion that the experience and political influence of lawmakers can be instrumental in consolidating the democratic process and institution-building in the territory under the Palestinian Authority, strengthening political dialogue between the parties, and in applying norms of international law to efforts to resolve the conflict.

100. The Committee requests the Division to continue its substantive and secretariat support; the programme of research, monitoring and publications and other informational activities, such as the further expansion and development of UNISPAL, including the graphic enhancement of the “Question of Palestine” website; the annual training programme for staff of the Palestinian Authority; and the annual observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

101. The Committee is of the view that the special information programme on the question of Palestine of the Department of Public Information has made an important contribution to informing the media and public opinion of the relevant issues. The Committee requests the continuation of the programme, with the necessary flexibility, as warranted by developments relevant to the question of Palestine.

102. Wishing to make its contribution to the achievement of a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine, and in view of the many difficulties facing the Palestinian people and besetting the peace process, the Committee calls upon all States to join it in this endeavour and to extend their cooperation and support to the Committee, and invites the General Assembly again to recognize the importance of its role and to reconfirm its mandate.





United Nations

Report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

General Assembly

Official Records

Sixty-fourth Session

Supplement No. 35

General Assembly
Official Records
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Note

Symbols of United Nations documents are composed of capital letters combined with figures. Mention of such a symbol indicates a reference to a United Nations document.

Contents

<i>Chapter</i>	<i>Page</i>
Letter of transmittal	iv
I. Introduction	1
II. Mandate of the Committee	4
III. Organization of work	5
A. Membership and officers	5
B. Participation in the work of the Committee	5
IV. Review of the situation relating to the question of Palestine	6
V. Action taken by the Committee	13
A. Action taken in accordance with General Assembly resolution 63/26	13
1. Action taken in the General Assembly and the Security Council	13
2. Action taken by the Bureau of the Committee	13
B. Action taken by the Committee and the Division for Palestinian Rights in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 63/26 and 63/27	14
1. Programme of international meetings and conferences	14
2. Cooperation with intergovernmental organizations	16
3. Cooperation with civil society	16
4. Research, monitoring and publications	17
5. United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine	17
6. Training programme for staff of the Palestinian Authority	18
7. International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People	18
VI. Action taken by the Department of Public Information in accordance with General Assembly resolution 63/28	19
VII. Conclusions and recommendations of the Committee	21

Letter of transmittal

[6 October 2009]

Mr. Secretary-General,

I have the honour to enclose herewith the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for submission to the General Assembly in accordance with paragraph 2 of its resolution 63/26 of 26 November 2008.

The report covers the period from 7 October 2008 to 6 October 2009.

Accept, Sir, the assurances of my highest consideration.

(Signed) Paul **Badji**
Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the
Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon
Secretary-General of the United Nations
New York

Chapter I

Introduction

1. The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People was established by the General Assembly by its resolution 3376 (XXX) of 10 November 1975, with the task of recommending a programme designed to enable the Palestinian people to exercise its inalienable rights, as recognized by the Assembly in its resolution 3236 (XXIX) of 22 November 1974.

2. The recommendations made by the Committee in its first report to the General Assembly¹ were endorsed by the Assembly as a basis for the solution of the question of Palestine. In its subsequent reports,² the Committee has continued to stress that a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, must be based on the relevant United Nations resolutions and the following essential principles: the withdrawal of Israel from the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem, and from the other occupied Arab territories; respect for the right of all States in the region to live in peace within secure and internationally recognized boundaries; and the recognition and exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. The recommendations of the Committee contained in its first report could not be implemented, and the Assembly each year renewed the Committee's mandate in pursuit of the tasks assigned to it.

3. The Committee has consistently supported a peaceful solution of the question of Palestine. It welcomed the 1991 Madrid Peace Conference that launched the Middle East peace process based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). It also welcomed the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements (A/48/486-S/26560, annex) and subsequent implementation agreements. The Committee has strongly supported the vision of two States, Israel and Palestine, living side by side within secure and recognized borders on the basis of the 1949 armistice lines, in accordance with relevant United Nations resolutions, including Security Council resolutions 1397 (2002) and 1515 (2003). The Committee welcomed and supported the Quartet's road map and called on the parties to implement it. In keeping with its mandate, the Committee continued to work towards creating conditions for successful negotiations on a permanent settlement allowing the Palestinian people to realize its inalienable rights. The Committee also promotes support and assistance by the international community to the Palestinian people.

4. The period since October 2008 was characterized by the stagnation of the political process, lack of progress in efforts to unite the West Bank and the Gaza Strip under the Palestinian Authority and a worsening situation on the ground throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. Of particular concern was the continuing humanitarian emergency in the Gaza Strip, exacerbated by an Israeli military offensive carried out in December 2008 and January 2009, and the continuing imposition of a severe blockade on the Gaza Strip

¹ *Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-first Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/31/35).*

² Since the thirty-first session, the Committee has submitted annual reports to the General Assembly; all such reports have been issued as supplement No. 35 of the sessional documentation of the Assembly.

which obstructed the movement of persons and goods, including humanitarian access and the import of all essential supplies.

5. The political process between the Israeli and Palestinian sides, which was resumed after the Annapolis conference of November 2007, failed to produce any tangible results and stalled once again. The Gaza ceasefire was not accompanied by an easing of the blockade and crossing points remained closed, allowing in only minimal humanitarian assistance for the 1.5 million civilians in Gaza. Israel continued to conduct military operations in the Gaza Strip, resulting in Palestinian casualties. This was met with resumed rocket and mortar fire by armed Palestinian groups into southern Israel, causing Israeli casualties and property damage. By the end of December 2008, Israel escalated the situation launching Operation Cast Lead, a large-scale military offensive with the declared goal of eliminating the threat of rocket fire on Israeli population centres. Military operations lasted for more than three weeks, killing more than 1,400 Palestinians, the majority of them civilians, including hundreds of children and women, and injuring more than 5,000 civilians. Israel reported 14 deaths, including 4 civilians, and 182 wounded. In the West Bank, the expansion of Israeli settlements, including outposts, continued, as did the construction of the wall, including in and around East Jerusalem. The number of checkpoints increased, which restricted Palestinian movement and undermined efforts to revive the economy. The Israeli army continued to carry out raids into Palestinian cities, often accompanied by the arrest and detention of Palestinians. The situation in East Jerusalem seriously deteriorated, with land confiscations, house demolitions and evictions of Palestinian residents, and the transfer of more Israeli settlers. The divide among major Palestinian factions continued to affect the lives of ordinary Palestinians, in particular in Gaza, and prevented Palestinians from uniting in support of the Palestinian Authority.

6. The international community responded to the assault on Gaza by calling for calm and respect for the lives of innocent civilians. Rocket attacks by Palestinian militants that indiscriminately targeted Israeli civilians were also condemned. The General Assembly and the Security Council met in special sessions and adopted resolutions calling for, inter alia, a permanent and durable ceasefire and the immediate provision of the necessary humanitarian assistance to the Palestinian civilian population in Gaza. The Secretary-General intervened and visited Gaza immediately after the halt of hostilities. The Sharm el-Sheikh donor conference on 2 March led to pledges of about \$4.5 billion for Gaza's reconstruction. In March, the Palestinian Authority presented a plan to put those funds to effective use for early recovery and reconstruction. However, the continuation of the Israeli blockade to date has prevented the start of any reconstruction, which has deepened the despair of the Palestinians and provided a fertile ground for rising extremism in Gaza. After the war, a number of investigations were conducted, including one launched by the Secretary-General to assess the damage caused to United Nations facilities in Gaza and casualties among civilians having sought refuge there and a fact-finding mission launched by the Human Rights Council.

7. The Quartet continued its efforts at achieving a comprehensive resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict. It emphasized that Arab-Israeli peace and an end to the occupation that began in 1967 and the establishment of a State of Palestine in the West Bank and Gaza were in the fundamental interest of the international community. It called upon Israel and the Palestinians to act on their previous agreements and obligations, in particular adherence to the road map, irrespective of

reciprocity. It acknowledged progress made by the Palestinian Authority in reforming its security sector and building its institutions and called for continued efforts to improve law and order, to fight violent extremism and to end incitement. Buttressed by the active efforts of the new United States Administration, the Quartet urged Israel to refrain from provocative actions in East Jerusalem and to freeze all settlement activity, which is deemed unlawful in accordance with international law and recognized by the international community as the biggest obstacle to achieving a permanent settlement.

8. Through its activities, the Committee sought to draw attention to the urgent need for coordinated and collective efforts to mitigate the negative developments occurring on the ground. The Committee warned repeatedly that without visible improvement in the situation on the ground, the negotiations would be doomed to fail. It supported the Gaza ceasefire and called upon Israel to lift the blockade. After the Israeli invasion of Gaza, the Committee swiftly condemned the deadly military assaults and destruction perpetrated by Israel and demanded a halt to the warfare. It also condemned rocket firing into Israel. The Committee's first international meeting in early March 2009 provided for an early opportunity to discuss the delivery of humanitarian assistance to the Palestinian people in Gaza and to promote and coordinate reconstruction efforts. Another meeting, held in July, pointed to the obligations of all Governments to uphold international humanitarian law. Other international meetings emphasized the urgency to implement a two-State solution, cautioning that the continuation of the Israeli policy of imposing *faits accomplis* on the ground posed a grave threat to the prospects for a just, peaceful and negotiated solution of the conflict. Throughout the reporting period, the Bureau of the Committee met with high-level representatives of Governments, intergovernmental organizations, parliamentarians, civil society and the media, encouraging them to support the role and activities of the Committee and urging them to take appropriate steps in support of the implementation of the international consensus on the need to achieve a two-State solution.

Chapter II

Mandate of the Committee

9. On 26 November 2008, the General Assembly renewed the mandate of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (see resolution 63/26), requested the Secretary-General to continue to provide the Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat with the necessary resources to carry out its programme of work (see resolution 63/27) and requested the continuation of the special information programme on the question of Palestine of the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat (see resolution 63/28). On the same date, the Assembly adopted resolution 63/29, entitled “Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine”.

Chapter III

Organization of work

A. Membership and officers

10. The Committee is composed of the following Member States: Afghanistan, Belarus, Cuba, Cyprus, Guinea, Guyana, India, Indonesia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mali, Malta, Namibia, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Pakistan, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Tunisia, Turkey and Ukraine.

11. At its 315th meeting, on 11 February 2009, the Committee re-elected Paul Badji (Senegal) as Chairman, Zahir Tanin (Afghanistan) as Vice-Chairman and Saviour F. Borg (Malta) as Rapporteur. The Committee also elected Abelardo Moreno Fernández (Cuba) as the other Vice-Chairman. At its 317th meeting, on 17 September 2009, the Committee elected Pedro Juan Núñez Mosquera (Cuba) as Vice-Chairman, to replace Abelardo Moreno Fernández, who had been assigned by his Government to another post.

12. Also at the 315th meeting, the Committee adopted its programme of work for 2009 (see A/AC.183/2009/1).

B. Participation in the work of the Committee

13. As in previous years, the Committee reconfirmed that all United Nations Member States and observers wishing to participate in the work of the Committee as observers were welcome to do so. In accordance with established practice, Palestine participated in the work of the Committee as an observer, attended all of its meetings and made observations and proposals for consideration by the Committee and its Bureau.

14. In 2009, the Committee again welcomed as observers all States and organizations that had participated in its work in the preceding year.³

³ The observers at the Committee meetings were: Algeria, Bangladesh, Bulgaria, China, Ecuador, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Mauritania, Morocco, the Niger, Qatar, Sri Lanka, the Syrian Arab Republic, the United Arab Emirates, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam and Yemen, as well as the African Union, the League of Arab States, the Organization of the Islamic Conference and Palestine.

Chapter IV

Review of the situation relating to the question of Palestine

15. In pursuance of its mandate, the Committee continued to monitor the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, as well as relevant political developments.

16. The violence in the Gaza Strip and southern Israel started to escalate when Israel killed six Hamas members in military operations in the central Gaza Strip that targeted a tunnel that the Israeli military said Hamas had been planning to use to capture Israeli soldiers. Militants in the Gaza Strip responded the following day by firing 35 Qassam rockets into southern Israel. Both Hamas and Islamic Jihad claimed responsibility for the rocket fire.

17. Following the end on 19 December 2008 of the six-month ceasefire between Israel and Hamas in the Gaza Strip that had been brokered by Egypt, on 27 December 2008 the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) launched, without warning, their military offensive in the Gaza Strip, Operation Cast Lead, with the stated purpose of deterring further rocket attacks by Hamas against Israeli citizens. Despite the international community's repeated calls for an immediate ceasefire and respect for civilian life, the offensive continued until Israeli troops completed withdrawal from the Gaza Strip on 21 January 2009, preceded by unilateral ceasefires declared by both parties on 19 January.

18. International humanitarian organizations and other investigation missions reported that during the offensive, the Israeli forces had made extensive use of white phosphorus in residential areas, causing death and injury to civilians and extensive fire damage to property. Homes, schools, medical facilities and United Nations buildings took direct hits. Tank-fired flechette rounds were also used by Israeli forces on at least five occasions between 4 and 9 January, resulting in the deaths of several civilians.

19. During the offensive, Israeli forces routinely prevented ambulances and other vehicles from reaching the wounded or from collecting bodies anywhere near their positions. Requests by Palestinian ambulance services to be allowed passage to rescue the wounded and evacuate the dead in any area in Gaza that had been taken over by Israeli forces were consistently denied by the Israeli army. As a result, many of the wounded, who were never more than 15 minutes away from a hospital, died.

20. Several Palestinian medical facilities, including hospitals, were repeatedly hit during the bombardments, and medical staff were themselves the victims of some attacks. According to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, in the course of the operation, 16 medical personnel were killed and 26 injured while on duty. Israeli bombardments damaged or destroyed 29 ambulances. Of the 122 health facilities throughout the Gaza Strip, 58 were either damaged or destroyed by direct or indirect shelling. Of those, 15 were hospitals and 43 were primary health-care clinics.

21. As a result of the offensive, 1,409 Palestinians were killed, of which 237 were combatants and 1,172 were non-combatants. Of the 1,172 non-combatants killed, at least 342 were children and 111 were women. Some 5,000 Palestinians were injured, including many women and children, many of whom were maimed for life. According to the Government of Israel, close to 800 rockets and mortar rounds

launched from the Gaza Strip landed on Israeli territory during the operation, killing four Israeli civilians and injuring 182 others. Ten Israeli soldiers were killed during the offensive, four of them in a friendly fire incident, and 336 were injured.

22. Some 40 Palestinians were killed and many others injured at or in the vicinity of schools and a health centre run by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) when they were hit by Israeli missiles, aerial bombs, artillery fire, or mortar rounds. Also, 5 UNRWA staff and 3 of its contractors were killed while on duty, and another 11 staff and 4 contractors were injured. There were four incidents during which aid convoys were shot at by Israeli forces. At least 53 United Nations buildings sustained damage.

23. According to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 3,540 Palestinian homes were destroyed and 2,870 homes severely damaged during the Gaza offensive. Also, 10 schools and 8 kindergartens were completely destroyed, and at least 280 others were damaged. According to the Palestinian Ministry of Education and Higher Education, 164 students and 12 teachers from its schools were killed, and another 454 students and 5 teachers were injured.

24. On 12 January, the United Nations Human Rights Council adopted resolution S-9/1 (A/HRC/S-9/L.1), condemning the Israeli military operation and calling for the immediate cessation of Israeli military attacks. In the same resolution, the Council decided to dispatch an independent international fact-finding mission to Gaza to investigate all violations of international human rights law during the Gaza offensive. On 3 April, the President of the Human Rights Council, Ambassador Martin Ihoeghian Uhomobhi of Nigeria, announced his decision to appoint Richard J. Goldstone, former Chief Prosecutor of the international criminal tribunals for the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda, to lead the four-member fact-finding mission to Gaza. The team visited the Gaza Strip and also held public hearings in Geneva in June. The mission submitted its report on 15 September, in which it concluded that there was evidence indicating that serious violations of international human rights and humanitarian law had been committed by Israel during the Gaza conflict, and that Israel had committed actions amounting to war crimes, and possibly crimes against humanity. The report also concluded that there was evidence that Palestinian armed groups had committed war crimes, and possibly crimes against humanity, in their repeated launching of rockets and mortars into southern Israel.

25. On 11 February, the Secretary-General appointed a United Nations Headquarters Board of Inquiry to review and investigate nine specific incidents that had occurred in the Gaza Strip between 27 December 2008 and 19 January 2009 and in which death or injuries had occurred at, and/or damage had been done to, United Nations premises or in the course of United Nations operations. The four-member Board was headed by Ian Martin of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. On 11 April, the Board presented its report to the Secretary-General, who on 15 May submitted a summary of the Board's findings, including its recommendations, to the Security Council (see A/63/855-S/2009/250).

26. On 30 July, the Government of Israel issued its own report on the factual and legal aspects of the operation, in which it stated, "Israel had both a right and an obligation to take military action against Hamas in Gaza to stop Hamas' almost incessant rocket and mortar attacks upon thousands of Israeli civilians and its other acts of terrorism. ... Israel has both the responsibility and the right under

international law, as does every State, to defend its civilians from intentional rocket attacks.”

27. On 26 February, after a series of Egyptian-mediated reconciliation talks in Cairo, Fatah and Hamas agreed to work towards setting up a unity government, and created five joint committees on transitional Government formation, on issues of reconciliation, security, elections, and the PLO. In subsequent months, the Egyptian mediation continued. Another round of reconciliation talks was scheduled for the end of October.

28. On 2 March, in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt hosted the International Conference in Support of the Palestinian Economy for the Reconstruction of Gaza. Representatives from some 80 countries and multilateral organizations welcomed the Palestinian National Early Recovery and Reconstruction Plan for Gaza, and donors pledged some \$4.5 billion for humanitarian and economic relief.

29. Israel’s Gaza offensive caused the widespread destruction of homes, infrastructure and productive assets and added to an already devastating humanitarian, social and economic situation in the Gaza Strip caused by the blockade imposed by Israel on the entire territory following the Hamas takeover in June 2007. As of August, approximately 75 per cent of Gaza’s population — more than 1.1 million people — were experiencing food insecurity caused by the dramatic increase in poverty, the destruction of agricultural assets and the inflation in prices of key food items. There has been a gradual shift in the diet of people in Gaza from high-cost and protein-rich foods, such as fruit, vegetables and animal products, to low-cost and high-carbohydrate foods, such as cereals, sugar and oil, which could lead to micronutrient deficiencies, in particular among children and pregnant women. In addition, over 40 per cent of Gaza’s workforce, or more than 140,000 people, were unemployed. The desperate situation led to dangerous and, at times, fatal attempts to smuggle necessary goods through tunnels dug under the border with Egypt. Since 18 January, 47 Palestinians have been killed in various tunnel-related incidents.

30. Follow-up treatment for people suffering from complex injuries and permanent disabilities inflicted during the Israeli offensive has created an enormous burden for a health system weakened by the shortages of facilities, equipment and drugs caused by the blockade. In addition, patients in need of specialized treatment outside Gaza must go through an arduous and uncertain process of obtaining the necessary permits required to leave Gaza, which adds considerable anguish and stress to patients’ lives and often results in denial by Israel of requests to travel for treatment and dire consequences for many patients, including several instances of fatalities.

31. The ban on the import of building materials has prevented the much-needed reconstruction of most of the damaged or destroyed houses and other infrastructure. No new construction for 7,500 planned housing units for Gaza’s rapidly expanding population has been possible owing to the lack of building materials available in Gaza. More than 20,000 displaced residents are forced to continue living in rented apartments, in the houses of relatives or in tents next to the rubble of their damaged houses. A small number of families continue to live in tented camps. The lives of those displaced families have been disrupted, with children being among the worst affected.

32. Palestinian women and children suffered the most as a consequence of the Israeli occupation, in particular, during and in the wake of the military assault on Gaza. As of July, none of the 10 schools and 8 kindergartens destroyed during the Gaza offensive had been rebuilt or rehabilitated because of the lack of construction materials. Schoolchildren, thousands of whom lost family members and/or their homes, were still suffering from psychological trauma and anxiety and were in need of social support. The World Health Organization reported that the inadequate infrastructure, lack of equipment and shortage of hospital staff were contributing to the deterioration of hospital care for mothers and newborns in Gaza.

33. In fulfilment of its road map obligations, the Palestinian Authority continued efforts to restructure its security forces to assume responsibility in West Bank cities, which was met with donor appreciation. On the other hand, there has not been a significant reduction in incursions by the Israeli army into Palestinian cities or in the easing of closures in the West Bank.

34. Israeli forces have routinely conducted raids and arrests in towns and villages in the West Bank. During the reporting period, a total of 27 Palestinians, including 8 children, were killed by Israeli forces, and more than 2,900 were arrested in the West Bank. In the Gaza Strip, outside the context of Operation Cast Lead, some 70 Palestinians, including 7 children, were killed by Israeli forces. One Israeli soldier on patrol was killed in a bomb blast near the Gaza border.

35. On 15 December 2008, Israel released 227 Palestinian prisoners as a gesture of goodwill ahead of the Muslim holiday of Eid al-Adha. On 23 June, Speaker of the Palestinian Legislative Council, Dr. Aziz Al-Dweik, was released after three years of detention. Ten Hamas members of the Palestinian Legislative Council were released on 2 September, while 23 others still remain in prison. In early October, Israel released 20 Palestinian women prisoners. There were no developments regarding the fate of some 11,000 other Palestinian prisoners, including children and women.

36. In the period under review, Israel continued illegal settlement activity in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. The occupying Power also carried out many demolitions of Palestinian homes and other infrastructure, destroyed and confiscated Palestinian-owned land and properties in order to expand existing settlements, and continued to carry out unlawful and provocative excavations in the area of Occupied East Jerusalem. In a report issued in March, an Israeli organization, Peace Now, stated that the Israeli Ministry of Construction and Housing was planning to construct 73,302 settlement units in the West Bank, 5,722 of which would be in East Jerusalem. A total of 15,156 units had been approved, 8,950 of which had already been built. If all the Ministry's plans are realized, the current total number of settlers would increase by approximately 300,000. According to a report by the Civil Administration of IDF covering the first half of 2009, there were 304,569 residents living in settlements in the West Bank, an increase of 2.3 per cent since January. This figure does not include the more than 180,000 Israeli settlers in East Jerusalem.

37. In August, Peace Now stated in its semi-annual report that construction within the settlement blocks continued as usual, despite Israel's announcement that it had stopped approving new building. According to the report, there were more than 40,000 settlement units in plans that had been approved in the past but not yet implemented, and the construction of 596 new structures had begun in the first half of 2009, 96 of which were in outposts.

38. Israeli activities to expand settlements in and expel Palestinian residents from East Jerusalem were of serious concern. On 12 December 2008, plans by the Housing Ministry and the Israel Land Administration to issue tenders in 2009 for 2,500 settlement units in Jerusalem, including 745 in the East Jerusalem settlement of Ramot, were reported. On 7 March, 88 houses were slated for demolition in the Al-Bustan neighbourhood of Silwan in East Jerusalem to make room for a park. On 19 March, the Israeli Mayor of Jerusalem, Nir Barkat, said that he would press forward with a plan to raze the entire Palestinian neighbourhood of Al-Bustan in East Jerusalem and to relocate more than 1,000 of its residents to make way for a park. On 23 March, the High Court of Justice authorized the confiscation of 30 dunams of Palestinian land in the Shu'fat neighbourhood of East Jerusalem to expand a military checkpoint.

39. On 27 April, the construction of approximately 60 new units began on a new East Jerusalem settlement in East Talpiot near the as-Sawahira neighbourhood. The expansion of that settlement would create a belt around East Jerusalem, severing it from the rest of the West Bank. On 3 May, the Israeli Minister of Internal Affairs and Shas party leader, Eli Yishai, recommended expanding Ma'ale Adumim by 12,000 dunams. The expansion would include 6,000 new units in the area between the Ma'ale Adumim and Qedar settlements. On 4 May, Minister Yishai announced plans to develop a Jewish residential area, City of David, in Jerusalem. On 2 June, it was reported that the Ministry of Internal Affairs had approved the construction of a new hotel in East Jerusalem 100 metres from the Old City walls. The plan would see the demolition of a wholesale market and a Palestinian kindergarten.

40. On 2 August, following a decision by the Israeli High Court of Justice, Israeli security forces forcibly evicted nine Palestinian families — 53 refugees registered by UNRWA, including 20 children — from their homes in the Sheikh Jarrah neighbourhood in East Jerusalem, and their property was handed over to a settlement organization. The United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Robert Serry, issued a statement deploring those actions and stating that they were contrary to the provisions of the Geneva Conventions and to the calls of the international community, including the Quartet's. On 7 September, Defence Minister Barak approved the construction of 455 new settlement units. Also on 7 September, the Israel Land Administration published tenders for the construction of 486 units in the Pisgat Ze'ev settlement.

41. There was a significant increase in settler-related violence in the West Bank, and a large number of settler attacks against Palestinian villagers were reported, such as shooting, damaging Palestinian property, uprooting of trees and burning farmland, and other forms of intimidation and harassment, including physical assault. The lack of adequate Israeli law enforcement, and even permissiveness, with regard to violent Israeli settlers remained a serious problem. In addition, two Israeli settlers, including a 13-year-old boy, were killed in Palestinian attacks during the reporting period.

42. Israel has continued to ignore the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice regarding the illegal construction of the wall on the Palestinian land it has occupied since 1967. As of July, approximately 58 per cent of the 709-kilometre-long wall was complete. A further 10 per cent was under construction, and 31.5 per cent was planned. When completed, most of the route, approximately 85 per cent, will run inside the West Bank, including in and around East Jerusalem. The total

area located between the wall and the Armistice Line of 1949 (Green Line), amounted to 9.5 per cent of the West Bank, including East Jerusalem and the “no man’s land”.

43. The substantial donor contributions aimed at rehabilitating the Palestinian economy have been considerably less effective than the donors had anticipated, in part because they were spent to attenuate the economic damage resulting from Israeli restrictions on Palestinian trade and movement, rather than on development projects. As of August, there were 619 closure obstacles. In September, Israel announced plans to remove 100 obstacles in the West Bank.

44. The World Bank reported in April that water withdrawals per head of the Palestinian population in the West Bank were declining and that there were real water shortages. Water withdrawals per capita for Palestinians in the West Bank are about one quarter of those available to Israelis and have declined over the last decade. There has been little progress on wastewater collection and treatment, with negative environmental results. Only four towns have wastewater treatment plants, producing poor quality effluent, and there is no planned or regulated reuse of effluent. Settlements are also discharging raw sewage into the environment.

45. As of August, some 10,000 people in northern Gaza did not have access to running water owing to the lack of available building materials to maintain and upgrade the wastewater infrastructure. As a result, 80 million litres of raw and partially treated sewage are being discharged daily into the environment. This has led to a further pollution of the sea and underground aquifer, creating serious health concerns. Only 5-10 per cent of the water extracted from Gaza’s aquifer meets the safety standards of the World Health Organization. Also, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) reported that the underground water supplies, upon which 1.5 million Palestinians depend for agricultural and drinking water, were in danger of collapse as a result of years of overuse and contamination that had been exacerbated by the recent Israeli offensive. UNEP also reported increased salinity from salt water intrusion caused by over-abstraction of the groundwater, as well as pollution from sewage and agricultural run off. Pollution levels are such that infants in the Gaza Strip are at risk from nitrate poisoning.

46. During the Israeli offensive in Gaza, the role of UNRWA in providing assistance to refugees and supporting the delivery of critical services to non-refugees became even more vital. Over 2,300 UNRWA staff remained on active duty throughout the war to ensure the provision of basic health care and emergency relief. In addition, more than 50,000 persons were sheltered in 50 UNRWA schools across Gaza, where they received food, water, blankets, mattresses, hygiene kits and medical care from staff of the Agency and local and international non-governmental organizations. UNRWA also offered logistical and material support to the Ministry of Health and public utility providers in Gaza.

47. Following the cessation of hostilities, UNRWA scaled up its emergency programmes to meet new and emerging needs. Generous donor funding allowed the Agency to respond effectively to emergency needs, although recovery and reconstruction efforts have not been possible owing to the continued blockade of Gaza, which precipitated an unprecedented socio-economic decline.

48. As the international community marks the sixtieth anniversary of UNRWA, the Committee reiterates its sincere appreciation for the vitally important and courageous work carried out daily by UNRWA in time of hostilities.

49. The Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People of the United Nations Development Programme also responded to the destruction wrought by the Israeli military attacks in the Gaza Strip by providing food and cash assistance to victims and leading the early recovery group of United Nations agencies and civil society organizations in formulating projects to alleviate suffering in spite of the blockade of Gaza.

50. In the West Bank, the Programme of Assistance completed the construction of dozens of public buildings, including courthouses, schools and clinics, and worked with the Palestinian Authority to improve its administration. The Programme also focused on improving water management and the environment and on encouraging entrepreneurship in the poorest sectors of Palestinian society.

51. The Committee continued to express appreciation for the work of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. It noted that the consolidated appeal for 2009 focused on delivering humanitarian assistance, increased protection of civilians, enhanced monitoring and reporting on the humanitarian situation and the strengthening of United Nations humanitarian coordination structures.

Chapter V

Action taken by the Committee

A. Action taken in accordance with General Assembly resolution 63/26

52. In pursuance of its mandate, the Committee continued to mobilize the international community in support of the Palestinian people, in cooperation with United Nations bodies, Governments, intergovernmental and civil society organizations and others, as indicated below.

1. Action taken in the General Assembly and the Security Council

Resumed tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly

53. The tenth Emergency Special Session on “Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory” was resumed on 15 and 16 January 2009 to discuss Israel’s military aggression in the Gaza Strip, during which the Chairman of the Committee, Paul Badji, delivered a statement on behalf of the Committee. Following a two-day debate, the Special Session adopted resolution ES-10/18, which called on all parties to exert all efforts to ensure, in cooperation with the Security Council, full and urgent compliance with resolution 1860 (2009) (A/ES-10/PV.32, 33, 34, 35 and 36).

Meetings of the Security Council

54. During the period under review, the Security Council continued to monitor the situation on the ground and the efforts to implement the road map. It held monthly briefings throughout the year under the agenda item entitled “The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question”.

55. The monthly briefing at the Council’s 6049th meeting, on 18 December 2008, was followed by an open debate, during which the Chairman of the Committee made a statement (S/PV.6049).

56. The Council held its 6061st meeting, on 6 January 2009, to discuss the crisis in the Gaza Strip. Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas delivered a statement, and 14 Ministers for Foreign Affairs participated in the outset of the debate. The Chairman of the Committee made a statement during the meeting resumed on 7 January (S/PV.6061 and Resumption 1). The following day, on 8 January, the Security Council held its 6063rd meeting, at which it adopted resolution 1860 (2009), calling for an immediate, durable and fully respected ceasefire and also recalling the importance of the Arab Peace Initiative.

57. At the 6100th meeting of the Council, on 25 March, the monthly briefing was followed by an open debate, during which the Chairman of the Committee delivered a statement (S/PV.6100).

2. Action taken by the Bureau of the Committee

58. On 14 November 2008, the Bureau of the Committee issued a statement on the humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip (GA/PAL/1100).

59. On 31 December 2008, the Bureau of the Committee issued a statement on Israel's deadly military assaults and destruction in the Gaza Strip (GA/PAL/1109).

60. On 8 January 2009, the Bureau of the Committee issued a statement on the escalating violence in the Gaza Strip (GA/PAL/1110).

61. On 19 May, at its 316th meeting, the Committee adopted a statement expressing its utmost concern about illegal and provocative Israeli policies and measures in Occupied East Jerusalem (A/63/861-S/2009/265).

62. On 11 September, the Bureau of the Committee held a meeting with the Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs and discussed the Committee's programme of activities and the latest political developments.

63. On 5 October, the Bureau of the Committee issued a statement on the situation in Occupied East Jerusalem (GA/PAL/1137).

B. Action taken by the Committee and the Division for Palestinian Rights in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 63/26 and 63/27

1. Programme of international meetings and conferences

64. Through its programme of international meetings and conferences, the Committee continued to raise international awareness of the various aspects of the question of Palestine and international support for the rights of the Palestinian people and the peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine.

65. In the period under review, the following international events were held under the auspices of the Committee:

(a) United Nations Latin American and Caribbean Meeting in Support of Israeli-Palestinian Peace, Headquarters of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, Santiago, 11 and 12 December 2008;

(b) United Nations Public Forum in Support of Israeli-Palestinian Peace, Headquarters of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, Santiago, 13 December 2008;

(c) United Nations Seminar on Assistance to the Palestinian People, Cairo, 10 and 11 March 2009;

(d) United Nations International Meeting in Support of Israeli-Palestinian Peace, Nicosia, 6 and 7 May 2009;

(e) Consultations of the Committee delegation with parliamentarians and other experts participating in the United Nations International Meeting in Support of Israeli-Palestinian Peace, Nicosia, 8 May 2009;

(f) United Nations Asian and Pacific Meeting on the Question of Palestine, Jakarta, 8 and 9 June 2009;

(g) United Nations Public Forum in Support of the Palestinian People, Jakarta, 10 June 2009;

(h) United Nations International Meeting on the Question of Palestine, United Nations Office at Geneva, 22 and 23 July 2009;

(i) Consultations of the Committee delegation with civil society organizations, United Nations Office at Geneva, 24 July.

66. The above-mentioned events were attended by representatives of Governments, Palestine, intergovernmental organizations and United Nations system entities, as well as representatives of civil society and the media. The reports of the meetings were issued as publications of the Division for Palestinian Rights and were made available through the "Question of Palestine" website maintained by the Division.

67. In Santiago, on the sidelines of the United Nations Latin American and Caribbean Meeting in Support of Israeli-Palestinian Peace, the Committee delegation was received by the President of Chile, Michelle Bachelet Jeria. It also held consultations with the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Alejandro Foxley Rioseco.

68. In Cairo, during the seminar on assistance to the Palestinian people, the Committee delegation met at the Egyptian's People's Assembly with Dr. Abdel Ahad Gamal El-Din, majority leader of the Egyptian People's Assembly. In separate engagements, it met with members of the Foreign Affairs Committee and the Minister for Legal and Parliamentary Affairs of Egypt, Moufid Mahmoud Shehab. The Committee delegation also had consultations with Suzanne Mubarak, President of the Egyptian Red Crescent Society and First Lady of Egypt. It also visited the Palestine Hospital administered by the Palestine Red Crescent Society and visited Palestinian victims of the Israeli offensive in the Gaza Strip.

69. During its stay in Nicosia in connection with the United Nations International Meeting in Support of Israeli-Palestinian Peace, the Committee delegation was received by the President of Cyprus, Dimitris Christofias. It also met separately with Marios Garoyian, Speaker of the House of Representatives and Averof Neophytou, Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Cypriot Parliament.

70. In Jakarta, during its stay in connection with the United Nations Asian and Pacific Meeting on the Question of Palestine, the Committee delegation was received by the Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs of Indonesia, Triyono Wibowo. It also met with Agung Laksono, Speaker of the House of Representatives of Indonesia.

71. The Committee delegation to the United Nations International Meeting on the Question of Palestine held at the United Nations Office at Geneva used its stay in Geneva to conduct meetings and consultations with Paul Seger, Head of the Directorate for International Public Law, Department of Foreign Affairs of Switzerland; Anders B. Johnsson, Secretary-General of the Inter-Parliamentary Union; Rudy Salles, President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean; Brigitte Troyon-Borgea, Deputy Director for International Law and Cooperation, International Committee of the Red Cross; Bekele Geleta, Secretary-General of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies; and Navanethem Pillay, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

2. Cooperation with intergovernmental organizations

72. Throughout the year, the Committee continued its cooperation with the African Union, the Non-Aligned Movement and the Organization of the Islamic Conference. The Committee very much appreciated the active participation of their representatives in the various meetings held under its aegis. During its stay in Cairo, the Committee delegation met with Amre Moussa, Secretary-General of the League of Arab States.

73. The Committee also continued its cooperation on the question of Palestine with the Presidency of the European Union (EU) and the European Commission. It appreciated the contribution of an EU expert speaker to the deliberations of the United Nations Seminar on Assistance to the Palestinian People held in Cairo. The Bureau of the Committee met on 10 September with the Permanent Representative of Sweden to the United Nations in his capacity as representative of the Presidency of the European Union.

3. Cooperation with civil society

Civil society organizations

74. The Committee continued its cooperation with civil society organizations worldwide. Representatives of civil society participated in all meetings organized under the auspices of the Committee, including the observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People on 24 November 2008. The meetings provided civil society representatives with an opportunity to discuss the situation on the ground and their programmes in support of the Palestinian people and to improve coordination of their activities. The Committee was appreciative of the work done by civil society organizations, encouraging them to continue contributing to efforts aimed at realizing a two-State solution.

75. The Committee maintained and developed its liaison with national, regional and international coordinating mechanisms cooperating with it, in addition to its established liaison with a large number of individual organizations. At the meeting of consultations with civil society organizations held at the United Nations Office at Geneva in July 2009, the deliberations focused on the efforts by civil society to persuade their respective Governments, in their relations with Israel and the Palestinians, to adhere to their obligations under international law, ensure respect for the Geneva Conventions and support the work of this Committee. Over the past year, the Chairman of the Committee met with representatives of civil society organizations in New York and at the meetings organized under the auspices of the Committee away from Headquarters.

76. The Division for Palestinian Rights maintained a page on the civil society network on the Question of Palestine (<http://www.un.org/depts/dpa/ngo>) on the "Question of Palestine" website as a tool for the exchange of information and for cooperation between civil society and the Committee.

Parliaments and inter-parliamentary organizations

77. The Committee continued to attach great importance to developing its liaison with national and regional parliaments and their organizations. Its meeting in Nicosia on the theme "Action by European, Arab and other parliamentarians and their umbrella organizations for Israeli-Palestinian peace" gave new impetus to the

cooperation efforts and motivated participating parliamentarians and other experts from Europe, North America and the Arab region to work together with the United Nations and the Committee for the achievement of the two-State solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In connection with the international meetings, the delegation of the Committee held meetings in Cairo, Nicosia, Jakarta, Geneva and New York with officials of the respective national parliaments, as well as the Inter-Parliamentary Union in Geneva, the European Parliament and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean.

78. On 29 September in New York, the Bureau of the Committee held a meeting with the delegation of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean, led by its President, Rudy Salles.

4. Research, monitoring and publications

79. The Division carried out research and monitoring activities and responded to requests for information and briefings on the question of Palestine. Under the guidance of the Committee, which reiterated the relevance of the research, monitoring and publications programme, it also prepared the publications listed below for dissemination, including through the Internet:

- (a) Monthly bulletin on action taken by United Nations and intergovernmental organizations relevant to the question of Palestine;
- (b) Monthly chronology of events relating to the question of Palestine, based on media reports and other sources;
- (c) Reports of international meetings and conferences organized under the auspices of the Committee;
- (d) Special bulletins and information notes on the observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People;
- (e) Periodic reviews of developments related to the Middle East peace process;
- (f) Annual compilation of resolutions and decisions of the General Assembly and the Security Council relating to the question of Palestine.

5. United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine

80. Pursuant to successive annual General Assembly mandates, the Division for Palestinian Rights, in cooperation with relevant technical and library services of the United Nations Secretariat, continued to administer, maintain, expand and develop the United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine (UNISPAL) and the "Question of Palestine" website, which is located on the United Nations home page under "Peace and Security". This included the ongoing maintenance and upgrading of the technical components of the system to ensure the uninterrupted presence of UNISPAL on the Internet and involved the expansion of the document collection to include relevant new and old documents. In addition, steps continued to be taken to enhance the user-friendliness and usefulness of the system (<http://unispal.un.org>), including by incorporating additional multimedia content and RSS feeds intended to alert users about newly posted materials. The Division continued to work on redesigning the "Question of Palestine" website and

conducted an online survey of website users, the results of which were used to identify ways in which the system could be further improved.

6. Training programme for staff of the Palestinian Authority

81. Two staff members from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Palestinian Authority participated in a training programme conducted by the Division from September to December 2008, in conjunction with the sixty-third session of the General Assembly. The trainees familiarized themselves with various aspects of the work of the Secretariat and other organs and conducted research on specific topics.

7. International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People

82. The International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People was observed at Headquarters and at the United Nations Office at Geneva on 24 November 2008, and at the United Nations Office at Vienna on 26 November. On the occasion of the observance at Headquarters, in addition to a special meeting of the Committee and other activities, a cultural exhibit entitled “The Palestinians: 60 years of struggle and enduring hope” was organized by the Permanent Observer Mission of Palestine to the United Nations under the auspices of the Committee. The Committee noted with appreciation that the International Day of Solidarity had also been observed by United Nations information centres and other bodies in many cities throughout the world. Details on the observance are contained in the special bulletin issued by the Division.

83. In adopting its programme of work, the Committee decided that a similar observance of the International Day of Solidarity should be organized in 2009.

Chapter VI

Action taken by the Department of Public Information in accordance with General Assembly resolution 63/28

84. The Department of Public Information, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 63/28, continued to implement its special information programme on the question of Palestine in order to raise the awareness of the international community on this question, as well as on the situation in the Middle East, in such a way as to contribute effectively to an atmosphere conducive to dialogue and supportive of the peace process.

85. UN Radio regularly covered the question of Palestine in the six official languages. Interviews, press briefings, and General Assembly and Security Council sessions were covered in programmes and posted on the UN Radio website. The international conference in Geneva organized by the Committee featured prominently in the programming of the Arabic Language Unit.

86. The United Nations News Centre, a news portal of the United Nations website, regularly highlighted issues related to the question of Palestine in the six official languages.

87. The Department organized a training programme for 10 young Palestinian journalists at Headquarters, in Washington, D.C., and in Geneva from 27 October to 5 December 2008. The programme, aimed at strengthening the participants' capacity as print media professionals, included Web training to improve their skills in maintaining websites in Arabic and finding Arabic language information on the United Nations website.

88. The Department organized two International Media Seminars on Peace in the Middle East. The seminar in 2008 was organized in cooperation with the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs of Austria, in Vienna, on 2 and 3 December 2008. The seminar in 2009 was organized in cooperation with the Ministry of External Relations of Brazil, in Rio de Janeiro, on 27 and 28 July 2009. The seminars included the participation of several journalists and experts from the respective regions, including Palestinians and Israelis. Press releases were issued on the proceedings of both seminars.

89. The Public Inquiries Unit distributed more than 1,000 copies of the publication *The Question of Palestine and the United Nations* to visitors in the six official languages.

90. A smaller-scale version of the exhibit, "The Question of Palestine and the United Nations" was produced in Arabic, English and Spanish. The Spanish and English versions were displayed, respectively, at the meetings held under the Committee's aegis in Santiago and Jakarta.

91. The Dag Hammarskjöld Library continued to digitize documents for the UNISPAL document collection.

92. The Department arranged a number of briefings on the Middle East issue by UNRWA and the Department of Political Affairs.

93. The network of United Nations information centres, services and offices continued to disseminate information on the question of Palestine and to organize

special outreach activities. The Information Centres actively promoted the observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People (29 November) and widely disseminated the messages of the Secretary-General in official and non-official languages, including Farsi, German, Greek, Italian, Japanese, the Nordic languages, Portuguese and Turkish.

Chapter VII

Conclusions and recommendations of the Committee

94. Throughout the reporting period, the Committee has repeatedly expressed its utmost concern about the ever-deteriorating situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the breakdown of the political process. It condemned the military offensive of the Israeli military in the Gaza Strip in December 2008 and January 2009. It also denounced the firing of rockets and mortar rounds by Palestinian militants from Gaza. It has been dismayed by the continued Israeli blockade of the Gaza Strip, which prevents any reconstruction and sustained humanitarian assistance and which has caused the near collapse of the economy and social fabric of Gaza. The Committee remained firmly opposed to the continued illegal construction of settlements in the West Bank, including in East Jerusalem. It has been particularly alarmed by the situation in Occupied East Jerusalem, the demolition of houses, the eviction of Palestinian citizens, settler extremism and the threats to Jerusalem's holy sites and historical heritage.

95. The Committee has been deeply alarmed about the Israeli military invasion of Gaza, which was accompanied by the callous disregard for civilian lives. After causing thousands of casualties among the civilian population and the massive destruction of Palestinian homes, property and infrastructure, Israel continued its suffocating blockade of the Gaza Strip. The Committee calls for the immediate lifting of the blockade. It reminds Israel that, under the Fourth Geneva Convention, the occupying Power is obliged to protect the civilian population under its occupation and to act within the ambit of international law. The Committee appeals to all the High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention to fulfil their obligations in accordance with common Article 1, which obligates them to respect and to ensure respect for the Convention in all circumstances. The Committee is of the view that 60 years after their entry into force, respect for the Geneva Conventions is often deficient, resulting in devastating consequences for the civilian victims of hostilities. The international community might consider strengthening respect for international humanitarian law by creating appropriate mechanisms to monitor adherence. The Committee recommends that the High Contracting Parties take, individually or collectively, the measures they deem appropriate to ensure respect for the Convention, including through the convening of a conference of the High Contracting Parties to address the subject of respect and ensuring respect for the Convention in all circumstances. The Committee will remain seized of the issue and is ready to work with Governments, intergovernmental organizations, parliamentarians, civil society and the media with a view to promoting a better understanding of the importance of the issue as it relates to the question of Palestine.

96. The Committee took note that various investigations into the warfare in Gaza had concluded that serious violations of international humanitarian law, and possibly war crimes, had been committed. The Committee commended the missions and convened a special international meeting to study their findings. At the same time, the Committee was disquieted by an almost complete denial by Israel of breaking the rules governing the conduct of war and deplored the lack of Israeli cooperation with some of the commissions. The investigations

asserted the use of illegal weapons and excessive force disproportionate to any threat that may have been faced by the army in densely populated areas. The Committee is of the view that the perpetrators of serious crimes on either side have to be brought to justice and held accountable for their actions. The recommendations contained in various reports must be implemented. The Committee urges intergovernmental organizations to respect their own guidelines on promoting compliance with international humanitarian and human rights law. It also recommends that in their national legislation, parliamentarians incorporate laws allowing for the prosecution of serious violations of international humanitarian law and that inter-parliamentary organizations promote the acceptance of universal standards in that regard.

97. The Committee is seriously concerned over Israel's ongoing settlement activity. It reiterates that the presence of settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, is illegal under international law. It calls upon Israel to immediately cease settlement activity, including construction related to so-called "natural growth", and to dismantle settlement outposts. The Committee welcomes the fact that the international community has remained focused on the damaging effects of Israel's settlement policies for the achievement of a two-State solution and calls for serious action to be taken in that regard.

98. The Committee is also greatly disturbed by the accelerated creation of *faits accomplis* in East Jerusalem, including recent policy statements and illegal unilateral measures by the Government of Israel. It reiterates that East Jerusalem is part of the Occupied Palestinian Territory and that a negotiated solution of the question of Jerusalem, based on international law, is absolutely essential to resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and crucial for a durable peace in the whole region. The Committee found that these concerns were widely shared by Governments, intergovernmental and civil society organizations, as well as by parliamentarians.

99. The Committee denounces the continued construction of the wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. Five years after the International Court of Justice issued its landmark 9 July 2004 Advisory Opinion confirming the illegality of the construction of the wall on Palestinian land, the ruling has remained unheeded. The Committee emphasizes that, based on the Advisory Opinion, the wall cannot be viewed by Israel, or any other Government, as a permanent political boundary predetermining the outcome of the permanent status negotiations. The Committee recommends that the international community take more determined action challenging the presence of the wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. The international community should also demand the removal of hundreds of checkpoints and other obstacles stifling the economic life in the West Bank and East Jerusalem.

100. The Committee notes that as a result of these detrimental developments and the continuing Israeli occupation, no progress has been achieved in the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. Self-determination, independence and sovereignty have remained elusive for the Palestinian people, as has the right of return, on the basis of General Assembly resolution 194 (III), for the more than 4.6 million Palestine refugees. The Committee fully supports the international consensus that the only viable

solution to the conflict and the exercise by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights is the creation of a Palestinian State in the territory occupied by Israel in 1967, living side by side with Israel in peace and security.

101. To that end, the Committee calls for the resumption of the permanent status negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians. This would require a genuine commitment of the Israeli Government to a two-State solution, buttressed by tangible improvements of the situation on the ground, first and foremost, by stopping all settlement activities. The continued support by the international community is crucial for moving forward the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations on all core issues. The Committee, therefore, will support all peace initiatives that have the realization of a two-State solution as their main objective.

102. Concerned that the divisions among the Palestinian factions profoundly affect the legitimate Palestinian national interests and aspirations for statehood and peace, the Committee calls for invigorated efforts by all to help reconcile their positions on the basis of the prevailing consensus on the need to achieve a two-State solution, which would lead to the exercise by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights.

103. The Committee and the Division for Palestinian Rights will continue, through their mandated activities, to contribute to a comprehensive, just and lasting solution of the question of Palestine, in accordance with international law and relevant United Nations resolutions. They will further generate international support for the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and a peaceful settlement of the conflict. In this connection, the Committee emphasizes the useful and constructive contribution of the Division in support of its mandate aimed at enabling the Palestinian people to exercise their inalienable rights. It notes with satisfaction: (a) the level of dialogue, engagement and support of the international community for its programme objectives, for instance, in terms of both participation at the meetings convened and the use of printed and electronic information materials provided by the Division; (b) the continued involvement of civil society organizations in support of the efforts of the Committee and the United Nations towards a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine; and (c) the increased international awareness of the United Nations policies and activities on the question of Palestine as indicated by the growing number of documents and relevant information materials on the issue accessed by users worldwide at the websites maintained by the Division. The Committee also considers that over the years the annual training programme for staff of the Palestinian Authority carried out by the Division has proved its usefulness, as it directly contributes to Palestinian capacity-building efforts. The Committee strongly recommends that this important mandated activity be continued and, where possible, enhanced.

104. The Committee considers that its programme of international meetings and conferences implemented by the Division contributes to focusing the attention of Governments, intergovernmental and civil society organizations and the public on the urgency of bringing about a two-State solution and mobilizing assistance to the Palestinian people. Through its international meetings programme for 2010, the Committee intends to continue to generate

wide support for a peaceful solution of the conflict, based on international law and relevant United Nations resolutions. In cooperation with partners in inter-parliamentary organizations, and given the importance of the issue of Jerusalem to the overall efforts at resolving the question of Palestine, the Committee will convene an international meeting on the question of Jerusalem. It will continue to engage Governments, parliamentarians and civil society to mobilize support for a just solution of the conflict. It will reach out, with the assistance of the United Nations entities on the ground, to the people most affected by the status quo, refugees and Palestinians living under occupation, as well as to members of the Israeli public, to involve them in the search for solutions, to promote dialogue and common projects and to win their backing for a settlement negotiated by their leaders and supported by the international community. The Committee wishes to contribute to efforts towards ending incitement on both sides, provide a venue for the narratives to be heard and reconciled and, with the help of civil society, to promote peace education on the ground. It will pay particular attention to the empowerment of women and their organizations in this process.

105. The Committee commends civil society organizations for their support of the Palestinian people. It lauds the courageous advocacy actions of numerous activists, including parliamentarians, who participate in demonstrations against the wall, provide assistance to Gaza and keep their home constituencies informed about the harsh realities of life under occupation. The Committee and civil society have different roles which, through cooperation, are complementing each other. The Committee encourages civil society partners to work with their national Governments and other institutions with a view to gaining their full support for the work of the United Nations, including that of the Committee, on the question of Palestine. It will continue to assess its programme of cooperation with civil society and consult them on ways to enhance their contribution. The Committee appreciates the support it receives from the Secretariat in strengthening cooperation with civil society.

106. The Committee looks forward to further developing its cooperation with parliamentarians and their umbrella organizations. Parliamentarians have a special responsibility to ensure that their Governments actively promote and support the realization of a two-State solution and ensure respect for international law, in accordance with their international obligations.

107. The Committee requests the Division to continue its substantive and secretariat support; the programme of research, monitoring and publications and other informational activities, such as the further expansion and development of UNISPAL, including the graphic enhancement of the "Question of Palestine" website; the annual training programme for staff of the Palestinian Authority; and the annual observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

108. The Committee is of the view that the special information programme on the question of Palestine of the Department of Public Information has made an important contribution to informing the media and public opinion of the relevant issues. The Committee requests the continuation of the programme, with the necessary flexibility, as warranted by developments relevant to the question of Palestine.

109. Wishing to make its contribution to the achievement of a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine, and in view of the many difficulties facing the Palestinian people and besetting the peace process, the Committee calls upon all States to join it in this endeavour and to extend their cooperation and support to the Committee, and invites the General Assembly again to recognize the importance of its role and to reconfirm its mandate.

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United Nations

Report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

General Assembly
Official Records
Sixty-fifth Session
Supplement No. 35

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United Nations • New York, 2010

Note

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Contents

<i>Chapter</i>	<i>Page</i>
Letter of transmittal	iv
I. Introduction	1
II. Mandate of the Committee	4
III. Organization of work	5
A. Membership and officers	5
B. Participation in the work of the Committee	5
IV. Review of the situation relating to the question of Palestine	6
V. Action taken by the Committee	14
A. Action taken in accordance with General Assembly resolution 64/16	14
1. Action taken in the General Assembly and the Security Council	14
2. Action taken by the Bureau of the Committee	14
B. Action taken by the Committee and the Division for Palestinian Rights in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 64/16 and 64/17	15
1. Committee meetings at Headquarters	15
2. Programme of international meetings and conferences	15
3. Cooperation with intergovernmental organizations	16
4. Cooperation with civil society	16
5. Research, monitoring and publications	17
6. United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine	17
7. Training programme for staff of the Palestinian Authority	18
8. International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People	18
VI. Action taken by the Department of Public Information in accordance with General Assembly resolution 64/18	19
VII. Conclusions and recommendations of the Committee	20

Letter of transmittal

[6 October 2010]

Mr. Secretary-General

I have the honour to enclose herewith the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for submission to the General Assembly in accordance with paragraph 2 of its resolution 64/16 of 2 December 2009.

The report covers the period from 7 October 2009 to 6 October 2010.

Accept, Sir, the assurances of my highest consideration.

(Signed) Paul **Badji**
Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the
Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon
Secretary-General of the United Nations
New York

Chapter I

Introduction

1. The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People was established by the General Assembly by its resolution 3376 (XXX) of 10 November 1975, with the task of recommending a programme designed to enable the Palestinian people to exercise its inalienable rights, as recognized by the Assembly in its resolution 3236 (XXIX) of 22 November 1974.

2. The recommendations made by the Committee in its first report to the General Assembly¹ were endorsed by the Assembly as a basis for the solution of the question of Palestine. In its subsequent reports,² the Committee has continued to stress that a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, must be based on the relevant United Nations resolutions and the following essential principles: the withdrawal of Israel, the occupying Power, from the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem, and from the other occupied Arab territories; respect for the right of all States in the region to live in peace within secure and internationally recognized boundaries; and the recognition and exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. The recommendations of the Committee contained in its first report could not be implemented, and the Assembly each year renewed the Committee's mandate and requested it to intensify efforts in pursuit of its objectives.

3. The Committee has consistently supported a peaceful solution of the question of Palestine. It welcomed the 1991 Madrid Peace Conference that launched the Middle East peace process based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). It also welcomed the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements (A/48/486-S/26560, annex) and subsequent implementation agreements. The Committee has strongly supported the objective of two States, Israel and Palestine, living side by side within secure and recognized borders on the basis of the 1949 armistice lines, in accordance with relevant United Nations resolutions, including Security Council resolutions 1397 (2002) and 1515 (2003). The Committee welcomed and supported the Quartet's road map and called on the parties to implement it. In keeping with its mandate, the Committee has continued to work towards creating conditions for the successful conduct and conclusion of the negotiations on a permanent settlement allowing the Palestinian people to realize its inalienable rights. The Committee has also promoted support and assistance by the international community to the Palestinian people.

4. The reporting period has been characterized by efforts to resume negotiations between the parties on all permanent status issues, a volatile situation on the ground throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the continued division between the political leadership in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Of special concern was the humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip, exacerbated by the continued imposition by Israel of a severe blockade on the territory, which has obstructed the movement of persons and goods, including

¹ *Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-first Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/31/35).*

² Since the thirty-first session, the Committee has submitted annual reports to the General Assembly; all such reports have been issued as supplement No. 35 of the sessional documentation of the Assembly.

humanitarian access and the import of materials required for the reconstruction and rehabilitation of Gaza and other essential supplies.

5. Systematic engagement by the Quartet and its individual members, in particular the United States of America, with the Israeli and Palestinian leaderships and other stakeholders in the region, led to the resumption of direct talks between Israel and the Palestinians on 2 September 2010. That had been preceded by several rounds of proximity talks assisted by the United States. The League of Arab States also engaged actively with the parties and the Quartet within the framework of the Arab Peace Initiative.

6. The situation in the Gaza Strip remained bleak, with 1.5 million inhabitants still suffering from the aftermath of the Israeli military assault of December 2008-January 2009, an acute shortage of basic goods and services, including clean water, and economic activity stifled by the blockade. Efforts by the international community, in particular the United Nations, to ease the blockade had only a limited effect. Civil society organizations mobilized ship convoys to break the siege, which were either prevented through the diplomatic efforts of Israel, or intercepted by its navy. On 31 May 2010, Israeli forces attacked, in international waters, a multinational humanitarian aid convoy sailing to Gaza. That military assault, in violation of international law, left nine Turkish civilians dead and many more wounded. It triggered an immediate condemnation by the international community, including the Security Council, and led to national and international investigations. The Human Rights Council dispatched an international independent fact-finding mission, and the Secretary-General established a Panel of Inquiry. At the same time, the international debate was continuing with regard to ensuring accountability and justice for violations of international humanitarian and human rights law committed during the Israeli military operations in the Gaza Strip, in particular the follow-up of the very specific conclusions and recommendations contained in the report of the United Nations Fact-Finding Mission on the Gaza conflict, established by the Human Rights Council and led by Justice Richard Goldstone (A/HRC/12/48).

7. Throughout the year, Israel conducted limited military operations in the Gaza Strip, resulting in Palestinian casualties. This was met with resumed rocket and mortar fire by armed Palestinian groups into southern Israel. In addition, Israeli military incursions into West Bank population centres continued, often accompanied by the arrests of Palestinians. The expansion of Israeli settlements continued in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, as did the construction of the wall. The number of checkpoints was only marginally reduced. The situation in Occupied East Jerusalem deteriorated further, with ongoing land confiscations, house demolitions and evictions of Palestinian residents, and the transfer of more Israeli settlers into the City.

8. The divide among major Palestinian factions continued to affect the lives of ordinary Palestinians, especially in Gaza, and prevented Palestinians from uniting in support of the Palestinian Authority. Yet, in spite of the challenges presented by the occupation, the Palestinian Authority was able in the past year to make appreciable progress in economic development and State-building through the phased implementation of a plan entitled "Palestine: Ending the Occupation, establishing the State" (Fayyad Plan), which has received widespread international support.

9. The activities of the Committee and its Bureau in the reporting period focused on the need to end the Israeli occupation and to establish a sovereign and

independent Palestinian State. The Committee monitored the situation on the ground and the political developments, implemented its programme of international meetings and conferences, held a number of consultations with representatives of Governments, national parliaments and inter-parliamentary organizations, as well as civil society, and reached out to its partners worldwide using new communications media. The Committee reiterated its position of principle that a permanent settlement of the question of Palestine could only be achieved through ending the occupation, establishing a Palestinian State on the basis of the pre-1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital, and a just and agreed solution to the Palestine refugees issue on the basis of General Assembly resolution 194 (III). The first international meeting of the Committee in February 2010 engaged parliamentarians of the Mediterranean region and beyond in support of the two-State solution. It was followed by a seminar promoting international support of the Fayyad Plan. At another meeting held in May, participants emphasized the urgency to implement the two-State solution, cautioning that the continuation of the Israeli policy of illegally and unilaterally imposing faits accomplis on the ground posed a grave threat to the prospects of a negotiated solution of the conflict. The fourth event focused on the situation in East Jerusalem and its significance for a just peace in the Middle East. The Committee encouraged all stakeholders to support the role and activities of the United Nations and urged them to support the two-State solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict on the basis of the relevant Security Council resolutions, the terms of reference of the Madrid Conference, including the principle of land for peace, the Arab Peace Initiative and the Quartet road map.

Chapter II

Mandate of the Committee

10. On 2 December 2009, the General Assembly renewed the mandate of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (see resolution 64/16), requested the Secretary-General to continue to provide the Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat with the necessary resources to carry out its programme of work (see resolution 64/17) and requested the continuation of the special information programme on the question of Palestine of the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat (see resolution 64/18). On the same date, the Assembly adopted resolution 64/19, entitled “Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine”.

Chapter III

Organization of work

A. Membership and officers

11. The Committee is composed of the following Member States: Afghanistan, Belarus, Cuba, Cyprus, Guinea, Guyana, India, Indonesia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mali, Malta, Namibia, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Pakistan, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of).

12. The observers at the Committee meetings are: Algeria, Bangladesh, Bulgaria, China, Ecuador, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Mauritania, Morocco, Niger, Qatar, Sri Lanka, the Syrian Arab Republic, the United Arab Emirates, Viet Nam and Yemen, as well as the African Union, the League of Arab States, the Organization of the Islamic Conference and Palestine.

13. At its 321st meeting, on 21 January 2010, the Committee re-elected Paul Badji (Senegal) as Chair, Zahir Tanin (Afghanistan) and Pedro Núñez Mosquera (Cuba) as Vice-Chair and Saviour F. Borg (Malta) as Rapporteur.

14. Also at the 321st meeting, the Committee adopted its programme of work for 2010 (see A/AC.183/2010/1).

B. Participation in the work of the Committee

15. As in previous years, the Committee reconfirmed that all United Nations Member States and observers wishing to participate in the work of the Committee as observers were welcome to do so. In accordance with established practice, Palestine participated in the work of the Committee as an observer, attended all of its meetings and made observations and proposals for consideration by the Committee and its Bureau.

Chapter IV

Review of the situation relating to the question of Palestine

16. After a long break in the Israeli-Palestinian peace negotiations, the United States, in early May 2010, facilitated indirect talks between the parties. After seven rounds of proximity talks, the parties agreed to enter into direct negotiations on permanent status issues. On 2 September, in Washington, D.C., delegations led by the Prime Minister of Israel, Benjamin Netanyahu, and the President of the Palestinian Authority, Mahmoud Abbas, held the first bilateral talks in some 20 months, followed by a second round of talks, held in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, and Jerusalem on 14 and 15 September. An Israeli moratorium on settlement construction ended on 26 September, which was met by broad criticism and endangered the continuation of the talks. The United States, supported by Egypt, Jordan and the European Union, intensified efforts aimed at convincing the Government of Israel to renew the moratorium.

17. The situation on the ground remained a cause of serious concern. Israeli forces continued to conduct routine military raids and arrests throughout the West Bank. During the reporting period (as at 28 September), 14 Palestinians were killed and more than 1,000 injured by Israeli forces in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, including during clashes between demonstrators and Israeli forces. Two members of the Israeli forces and five Israeli settlers were killed by Palestinians, and some 140 soldiers and policemen were injured during the reporting period. Over 2,300 Palestinians were arrested during some 4,000 search operations conducted by Israeli forces. In the Gaza Strip, Israeli forces killed 57 Palestinians, including 23 civilians, and injured more than 210 Palestinians, including at least 177 civilians, in incidents involving air strikes and the enforcement of access restrictions near the border fence. Three Israeli soldiers were killed and eight soldiers were injured during clashes with Palestinian militants in the Gaza Strip and southern Israel. One foreign worker was killed in southern Israel by a rocket launched by Palestinians in Gaza. The Israeli military reported that, as of September, 150 projectiles had been fired at Israel since the beginning of 2010.

18. In a worrisome development, the Israeli military issued a new order on 13 April, defining any person present in the West Bank without a permit issued by the Israeli military commander as an “infiltrator” who had committed a criminal offence and could be deported within 72 hours without judicial review. This new order puts at risk thousands of Palestinians living in the West Bank whose home addresses, as recorded in the population registry, are in Gaza, as well as people born in the West Bank or abroad who, for various reasons, do not have residency cards. However, owing to the ambiguity of the language of the order, it could potentially be applied to a much broader category of residents. In implementation of the new policy, several Palestinians have been deported to Gaza after being released from Israeli jails.

19. On numerous occasions, Israeli forces penetrated a few hundred metres within the Gaza Strip and withdrew shortly after conducting land-levelling operations. Such incidents occurred in the context of Israeli restrictions on Palestinian access to areas along the border fence. Similar restrictions were applied on access to fishing areas near shore. In many incidents, Israeli naval forces opened fire on Palestinian fishing boats, forcing them ashore, and, in several cases, wounding fishermen and damaging their boats. Three Palestinian fishermen have been killed and five others

injured in 2010 (as of September). Since late 2008, Palestinians have been totally or partially prevented from accessing land located up to 1,000 metres to 1,500 metres from the Green Line, and sea areas beyond three nautical miles from shore. The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs estimated the restricted area at 17 per cent of the total land mass of the Gaza Strip and 35 per cent of its agricultural land. At sea, fishermen were totally prevented from accessing some 85 per cent of the maritime areas to which they were entitled according to the Oslo Agreements. An estimated 178,000 people — 12 per cent of the population of Gaza — were directly affected by this regime, with approximately 113,000 affected in land areas and 65,000 affected by restrictions on access to maritime areas.

20. Access restrictions in those areas were primarily enforced by live fire on people attempting to enter the areas. While in most cases it was “warning shots” that forced people to stay away from the area, the Israeli army since the end of the Cast Lead offensive in January 2009, has killed at least 22 civilians and injured more than 150 in these circumstances. Despite the potential for civilian casualties, the Israeli authorities have not informed the affected population about the precise boundaries of the restricted areas and the conditions under which access to those areas might be permitted or denied.

21. Another method used by the Israeli military to prevent access was the systematic levelling of farm land and the destruction of other private property located in the restricted areas. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs conservatively estimated the value of agricultural and other property destroyed in the past five years in those areas at \$308 million. It has been further estimated that access restrictions and the related destruction of agricultural assets resulted in a yearly loss of approximately 75,000 metric tons of potential produce, conservatively estimated at \$50.2 million a year. In the fishing sector, the potential fishing catch lost as a result of access restrictions was estimated at approximately 7,000 metric tons, with a related loss of income of some \$26.5 million over a period of five years. The erosion of livelihoods has forced affected families to develop a variety of coping mechanisms aimed at generating alternative income and reducing expenditure. Some of the practices raising significant concerns include a reduction in the quantity of food consumed; a gradual shift in diets (from vegetables and animal products to low-cost and high-carbohydrate items); a reduction in the length of school enrolment for children; and an increased inclination on the part of parents to marry off their daughters at an earlier age.

22. These access restrictions in Gaza, together with Israel’s continued obstruction of the import of essential construction materials and spare parts, have significantly impeded the maintenance and upgrade of the existing infrastructure for wastewater and electricity, negatively impacting the provision of services to the entire population of Gaza. In particular, the prolonged delay in the construction of three wastewater treatment plants has contributed to the daily release of some 80 million litres of raw and partially treated sewage into the sea and streams, constituting a significant environmental and health hazard.

23. Reconstruction in Gaza has been nearly impossible owing to the blockade imposed by Israel. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) reported in May 2010 that, more than one year after the Israeli offensive, three quarters of the damage inflicted on buildings and infrastructure remained unrepaired. Nearly none of the 3,425 homes destroyed during the operation had been reconstructed, resulting

in the displacement of approximately 20,000 people. Only 17.5 per cent of the value of the damage caused to educational facilities had been repaired, putting an extra strain on Gaza's already stressed education system. Only half of the damage to the power network had been repaired, and no repair had been made to the transport infrastructure. A quarter of damaged farmland had been rehabilitated and only 40 per cent of private businesses had been repaired.

24. On 31 May, Israeli naval commando forces, operating in international waters, intercepted the "Free Gaza" flotilla of six ships carrying international activists and humanitarian aid to the Gaza Strip. During the takeover of one of the vessels, the *Mavi Marmara*, nine Turkish nationals, including one with dual United States citizenship, were killed by Israeli soldiers and many others were wounded. The Israeli assault was widely condemned by the international community. At the end of an emergency meeting, the Security Council on 1 June issued a presidential statement condemning these acts and calling for "a prompt, impartial, credible and transparent investigation conforming to international standards" (see/PRST/2010/9).

25. On 14 June, the Israeli Cabinet approved the establishment of the Israeli Public Commission to Examine the Maritime Incident of 31 May 2010, headed by retired Israeli Supreme Court Justice Jacob Turkel, in addition to a military investigation headed by General Eiland. On 2 June, the United Nations Human Rights Council decided to dispatch an independent international fact-finding mission to investigate violations of international law resulting from the attacks on the flotilla. The mission issued its report (A/HRC/15/21) on 22 September, concluding that a series of violations of international law had been committed by Israeli forces. The conclusions contained in the report were endorsed by the Human Rights Council on 29 September. On 2 August, the Secretary-General announced the launch of a Panel of Inquiry on the Flotilla incident that occurred on 31 May 2010, led by Geoffrey Palmer, the former Prime Minister of New Zealand. The Panel submitted its initial progress report to the Secretary-General on 15 September.

26. On 20 June, under international pressure, the Government of Israel announced a decision to ease the blockade on Gaza, which has been imposed for over three years since 2007. On 5 July, the Government of Israel switched from a "positive" list of goods allowed into Gaza to a "negative" list of items that would be prohibited or restricted from entry. Among the items prohibited or restricted are fertilizers, glass-fibre-based raw materials, drilling equipment, vessels and water disinfectants, as well as 19 types of construction materials (to be limited to projects under international supervision), including cement, gravel, concrete blocks, steel elements, asphalt, sealing materials and construction vehicles.

27. Despite the increase in imports into Gaza under the new measures, they remained far below the weekly average of truckloads delivered before the institution of the closure regime in 2007, thereby impeding the reconstruction of homes and infrastructure and limiting the scope of economic reactivation. A lack of industrial fuel supplied to the Gaza power plant continued to result in power outages of between four to six hours per day (as of September), affecting the daily life of residents, as well as the provision of essential services, including water supply, sewage treatment and removal. Power cuts also forced hospitals to suspend or postpone elective surgery, diagnostic procedures and supportive services, and sensitive medical equipment was regularly damaged as a result of the cuts. Access to

medical facilities in the West Bank, Israel and Jordan continued to be limited by a restrictive permit regime implemented by the Israeli authorities.

28. Residents of Gaza continued to rely on goods smuggled through the tunnels under the border with Egypt. During the reporting period, 49 Palestinians, including 2 children, were killed and 104 injured in tunnel-related incidents, including Israeli air strikes, tunnel collapses, electrocution and the explosion of gas cylinders.

29. On 15 January, an arrangement was made whereby the Government of Israel made a payment of \$10.5 million to the United Nations in respect of losses caused by Israel to United Nations facilities in Gaza during the Israeli military assault of December 2008 to January 2009 in the nine incidents investigated by the Gaza Board of Inquiry established by the Secretary-General. In the light of that payment, the United Nations has agreed that the financial issues relating to those incidents had been brought to a satisfactory conclusion.

30. During the reporting period, Israel continued illegal settlement activities in the West Bank, including in East Jerusalem. On 25 November 2009, Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu declared a 10-month “partial moratorium” on new construction in settlements in the West Bank in order to encourage the resumption of talks with the Palestinians. The moratorium was not applied to East Jerusalem, where settlement construction continued throughout the reporting period. The organization Peace Now, which monitors Israeli settlements, reported in August 2010 that at least 600 housing units had started to be built during the moratorium in over 60 settlements, at least 492 of those in direct violation of the moratorium. Peace Now also reported that some 2,000 housing units were currently under construction, most of which had started before the announcement of the moratorium. Hours after the expiration of the moratorium on 26 September, construction work resumed in many settlements. According to a report by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, for the year 2009, the number of settlements in the West Bank totalled 144, the majority located in the Jerusalem area, and the number of settlers reached 517,774 by the end of 2009, the majority living in the Jerusalem area.

31. Of critical concern was settlement activity in Occupied East Jerusalem, as well as acts aimed at displacing and expelling Palestinian residents from the City through house demolitions, evictions and revocations of residency rights. Efforts by Israelis to settle in Palestinian neighbourhoods in East Jerusalem have intensified and have often been accompanied by attempts to forcibly evict Palestinian families. Among the methods used have been “reclamation of property” allegedly owned by Jewish residents of pre-1948 Mandatory Palestine, and controversial purchases of Palestinian property. Moreover, the Palestinian institutions in East Jerusalem, including the Orient House and the Chamber of Commerce, remained closed in contravention of the road map.

32. According to a report issued by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in July 2010, at least 242 Palestinian structures had been demolished in East Jerusalem and “Area C” of the West Bank in 2010. As a result, more than 1,100 Palestinians, including more than 400 children, had been forcibly displaced or otherwise affected owing to extensive damage of property or destruction of livelihood. In addition, there had been a marked increase in the number of stop-work and demolition orders being issued by Israel in Area C. As of August 2010, there were more than 3,000 outstanding demolition orders against Palestinian properties throughout Area C. Demolitions were carried out mainly

against structures that had been built without Israeli-issued building permits and were thus considered “illegal” by Israel. In Area C, more than 70 per cent of the land, currently allocated to Israeli settlements or the Israeli occupying forces, was unavailable for Palestinians, while severe restrictions applied to their use of an additional 29 per cent. Only 1 per cent of the land in Area C was thus available for Palestinian construction and development. In East Jerusalem, only 13 per cent of the land was currently zoned for Palestinian construction, compared to the 35 per cent allocated for Israeli settlements.

33. The reporting period was also marked by increased violence by Israeli settlers against Palestinians. This included physical assault, harassment, intimidation, setting fire to or seizing agricultural land, uprooting or damaging olive trees and grape vines, the prevention of access, throwing stones at vehicles and houses, vandalizing mosques and cemeteries, shooting civilians and killing livestock. During the period, more than 300 incidents have taken place in which Israeli settlers caused either injury to Palestinian civilians, including children, or damage to Palestinian property. An Israeli settler was killed in a Palestinian shooting attack on his vehicle on 24 December 2009, and three Palestinian suspects were killed by an Israeli undercover unit two days later. On 14 May 2010, a Palestinian boy from the Ramallah area was shot and killed by Israeli settlers after he had thrown stones at their car. On 31 August, gunmen from the Izz ad-Din Al-Qassam Brigades, the armed wing of Hamas, opened fire at an Israeli car near Hebron, killing four settlers inside, including two women, one of whom was pregnant. The trend of particular concern was the so called “price tag” strategy by extreme settlers to protest the Israeli Government’s policy of settlement restraint, whereby for every attempt by the Israeli authorities to dismantle a settlement outpost, settlers would attack Palestinian communities. Also, the lack of adequate law enforcement on settler violence remained an issue of serious concern. The Israeli human rights group, Yesh Din, reported that investigations into many incidents had been closed by the Israeli police for lack of evidence or owing to “unknown perpetrators”.

34. Israel has continued the illegal construction of the wall in the West Bank, including in and around Occupied East Jerusalem, in defiance of the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice. According to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, as of July 2010, approximately 61.4 per cent of the 707-kilometre-long wall was complete, a further 8.4 per cent was under construction and 30.1 per cent was planned but not yet constructed. When completed, the majority of the route, approximately 85 per cent, will run inside the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, rather than along the Green Line. The total area located between the wall and the Green Line amounted to 9.4 per cent of the West Bank, including East Jerusalem and the “no man’s land”, resulting in the confiscation of vast tracts of Palestinian land and the displacement of thousands of Palestinian civilians, many of whom are now forced to acquire special permits from the occupying Power in order to remain in their own homes in and around those areas.

35. According to information made available by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics in April 2010, more than 7,000 Palestinians, including 34 women and 270 children (44 under the age of 16), were held by Israel in 17 investigation and detention centres as well as prisons. Detainees were often deprived of medical treatment, and there were more than 1,500 cases of illness among the detainees, including heart problems, kidney failure and cancer. Israeli authorities deprived

these detainees of adequate medical treatment, and medication was often limited to pain killers only. Detainees were often subjected to isolated confinement and other forms of ill-treatment, resulting in psychological problems. Approximately 14 detainees had been subjected to isolated confinement for more than five years.

36. The Israeli occupation continued to gravely affect Palestinian women and children. In a report released in February 2010, the World Bank stated that, while men were the direct recipients of violence, women had also had to bear its indirect costs. For instance, although the overwhelming majority of Palestinians killed or imprisoned were men, women had to shoulder the responsibility of raising children and maintaining the household alone. In addition, for women, the Israeli military checkpoints represented spaces of humiliation and presented both physical and moral danger with gender-related consequences. The invasive search procedures presented a potential risk to women's honour. Families and communities often responded by censoring women's movements, in particular those of young unmarried women. The sense of humiliation and degree of affront to a woman's reputation was so great that families in Areas B and C even limited their girls' education rather than subject them to the perceived moral dangers of the checkpoints.

37. In Area C of the West Bank, schoolchildren face many obstacles, including restricted access to their schools, long walking distances, and substandard classrooms owing to the restrictive permit regime. In East Jerusalem, as of August 2010, over 7,000 Palestinian school-aged children were not enrolled in school because of Israeli policies requiring families to obtain permits proving residency in Jerusalem. In the Gaza Strip, 82 per cent of the damage caused to schools during Operation Cast Lead has still not been repaired, according to the United Nations Children's Fund. Moreover, the closure regime on Gaza has affected access to schools, seven of which were located within the restricted areas near the border with Israel. The safety of some 4,600 students and staff attending those institutions, the quality of education provided and the level of educational achievement have been seriously undermined by the frequent exposure to Israeli fire targeting people present in open areas.

38. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs reported that access restrictions in the West Bank had exacerbated the acute water shortage affecting communities in Area C, particularly during the summer season, as a result of the lack of water infrastructure and previous years of drought. The water shortage has gradually eroded the herding livelihoods on which most of those communities rely. Humanitarian organizations seeking to address the needs of these vulnerable communities faced considerable challenges owing to the restrictive permit regime implemented by the Israeli authorities. The Israeli human rights organization B'Tselem reported that Israel held almost complete control of the mountain aquifer and exploited 80 per cent of the production for its needs. The discriminatory sharing of water resources has created a chronic water shortage in the West Bank, with potentially serious consequences for the health of Palestinians.

39. In the Gaza Strip, in the peak of the hot summer season, households' access to running water was severely limited owing to power shortages. According to the Coastal Municipalities Water Utility, as of August 2010, 40 per cent of households in Gaza had access to running water for only six to eight hours per week, 30 per cent received water for only six hours once every five days, and the other 30 per cent

obtained water only once every two days. The quality of the running water was poor, forcing the population to rely extensively on tankered water for drinking.

40. Despite facing very difficult circumstances of the occupation, the Palestinian Authority has made significant progress in carrying out its two-year State-building plan led by Prime Minister Fayyad, entitled “Palestine: Ending the occupation, establishing the State”, which was released in August 2009. The World Bank reported that the Palestinian Authority was making steady progress on implementing the programme and had strengthened its public financial management systems, improved service delivery, and made significant reforms to increase security and shore up its fiscal position. In the first half of 2010, the Palestinian economy has achieved real growth of 7 per cent. Most of the growth was in the West Bank, while Gaza continued to experience falling per capita gross domestic product. Sustainability of the growth, given the reliance on donor assistance, was a cause for concern. While private sector growth required a shift from public sector-driven investment to a real take-off in private sector investment and development and stabilization of the economy, the restrictions on movement and access to resources and markets imposed by the Government of Israel remained the largest impediment to private sector investment in the West Bank and Gaza. In August 2010, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs recorded some 500 obstacles to movement in the West Bank.

41. In its progress report on the Fayyad Plan released in August, entitled “Homestretch to freedom”, the Palestinian Authority stated that 34 new schools had been built and 23 had been expanded; 11 new clinics had been built and 30 expanded; 44 new housing projects had been started; 16 new roads had been built and 40 road improvement projects had been started; and 370,000 trees had been planted under the Greening Palestine project. Also, law and order had been improved: 88,000 court orders had been carried out by the police and a police station had been established in every major urban centre and in some other municipal centres. The Government had been able to increase revenues by 18 per cent, with an increase of 20 per cent in tax revenues.

42. The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) continued to provide an extensive programme of emergency assistance and basic public services in Gaza and the West Bank. Despite the Israeli announcement regarding the intention to ease the Gaza blockade in July 2010, UNRWA has not been able to resume work on suspended major infrastructure projects, with the exception of three pilot projects intended to test the integrity of the supply chain. In May 2010, the Agency completed 60 years of operations amidst one of its most grave financial crises, which threatened its ability to continue its vital services for the refugee population. The Committee reiterates its appreciation for the dedicated services provided by UNRWA and calls upon all donors to increase contributions to ensure the uninterrupted delivery of vital services and the well-being of the 4.8 million registered refugees dependent on the Agency’s assistance.

43. UNDP continued to respond to the destruction caused by the Israeli military attacks in the Gaza Strip of December 2008 to January 2009 by clearing and recycling debris, repairing damage to farming and fishing assets, providing social and economic assistance and coordinating early recovery efforts by various United Nations system entities. UNDP has affirmed its preparedness to restart the construction projects that have been suspended for three years if the reported

changes in Israel's closure regime occur. In the West Bank, UNDP is working with the Palestinian Authority to increase its administrative capacity and improve access to justice. It is also engaged in a range of infrastructure, environmental, social and economic initiatives to improve the conditions of the Palestinian people and the effectiveness of government.

44. The Committee remained appreciative of the important work of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. It noted that the consolidated appeal for 2010 focused on delivering humanitarian assistance, increased protection of civilians, enhanced monitoring and reporting on the humanitarian situation and the strengthening of United Nations humanitarian coordination structures.

Chapter V

Action taken by the Committee

A. Action taken in accordance with General Assembly resolution 64/16

45. In pursuance of its mandate, the Committee continued to mobilize the international community in support of the Palestinian people, in cooperation with United Nations bodies, Governments, intergovernmental and civil society organizations and others.

1. Action taken in the General Assembly and the Security Council

Meetings of the Security Council

46. During the reporting period, the Security Council has continued to monitor the situation on the ground and the efforts to implement the road map. It held monthly briefings throughout the year under the agenda item entitled “The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question”.

47. The Council held its 6201st meeting on 14 October 2009 to discuss the Goldstone report, at the request of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, supported by Egypt on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, and the Syrian Arab Republic, on behalf of the Organization of the Islamic Conference. During the open debate, the Chair of the Committee made a statement (S/PV.6201).

48. The Council held its 6265th meeting on 27 January 2010. During an open debate following the monthly briefing, the Chair of the Committee delivered a statement (S/PV.6265).

49. The Council held its 6298th meeting on 14 April. During an open debate following the monthly briefing, the Vice-Chair of the Committee delivered a statement (S/PV.6298).

50. The Council held its 6363rd meeting on 21 July. During an open debate following the monthly briefing, the Chair of the Committee made a statement (S/PV.6363).

2. Action taken by the Bureau of the Committee

51. On 15 December 2009, the Bureau of the Committee issued a statement on Israel’s settlement activity in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem (GA/PAL/1142).

52. On 24 February 2010, the Bureau of the Committee issued a statement on Israel’s announcement to include the Tomb of the Patriarchs (Al-Haram Al-Ibrahimi) in Hebron and Rachel’s Tomb (Masjid Bilal or Qubbat Rakhil) in Bethlehem in a list of Israel’s “national heritage infrastructure” (GA/PAL/1151).

53. On 19 March, the Bureau of the Committee issued a statement on Israel’s settlement expansion in East Jerusalem (GA/PAL/1153).

54. On 31 August, the Bureau of the Committee issued a statement on the resumption of negotiations on all permanent status issues (GA/PAL/1173).

B. Action taken by the Committee and the Division for Palestinian Rights in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 64/16 and 64/17

1. Committee meetings at Headquarters

55. At its periodic meetings at Headquarters in New York, the Committee, among other things, heard a presentation by a representative of the United Nations Environment Programme on an environmental assessment of the Gaza Strip following the Israeli military offensive, as well as a testimony by a participant in the Free Gaza flotilla. As a new initiative, the Committee also screened several documentary films on the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

2. Programme of international meetings and conferences

56. Through its programme of international meetings and conferences, the Committee continued to raise international awareness of the various aspects of the question of Palestine and international support for the rights of the Palestinian people and the peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine.

57. In the period under review, the following international events were held under the auspices of the Committee:

(a) International Meeting in Support of Israeli-Palestinian Peace, co-organized with the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean, Qawra, Malta, 12 and 13 February 2010;

(b) United Nations Seminar on Assistance to the Palestinian People, United Nations Office at Vienna, 24 and 25 March;

(c) United Nations Meeting of Civil Society in Support of the Palestinian People, United Nations Office at Vienna, 26 March;

(d) United Nations International Meeting in Support of the Israeli-Palestinian Peace Process, Istanbul, 25 and 26 May;

(e) United Nations Public Forum in Support of the Palestinian People, Istanbul, 27 May;

(f) United Nations African Meeting on the Question of Palestine, Rabat, 1 and 2 July.

58. The above-mentioned events were attended by representatives of Governments, Palestine, intergovernmental organizations and United Nations system entities, as well as parliamentarians and representatives of civil society and the media. The reports of the meetings were issued as publications of the Division for Palestinian Rights and were made available through the "Question of Palestine" website maintained by the Division.

59. In Malta, on the sidelines of the International Meeting in Support of Israeli-Palestinian Peace, the Committee delegation was received by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Malta, Tonio Borg. It also held a meeting with the Chair of the Standing Committee on Foreign and European Affairs of the Maltese Parliament, Michael Frendo, and members of the Standing Committee.

60. During its stay in Vienna in connection with the United Nations Seminar on Assistance to the Palestinian People, the Committee delegation met with the Political Director, Ambassador Stefan Lehne, and the Director for the Middle East and North Africa, Minister Friedrich Stift, both of the Ministry for European and International Affairs of Austria.

61. In Istanbul, during its stay in connection with the United Nations International Meeting in Support of the Israeli-Palestinian Peace Process, the Committee delegation was received by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Turkey, Ahmet Davutoğlu.

62. In Rabat, on the sidelines of the United Nations African Meeting on the Question of Palestine, the Committee delegation met with President of the House of Representatives of Morocco, Abdelwahad Radi, and the President of the Moroccan House of Councillors, Mohamed Cheikh Biadillah.

3. Cooperation with intergovernmental organizations

63. Throughout the year, the Committee continued its cooperation with the African Union, the European Union, the League of Arab States, the Non-Aligned Movement and the Organization of the Islamic Conference. The Committee is appreciative of the active participation of their representatives in the various international events held under its auspices.

4. Cooperation with civil society

Civil society organizations

64. The Committee continued its cooperation with civil society organizations worldwide. Representatives of civil society participated in all meetings organized under the auspices of the Committee, including the observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People on 30 November 2009. The meetings provided civil society representatives with an opportunity to discuss the situation on the ground and their programmes in support of the Palestinian people and to improve coordination of their activities. The Committee was appreciative of the work done by civil society organizations and encouraged them to continue contributing to efforts aimed at realizing a two-State solution.

65. The Committee maintained and developed its liaison with national, regional and international coordinating mechanisms cooperating with it, in addition to its established liaison with a large number of individual organizations. At the United Nations Meeting of Civil Society in Support of the Palestinian People, held at the United Nations Office at Vienna in March, the deliberations focused on civil society actions against the separation wall and the importance of upholding international law, including with respect to the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the wall. Meanwhile, the United Nations Public Forum in Support of the Palestinian People, held in May 2010 at the Istanbul Kültür University in Turkey, focused on Jerusalem. Over the past year, the Chair of the Committee met with representatives of civil society, including a delegation of Palestinian Christians.

66. During the reporting period, six civil society organizations have been accredited to the Committee.

67. The Division for Palestinian Rights maintained a page on civil society and the question of Palestine (<http://unispal.un.org/unispal.nsf/ngo.htm>) on the “Question of Palestine” website as a tool for the exchange of information and networking and for cooperation between civil society and the Committee.

68. The Division strived to enhance the use of information technology and created a Facebook “fan page”, which has attracted more than 800 “fans” during the reporting period, informing about developments related to the question of Palestine and the work of the Committee. In addition, the Division continued to publish the periodic online bulletin “NGO Action News”, in order to catalogue and publicize civil society initiatives.

Parliaments and inter-parliamentary organizations

69. The Committee continued to attach great importance to developing its liaison with national and regional parliaments and their organizations. For the first time, it co-organized a meeting with the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean. The meeting considered, in particular, the role of parliamentarians and inter-parliamentary organizations in supporting Israeli-Palestinian peace and promoting stability in the region. The four international events held during 2010 were addressed by parliamentarians from Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Malta, Turkey, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

5. Research, monitoring and publications

70. The Division carried out research and monitoring activities and responded to requests for information and briefings on the question of Palestine. Under the guidance of the Committee, which reiterated the relevance of the research, monitoring and publications programme, it also prepared the publications listed below for dissemination, including through the Internet:

- (a) Monthly bulletin on action taken by the United Nations system and intergovernmental organizations relevant to the question of Palestine;
- (b) Monthly chronology of events relating to the question of Palestine, based on media reports and other sources;
- (c) Reports of international meetings and conferences organized under the auspices of the Committee;
- (d) Special bulletins and information notes on the observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People;
- (e) Periodic reviews of developments related to the Middle East peace process;
- (f) Annual compilation of resolutions and decisions of the General Assembly and the Security Council relating to the question of Palestine.

6. United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine

71. Pursuant to successive annual General Assembly mandates, the Division for Palestinian Rights, in cooperation with relevant technical and library services of the United Nations Secretariat, continued to administer, maintain, expand and develop

the United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine (UNISPAL) and the “Question of Palestine” website, which is located on the United Nations home page under “Peace and Security”. This included the ongoing maintenance and upgrading of the technical components of the system to ensure the uninterrupted presence of UNISPAL (<http://unispal.un.org>) on the Internet and involved the expansion of the document collection to include relevant new and old United Nations system and related documents. In addition, steps continued to be taken to enhance the user-friendliness and usefulness of UNISPAL, including by incorporating additional multimedia content and RSS and Twitter feeds intended to alert users about newly posted materials. The Division has successfully launched the redesigned “Question of Palestine” portal.

7. Training programme for staff of the Palestinian Authority

72. Two staff members from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Palestinian Authority participated in a training programme conducted by the Division from September to December 2009, in conjunction with the sixty-fourth session of the General Assembly. The trainees familiarized themselves with various aspects of the work of the Secretariat and other organs and conducted research on specific topics.

8. International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People

73. The International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People was observed at Headquarters and at the United Nations Office at Geneva on 30 November 2009, and at the United Nations Office at Vienna on 1 December. On the occasion of the observance at Headquarters, in addition to a special meeting of the Committee and other activities, a cultural exhibit entitled “The United Nations and the Palestine refugees, 60 years later” was presented by UNRWA, in cooperation with the Permanent Mission of Luxembourg to the United Nations, under the auspices of the Committee. The Committee also sponsored a concert by Maqamat, an orchestra of the Edward Said National Conservatory of Music in Ramallah. The Committee noted with appreciation that the International Day of Solidarity had also been observed by United Nations information centres and other bodies in many cities throughout the world. Details on the observance are contained in the special bulletin issued by the Division.

Chapter VI

Action taken by the Department of Public Information in accordance with General Assembly resolution 64/18

74. The Department of Public Information, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 64/18, continued to implement its special information programme on the question of Palestine in order to raise the awareness of the international community on this question, as well as on the situation in the Middle East, in such a way as to contribute effectively to an atmosphere conducive to dialogue and supportive of the peace process.

75. During the reporting period, the Department produced a total of 129 press releases on the question of Palestine in English and French, including summaries of formal meetings and press conferences, as well as statements and press releases by the Secretary-General and other United Nations officials.

76. UN Radio and the United Nations News Centre regularly covered the question of Palestine in the six official languages, as well as in Portuguese and Kiswahili. The Arabic Language Unit provided extensive coverage of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. Interviews, press briefings and General Assembly and Security Council sessions were covered and posted on the UN Radio website. The English language version of the portal alone carried over 200 news stories devoted to the subject.

77. The Department, in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Portugal, organized the eighteenth International Media Seminar on Peace in the Middle East, in Lisbon on 22 and 23 July 2010. Approximately 100 participants from Portugal, the Middle East and other parts of the world participated, including current and former policymakers, government officials, mayors, representatives of civil society, academia and journalists. The Seminar received both local and international media coverage.

78. The Department organized a training programme for 10 young Palestinian journalists at Headquarters, in Washington, D.C., and in Geneva from 2 November to 11 December 2009. The programme strengthened the participants' capacity as broadcast media professionals and included training to improve their skills in maintaining websites in Arabic.

79. The Dag Hammarskjöld Library continued to digitize documents for the UNISPAL document collection.

80. The network of United Nations information centres and services continued to disseminate information on the question of Palestine and to organize special outreach activities. The information centres promoted the observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People and widely disseminated the messages of the Secretary-General in the official and non-official languages, including German, Greek, Japanese, Polish, Portuguese and Turkish. The United Nations Information Service in Vienna and the United Nations information centres in Ankara and Rabat provided communications support to the United Nations meetings held under the auspices of the Committee.

Chapter VII

Conclusions and recommendations of the Committee

81. Throughout the reporting period, the Committee has continued to advocate a peaceful and just solution of the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, through the establishment of a sovereign and independent Palestinian State on the basis of the pre-1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital in accordance with international law and the relevant United Nations resolutions. There is international consensus that such a solution would lead to the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, as defined by the General Assembly, and the establishment of peace and security in the region. The Committee has reiterated that the Israeli occupation of Palestinian land that started in 1967 remains the main obstacle towards the realization of that objective. The occupation has entailed the construction of settlements and the wall, the transfer of Israeli settlers and the annexation of Palestinian land, as well as the military oppression of the Palestinian civilian population, constituting violations of international humanitarian and human rights law and constant affronts to the human dignity of the Palestinian people and the economic and social fabric of the Palestinian society. The occupation, with all its consequences, not only subjugates the Palestinian people but also harms the social fabric of the Israeli society. The prolonged occupation has made the search for a comprehensive, just and lasting solution more difficult by creating almost irreversible facts on the ground. As a result, a majority of the Palestinian people have lost confidence in the political process with Israel.

82. The Committee has repeatedly expressed its utmost concern about the volatile situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including in East Jerusalem, and the stagnation of the political process. The Committee remained firmly opposed to the continued illegal construction of settlements in the West Bank, including in East Jerusalem, accompanied by escalating settler violence. In addition, the construction of the separation wall has continued, leaving thousands of Palestinians cut off from access to their lands, families, schools and hospitals and isolating several communities in walled enclaves. The Committee is disturbed by the impunity with which Israel's legal obligations, as confirmed by the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice, have been flouted, and calls upon the international community to take the required action to ensure respect for, and compliance with, the ruling of the International Court of Justice, the Fourth Geneva Convention and the relevant United Nations resolutions.

83. The Committee has been particularly alarmed by the situation in Occupied East Jerusalem, including the acceleration of settlement construction and expansion, the demolition of houses, the revocation of residency rights, the eviction of Palestinian citizens, settler extremism and the threats to Jerusalem's holy sites and historical heritage. Recent Israeli policy statements and actions by the municipal government in the City are not conducive to productive talks on the future of Jerusalem as the capital of two States. The Committee reiterates its position that Israel's dangerous and provocative policies in East Jerusalem are prone to spark negative reactions on the ground, in the region and by Muslims worldwide, leading to violence and even armed conflict. East Jerusalem is an integral part of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, and a negotiated solution of the question of Jerusalem, based on international law, is

essential to resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and crucial for a durable peace in the whole region. The Committee is encouraged that these concerns are widely shared by Governments, intergovernmental and civil society organizations, as well as by parliamentarians.

84. The Committee has persistently condemned the Israeli blockade of the Gaza Strip, which prevents any reconstruction and sustained humanitarian assistance and which has caused the near collapse of the economy and social fabric of Gaza. That siege constitutes a severe form of collective punishment of the entire population of the Gaza Strip. The Committee has also denounced the firing of rockets and mortar rounds by Palestinian militants from Gaza and reiterated its call for the release of Israeli corporal Gilad Shalit. It urges Israel to open all of the Gaza Strip's border crossings for the flow of humanitarian aid, import and export of commercial goods, including reconstruction materials, and movement of persons in accordance with international humanitarian law, the Agreement on Movement and Access of 15 November 2005 and Security Council resolution 1860 (2009).

85. The Committee continued to monitor the international investigations and their follow-up into the Israeli military offensive against Gaza of December 2008 to January 2009 and the Free Gaza flotilla incident of May 2010. It acknowledged the value of internal investigations on the national level. The report of the United Nations Fact-Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict, established by the Human Rights Council and led by Justice Richard Goldstone (A/HRC/12/48), represents a comprehensive, balanced and authoritative account of the 2008-2009 Israeli incursion into Gaza. While the Committee recognizes the value of the Israeli Government's recent examination of some of the specific allegations, it calls for a comprehensive, credible and independent investigation into the violations of international law committed and demands follow-up action. The Committee also took note of the report of the international fact-finding mission established by the Human Rights Council to investigate violations of international law, including international humanitarian and human rights law, resulting from the Israeli attacks on the flotilla of ships carrying humanitarian assistance (A/HRC/15/21). The results of those investigations will, without doubt, contribute to a strengthening of the rule and application of international humanitarian and human rights law in conflict situations. The Committee appeals to all the High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention to fulfil their obligations in accordance with common Article 1, which obligates them to respect and to ensure respect for the Convention in all circumstances.

86. The Committee welcomed the resumption of the direct negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians on all permanent status issues and notes the important role played by the United States, Egypt and Jordan. The agreement by the Palestinian leadership to direct talks, despite Israel's lack of compliance with its road map obligations, testifies to the full commitment of the Palestine Liberation Organization to a peaceful solution of the conflict and should be met by a genuine commitment of the Israeli Government to the two-State solution, bolstered by tangible improvements of the situation on the ground. The Committee is of the view that the talks can only succeed if they are conducted in an atmosphere of trust and goodwill. In that regard, the Committee joins the rest of the international community in expressing deep regret at the non-extension of the Israeli moratorium on settlement construction, which called

into question the continuation of the negotiations. It is crucial that the negotiations are based on the relevant Security Council resolutions, the Madrid terms of reference and the Arab Peace Initiative. The direct involvement in the negotiations of regional partners is vitally important. The continued support by the international community, in particular by the Quartet and its individual members, is key to moving forward the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations on all permanent status issues. The Committee will closely follow the developments and offer constructive support in the interest of resolving the question of Palestine and the achievement by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights.

87. The negotiations should be buttressed by a parallel process of Palestinian State-building in implementation of the strategic plan of the Palestinian Authority. The Committee will back those efforts by advocating sustained and generous donor commitment, highlighting the actual needs on the ground and providing the Palestinian Authority with the opportunity to present its assessment to the wider international community.

88. The Committee remains concerned that the divisions among the Palestinian factions profoundly affect the legitimate Palestinian national aspirations for statehood and peace. It calls for invigorated efforts by all to help reconcile their positions on the basis of the prevailing consensus on the need to achieve the two-State solution, which would lead to the exercise by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights.

89. The Committee and the Division for Palestinian Rights will continue through their mandated activities to generate heightened international awareness of the current challenges for a comprehensive, just and lasting solution of the question of Palestine. In this connection, the Committee emphasizes the useful and constructive contribution of the Division in support of its mandate aimed at enabling the Palestinian people to exercise their inalienable rights. It notes with satisfaction: (a) the sustained level of dialogue, engagement and support of the international community for its programme objectives, for instance, in terms of both participation at the meetings convened and the use of printed and electronic information materials provided by the Division; (b) the continued involvement of parliamentarians and civil society organizations in support of the efforts of the Committee and the United Nations towards a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine; and (c) the increased international awareness of the United Nations policies and activities on the question of Palestine as indicated by the growing number of documents and relevant information materials on the issue accessed by users worldwide at the websites maintained by the Division. The Committee also considers that the annual training programme for staff of the Palestinian Authority carried out by the Division has proved its usefulness as it directly contributes to Palestinian capacity-building efforts. The Committee strongly recommends that this important mandated activity be continued and, where possible, enhanced.

90. The Committee will focus its programme of international meetings and conferences in 2011, implemented by the Division, on widening international support for the permanent status negotiations and on contributing to the creation of a favourable international atmosphere for their conduct in good faith. The Committee intends to mobilize increased international scrutiny of the developments on the ground, in particular the halt of all settlement activities in

the West Bank and East Jerusalem, and an end to all other illegal Israeli policies and practices in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. It will support global campaigns to challenge Israeli impunity and promote the concept of Israeli accountability for its actions towards the Palestinian people. It will pay special attention to highlighting the plight of the most disadvantaged Palestinians, such as the Palestine refugees, the Palestinians living in Gaza and Palestinian political prisoners. The Committee will continue to mobilize support for the Palestinian institution-building plan and all other efforts to facilitate the independence and viability of the Palestinian State. It will reach out to and engage Governments, parliamentarians and civil society to mobilize support for a just solution of the conflict. The Committee wishes to contribute to efforts towards ending incitement on both sides, provide a venue to have the narratives heard and reconciled and, with the help of civil society, to promote peace education. It will pay particular attention to the inclusion and empowerment of women and their organizations in this process.

91. The Committee highly values civil society initiatives in support of the Palestinian people. It lauds the courageous advocacy actions of countless activists, including eminent personalities and parliamentarians, who participate in demonstrations against the wall, try to break the siege of Gaza and keep their home constituencies informed about the harsh realities of life under occupation. The Committee encourages civil society partners to work with their national Governments and other institutions with a view to gaining their full support for the work of the United Nations, including that of the Committee, on the question of Palestine. It will continue to assess its programme of cooperation with civil society and consult them on ways to enhance their contribution. The Committee appreciates the support it receives from the Secretariat in strengthening cooperation with civil society.

92. The Committee looks forward to further developing its cooperation with parliamentarians and their umbrella organizations. Parliamentarians have a special responsibility to ensure that their Governments actively promote and support the realization of the two-State solution and ensure respect for international law, in accordance with their international obligations.

93. The Committee requests the Division to continue its substantive and secretariat support; the programme of research, monitoring and publications and other informational activities. The Division should pay special attention to continued development of the "Question of Palestine" portal and to explore new technologies and media, including Web-based social information networks, such as Facebook and Twitter. The Division should also continue to develop the UNISPAL document collection. The Division should further develop the annual training programme for staff of the Palestinian Authority paying special attention to the programme's gender balance, and organize the annual observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

94. The Committee is of the view that the special information programme on the question of Palestine of the Department of Public Information has made an important contribution to informing the media and public opinion of the relevant issues. The Committee requests the continuation of the programme, with the necessary flexibility, as warranted by developments relevant to the question of Palestine.

95. Wishing to make its contribution to the achievement of a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine, and in view of the many difficulties facing the Palestinian people and besetting the peace process, the Committee calls upon all States to join it in this endeavour and to extend their cooperation and support to the Committee, and invites the General Assembly again to recognize the importance of its role and to reconfirm its mandate.

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Report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

General Assembly

Official Records

Sixty-sixth Session

Supplement No. 35

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United Nations • New York, 2011

Note

Symbols of United Nations documents are composed of letters combined with figures. Mention of such a symbol indicates a reference to a United Nations document.

Contents

<i>Chapter</i>	<i>Page</i>
Letter of transmittal	iv
I. Introduction	1
II. Mandate of the Committee	4
III. Organization of work	5
A. Membership and officers	5
B. Participation in the work of the Committee	5
IV. Review of the situation relating to the question of Palestine	6
V. Action taken by the Committee	14
A. Action taken in accordance with General Assembly resolution 65/13	14
B. Action taken by the Committee and the Division for Palestinian Rights in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 65/13 and 65/14	14
VI. Action taken by the Department of Public Information in accordance with General Assembly resolution 65/15	19
VII. Conclusions and recommendations of the Committee	21

Letter of transmittal

[6 October 2011]

Mr. Secretary-General,

I have the honour to enclose herewith the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for submission to the General Assembly in accordance with paragraph 2 of its resolution 65/13 of 30 November 2010.

The report covers the period from 7 October 2010 to 6 October 2011.

(Signed) Abdou Salam **Diallo**
Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the
Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon
Secretary-General of the United Nations
New York

Chapter I

Introduction

1. The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People was established by the General Assembly by its resolution 3376 (XXX) of 10 November 1975, with the task of recommending a programme designed to enable the Palestinian people to exercise its inalienable rights, as recognized by the Assembly in its resolution 3236 (XXIX) of 22 November 1974.

2. The recommendations made by the Committee in its first report to the General Assembly¹ were endorsed by the Assembly as a basis for the solution of the question of Palestine. In its subsequent reports,² the Committee has continued to stress that a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, must be based on the relevant United Nations resolutions and the following essential principles: the withdrawal of Israel, the occupying Power, from the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem, and from the other occupied Arab territories; respect for the right of all States in the region to live in peace within secure and internationally recognized boundaries; and the recognition and exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. The recommendations of the Committee contained in its first report could not be implemented, and the Assembly each year renewed the Committee's mandate and requested it to intensify efforts in pursuit of its objectives.

3. The Committee has consistently supported a peaceful solution of the question of Palestine. It welcomed the 1991 Madrid Peace Conference that launched the Middle East peace process based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). It also welcomed the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements (A/48/486-S/26560, annex) and subsequent implementation agreements. The Committee has strongly supported the objective of two States, Israel and Palestine, living side by side within secure and recognized borders on the basis of the 1949 armistice lines, in accordance with relevant United Nations resolutions, including Security Council resolutions 1397 (2002) and 1515 (2003). The Committee welcomed and supported the Quartet's road map and called on the parties to implement it. In keeping with its mandate, the Committee has continued to work towards creating conditions for the successful conduct of the negotiations on a permanent settlement allowing the Palestinian people to realize its inalienable rights. The Committee has also promoted support and assistance by the international community to the Palestinian people.

4. The reporting period has been characterized by the stagnation of the political process and a volatile situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. The status quo has been characterized unanimously by the international community as unsustainable and requiring urgent attention. Despite the global calls for a complete cessation, Israel has continued its illegal settlement campaign in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, further exacerbating tensions and mistrust between the two sides. The critical humanitarian situation in

¹ *Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-first Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/31/35)*.

² Since the thirty-first session, the Committee has submitted annual reports to the General Assembly; all such reports have been issued as supplement No. 35 of the sessional documentation of the Assembly.

the Gaza Strip was also exacerbated by the continued imposition by Israel of a severe blockade on the territory, which has obstructed the movement of persons and goods, including humanitarian access and the import of materials required for the reconstruction and rehabilitation of Gaza, and undermined economic recovery.

5. The Israeli-Palestinian peace talks relaunched in September 2010 under the mediation of the United States of America were stalled merely after a few rounds of meetings following Israel's refusal to renew its so-called moratorium on settlement activity in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. In the absence of credible negotiations owing to Israel's refusal to cease settlements activity and to commit to the long-standing terms of reference of the peace process, the Palestinian leadership turned to diplomatic initiatives to gain recognition as a State within the 1967 borders, on the basis of international law and relevant United Nations resolutions, and efforts aimed at obtaining United Nations membership during the General Assembly in 2011 session, the date endorsed in August 2010 by the Quartet as the date for the achievement of a final peace settlement. On 23 September 2011, at the outset of the sixty-sixth session of the General Assembly, the President of the Palestinian Authority, Mahmoud Abbas, submitted to the Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon, an application for Palestine to become a State Member of the United Nations.

6. The situation in the Gaza Strip remained bleak, with high rates of poverty and unemployment. The continued blockade imposed by Israel forced 1.5 million Palestinians in Gaza to suffer from an acute shortage of basic goods and services, medicine and medical equipment and even clean water. Reconstruction and rehabilitation have been seriously undermined by the blockade. Throughout the year, Israel continued to conduct air strikes and limited ground incursions in Gaza, resulting in Palestinian casualties, including many civilians. This was met with rocket and mortar fire by armed Palestinian groups into southern Israel, endangering the lives of the Israeli population.

7. Israeli military incursions into West Bank population centres also continued, involving the killing and injuring of Palestinians, including civilians. Hundreds of Palestinians were arrested during those operations, including children under the age of 18 years. Many unarmed civilians were subjected to the excessive use of force by the Israeli military during demonstrations against the occupation, resulting in many injuries. The expansion of illegal Israeli settlements continued in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, with thousands of new units approved by the Israeli authorities. The construction of the separation wall continued in defiance of the International Court of Justice advisory opinion, resulting in further confiscation of Palestinian land and demolition of properties and further harming socio-economic conditions. The situation in Occupied East Jerusalem remained particularly alarming, with continued land confiscations, house demolitions and evictions of Palestinian residents, and the transfer of more Israeli settlers into the City.

8. Heeding the calls of the Palestinian people for an end to the political division since June 2007, Palestinian factions concluded a much anticipated reconciliation agreement in April 2011, but its implementation has been pending.

9. Over the reporting period, the Palestinian Authority successfully advanced its State-building programme, with strong support from the international community, and its institutional readiness for Statehood has been endorsed by the United Nations, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

10. The activities of the Committee and its Bureau in the reporting period focused on the need for respect for the relevant United Nations resolutions and the urgency of resuming negotiations between the parties in the interest of salvaging the two-State solution and advancing the realization of a just, comprehensive and lasting peace. The Committee monitored the situation on the ground and the political developments, implemented its programme of international meetings and conferences, held consultations with representatives of Governments, national parliaments and inter-parliamentary organizations, as well as civil society, and reached out to its partners worldwide using new communications media. The Committee reiterated its position of principle that a permanent settlement of the question of Palestine could be achieved only through ending the occupation that began in 1967, establishing a Palestinian State on the basis of the pre-1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital, and a just and agreed solution to the Palestine refugees issue on the basis of General Assembly resolution 194 (III). The first international meeting convened by the Committee in March 2011 focused on the urgency of addressing the plight of Palestinian political prisoners held by Israel. It was followed by a regional meeting for Latin America and the Caribbean to discuss the urgency of realizing a two-State solution. The annual assistance seminar organized by the Committee in May focused on the mobilization of continued support for the Palestinian State-building programme. At another international meeting held in Brussels in June, participants discussed the role of Europe in advancing Palestinian Statehood and achieving Israeli-Palestinian peace. The Committee encouraged all stakeholders to support the role and activities of the United Nations and urged them to support the two-State solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict on the basis of the relevant Security Council resolutions, the terms of reference of the Madrid Conference, including the principle of land for peace, the Arab Peace Initiative and the Quartet road map.

Chapter II

Mandate of the Committee

11. On 30 November 2010, the General Assembly renewed the mandate of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (see resolution 65/13), requested the Secretary-General to continue to provide the Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat with the necessary resources to carry out its programme of work (see resolution 65/14) and requested the continuation of the special information programme on the question of Palestine of the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat (see resolution 65/15). On the same date, the Assembly adopted resolution 65/16, entitled “Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine”.

Chapter III

Organization of work

A. Membership and officers

12. The Committee is composed of the following Member States: Afghanistan, Belarus, Cuba, Cyprus, Guinea, Guyana, India, Indonesia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mali, Malta, Namibia, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Pakistan, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of).

13. The observers at the Committee meetings are: Algeria, Bangladesh, Bulgaria, China, Ecuador, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Niger, Qatar, Sri Lanka, the Syrian Arab Republic, the United Arab Emirates, Viet Nam and Yemen, as well as the African Union, the League of Arab States, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and Palestine.

14. At its 330th meeting, on 21 January 2011, the Committee re-elected Abdou Salam Diallo (Senegal) as Chair, Pedro Núñez Mosquera (Cuba) and Zahir Tanin (Afghanistan) as Vice-Chairs and Saviour F. Borg (Malta) as Rapporteur.

15. Also at the 330th meeting, the Committee adopted its programme of work for 2011 (see A/AC.183/2011/1).

B. Participation in the work of the Committee

16. As in previous years, the Committee reconfirmed that all United Nations Member States and observers wishing to participate in the work of the Committee as observers were welcome to do so. In accordance with established practice, Palestine participated in the work of the Committee as an observer, attended all of its meetings and made observations and proposals for consideration by the Committee and its Bureau.

Chapter IV

Review of the situation relating to the question of Palestine

Political developments

17. The Israeli-Palestinian talks that had been initiated by the United States of America on 2 September 2010 were stalled after Israel ended its 10-month so-called moratorium on settlement activity on 26 September. In the following months, intensive diplomatic efforts led by the United States and supported by the Quartet to create conditions conducive to the continuation of talks, including a renewal of the settlement freeze, were met by Israeli government approval of hundreds of new settlement units, especially in Occupied East Jerusalem. On 8 December, the United States efforts towards a settlement freeze were brought to a close.

18. In a Middle East policy speech on 19 May 2011, the President of the United States of America, Barack Obama, laid out parameters on borders and security, stating that the borders of Israel and Palestine should be based on the 1967 lines with mutually agreed swaps, so that secure and recognized borders were established for both States, and that the full and phased withdrawal of Israeli military forces should be coordinated with the assumption of Palestinian security responsibility in a sovereign, non-militarized State. On 20 May, the Quartet issued a statement expressing strong support for President Obama's vision. Subsequently, the Quartet was unable to translate that vision into clear parameters for the resumption of negotiations between the parties.

19. Meanwhile, the Palestinian leadership continued its efforts to gain international recognition as a State within the 1967 borders. A number of countries have recognized the State of Palestine during the reporting period. According to the Palestine Liberation Organization Negotiations Affairs Department, more than 127 States Members of the United Nations recognize Palestine to date. On 23 September 2011, during the general debate of the sixty-sixth session of the General Assembly, Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas submitted to the Secretary-General an application for Palestine to become a State Member of the United Nations. The Secretary-General immediately forwarded the application to the Security Council and the General Assembly.

Settlements

20. During the reporting period, Israel, the occupying Power, continued illegal settlement activity in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics reported in August 2011 that the number of Israeli settlements in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, totalled 144, and the number of settlers in 2010 had been 518,974. During the reporting period, the following plans to construct new housing units were approved by Israel, the occupying Power: 158 in the "Ramot" settlement and 80 in "Pisgat Ze'ev" (14 October 2010); 800 in "Ariel" and more than 1,000 elsewhere in Jerusalem and the West Bank (8 November); 130 in "Gilo" and Beit Safafa (30 November); 625 in "Pisgat Ze'ev" in East Jerusalem (1 December); 24 in "Beit Orot" in East Jerusalem (14 December); 92 in "East Talpiot" and 32 in "Pisgat Ze'ev" (17 January 2011); 56 in "Ramot" in East Jerusalem (14 February); 14 in the East Jerusalem neighbourhood of Ras al-Amud (2 March); 200 in "Modi'in Ilit", 100 in "Ariel", 40 in "Ma'ale Adumim" and 50 in "Gush Etzion" (13 March); 942 in "Gilo" in East

Jerusalem (4 April); 204 in the East Jerusalem settlement of French Hill (13 May); 1,550 in “Har Homa” and “Pisgat Ze’ev” in East Jerusalem (19 May); 294 in “Beitar Iliit” (22 May); 930 in “Har Homa” (4 August); 1,600 in “Ramat Shlomo” in East Jerusalem, 2,000 in “Givat Hamatos” and 700 in “Pisgat Ze’ev” (11 August); 277 in “Ariel” (15 August); 100 in “Beit Aryeh” (30 August); 1,100 in “Gilo” in East Jerusalem (27 September).

21. Also, Israeli authorities demolished the Shepherd Hotel in East Jerusalem on 9 January 2011 to build a complex of 20 luxury apartments for settlers. On 8 February, the Jerusalem Planning and Building Committee approved plans for the establishment of two new settlements in Sheikh Jarrah in East Jerusalem. On 4 April, Israeli Defence Minister Ehud Barak approved master plans for the “Nofim”, “Eshkolot”, “Rotem” and “Hemdat” settlements. On 19 May, Israeli ministers inaugurated a new settlement “Ma’aleh Hazeitim” in East Jerusalem. Peace Now reported in early September that, during the 10 months since the end of the settlement moratorium (from October 2010 to July 2011), the construction of 2,598 new housing units had begun, 2,149 had been completed and at least 3,700 had been under construction. In the light of the particular acceleration of settlement expansion, on 18 February, over 120 Member States sponsored a Security Council draft resolution condemning those illegal and provocative Israeli policies and calling for their immediate and complete cessation. While 14 members of the Council voted for the resolution, it was not adopted owing to the negative vote of the United States of America.

Settler violence

22. Settler-related violence in the West Bank and East Jerusalem continued to be a source of serious concern. During the reporting period, three Palestinians, including two children, were killed by Israeli settlers, and six Israeli settlers, including three children, were killed by Palestinians. According to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, there were at least 333 incidents of settler violence resulting in Palestinian casualties or property damage in 2011, and at least 142 Palestinians were injured by settlers. During the same period, 28 settlers were injured by Palestinians (as of 4 October). Since the beginning of 2011, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs recorded the death of one Palestinian boy and the injury of 21 Palestinians, including 14 children, hit by vehicles driven by Israeli settlers.

23. During the olive harvest season in 2010, attacks by Israeli settlers, including arson, the uprooting of thousands of olive trees belonging to Palestinians, vandalism and theft of agricultural equipment and crops were reported on an almost daily basis. On 22 October, Israeli settlers desecrated a Palestinian cemetery on the outskirts of the West Bank village of Kfar Kadum. Incidents of arson and vandalism of mosques in the West Bank by Israeli settlers also occurred during the reporting period. According to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, over 7,500 trees have been uprooted, burned or vandalized by Israeli settlers since the beginning of 2011. Palestinian civilians tended not to file complaints with the Israeli authorities as those complaints had almost never led to the prosecution of perpetrators. That tendency was reinforced by the hurdles facing those Palestinians who chose to do so, including the need to reach police stations located within Israeli settlements. When complaints were filed, investigations by Israel rarely succeeded. Approximately 90 per cent of the Israeli police investigations into such offences in

recent years ended in failure, as files were closed on the grounds of either a “lack of evidence” or “perpetrator unknown”. In some cases, complaints were lost and never investigated. Of 97 complaints related to the vandalization of Palestinians’ trees that occurred between 2005 and 2010, followed up by the Israeli human rights group Yesh Din, none had led to the filing of an indictment against suspects, including 72 cases closed on grounds of “perpetrator unknown”.

Movement restrictions

24. As of August 2011, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs documented a total of 522 obstacles (roadblocks, checkpoints, among others) to Palestinian movement within the West Bank, an increase of 4 per cent from the equivalent figure recorded in July 2010 (503). The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs observed almost no changes in the other components of the system of movement restrictions, including the wall, the permit and “prior coordination” regimes to access the “Seam Zone” or settlement areas, and the closure of areas for military training. Also, the average number of flying checkpoints reported per month had significantly increased from less than 350 in previous years (July 2007 to June 2010) to close to 500 over the last 12 months (June 2010 to July 2011).

Demolitions and displacements

25. The Israeli practice of demolishing Palestinian homes, basic infrastructure and sources of livelihoods continued to devastate Palestinian families and communities in East Jerusalem and Area C, 60 per cent of the West Bank controlled by Israel. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs observed a sharp increase in demolitions since the beginning of 2011: as of 4 October, 435 Palestinian-owned structures had been demolished, displacing 823 persons. The total number of displaced persons in the whole of 2010 was 594. The United Nations estimated that there were more than 3,000 demolition orders outstanding in Area C, including 18 issued to schools. Most demolitions targeted already vulnerable Bedouin and herding communities, leaving those communities facing a real danger of complete destruction.

26. According to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, of those living entirely in Area C, approximately 18,500 live in small, sedentary villages and 27,500 reside in Bedouin and other herding communities, many in remote areas. They live in very basic structures (e.g., tents and tin shelters), have limited access to services and have no service infrastructure (including water, sanitation and electricity infrastructure). Food insecurity among those communities is high, at 55 per cent, compared to the overall level of 22 per cent for the West Bank. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs observed worrying trends regarding the displacement of Palestinians in Area C. The single most common reason causing people to move stems from the restrictive planning regime applied by the occupying Power, which makes it virtually impossible for Palestinians to obtain permissions to build. In many cases, it is due to a combination of other factors, such as settler violence, movement restrictions, including the wall, reduced income, demolitions, or obstructed access to water, education and other services.

The wall

27. Israel continued the illegal construction of the wall in the West Bank, including in and around Occupied East Jerusalem, in defiance of the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs reported in July that, according to the most recently approved route, the wall's total length was approximately 708 km, more than twice the length of the 1949 Armistice Line (Green Line) between the West Bank and Israel. Approximately 61.8 per cent of the wall was complete, a further 8.2 per cent was under construction and 30 per cent was planned but not yet constructed. When completed, the majority of the route, approximately 85 per cent, would run inside the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, rather than along the Green Line. The total area located between the wall and the Green Line amounted to 9.4 per cent of the West Bank, including East Jerusalem and "no man's land". The inclusion of Israeli settlements, together with areas planned for their future expansion, constituted the major factor for the deviation of the wall's route from the Green Line. The area on the western, or "Israeli", side of the wall included over 85 per cent of the total settler population in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, living in 71 of the 150 settlements.

Security

28. The security situation on the ground remained a cause of serious concern. The Palestinian Authority continued to work to provide security in areas under its authority and to meet its road map commitments to combat terrorist attacks. In November 2010, a sixth battalion of Palestinian national security forces completed its training in Jordan and was deployed in the West Bank, raising the number of newly trained security personnel in the West Bank to over 3,500. Palestinians have seen law and order return to the main cities, and Israelis have faced comparatively few acts of violence from the West Bank. Despite those efforts by the Palestinian Authority, Israeli occupying forces continued to conduct routine military raids and arrests throughout the West Bank. During the reporting period (as of 4 October), 11 Palestinians were killed and more than 1,300 injured by Israeli forces in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, including during clashes between demonstrators and Israeli forces. Israeli forces conducted more than 3,000 search-and-arrest operations during the reporting period.

29. In the Gaza Strip, Israeli forces killed 104 Palestinians and injured over 500 Palestinians during the reporting period (as of 4 October) in incidents involving air strikes and the enforcement of access restrictions near the border fence. Israeli restrictions on Palestinian access to land (up to 1,500 metres from the border fence) and sea (beyond three nautical miles from the shore) continued to result in casualties and hinder the livelihoods of thousands of Palestinians in Gaza.

30. Israel reported in late August that more than 550 rockets had been fired from Gaza into southern Israel during the past 12 months. On 6 April, a mortar shell from Gaza hit a school bus in southern Israel and a 13-year-old Israeli boy later died of his wounds. In total, 2 Israeli civilians, including a child, were killed, and 23 others, including 4 children, and 3 foreign workers were injured by rocket fire from Gaza during the reporting period.

Gaza Strip

31. Israel continued to ignore its obligations under international law to provide protection to the civilian population in the Gaza Strip. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs reported in July that among the 1.6 million population of Gaza, 38 per cent lived in poverty, 31 per cent of the workforce was unemployed, 47 per cent of youths were unemployed, 54 per cent were food insecure, and over 75 per cent were aid dependent. The economic output in 2010 was 20 per cent lower than in 2005, and 35 per cent of Gaza's farmland and 85 per cent of its fishing waters were totally or partially inaccessible owing to Israeli military measures.

32. Despite the Israeli claims of "easing restrictions", the Israeli blockade continues to severely restrict imports and exports, as well as the movement of people in and out of Gaza, and access to agricultural land and fishing waters. People in Gaza are unable to provide for their families, and the quality of infrastructure and vital services has continued to deteriorate, with a severely detrimental impact on the socio-economic conditions. As such, measures taken to ease the blockade in June 2010 have had little effect on the humanitarian situation. While imports have increased, they are still only at 45 per cent of the pre-2007 levels. Exports remain tightly restricted and are limited to some agricultural produce to Europe. Businesses cannot access their traditional markets of Israel and the West Bank. Thousands of people, some of them children, risk their lives smuggling goods through the tunnels under the border with Egypt. The tunnel industry in Gaza is a direct result of ongoing restrictions on the import of construction materials, the lack of employment opportunities and the huge reconstruction needs in Gaza. During the reporting period, at least 37 Palestinians were killed and at least 52 injured in tunnel-related incidents, including Israeli air strikes, tunnel collapses, electrocution and explosion of gas cylinders (as of 4 October).

Water

33. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs reported in July 2011 that 50 to 80 million litres of raw and partially treated sewage from the Gaza Strip were dumped in the sea each day, and over 90 per cent of the water from the Gaza aquifer was undrinkable. The already vulnerable water and sanitation infrastructure serving the Gaza Strip population was increasingly affected by Israeli attacks in recent months.

34. The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics reported that Israeli settlers in the West Bank consumed water 7 times more than Palestinians. The amount of pure water available in the Occupied Palestinian Territory is estimated to be 2.4 billion cubic metres yearly, of which Israel utilizes about 90 per cent. This leads to scarcity in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, forcing Palestinians to look for alternative resources, such as water purchased from an Israeli company. In 2010, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs recorded the demolition by Israel of 27 water cisterns and other rainwater-collection systems in the West Bank, which serve marginalized rural and herder Palestinian communities where water is already scarce and where drought is an ever-present threat. The removal of such critical infrastructure places serious strains on the resilience and coping mechanisms of these communities, who will become increasingly dependent on economically unsustainable sources such as tankered water.

Women

35. The West Bank and Gaza Office of UN-Women welcomed the fact that the Palestinian Authority had set up, for the first time, a Cross-sectoral National Gender Strategy and had pledged gender responsive budgeting to ensure gender equality and women's empowerment. Yet, women were still the most underutilized resource for socio-economic development, with formal labour force participation at 15 per cent and a lack of diversification in women's employment — 61 per cent in services and 20 per cent in agriculture.

Children's right to education

36. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs observed a number of concerns related to the right to education for children in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. Continuing hostilities between the Israeli military and armed Palestinian groups in the Gaza Strip have affected the students of both populations. In Gaza, seven schools were damaged as a result of Israeli air strikes. In southern Israel, two incidents of Palestinian rocket fire caused damage to school infrastructure. Classroom shortages are also the main challenge facing the education sector in the Gaza Strip. The ban on the import of building materials imposed by Israel is among the main reasons for the current shortage of classrooms. Approximately 80 per cent of government schools and 90 per cent of United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) schools run double shifts. As a result, students often have to be accommodated in schools far from where they live, and classroom time has been reduced by almost one third. Even with double shifting, schools are overcrowded, with an average of 39 pupils in a class. Those difficulties have had a severe negative impact on learning outcomes. To address the classroom shortages for the next five years, it is estimated that 130 new government-run schools and 100 new UNRWA schools are needed.

37. Israeli military raids on school premises in the West Bank resulted in children being exposed to tear gas inhalation, frightened or injured by sound bombs, or arrested within their schools. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs reported in July that part of a school had been demolished in the Area C village of Kherbet Al Dkeika in Hebron this year, and that six schools in East Jerusalem and 18 in Area C were served demolition orders. In East Jerusalem, almost half of the classrooms attended by Palestinian students were considered to be "non-standard" in 2010. To partially address these difficulties, double shifting is common, and schools are often forced to hold classes in rented houses that do not meet basic educational and health standards. It is almost impossible for alternative schools to obtain Israeli-issued building permits, and sometimes they are forced to build without a permit, running the risk of receiving demolition orders and heavy fines.

Prisoners

38. The Palestine Liberation Organization Negotiations Affairs Department said in January 2011 that Israel held roughly 6,000 Palestinian and Arab political prisoners in its prisons and detention centres, including 225 children and 39 women. That also included 315 political prisoners that it had held since before the conclusion of the Oslo accords in 1993. On 12 February 2011, the Palestinian Authority Minister of Prisoners Affairs, Issa Qaraqi, said that Palestinian children in Israeli prisons were

“subjected to all forms of torture” and that in 2010 Israel had imprisoned 1,000 children and imposed house arrests and large fines on many minors. In a report published on 13 April, the Palestinian Authority Ministry for Prisoners Affairs said that Israel had arrested a total of 750,000 Palestinians since the start of the occupation in 1967. On 4 August, at the outset of the month of Ramadan, Israel released 200 Palestinian security prisoners that were close to completing their sentences.

Palestinian State-building programme

39. Despite the very difficult circumstances under occupation, the Palestinian Authority steadily advanced its State-building programme with strong support from the international community. In a report to the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee meeting in April 2011, the World Bank reported that the Palestinian Authority had continued to strengthen its institutions, delivering public services and promoting reforms. It added that the quality of its public financial management had further improved. Education and health in the West Bank and Gaza were on the rise, comparing favourably to the performance of countries in the region as well as globally. Real economic growth in the West Bank and Gaza was estimated to have reached 9.3 per cent in 2010, exceeding the Palestinian Authority’s budget projection of 8 per cent. Also in a report to the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee meeting, the Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process (UNSCO) concluded that in six areas where the United Nations was most engaged, the Palestinian Authority’s governmental functions were now sufficient for a functioning government of a State.

40. Meeting in Brussels on 13 April, the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee recommended that the Palestinian Authority seek observer status in the World Trade Organization, and called on the Palestinian Authority to develop long-term strategies and advance trade-related institution-building. Also on 13 April, the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Catherine Ashton announced the signing of a deal that would open West Bank and Gaza markets to Europe, giving all agricultural products, processed agricultural products and fish and fishery products originating in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip duty free access to the European Union market.

41. In a report to the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee meeting in September 2011, the World Bank stated that the onset of an acute fiscal crisis, accompanied by declining economic growth, might undermine the promise of those institution-building achievements. The economic growth had been unsustainable, driven primarily by donor aid rather than a rebounding private sector, which remained stifled by Israeli restrictions on access to natural resources and markets. Under those conditions, lower-than-expected aid flows in the first half of 2011 had had an immediate impact on the Palestinian economy. The shortfall in external financial support in the first half of 2011 had also contributed to the current fiscal crisis facing the Palestinian Authority. The United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, also in a report to the September Ad Hoc Liaison Committee meeting, stated that the institutional achievements of the Palestinian State-building agenda were fundamentally constrained in realizing their full potential by the lack of an enabling political environment, and that the constraints on the existence and successful functioning of the institutions of a potential State of Palestine arose

primarily from the persistence of occupation, the unresolved issues in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the Palestinian divide.

Reconciliation

42. On 27 April 2011, Fatah, Hamas and other Palestinian factions concluded a reconciliation agreement in Cairo under Egyptian auspices, and a signing ceremony was held on 4 May in Cairo. The agreement provides for the establishment of a transitional Government of technocrats that would prepare for parliamentary and presidential elections in a year and work for the reconstruction of the Gaza Strip. Implementation of the accord, however, has been stalled amid disputes over the composition and programme of a new government.

United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East

43. The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) continued to provide extensive core services and emergency assistance to the Palestine refugees in its five fields of operations. The Israeli Government undertook measures to ease the movement of goods into and out of the Gaza Strip, but those measures still fell well short of the level required to meet the needs of the Palestinian civilian population and reconstruction requirements, or to ensure the revival of the economy. UNRWA continues to experience a grave financial crisis which threatens its ability to sustain or improve its services, to continue emergency assistance programmes, and to complete essential projects, such as the reconstruction of the Nahr El Bared Camp in Lebanon. The Committee reiterates its appreciation for the dedication of UNRWA to its mission and calls upon all donors to increase contributions to ensure the well-being of the population of 4.8 million registered refugees under the mandate of the Agency.

United Nations Development Programme/Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

44. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), through its Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People, continued to respond to the development needs in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. The UNDP/Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People, in support of the Palestinian Authority's National Development Plan 2011-2013, developed its strategy, entitled "Development for Freedom: Empowered Lives, a Resilient Nation 2011-2013", outlining the way the United Nations Development Programme/Programme intended to support Palestinians' aspiration for Statehood. The three-year plan will focus on democratic governance and the rule of law, economic empowerment of the most vulnerable and private sector investment, environment and management of natural resources, and public and social infrastructure for a viable State. Particular focus is on three geographic areas where the needs are the greatest owing to the lack of Palestinian Authority access — the Gaza Strip, East Jerusalem and Area C.

45. The Committee also remained appreciative of the important work of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. It noted that the consolidated appeal for 2011 focused on delivering humanitarian assistance, increased protection of civilians, enhanced monitoring and reporting on the humanitarian situation and the strengthening of United Nations humanitarian coordination structures.

Chapter V

Action taken by the Committee

A. Action taken in accordance with General Assembly resolution 65/13

46. In pursuance of its mandate, the Committee continued to mobilize the international community in support of the Palestinian people, in cooperation with United Nations bodies, Governments, intergovernmental and civil society organizations and others.

1. Action taken in the Security Council

47. During the reporting period, the Security Council has continued to monitor the situation on the ground and the efforts to implement the road map. It held monthly briefings throughout the year under the agenda item entitled "The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question".

48. During the open debates at the Council meetings held on 19 January, 21 April, and 26 July 2011, the Chair of the Committee delivered statements (see S/PV.6470, S/PV.6520, S/PV.6590).

2. Action taken by the Bureau of the Committee

49. On 14 January and 19 August 2011, the Bureau of the Committee issued statements on Israel's illegal settlement activity in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem.

B. Action taken by the Committee and the Division for Palestinian Rights in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 65/13 and 65/14

1. Committee meetings at Headquarters

50. At its periodic meetings at Headquarters in New York, the Committee, among other things, heard presentations by representatives of UNRWA and the Association of International Development Agencies on the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

2. Programme of international meetings and conferences

51. Through its programme of international meetings and conferences, the Committee continued to raise international awareness of the various aspects of the question of Palestine and international support for the rights of the Palestinian people and the peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine.

52. In the period under review, the following international events were held under the auspices of the Committee, in 2011:

(a) The United Nations International Meeting on the Question of Palestine, United Nations Office at Vienna, 7 and 8 March;

(b) United Nations Latin American and Caribbean Meeting in Support of Israeli-Palestinian Peace, Montevideo, 29 and 30 March;

(c) United Nations Meeting of Civil Society in Support of Israeli-Palestinian Peace, Montevideo, 31 March;

(d) United Nations Seminar on Assistance to the Palestinian People, Helsinki, 28 and 29 April;

(e) United Nations International Meeting in Support of the Israeli-Palestinian Peace Process, Brussels, 28 and 29 June.

53. The above-mentioned events were attended by representatives of Governments, Palestine, intergovernmental organizations and United Nations system entities, as well as parliamentarians and representatives of civil society and the media. The reports of the meetings were issued as publications of the Division for Palestinian Rights and were made available through the "Question of Palestine" website maintained by the Division.

54. In Vienna, on the margins of the United Nations International Meeting, the Committee delegation held consultations with representatives of the Austrian Ministry for European and International Affairs, the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean. It also met with the Director-General of the United Nations Office at Vienna and the Deputy United Nations Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process.

55. During its stay in Montevideo, in connection with the United Nations Latin American and Caribbean Meeting, the delegation of the Committee was received by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Uruguay, Luis Almagro. The delegation also met with a group of parliamentarians led by the Chairpersons of the International Affairs Committees of the Senate and the House of Representatives. On its way back from Montevideo to New York, the delegation was received in Buenos Aires by the Deputy Foreign Minister of Argentina, Alberto D'Alotto.

56. In Helsinki, on the sidelines of the United Nations Seminar on Assistance to the Palestinian People, the Committee delegation met with the Secretary-General and Chief of the Cabinet of the President of Finland, Päivi Kairamo-Hella, as well as with a number of Finnish parliamentarians and representatives of leading civil society organizations involved in conflict resolution efforts.

57. In Brussels, in the margin of the United Nations International Meeting, the Committee delegation met with the Deputy Director-General for Multilateral Affairs and Globalization of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Belgium, Michel Goffin; the Chairman of the European Parliament Delegation for Relations with the Palestinian Legislative Council, Maghreb and Mashreq countries, Proinsias de Rossa, and other members of the European Parliament and their advisers at the European Parliament; the President of the European Economic and Social Committees, Staffan Nilsson; the Chief Diplomatic Adviser to the President of the European Parliament, Alexander Stutzmann; and the Head of the Middle East Division at the European External Action Service, Ilkka Uusitalo.

3. Cooperation with intergovernmental organizations

58. Throughout the year, the Committee continued its cooperation with the African Union, the European Union, the League of Arab States, the Non-Aligned Movement

and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation. The Committee is appreciative of the active participation of their representatives in the various international events held under its auspices.

4. Cooperation with civil society

Civil society organizations

59. The Committee continued its cooperation with civil society organizations worldwide. Representatives of civil society participated in all meetings organized under the auspices of the Committee, including the observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People on 29 November 2010. The meetings provided civil society representatives with an opportunity to discuss the situation on the ground and their programmes in support of the Palestinian people and to improve coordination of their activities. The Committee was appreciative of the work done by civil society organizations and encouraged them to continue contributing to efforts aimed at realizing a two-State solution.

60. The Committee maintained and developed its liaison with national, regional and international coordinating mechanisms cooperating with it, in addition to its established liaison with a large number of individual organizations. At the United Nations Meeting of Civil Society in Support of Israeli-Palestinian Peace, held in Montevideo in March, the deliberations focused on the ways of engaging the civil society in Latin America and the Caribbean for peace and reconciliation between the Israelis and the Palestinians. While in Brussels, in connection with the United Nations International Meeting in Support of the Israeli-Palestinian Peace Process, the Committee delegation held consultations with 11 representatives of civil society organizations from Europe, the Occupied Palestinian Territory and Israel.

61. During the reporting period, seven civil society organizations were accredited to the Committee.

62. The Division for Palestinian Rights maintained a page on civil society (<http://unispal.un.org/unispal.nsf/ngo.htm>) on the "Question of Palestine" website as a tool for the exchange of information and networking and for cooperation between civil society and the Committee.

63. The Division maintained a Facebook page for information about developments related to the question of Palestine and the work of the Committee. The page has attracted some 700 additional "fans" during the reporting period, bringing the total to over 1,390. In addition, the Division continued to publish the periodic online bulletin *NGO Action News*, in order to catalogue and publicize civil society initiatives.

Parliaments and inter-parliamentary organizations

64. The Committee continued to attach great importance to developing its liaison with national and regional parliaments and their organizations. The international events held during 2011 were addressed by parliamentarians from Argentina, Belgium, Brazil, Chile, Israel, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Uruguay and the Occupied Palestinian Territory, as well as members of the European Parliament.

5. Research, monitoring and publications

65. The Division carried out research and monitoring activities and responded to requests for information and briefings on the question of Palestine. Under the guidance of the Committee, which reiterated the relevance of the research, monitoring and publications programme, it also prepared the publications listed below for dissemination, including through the Internet:

(a) Monthly bulletin on action taken by the United Nations system and intergovernmental organizations relevant to the question of Palestine;

(b) Monthly chronology of events relating to the question of Palestine, based on media reports and other sources;

(c) Reports of international meetings and conferences organized under the auspices of the Committee;

(d) Special bulletins and information notes on the observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People;

(e) Periodic reviews of developments related to the Middle East peace process;

(f) Annual compilation of resolutions and decisions of the General Assembly and the Security Council relating to the question of Palestine.

6. United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine

66. Pursuant to successive annual General Assembly mandates, the Division for Palestinian Rights, in cooperation with relevant technical and library services of the United Nations Secretariat, continued to administer, maintain, expand and develop the United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine (UNISPAL) and the “Question of Palestine” website, which is located on the United Nations home page under “Peace and Security”. That included the ongoing maintenance and upgrading of the technical components of the system to ensure the uninterrupted presence of UNISPAL (<http://unispal.un.org>) on the Internet and involved the expansion of the document collection to include relevant new and old United Nations system and related documents. Documents in French were given French markers to facilitate the work of French-speaking researchers. In addition, steps continued to be taken to enhance the user-friendliness and usefulness of UNISPAL, including by incorporating additional multimedia content and RSS and Twitter feeds intended to alert users about newly posted materials. The Division has continued to improve the redesigned “Question of Palestine” portal.

7. Training programme for staff of the Palestinian Authority

67. In accordance with the request of the General Assembly, the training programme conducted by the Division has been enhanced and involved four staff members of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Palestinian Authority. Two Palestinian Authority staff members participated in the New York training programme during the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly, where they familiarized themselves with various aspects of the work of the Secretariat and other United Nations organs and conducted research on specific topics. Two additional Palestinian Authority staff members participated in a three-week training programme at the United Nations Office at Geneva during the Trade and

Development Board session from 14 to 30 September 2011, where they familiarized themselves with the work of UNCTAD, including on trade facilitation and foreign direct investment. They also attended briefings on the work of other United Nations entities, including the Human Rights Council, the World Health Organization and the World Trade Organization.

8. International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People

68. The International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People was observed at Headquarters in New York, the United Nations Office at Geneva and the United Nations Office at Vienna on 29 November 2010. On the occasion of the observance at Headquarters, in addition to a special meeting of the Committee and other activities, a photo exhibit entitled “Summer Games in Gaza” was presented by UNRWA under the auspices of the Committee, in cooperation with the Department of Public Information. The Committee also sponsored a cultural performance “The Gaza Monologues” by the Ashtar Theatre — Ramallah. The Committee noted with appreciation that the International Day of Solidarity had also been observed by United Nations information centres and other bodies in many cities throughout the world. Details on the observance are contained in the special bulletin issued by the Division.

Chapter VI

Action taken by the Department of Public Information in accordance with General Assembly resolution 65/15

69. The Department of Public Information, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 65/15, continued to implement its special information programme on the question of Palestine. In doing so, it strove to enhance dialogue and understanding, while sensitizing public opinion to the question of Palestine and the Middle East peace process.

70. During the reporting period, the Department used all of its information outlets and products to highlight the broadest possible range of developments and issues related to the question of Palestine and the Middle East peace process. The online United Nations News Centre provided extensive coverage of the question of Palestine and the United Nations. The News Centre's English-language version alone published some 300 stories during the reporting period. The Department also produced a total of 144 press releases on the question of Palestine in English and French, including summaries of formal meetings and press conferences, as well as statements and press releases by the Secretary-General and other United Nations officials.

71. UN Radio, also available in all official languages of the United Nations, as well as in Swahili and Portuguese, provided regular coverage of issues and events connected to the question of Palestine. It paid particularly close attention to the plight of Palestinians living in the Gaza Strip and the work done on the ground by UNRWA and other United Nations entities. Coverage was also provided by UNTV through its live broadcasts and web streaming, as well as dissemination via the UNifeed satellite distribution system and UNTV's Channel 150 on Time Warner cable network. A feature story on female entrepreneurs in the Occupied Palestinian Territory was distributed to hundreds of broadcasters worldwide as part of both UNTV's news magazine programme, *21st Century*, and the *UN in Action* series. UNTV also helped to distribute video content, including documentaries, produced by UNRWA. The Department also provided live webcast for over 56 hours of major discussions concerning the question of Palestine, including meetings in the Security Council and the General Assembly.

72. The Department arranged six briefings for 230 college and graduate-level students and responded to over 370 public inquiries on peace in the Middle East. The question of Palestine also continued to be a regular feature on the United Nations guided tour. Visitors were able to view the permanent exhibit on the topic, and tour guides and the audio tour recording provided additional information on the subject. The Department's Graphic Design Unit has worked on updating the permanent exhibit on Palestine, which is expected to be launched before the end of the year.

73. The Department's annual training programme for Palestinian media practitioners took place at United Nations Headquarters from 8 November to 10 December 2010. Nine mid-level Palestinian journalists working mainly in print media attended the programme, which also included visits to Geneva and Washington, D.C. The primary focus of the five-week session was strengthening the participants' capacity as print media professionals, including training with Internet-based media in the Arabic language.

74. The Department, in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Hungary, organized the 2011 International Media Seminar on Peace in the Middle East in Budapest on 12 and 13 July. The Seminar, which brought together over 100 former and present policymakers from Israel and the Palestinian Authority, international media personalities, as well as members of academia and civil society, focused on the theme “Prospects for Peace: Understanding Current Challenges and Overcoming Obstacles”. It took account of the dramatic changes in the political landscape in the Middle East and North Africa, including the increasing role of new media such as Twitter and Facebook in fostering political change. The Seminar was notable for its focus on the role of culture and the media in promoting understanding between Israelis and Palestinians. Eminent writers, cultural activists, musicians and political bloggers were among the panellists.

75. The network of United Nations information centres and services worldwide continued to disseminate information on the question of Palestine. The information centres promoted the observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People and widely disseminated the message of the Secretary-General in official and non-official languages, including German, Kirundi, Portuguese and Turkish. Commemorative events, such as seminars, exhibits and film screenings, were organized in Dar es Salaam, Moscow, Manama and Pretoria.

Chapter VII

Conclusions and recommendations of the Committee

76. The reporting period was characterized by a continued deadlock in the peace process that began 20 years ago with the Madrid Peace Conference. It was accompanied by further stagnation on the ground, while the broader region underwent dramatic and rapid changes. International efforts to create conditions to bring the parties back to the negotiating table have not been successful owing to Israel's refusal to commit to the internationally supported terms of reference of the Middle East peace process for the achievement of the two-State solution on the basis of the pre-1967 borders in accordance with relevant United Nations resolutions. The illegal Israeli settlement campaign accelerated, particularly in occupied East Jerusalem. Meanwhile, the two-year programme of the Palestinian Authority laid the institutional foundations of a functional State. The Palestinian leadership embarked on a successful worldwide diplomatic campaign, with a growing number of countries recognizing the Palestinian State, upgrading its diplomatic representation, and signalling their support for its bid to seek United Nations membership.

77. The Committee remains frustrated by the current stalemate in the peace process. The agreed upon target date of September 2011 for the conclusion of a peace settlement passed without a breakthrough. The Committee emphasizes that the status quo is unsustainable. Maintaining negotiations without clear parameters and timeline provides only cover for expanding settlements and consolidating the occupation. The Committee calls for a resumption of credible negotiations towards the two-State solution on the basis of relevant Security Council resolutions, the Madrid terms of reference, the road map, and the Arab Peace Initiative. The Committee is implacably opposed to all settlement activities by Israel, which are inimical to the peace process and contravene international law, Security Council and General Assembly resolutions and the road map. It was profoundly disappointed by the failure of the Security Council to uphold its obligations under the Charter of the United Nations in that regard. The continued engagement of the international community remains critical. The Committee welcomes the principles articulated by President Obama on 19 May 2011, and calls on the Quartet to translate them into comprehensive final status parameters so that Israeli-Palestinian negotiations can resume on that basis.

78. The Committee is encouraged by the success of the Palestinian State-building and reform programme, which it has consistently supported, and by the broadening international recognition of the State of Palestine. The Committee welcomes the intra-Palestinian agreement signed in Cairo as a step towards Palestinian unity and calls for its fulfilment. Further progress towards the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinians requires a dismantlement of the Israeli occupation and its associated regime of settlements, checkpoints, the separation wall, demolitions, land confiscations and expulsions, which have been alarmingly intensifying, particularly in East Jerusalem and in Area C. The financial situation of the Palestinian Authority should be stabilized to enable it to sustain its State-building momentum. The Committee calls on donors to provide urgent and generous support, and looks forward to the early convening of a donors conference. The Committee

condemns any illegal and provocative seizure by Israel of the Palestinian Authority's revenues.

79. The Committee remains deeply concerned by the situation on the ground and the systematic violations of humanitarian and human rights law, which particularly affect the most vulnerable groups of Palestinian civilians — women, children and prisoners. The Committee is alarmed by the escalation of violence in and around Gaza, which threatens to end the relative calm that has prevailed in recent months. It reiterates its call for all attacks against all civilians to stop immediately and unconditionally, including rocket fire from Gaza and air strikes on populated areas in Gaza, settler violence and the shootings of unarmed protesters. The Gaza blockade should be immediately lifted by Israel, the occupying Power, in accordance with Security Council resolution 1860 (2009). The Security Council and the High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention should act urgently and decisively to guarantee the protection of civilians in all situations and ensure accountability for violations of international law.

80. The Committee and the Division for Palestinian Rights will continue through their mandated activities to generate heightened international awareness of the current challenges for a comprehensive, just and lasting solution of the question of Palestine. In this connection, the Committee emphasizes the useful and constructive contribution of the Division in support of its mandate aimed at enabling the Palestinian people to exercise their inalienable rights. It notes with satisfaction: (a) the sustained level of dialogue, engagement and support of the international community for its programme objectives, for instance, in terms of both participation at the meetings convened and the use of printed and electronic information materials provided by the Division; (b) the continued involvement of parliamentarians and civil society organizations in support of the efforts of the Committee and the United Nations towards a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine; and (c) the increased international awareness of the United Nations policies and activities on the question of Palestine as indicated by the growing number of documents and relevant information materials on the issue accessed by users worldwide on the websites maintained by the Division. The Committee also considers that the annual training programme for staff of the Palestinian Authority carried out by the Division has proved its usefulness as it directly contributes to Palestinian capacity-building efforts. The Committee strongly recommends that that important mandated activity be continued and, where possible, further enhanced.

81. The Committee will focus its programme of international meetings and conferences in 2012, implemented by the Division, on widening international support for the achievement of inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination, national independence and sovereignty, and to return to their homes and property. The programme will also focus on strengthening international support for the permanent status negotiations and contributing to the creation of a favourable international atmosphere for their conduct in good faith. The Committee intends to mobilize increased international scrutiny of the developments on the ground, in particular the halt of all settlement activities in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, and an end to all other illegal Israeli policies and practices in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. It will support

global campaigns to challenge Israeli impunity and promote the concept of Israeli accountability for its actions towards the Palestinian people.

82. The Committee will continue to pay special attention to highlighting the plight of the most disadvantaged Palestinians, such as the Palestine refugees, the Palestinians living in Gaza and Palestinian political prisoners. Taking into account the urgency of resolving the situation of thousands of Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails and detention facilities, and as a follow-up to its 2010 International Meeting on that issue, the Committee will hold an international meeting at the United Nations Office at Geneva on that topic. Also, considering the central role of youth as the agents of change through non-violent, peaceful means, as recent events in the Arab world have shown, and the need for an increased involvement of the Palestinian youth in the shaping of their future State, the Committee will convene a meeting on the role of youth in the resolution of the question of Palestine, with the participation of youth political and community leaders and diplomats.

83. The Committee will continue to mobilize support for the Palestinian institution-building and all other efforts to facilitate the viability of the Palestinian State. It will reach out to and engage Governments, parliamentarians and civil society to mobilize support for a just solution of all permanent status issues. The Committee wishes to contribute to efforts towards ending incitement on both sides, provide a venue to have the narratives heard and reconciled and, with the help of civil society, to promote peace education. It will pay particular attention to the inclusion and empowerment of women and their organizations in this process. The Committee also wishes to work towards Palestinian reconciliation and will strive to involve in its events Palestinians from different ends of the political spectrum.

84. The Committee highly values civil society initiatives in support of the Palestinian people and welcomes the growing calls from civil society groups for peaceful protests against the status quo. It lauds the courageous advocacy actions of countless activists, including eminent personalities and parliamentarians, who participate in demonstrations against the wall, try to break the siege of Gaza and keep their home constituencies informed about the harsh realities of life under occupation. The Committee salutes the achievements of civil society which give hope to the Palestinian people. The Committee encourages civil society partners to work with their national Governments and other institutions with a view to gaining their full support for the work of the United Nations, including that of the Committee, on the question of Palestine. It will continue to assess its programme of cooperation with civil society and consult them on ways to enhance their contribution. The Committee appreciates the support it receives from the Secretariat in strengthening cooperation with civil society.

85. The Committee looks forward to further developing its cooperation with parliamentarians and their umbrella organizations. Parliamentarians have a special responsibility to ensure that their Governments actively promote and support the realization of the two-State solution and ensure respect for international law, in accordance with their international obligations.

86. The Committee requests the Division to continue its substantive and secretariat support, the programme of research, monitoring and publications

and other informational activities. The Division should pay special attention to continued development of the “Question of Palestine” portal and use of new technologies and media, including web-based social information networks, such as Facebook and Twitter. The Division should also continue to develop the UNISPAL document collection by, among other things, continuing to digitize and upload historic documents and to develop user-friendly search features such as the French titles project. The Division should further develop the annual training programme for staff of the Palestinian Authority paying special attention to the programme’s gender balance, and organize the annual observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

87. The Committee is of the view that the special information programme on the question of Palestine of the Department of Public Information has made an important contribution to informing the media and public opinion of the relevant issues. The Committee requests the continuation of the programme, with the necessary flexibility, as warranted by developments relevant to the question of Palestine.

88. The Committee, at its meeting held on 30 September 2011, took note of the application of Palestine for admission to membership in the United Nations submitted by President Mahmoud Abbas on 23 September 2011 to the Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon. The Committee calls upon the Security Council and the General Assembly to favourably consider Palestine’s application for United Nations membership. The Committee also supports the appeal made by President Abbas before the General Assembly to the States that have not yet recognized the State of Palestine to do so.

89. Wishing to make its contribution to the achievement of a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine, and in view of the many difficulties facing the Palestinian people and besetting the peace process, the Committee calls upon all States to join it in this endeavour and to extend their cooperation and support to the Committee, and invites the General Assembly again to recognize the importance of its role and to reconfirm its mandate.



Report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

General Assembly
Official Records
Sixty-seventh Session
Supplement No. 35



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**Report of the Committee on the
Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of
the Palestinian People**



United Nations • New York, 2012

Note

Symbols of United Nations documents are composed of letters combined with figures. Mention of such a symbol indicates a reference to a United Nations document.

Contents

<i>Chapter</i>	<i>Page</i>
Letter of transmittal	iv
I. Introduction	1
II. Mandate of the Committee	4
III. Organization of work	5
A. Membership and officers	5
B. Participation in the work of the Committee	5
IV. Review of the situation relating to the question of Palestine	6
V. Action taken by the Committee	14
A. Action taken in accordance with General Assembly resolution 66/14	14
B. Action taken by the Committee and the Division for Palestinian Rights in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 66/14 and 66/15	14
VI. Action taken by the Department of Public Information in accordance with General Assembly resolution 66/16	19
VII. Conclusions and recommendations of the Committee	21

Letter of transmittal

[8 October 2012]

Mr. Secretary-General,

I have the honour to enclose herewith the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for submission to the General Assembly in accordance with paragraph 2 of its resolution 66/14 of 30 November 2011.

The report covers the period from 7 October 2011 to 6 October 2012.

(Signed) Abdou Salam **Diallo**
Chair of the Committee on the Exercise of the
Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon
Secretary-General of the United Nations
New York

Chapter I

Introduction

1. The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People was established by the General Assembly by its resolution 3376 (XXX) of 10 November 1975, with the task of recommending a programme designed to enable the Palestinian people to exercise its inalienable rights, as recognized by the Assembly in its resolution 3236 (XXIX) of 22 November 1974.

2. The recommendations made by the Committee in its first report to the General Assembly¹ were endorsed by the Assembly as a basis for the solution of the question of Palestine. In its subsequent reports,² the Committee has continued to stress that a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, must be based on the relevant United Nations resolutions, including Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), as well as on the following essential principles: the withdrawal of Israel, the occupying Power, from the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem, and from the other occupied Arab territories; respect for the right of all States in the region to live in peace within secure and internationally recognized boundaries; and the recognition and exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. The recommendations of the Committee contained in its first report could not be implemented, and the Assembly has each year renewed the Committee's mandate and requested it to intensify efforts in pursuit of its objectives.

3. The Committee has consistently supported the objective of two States, Israel and Palestine, living side by side within secure and recognized borders on the basis of the 1949 armistice lines, in accordance with relevant United Nations resolutions, including Security Council resolutions 1397 (2002) and 1515 (2003). The Committee welcomed and supported the Quartet's Road Map and called upon the parties to implement it. In keeping with its mandate, the Committee has continued to work towards creating conditions for the successful conduct of the negotiations on a permanent settlement allowing the Palestinian people to realize its inalienable rights. The Committee has also promoted support and assistance by the international community to the Palestinian people.

4. The reporting period was characterized by the deadlocked political process and the deteriorating socioeconomic situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. There has been no breakthrough in efforts towards resuming direct Israeli-Palestinian negotiations, owing to Israel's consistent refusal to freeze its settlement activity and adhere to the long-standing terms of reference of the peace process. In the absence of credible negotiations, the Palestinian leadership continued its diplomatic initiatives to gain international recognition of Palestine as a State within the 1967 borders on the basis of international law and relevant United Nations resolutions. While Palestine's request for admission as a United Nations Member State, submitted on 23 September 2011, has been pending in the Security Council, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) admitted Palestine as a member State on 31 October 2011.

¹ *Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-first Session, Supplement No. 35 (A/31/35).*

² Since the thirty-first session, the Committee has submitted annual reports to the General Assembly; all such reports have been issued as supplement No. 35 of the sessional documentation of the Assembly.

5. The situation in the Gaza Strip continued to be a source of serious concern, with high rates of poverty and unemployment. The continued blockade imposed by Israel, the occupying Power, forced 1.6 million Palestinians in Gaza, half of them children and two thirds of them refugees, to continue suffering from an acute shortage of basic goods and essential services. Reconstruction and rehabilitation continued to be hampered by the blockade. Israel continued to conduct air strikes and other military operations in and around Gaza, resulting in Palestinian casualties, including many civilians. Rocket and mortar fire by armed Palestinian groups into southern Israel also continued, endangering the lives of the Israeli population.

6. Israeli military raids and incursions in West Bank population centres continued, involving the killing and injuring of Palestinians, including children. At least 2,500 Palestinians, including women and children, were arrested during those operations. Many unarmed civilians were subjected to the excessive use of force by the Israeli occupying forces during demonstrations against the occupation, resulting in many injuries. Israel continued to expand its illegal settlements in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, attempted to retroactively “legalize” so-called outposts, created new settlements and approved thousands of new settlement units. The construction of the separation wall continued in defiance of the International Court of Justice advisory opinion (2004), resulting in further confiscation of Palestinian land and demolition of properties, further harming socioeconomic conditions and causing the displacement of more Palestinian families. The situation in Occupied East Jerusalem remained alarming, with continued land confiscations, house demolitions and evictions of Palestinian residents, and the transfer of more Israeli settlers into the City.

7. The Palestinian Authority steadily advanced its State-building programme on the ground, but it was challenged by a serious budget deficit as well as by restrictions and obstacles imposed by Israel on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, which continued to prevent the normal movement of persons and goods, economic activity and sustained growth. In addition, a decrease in foreign aid and the failure of donor countries to fulfil their financial pledges contributed to the dire situation. As for Palestinian reconciliation, Fatah and Hamas reached an agreement in February 2012 to form a transitional Government as part of the process launched by their May 2011 agreement, but its implementation has been pending.

8. The activities of the Committee and its Bureau in the reporting period focused on the need for respect for the relevant United Nations resolutions and the urgency of resuming negotiations between the parties in the interest of salvaging the two-State solution and advancing the realization of a just, comprehensive and lasting peace. The Committee monitored the situation on the ground and the political developments, implemented its programme of international meetings and conferences, held consultations with representatives of Governments, national parliaments and inter-parliamentary organizations, as well as civil society, and reached out to its partners worldwide using new communications media. The Committee reiterated its position of principle that a permanent settlement of the question of Palestine could be achieved only through ending the occupation that began in 1967, establishing a Palestinian State on the basis of the pre-1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital, and a just and agreed solution to the Palestine refugees issue on the basis of General Assembly resolution 194 (III).

9. The economic cost of the continued Israeli occupation of the Palestinian Territory was discussed at the annual seminar on assistance to the Palestinian people organized by the Committee in Cairo in February 2012. The seminar was followed in April by an international meeting in Geneva that focused on the question of Palestinian political prisoners held by Israel. The theme of another international meeting held in Paris in May addressed the role of youth and women in the peaceful resolution of the question of Palestine. It was followed in July by a regional meeting for Asia and the Pacific, at which the role of countries in the region in addressing the obstacles to the two-State solution was discussed.

Chapter II

Mandate of the Committee

10. On 30 November 2011, the General Assembly renewed the mandate of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (see resolution 66/14), requested the Secretary-General to continue to provide the Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat with the necessary resources to carry out its programme of work (see resolution 66/15) and requested the continuation of the special information programme on the question of Palestine of the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat (see resolution 66/16). On the same date, the Assembly adopted resolution 66/17, entitled “Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine”.

Chapter III

Organization of work

A. Membership and officers

11. During the reporting period, Ecuador joined the Committee as a new member and Saudi Arabia as an observer.

12. The Committee is composed of the following Member States: Afghanistan, Belarus, Cuba, Cyprus, Ecuador, Guinea, Guyana, India, Indonesia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mali, Malta, Namibia, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Pakistan, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of).

13. The observers at the Committee meetings are: Algeria, Bangladesh, Bulgaria, China, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Niger, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka, the Syrian Arab Republic, the United Arab Emirates, Viet Nam and Yemen, as well as the African Union, the League of Arab States, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and Palestine.

14. At its 339th meeting, on 13 February 2012, the Committee re-elected Abdou Salam Diallo (Senegal) as Chair, Pedro Núñez Mosquera (Cuba) and Zahir Tanin (Afghanistan) as Vice-Chairs. Christopher Grima (Malta) was elected Rapporteur.

B. Participation in the work of the Committee

15. As in previous years, the Committee reconfirmed that all United Nations Member States and observers wishing to participate in the work of the Committee were welcome to do so. In accordance with established practice, Palestine participated in the work of the Committee as an observer, attended all of its meetings and made observations and proposals for consideration by the Committee and its Bureau.

Chapter IV

Review of the situation relating to the question of Palestine

Political developments

16. Despite a series of quiet and informal meetings between the parties, there has been no breakthrough in efforts towards resuming Israeli-Palestinian dialogue and negotiations, owing to Israel's consistent refusal to freeze its illegal settlement activities, which continued to deepen mistrust and raise tensions and to jeopardize the two-State solution. On the contrary, Israel has continued to create new settlements, attempted to retroactively "legalize" so-called outposts, and announced plans for the construction of thousands of new settlement units during the reporting period.

17. Palestine's application for admission to United Nations membership, submitted by Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas on 23 September 2011, remains pending in the Security Council, since its Committee on the Admission of New Members was unable to make a unanimous recommendation to the Council, as reflected in its report of 11 November 2011. In his statement to the General Assembly on 27 September 2012, President Abbas said that Palestine had begun intensive consultations with various Member States and regional organizations aimed at having the Assembly adopt a resolution considering Palestine a non-Member State of the United Nations.

18. Meanwhile, the Palestinian leadership continued efforts to gain international recognition of Palestine as a State within the 1967 borders. On 31 October 2011, UNESCO admitted Palestine as a member State of the agency. The Israeli Government reacted to that development with punitive measures, including temporarily freezing the transfer of value-added tax and customs revenues that it collects on behalf of the Palestinian Authority pursuant to the Paris Protocol, and by announcing the accelerated construction of some 2,000 settlement units. On 29 June 2012, the UNESCO World Heritage Committee voted to add Bethlehem's Church of the Nativity and its pilgrimage route to the Heritage List.

19. During the reporting period, Iceland and Thailand announced that they recognized the State of Palestine, while several other States upgraded the status of the Palestinian delegation in their countries to that of an embassy or similar entity. According to the Negotiations Affairs Department of the Palestine Liberation Organization, to date some 130 States Members of the United Nations have recognized the State of Palestine.

Settlements

20. During the reporting period, Israel, the occupying Power, continued and intensified its illegal settlement activity in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics reported in August 2012 that, in 2011, the number of settlers in the 144 settlements in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, had been 536,932 (337,285 in the West Bank and 199,647 in East Jerusalem), reflecting an increase of almost 13,000 compared to 2010.

21. During the reporting period, the following plans were announced or approved by Israel: 119 housing units in the "Shilo" settlement (27 November 2011); 40 homes and a farm near "Efrat" (12 December); tenders for 348 units in "Beitar Illit" and 180 in "Givat Ze'ev" (18 December); the construction of 500 new units in

“Shilo” and the retroactive “legalization” of more than 200 units in “Shilo” and “Shvut Rachel” built without permits (22 February 2012); tenders for 180 units in “Givat Ze’ev” and 69 in “Katzrin” in the occupied Golan (4 April); 851 new units in several West Bank settlements (6 June); and 750 new housing units in “Ma’ale Adumim” (12 August).

22. In addition, on 31 December 2011, the Government of Israel announced that it would recognize the “Ramat Gilad” outpost established on private land of Palestinians from Kafr village, which would become part of the “Karnei Shomron” settlement. On 24 April 2012, the Government of Israel announced that it had granted legal status to three settlement outposts, “Bruchin”, “Sansana” and “Rechelim”. On 17 July, it was reported that the Israeli Defence Ministry had “legalized” the “Givat Salit” outpost by making it part of the nearby “Mehola” settlement.

23. In Occupied East Jerusalem, the following plans were announced or approved: construction of a new visitors’ centre at the “City of David National Park” in Silwan (11 February); 11 new apartments in “Pisgat Ze’ev” (8 October); approximately 2,600 housing units for a new settlement “Givat Hamatos” (11 October); tenders for 749 housing units in “Har Homa” and 65 in “Pisgat Ze’ev” (15 November); construction of a new Jewish enclave to be named “Maale David” in the heart of the Palestinian neighbourhood of Ras al-Amoud (7 December); tenders for 500 units in “Har Homa” (18 December); construction of 130 new settler units in East Jerusalem (28 December); three new tenders for 300 settlement housing units in Jerusalem (3 January 2012); 277 housing units in “Efrat” as part of a series of reprisals for Palestine’s admission to UNESCO (11 January); the establishment of a new settlement “Kidmat Zion”, with about 200 units on a plot of land purchased by United States of America millionaire Irving Moskowitz (2 April); tenders for 827 homes in “Har Homa” (4 April); construction of nine hotels in “Givat Hamatos” (1 May); 1,242 units in “Gilo” (10 May) and 180 units in “Armon HaNetziv” (26 June); tenders for 130 housing units in “Har Homa” and 41 in “Pisgat Ze’ev” (30 June); establishment of a military college on the Mount of Olives (2 July); and tenders for 130 housing units in “Har Homa” (16 August).

Settler violence

24. Settler-related violence in the West Bank and East Jerusalem continued to be a source of serious concern. According to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs of the Secretariat, at least 154 Palestinians were injured by Israeli settlers during the reporting period (as at 2 October). At least 39 Israeli settlers were injured by Palestinians during the same period. In 2012 (as at September), 13 Palestinians, including 8 children, have been injured in hit and run incidents involving Israeli settler vehicles. Inadequate law enforcement by Israel and lack of accountability continued to be the key factors underpinning the phenomenon of settler violence and deliberate provocations against the Palestinian civilian population, including acts against Palestinian children, families and farmers, homes, agricultural lands and orchards and desecration of Muslim and Christian holy sites.

Jerusalem

25. The Association for Civil Rights in Israel reported in May 2012 that 360,882 Palestinians comprised 38 per cent of the total population of the City of Jerusalem.

Since 1967, the residency status of 14,084 Palestinians had been revoked and rescinded by Israel, and those former residents were no longer permitted to live in the City. Some 78 per cent of Palestinians living in East Jerusalem lived below the poverty line. There was a chronic shortage of some 1,000 classrooms in East Jerusalem's education system. Palestinians were permitted to build on only 17 per cent of the area of East Jerusalem, most of which had already been totally exhausted by previous construction. A third of Palestinian land in East Jerusalem had been expropriated since 1967, and thousands of apartments for Israeli settlers had been built on it. Israel's building of the separation wall, the closing of passage points and the implementation of a strict "entry permit" regime had effectively cut off East Jerusalem from the West Bank, exacerbating the economic and social condition of its residents. Restrictions on entry from the West Bank, imposed both on patients and medical staff, had also led to a severe financial crisis in East Jerusalem hospitals, which provide the bulk of medical services for the entire West Bank. For 11 years now, Israel has also renewed the closure order of Palestinian institutions in East Jerusalem, including the Orient House and the Chamber of Commerce, in contradiction to Israel's road map obligations.

Movement restrictions

26. In July 2012, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs recorded 59 permanently staffed checkpoints, 34 barrier checkpoints, 26 partially staffed checkpoints, 455 unstaffed obstacles, and 343 flying checkpoints. As of the end of June 2012, 60 Palestinian communities, with a combined population of about 190,000, were still compelled to use detours that were two to five times longer than the direct route to the closest city. As a result, their access to livelihoods and basic services, including health, education and water supply, continued to be impaired. Some 94 per cent of the Jordan Valley and Dead Sea area remained off-limits for Palestinian use owing to their designation as closed military areas and nature reserves, or their allocation to Israeli settlements.

27. Access to private agricultural land in the vicinity of Israeli settlements has remained significantly constrained owing to the fencing off of those areas or to settler violence. Palestinian farmers who own land close to 55 Israeli settlements have access only through "prior" coordination with the Israeli army, which has continued to undermine the agricultural livelihoods of farmers from some 90 Palestinian communities. Palestinian movement within the Israeli-controlled section of Hebron City remained subject to severe restrictions. The area is segregated from the rest of the city by more than 120 closure obstacles and Palestinian movement by car, and in some cases, by foot, continued to be banned along certain streets. As a result, those Palestinians still living in the area continue to suffer from poor access to basic services, including education.

The wall

28. Israel continued the illegal construction of the wall in the Occupied West Bank, including in and around Occupied East Jerusalem, in defiance of the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice of 9 July 2004. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs reported in July 2012 that the wall's total length was approximately 708 km, more than twice the length of the 1949 Armistice Line (Green Line) between the West Bank and Israel. Approximately 62.1 per cent of the wall has been completed, a further 8 per cent is under construction, and 29.9 per

cent is planned but not yet constructed. When completed, some 85 per cent of the route would run inside the West Bank, rather than along the Green Line, isolating some 9.4 per cent of the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. The United Nations Register of Damage Caused by the Construction of the Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory has, to date, collected over 26,000 claims for material damage caused by the construction of the wall.

29. Israeli restrictions also continued to isolate East Jerusalem and obstruct the access of the majority of the Palestinian population to the City and its holy sites, medical, education and social services, and markets. Palestinians with West Bank identification cards who are granted special permits can only enter East Jerusalem through 4 of the 14 wall checkpoints around the City. According to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, around 7,500 Palestinians who reside in areas between the Green Line and the wall (Seam Zone), excluding East Jerusalem, require special permits to continue living in their own homes. Another 23,000 will be isolated if the wall is completed as planned.

Demolitions and displacements

30. According to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Israel carried out the demolition of at least 589 Palestinian-owned structures, 184 of which were residences, during the reporting period (as at 2 October), displacing at least 879 people, including many children. Among structures demolished in Area C (under Israeli control with no official Palestinian Authority presence) in 2012 were 44 structures funded by international donors. In 2011, over 110 such structures were demolished by Israel. Since the beginning of 2011, 44 per cent of the demolished assistance structures were basic residential shelters (e.g. tents) provided to vulnerable families, while the majority of the other structures were intended to support livelihoods or improve access to basic services.

31. According to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, approximately 18 per cent of the West Bank has been designated by Israel, the occupying Power, as a closed military zone for training or a “firing zone”. Approximately 5,000 Palestinians reside in those zones, in mostly Bedouin or herding communities, many of which existed prior to the closing of the areas. Two schools and one kindergarten located in firing zones currently have demolition orders against them. Some 45 per cent of demolitions of Palestinian-owned structures in Area C since 2010 have occurred in firing zones, displacing over 820 Palestinian civilians.

Security

32. Israeli occupying forces continued to conduct routine military raids and arrests throughout the West Bank. During the reporting period (as at 2 October), 5 Palestinians were killed and over 2,400 injured by Israeli forces in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, including during clashes with demonstrators. By August, Israeli forces arrested at least 2,500 Palestinians in some 3,500 search-and-arrest operations during the reporting period.

33. In the Gaza Strip, Israeli forces killed at least 77 Palestinians and injured more than 300 during the reporting period (as at 2 October) in incidents involving air strikes and the enforcement of access restrictions near the border fence. Israeli restrictions on Palestinian access to land (up to 1,500 metres from the border fence)

and sea (beyond three nautical miles from the shore) continued to result in casualties and hinder the livelihoods of thousands of Palestinians in Gaza. The Israeli authorities reported in September 2012 that more than 455 rockets fired from Gaza had hit Israel since the beginning of the year. In total, one Israeli soldier and one civilian were killed and 21 other Israelis injured by Palestinian fire from Gaza during the reporting period.

Gaza Strip

34. According to a report released by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in August 2012, many Palestinians in the Gaza Strip are food insecure, owing primarily to a lack of economic means, rather than to a shortage of food: 44 per cent of the households are food insecure and 16 per cent are vulnerable to food insecurity, even when taking into account United Nations food distributions to almost 1.1 million persons. On average, households spend close to 50 per cent of their cash on food; 80 per cent of households receive some form of assistance, and 39 per cent of persons live below the poverty line. As long as the closure continues, levels of food insecurity will remain high. Restrictions on access to agricultural land and the fishing limit of three miles from the coast remain challenges. Palestinians in Gaza have no access, or gain access only with difficulty, to 17 per cent of the land, including 35 per cent of the agricultural land, because it is located in the “buffer zone” or in the high-risk, access-restricted area near the border fence with Israel. More than 3,000 fishermen do not have access to 85 per cent of the maritime areas agreed in the 1995 Oslo Accords. As a result, the fish catch has decreased dramatically over the years of closure. Overall, land and sea restrictions affect the livelihoods of at least 178,000 people, or 12 per cent of the population of Gaza, resulting in annual estimated losses of US\$ 76.7 million from agricultural production and fishing. Reports indicate that if the three-mile limit on fishing were to be lifted, the fishing industry would likely grow in size. Further, in Gaza, the effect of the chronic multi-year electricity deficit has been significant, with prolonged power outages disrupting the delivery of basic services and undermining already vulnerable livelihoods and living conditions.

Water

35. According to a report issued by the Palestinian Water Authority in September 2012, Israel currently exploits 90 per cent of the shared water resources in the West Bank for exclusive Israeli use, including for use in settlements, and allocates less than 10 per cent for Palestinian use. Palestinian water consumption in the West Bank is limited to an average of just 70 litres per capita per day, below the “absolute minimum” of 100 litres per day recommended by the World Health Organization, and far below 300 litres per day in Israel.

36. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs reported in March 2012 that there were 56 water springs in the Occupied Palestinian Territory in the vicinity of Israeli settlements that had become the target of provocative settler actions, 30 of which had been taken over completely by settlers, while the other 26 were at risk of settler takeover. At least 84 per cent of the springs affected by settler activities were located on land recognized by Israel as privately owned by Palestinians. In three quarters of the springs taken over, Palestinians had been deterred from accessing the area by threatening or intimidating acts, while access to the rest had been prevented

by physical obstacles. In more than 70 per cent of the springs, Israeli settlers had begun to develop the surrounding area into a “tourist attraction”.

Women and children

37. According to the Palestinian Minister of Women’s Affairs, Palestinian women comprise 49.2 per cent of the population. The illiteracy rate among women has decreased from 16 per cent in 2000 to 7.8 per cent in 2011. The proportion of women in the workforce is 14.7 per cent, compared to that of males, which is 69 per cent. Of the women in the workforce, 27 per cent are unemployed, while a further 20 per cent work for no remuneration. In the public sector, women represent 37 per cent of employees. There are six women ministers in the current Palestinian Authority Government, the highest number to date. Furthermore, women are occupying positions that were formerly reserved for men, such as governors, heads of municipalities and the President of the Central Authority for Palestinian Statistics and Public Prosecutor.

38. According to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Palestinian children living in the Gaza Strip, Area C of the West Bank and East Jerusalem face particularly serious challenges, including a substandard school infrastructure and a chronic shortage of classrooms, owing to building restrictions, and impeded access to educational facilities, owing to physical, bureaucratic and other obstacles. These factors often result in a high drop-out rate, low learning achievements and, in some cases, displacement. Military operations and settler violence have also continued to disrupt schooling: during the first six months of 2012, there were 16 documented incidents which resulted in damage to schools or interruption of education, and in some cases, in direct injury to children.

39. Save the Children and the East Jerusalem Young Women’s Christian Association (YWCA) stated in a March 2012 report that Palestinian children were subjected to Israeli violations of their rights on a daily basis, including killing, maiming, torture, arbitrary arrest and detention, home demolitions, discrimination, harassment and restrictions of movement. According to the report, 11 per cent of children under the age of 5 suffered from chronic malnutrition. Since the commencement of the second intifada in 2000, the Israeli occupying forces had arrested and detained over 8,000 Palestinian children, many of whom were as young as 12 years old. Those children were interrogated, arrested and prosecuted in the Israeli military court system. Cases of ill-treatment, torture and physical and verbal harassment during detention were frequently reported. Usually arrested at night, blindfolded and their hands bound, they were often forcibly taken, either to Israeli prisons or settlements within the West Bank for interrogations. The questioning almost always takes place without the child’s lawyer or parents present. The way minors are treated by Israeli military forces and courts is in serious violation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Fourth Geneva Convention and the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. Moreover, detention usually affects their psychological well-being with long-lasting implications.

Prisoners

40. In a prisoner exchange deal with Hamas, Israel released 477 Palestinian prisoners on 16 October 2011. In all, 205 prisoners were transferred to locations

other than their residence before their detention, in accordance with the exchange agreement. On 18 October, Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit, who had been held in Gaza since June 2006, was released by Hamas. On 18 December, 550 Palestinian prisoners, including 55 minors and 6 women, were released by Israel in the second phase of the exchange. A hunger strike was launched in early 2012 by more than 1,500 Palestinian prisoners and detainees in Israeli custody to protest the deplorable and harsh conditions of captivity and Israel's application of administrative detention, by which it holds Palestinians without evidence, charge or trial. The crisis was resolved on 14 May, when Israel agreed to allow some 400 prisoners from Gaza to receive family visits for the first time since 2006, improve other conditions of detention and release administrative detainees once they completed their terms. Roughly 20 prisoners were also released from solitary confinement. According to the Israeli human rights organization B'Tselem, some 4,423 Palestinian security detainees and prisoners were held in Israeli prisons at the end of July 2012, among them 250 administrative detainees, 210 under the age of 18 and 7 women.

Palestinian institution-building

41. The International Monetary Fund reported in September 2012 that growth in the West Bank's gross domestic product (GDP) had declined to 5 per cent in 2011 and the first quarter of 2012, while unemployment had risen to 19 per cent in the first half of 2012, from 16 per cent in the same period of the previous year. The economic slowdown reflected continued fiscal retrenchment, combined with severe financing difficulties, declining donor aid, especially from regional donors, and slower easing of restrictions on movement and access. In Gaza, after a rebound in its real output by over 20 per cent on average in 2010-11 following the easing of tight restrictions, growth had declined to 6 per cent in the first quarter of 2012, and unemployment had risen to 30 per cent from 28 per cent in the same period in 2011.

42. The World Bank reported in September 2012 that the Palestinian Authority was facing a very serious fiscal situation with its budget deficit higher than expected, while external budget support had been falling. Debt to the local banking sector was almost at its limit and further credit from the private sector was unlikely to be forthcoming given the current high level of arrears. While the sustainability of growth in the Palestinian territories depended upon increasing private investment, restrictions put in place by the Government of Israel continued to stand in the way of potential private investment and remained the major impediment to sustainable economic growth. Most notably, the continued geographical fragmentation of Area C (envisaged under the Oslo Accords as a temporary arrangement) posed a binding constraint to real economic growth, essential to support the future Palestinian State. Area C's significance, as the only contiguous land in the West Bank connecting 227 separate geographical areas (A and B), was the key to economic cohesion and was the most resource-abundant space in the West Bank, holding the majority of the territory's water, agricultural lands, natural resources, and land reserves that provide an economic foundation for growth in key sectors of the economy.

Reconciliation

43. During a meeting in Doha on 5 February 2012, President Abbas and Hamas Political Bureau Chief Khaled Mashaal reached an agreement to form an interim government of "technocrats" to be headed by President Abbas and to be followed by the holding of presidential, parliamentary and local elections as agreed in May 2011.

However, to date, the agreement has not been implemented. The voter registration process that the Central Elections Commission had planned for Gaza from 3 to 14 July was suspended by the Hamas authorities. On 10 July, the Palestinian Authority, pending further developments on reconciliation, called for municipal elections to be held throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory on 20 October. Hamas has rejected that call. From 5 to 9 August, the Palestinian Central Elections Committee initiated a voter registry update in the West Bank, ahead of the planned local elections.

United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East

44. The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) continued to provide extensive core services and emergency assistance to the Palestine refugees in all its fields of operations in Jordan, Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic and the Occupied Palestinian Territory. The Government of Israel undertook some measures to ease the movement of goods into and out of the Gaza Strip, but those measures still fell well short of the level required to meet the needs of the Palestine refugee population and UNRWA's reconstruction requirements, or to ensure the revival of the economy which would reduce the dependency on UNRWA services. The Agency continues to experience a grave and recurrent financial crisis, which threatens its ability to sustain or improve its services and to continue emergency assistance programmes, including in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and for Palestine refugees in the Syrian Arab Republic, as well as its ability to complete essential projects, such as the reconstruction of the Nahr El Bared Camp in Lebanon. The Committee reiterates its appreciation for the dedication of UNRWA to its mission and calls upon all donors to increase contributions to ensure the well-being of more than 5 million registered Palestine refugees under the mandate of the Agency.

United Nations Development Programme/Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

45. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), through its Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People, continued to respond to the development needs in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. In support of the Palestinian Authority's National Development Plan 2011-2013, UNDP proceeded with the implementation of its new consolidated plan, "Development for Freedom: Empowered Lives, a Resilient Nation 2011-2013". The three-year plan focuses on democratic governance and the rule of law, economic empowerment and private sector investment, environment and management of natural resources, as well as public and social infrastructure. In support of Palestinian Statehood, the UNDP plan places empowerment, resilience and sustainability at the centre of its efforts, with a focus on three priority areas: the Gaza Strip, East Jerusalem and Area C, where the needs are the greatest, owing to the lack of access by the Palestinian Authority.

46. The Committee also remained appreciative of the important work of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. It noted that the consolidated appeal for 2012 focused on delivering humanitarian assistance, increased protection of civilians, enhanced monitoring and reporting on the humanitarian situation and the strengthening of United Nations humanitarian coordination structures.

Chapter V

Action taken by the Committee

A. Action taken in accordance with General Assembly resolution 66/14

47. In pursuance of its mandate, the Committee continued to mobilize the international community in support of the Palestinian people, in cooperation with United Nations bodies, Governments, intergovernmental and civil society organizations and others.

1. Action taken in the Security Council

48. During the reporting period, the Security Council has continued to monitor the situation on the ground and the efforts to implement the road map. It held monthly briefings throughout the year under the agenda item entitled “The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question”.

49. During the open debates at the Council meetings held on 24 October 2011, 24 January, 23 April, and 25 July 2012, the Chair of the Committee delivered statements (see S/PV.6636, Resumption 1, S/PV.6706, Resumption 1, S/PV.6757, S/PV.6816).

2. Action taken by the Bureau of the Committee

50. On 13 October 2011, the Bureau of the Committee issued a statement on the situation of Palestinian political prisoners held by Israel (GA/PAL/1211). Further, on 24 February and 25 April 2012, the Bureau issued statements on Israel’s illegal settlement activity in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem (GA/PAL/1224 and GA/PAL/1228).

B. Action taken by the Committee and the Division for Palestinian Rights in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 66/14 and 66/15

1. Committee meetings at Headquarters

51. At its periodic meetings at Headquarters in New York, the Committee, among other things, heard presentations by representatives of UNRWA, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the Norwegian Refugee Council on the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. On two separate occasions, the Committee was briefed on recent developments by Palestine Liberation Organization Executive Committee member Hanan Ashrawi and Palestinian negotiator Mohammad Shtayyeh, respectively. The Committee also organized a screening of a documentary film on the daily life of Palestinians in Hebron facing violence and harassment by Israeli settlers.

2. Programme of international meetings and conferences

52. Through its programme of international meetings and conferences, the Committee continued to raise international awareness of the various aspects of the question of Palestine and international support for the rights of the Palestinian people and the peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine.

53. In the period under review, the following international events were held under the auspices of the Committee in 2012:

(a) United Nations Seminar on Assistance to the Palestinian People, Cairo, 6 and 7 February, on the economic cost of the continued Israeli occupation;

(b) United Nations International Meeting on the Question of Palestine, United Nations Office at Geneva, 3 and 4 April, on the question of Palestinian political prisoners;

(c) United Nations International Meeting on the Question of Palestine, UNESCO headquarters, Paris, 30 and 31 May, on the role of youth and women in the peaceful resolution of the question of Palestine;

(d) United Nations Meeting of Civil Society in Support of Israeli-Palestinian Peace, UNESCO headquarters, Paris, 1 June, on harnessing the power of youth and women;

(e) United Nations Asian and Pacific Meeting in Support of Israeli-Palestinian Peace, Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, Bangkok, 10 and 11 July, on international efforts at addressing the obstacles to the two-State solution.

54. The above-mentioned events were attended by representatives of Governments, Palestine, intergovernmental organizations and United Nations system entities, as well as parliamentarians and representatives of civil society and the media. Detailed information about these meetings is being issued as publications of the Division for Palestinian Rights and will be available on the “Question of Palestine” website maintained by the Division.

55. In connection with the above-mentioned events, the Committee delegation carried out the following activities: on the margins of the seminar in Cairo, the Committee delegation was received by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Egypt, Mohamed Kamel Amr, and by the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States, Nabil Elaraby.

56. During its stay in Geneva, the Committee delegation held meetings with Swiss Government officials, including the Special Representative of Switzerland for the Middle East, Jean-Daniel Ruch, and with senior officials of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the International Committee of the Red Cross.

57. On the sidelines of the meeting in Paris, the Committee delegation met with UNESCO Deputy Director-General Getachew Engida. On its way back to New York, the delegation stopped in Lisbon, where it met with representatives of parliamentary groups and civil society organizations.

58. In Bangkok, the Committee delegation met with officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand. On its way back to New York, the delegation also visited Hanoi to meet with Vietnamese officials.

3. Cooperation with intergovernmental organizations

59. Throughout the year, the Committee continued its cooperation with the African Union, the European Union, the League of Arab States, the Non-Aligned Movement

and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation. The Committee is appreciative of the active participation of their representatives in the various international events held under its auspices.

4. Cooperation with civil society

Civil society organizations

60. The Committee continued its cooperation with civil society organizations worldwide. Representatives of civil society participated in all meetings organized under the auspices of the Committee, including the observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People on 29 November 2011. The meetings provided civil society representatives with an opportunity to discuss the situation on the ground and their programmes in support of the Palestinian people and to improve coordination of their activities. The Committee was appreciative of the work done by civil society organizations and encouraged them to continue contributing to efforts aimed at realizing a two-State solution.

61. The Committee maintained and developed its liaison with national, regional and international coordinating mechanisms cooperating with it, in addition to its established liaison with a large number of individual organizations. At the United Nations Meeting of Civil Society in Support of Israeli-Palestinian Peace, held in Paris in June, the deliberations focused on ways in which civil society organizations could serve as a platform for empowering youths and women. While in Geneva, the Committee delegation held consultations with 12 representatives of civil society organizations from Europe, the Occupied Palestinian Territory and Israel. The Committee delegation also held consultations in Bangkok with 15 civil society organizations from the Asian and Pacific region, the Occupied Palestinian Territory and Israel.

62. During the reporting period, three civil society organizations were accredited to the Committee.

63. The Division for Palestinian Rights maintained a page on civil society (<http://unispal.un.org/unispal.nsf/ngo.htm>) on the "Question of Palestine" website as a tool for the exchange of information and networking and for cooperation between civil society and the Committee.

64. The Division maintained a Facebook page to disseminate information about the work of the Committee, and the United Nations as a whole, on the question of Palestine. In addition, the Division continued to publish the periodic online bulletin *NGO Action News*, in order to catalogue and publicize civil society initiatives.

Parliaments and inter-parliamentary organizations

65. The Committee continued to attach great importance to developing its liaison with national and regional parliaments and their organizations. Representatives of parliaments and inter-parliamentary organizations participated in international events organized by the Committee during 2012. Consultations with parliamentarians were also held in Lisbon and Hanoi.

5. Research, monitoring and publications

66. The Division carried out research and monitoring activities and responded to requests for information and briefings on the question of Palestine. Under the guidance of the Committee, which reiterated the relevance of the research, monitoring and publications programme, it also prepared the publications listed below for dissemination, including through the Internet:

- (a) Monthly bulletin on action taken by the United Nations system and intergovernmental organizations relevant to the question of Palestine;
- (b) Monthly chronology of events relating to the question of Palestine, based on media reports and other sources;
- (c) Reports of international meetings and conferences organized under the auspices of the Committee;
- (d) A special bulletin and information notes on the observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People;
- (e) Periodic reviews of developments related to the Middle East peace process;
- (f) Annual compilation of resolutions and decisions of the General Assembly and the Security Council relating to the question of Palestine.

6. United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine

67. Pursuant to successive annual General Assembly mandates, the Division for Palestinian Rights, in cooperation with relevant technical and library services of the United Nations Secretariat, continued to administer, maintain, expand and develop the United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine (UNISPAL) and the “Question of Palestine” website, which is located on the United Nations home page under “Peace and Security”. That included the ongoing maintenance and upgrading of the technical components of the system to ensure the uninterrupted presence of UNISPAL (<http://unispal.un.org>) on the Internet and involved the expansion of the document collection to include relevant new and old United Nations system and related documents. In addition, steps continued to be taken to enhance the user-friendliness and usefulness of UNISPAL, including by creating a focus page on Palestine’s application for United Nations membership and by incorporating additional multimedia content. RSS and Twitter feeds alerted users about newly posted materials.

7. Training programme for staff of the Palestinian Authority

68. In accordance with the General Assembly mandate, the training programme conducted by the Division has been enhanced and involved seven staff members of the Palestinian Authority. Three staff members from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Planning and the Permanent Observer Mission of Palestine to the United Nations participated in a newly established training programme at the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia in Beirut from 7 to 11 May during its 27th session. Two additional Palestinian Authority staff members of the Ministry of National Economy participated in a three-week training programme at the United Nations Office at Geneva during the Trade and Development Board session from 18 September to 5 October 2012, where they familiarized themselves with the work

of UNCTAD, including on trade facilitation and foreign direct investment. They also attended briefings on the work of other United Nations entities, including the Human Rights Council, the World Health Organization and the World Trade Organization. In addition, two staff members of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs are in the process of completing a three-month training programme at United Nations Headquarters in New York held from 12 September to 2 December, aimed at familiarizing themselves with various aspects of the work of the Secretariat and other United Nations organs and bodies, including the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council.

8. International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People

69. The International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People was observed on 29 November 2011 at Headquarters in New York, and at the United Nations Offices at Geneva and Vienna. On the occasion of the observance at Headquarters, in addition to a special meeting of the Committee and other activities, a cultural exhibit entitled “A Palestinian Vista” was organized under the auspices of the Committee, in cooperation with the Permanent Observer Mission of Palestine to the United Nations and the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat. The Committee noted with appreciation that the International Day of Solidarity had also been observed by United Nations information centres and other bodies in many cities throughout the world. Details on the observance are contained in the special bulletin issued by the Division.

Chapter VI

Action taken by the Department of Public Information in accordance with General Assembly resolution 66/16

70. The Department of Public Information, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 66/16, continued to implement its special information programme on the question of Palestine. In doing so, it strove to enhance dialogue and understanding, while sensitizing public opinion to the question of Palestine and the Middle East peace process.

71. The Department, in cooperation with the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs of Switzerland, organized the 2012 International Media Seminar on Peace in the Middle East in Geneva on 12 and 13 June 2012. The seminar, which brought together journalists, bloggers, activists, film-makers, academics, policymakers and diplomats from Palestine, Israel, the wider Middle East region, Europe and the United States, as well as senior United Nations officials, examined the prospects for peace approaching the twentieth anniversary of the Oslo Accords; how the Arab Spring has affected media coverage of the question of Palestine; the role of women's activism and the media in Israeli-Palestinian peace and the wider region; civil society in media and film in the Middle East; and youth activism in the Middle East. The event, which had the largest number of female participants in its history, was promoted extensively across online platforms, including Tumblr and Twitter.

72. To mark the 2011 observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People on 29 November, the Department produced a revised and updated permanent exhibit on the question of Palestine and the United Nations. The exhibit has been translated by United Nations information centres around the world into 11 languages. In addition, the information centres widely disseminated the Secretary-General's message on the occasion of the Day in official and local languages. Commemorative events, such as exhibits, film screenings and panel discussions, were organized in Brussels, Geneva, Harare, Manama, Moscow and Pretoria, among others.

73. The Department's annual training programme for Palestinian journalists was held at United Nations Headquarters from 31 October to 2 December 2011. Nine Palestinian journalists working mainly in broadcast media attended the programme, which included a visit to Washington, D.C. The programme's primary focus was strengthening the participants' capacity as broadcast media professionals.

74. During the reporting period, the Department also used all of its information outlets and products, including digital media platforms, to highlight the broad range of developments and issues related to the question of Palestine and the Middle East peace process. The multilingual United Nations News Centre portal covered the issue extensively, with its English and French language versions alone carrying more than 200 related stories. The Arabic, Chinese, Russian and Spanish versions of the United Nations News Centre provided further coverage. The Department also produced 110 press releases on the question of Palestine in English and French, which included summaries of formal meetings and press conferences, as well as statements by the Secretary-General and other United Nations officials. United Nations Webcast provided live coverage of major discussions concerning the question of Palestine, including meetings of the Security Council and the General Assembly.

75. United Nations Radio, which is available in all the official languages, as well as in Kiswahili and Portuguese, provided regular coverage of issues and events pertaining to the question of Palestine, including news reports on the Palestinian Rights Committee and on the plight of Palestinians living in the Gaza Strip, and the ongoing work of UNRWA. United Nations Radio also highlighted the engagement by other United Nations entities, such as the Human Rights Council and UNESCO.

76. United Nations TV provided extensive coverage through its live broadcasts and feature programmes, which were distributed and broadcast via a variety of means and platforms, including United Nations Webcast, the United Nations audiovisual broadcasting services (UNifeed) satellite distribution system and United Nations programming on the Time Warner cable network. Related feature stories, such as the Secretary-General's visit to the region in February 2012, the UNESCO vote on Palestinian membership in October 2011, and the Gaza marathon in March 2012, were also produced and widely distributed.

77. During the reporting period, three other groups of visitors were briefed on the question of Palestine and the Middle East peace process (two high school groups, with a total of 65 students, and one college group, with a total of 22 students). In addition, the United Nations public inquiries team responded to 1,272 inquiries relating to the Middle East peace process.

Chapter VII

Conclusions and recommendations of the Committee

78. Throughout the reporting period, the Committee continued to work for the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including their right to self-determination, and a negotiated settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in all its aspects, resulting in an end to the occupation and the independence of a sovereign, viable, contiguous and democratic Palestinian State based on 1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital, and a just solution for the Palestine refugees based on General Assembly resolution 194 (III). It urged the international community to continue its support for the Middle East peace process, promoted international action against obstacles in its path, particularly the ongoing illegal Israeli settlement campaign, and engaged with diverse constituencies in support of peace, such as women and youth. It continued to mobilize international assistance to the Palestinians, while bringing to light the economic costs of the Israeli occupation which constrain Palestinian economic, social and institutional development. The Committee raised international alarm about the plight of the Palestinian prisoners and called for their release and an end to abusive practices by Israel, including administrative detentions.

79. The reporting period marked the one-year anniversary of the 23 September 2011 submission of the application for United Nations membership by Palestine, and the adoption by the Quartet of a timetable for the resumption of Israeli-Palestinian negotiations, with a view to reaching an agreement by the end of 2012. The Committee is concerned that the positive momentum towards the two-State solution generated by these developments appears to have dissipated, while other crises have competed for international attention. The Committee remains convinced that a durable settlement of the conflict is a prerequisite for a just and lasting peace in the Middle East. It is of the view that progress on the Palestinian status at the United Nations will generate a new dynamic in the peace process and help safeguard the two-State solution, as would the recognition of the State of Palestine by additional Member States. The Committee regrets that the series of “exploratory” meetings between the parties held in Amman in January 2012, and subsequent contacts, have not yet resulted in resumed negotiations. The main reason remains the continuation and expansion by Israel of its illegal settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and its refusal to commit to the long-standing parameters of the peace process based on relevant United Nations resolutions, the Madrid terms of reference, including the principle of land for peace, the Arab Peace Initiative and the Quartet road map. The international community needs to maintain its focus on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, uphold its legal obligations in that regard, and present bold initiatives to break the current deadlock. The Committee shares the concern that any attempts to maintain the status quo will not only delay the two-State solution, but may also usher in a one-State reality with unpredictable consequences. The Committee calls upon the international community to take serious and concrete action which would compel Israel to stop its illegal settlement activities and to genuinely commit to ending its 45-year military occupation and to making peace. The dispatch of a fact-finding mission by the Human Rights Council is a welcome first step towards accountability. The

Committee joins in the calls upon the Security Council members to undertake a mission to the region to examine the situation first-hand and to uphold its duties under the Charter of the United Nations to contribute tangibly to the efforts to advance a just, lasting and comprehensive solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the Arab-Israeli conflict as a whole and to the establishment of peace and security in the Middle East region.

80. The Committee has consistently supported the Palestinian State-building and reform agenda. It is concerned that its accomplishments are now endangered, owing to the debilitating financial crisis experienced by the Palestinian Authority, and it calls upon donors to meet their prior commitments and to provide emergency aid to buttress the two-State solution. Progress towards that goal also requires all Palestinian factions to unite behind the legitimate leadership of President Mahmoud Abbas. The Committee urges the speedy implementation, in good faith, of national reconciliation agreements.

81. The Committee remained deeply concerned about the ongoing violence and gross violations of humanitarian and human rights law. It reiterates its condemnation of all attacks against civilians, including rocket fire from Gaza, air strikes on populated areas, and settler violence and calls upon the Security Council and the High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention to act urgently to guarantee the protection of civilians.

82. As the Gaza blockade reached its five-year mark, the Committee was greatly alarmed by the conclusions of a recent United Nations study that the damage to its economy, infrastructure and resources is becoming irreversible, thus threatening Gaza's future viability. The Committee remains convinced that any sustainable recovery would require a complete lifting of the blockade by Israel. It would also require the dismantlement of the Israeli occupation and its associated regime of settlements, checkpoints, the separation wall, demolitions, land confiscations and expulsions, which have been on the rise, with the worst abuses occurring in East Jerusalem and in Area C. The Committee calls in this regard for the transfer of additional territories in Area C to the jurisdiction of the Palestinian Authority, as envisaged in the Oslo Accords.

83. The Committee and the Division for Palestinian Rights will continue through their mandated activities to generate heightened international awareness of the question of Palestine, as well as international support for the rights of the Palestinian people and the peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine. In this connection, the Committee emphasizes the useful and constructive contribution of the Division in support of its mandate aimed at enabling the Palestinian people to exercise their inalienable rights. It notes with satisfaction: (a) the sustained level of dialogue, engagement and support on the part of the international community for the programme's objectives, as evidenced by the number of adopted resolutions, international meetings and conferences, and commemorations of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People; (b) the continued involvement of civil society organizations in support of the efforts of the Committee and the United Nations towards a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine, as evidenced by the number of civil society conferences, public forums, meetings and consultations between the Committee and civil society

organizations; and (c) an increase in international awareness of the United Nations policies and activities on the question of Palestine, as evidenced by the increased access to the United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine (UNISPAL) and other information materials on the Question of Palestine website. The Committee also considers that the annual training programme for staff of the Palestinian Authority carried out by the Division has proved its usefulness, as it directly contributes to Palestinian capacity-building efforts. The Committee strongly recommends that that important mandated activity be continued and, where possible, further enhanced.

84. The Committee will focus its programme of international meetings and conferences in 2013, implemented by the Division, on widening international support for the achievement of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination, national independence and sovereignty, and to return to their homes and property. The programme will also focus on strengthening international support for the permanent status negotiations and contributing to the creation of a favourable international atmosphere for their conduct in good faith. The Committee intends to mobilize increased international scrutiny of the developments on the ground, in particular the halting of all settlement activities in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, and an end to all other illegal Israeli policies and practices in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. It will support global campaigns to challenge Israeli impunity and promote the concept of Israeli accountability for its actions towards the Palestinian people.

85. The Committee will continue to pay special attention to highlighting the plight of the most disadvantaged Palestinians, such as refugees, those living in Gaza and political prisoners. The Committee will continue to mobilize support for Palestinian institution-building and all other efforts to facilitate the viability of the Palestinian State. It will reach out to and engage Governments, parliamentarians and civil society to mobilize support for a just solution to all permanent status issues. The Committee wishes to contribute to efforts towards ending incitement on both sides, provide a venue to have the narratives heard and reconciled and, with the help of civil society, to promote peace education. It will pay particular attention to the inclusion and empowerment of women and youth and their organizations in this process. The Committee also wishes to work towards Palestinian reconciliation and will strive to involve Palestinians from different ends of the political spectrum in its events.

86. The Committee highly values civil society initiatives in support of the Palestinian people and welcomes the growing calls from civil society groups for peaceful protests against the status quo. It lauds the courageous advocacy actions of countless activists, including eminent personalities and parliamentarians, who participate in demonstrations against the wall, try to break the siege of Gaza and keep their home constituencies informed about the harsh realities of life under occupation. The Committee also recognizes the sacrifices made by Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails who have risked their lives to help to bring an end to illegal Israeli policies, including that of administrative detention. The Committee encourages civil society partners to work with their national Governments, parliamentarians and other institutions, with a view to gaining their full support for the work of the United Nations, including that of the Committee, on the question of Palestine. It will continue to assess its programme of cooperation with civil society and consult them on ways

to enhance their contribution. The Committee appreciates the support it receives from the Secretariat in strengthening cooperation with civil society.

87. The Committee looks forward to further developing its cooperation with parliamentarians and their umbrella organizations. Parliamentarians have a special responsibility to ensure that their Governments actively promote and support the realization of the two-State solution and ensure respect for international law, in accordance with their international obligations.

88. The Committee requests the Division to continue its substantive and secretariat support, the programme of research, monitoring and publications and other informational activities. It should pay special attention to continued development of the “Question of Palestine” portal and use of web-based social information networks, such as Facebook and Twitter. It should also continue to develop the UNISPAL document collection by reflecting the issue of the hour and enhancing subject-based search capability, as well as by continuing to digitize and upload historic documents and to develop user-friendly search features, such as the French titles project. The Division should continue to collaborate with the United Nations Libraries at Headquarters and at Geneva in the search for historic documents. It should further develop the annual training programme for staff of the Palestinian Authority, paying special attention to the programme’s gender balance and reviewing logistics to allow the maximum number of participants possible. It should continue to organize the annual observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

89. The Committee is of the view that the special information programme on the question of Palestine of the Department of Public Information has made an important contribution to informing the media and public opinion of the relevant issues. It requests the continuation of the programme, with the necessary flexibility warranted by developments relevant to the question of Palestine.

90. Wishing to make its contribution to the achievement of a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine, and in view of the many difficulties facing the Palestinian people and besetting the peace process, the Committee calls upon all States to join it in this endeavour and to extend their cooperation and support to the Committee, and invites the General Assembly again to recognize the importance of its role and to reconfirm its mandate.





United Nations

Report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

General Assembly
Official Records
Sixty-eighth Session
Supplement No. 35

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United Nations • New York, 2013

Note

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Contents

<i>Chapter</i>	<i>Page</i>
Letter of transmittal	iv
I. Introduction	1
II. Mandate of the Committee	3
III. Organization of work	4
A. Membership and officers	4
B. Participation in the work of the Committee	4
IV. Review of the situation relating to the question of Palestine	5
V. Action taken by the Committee	14
A. Action taken in accordance with General Assembly resolution 67/20	14
B. Action taken by the Committee and the Division for Palestinian Rights in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 67/20 and 67/21	14
VI. Action taken by the Department of Public Information in accordance with General Assembly resolution 67/22	18
VII. Conclusions and recommendations of the Committee	20

Letter of transmittal

[7 October 2013]

Mr. Secretary-General,

I have the honour to enclose herewith the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for submission to the General Assembly in accordance with paragraph 2 of its resolution [67/20](#) of 30 November 2012.

The report covers the period from 7 October 2012 to 6 October 2013.

(Signed) Abdou Salam **Diallo**
Chair of the Committee on the Exercise of the
Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon
Secretary-General of the United Nations
New York

Chapter I

Introduction

1. The reporting period witnessed a historic vote by the General Assembly on 29 November 2012 that granted Palestine non-member observer State status at the United Nations. Its adoption reflected the international consensus on the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and to freedom in their own sovereign State and consensus on the two-State solution, based on the pre-1967 borders and relevant United Nations resolutions, as well as the growing international impatience with the long-standing Israeli occupation and the growing sense of urgency to achieve a just and peaceful solution to the conflict.

2. The Government of Israel reacted negatively to the General Assembly vote by declaring plans to construct thousands of new settlement units, in breach of international law and United Nations resolutions, and by withholding the transfer of Palestinian tax and customs revenues, in violation of agreements reached. Israel continued to announce and approve settlement construction plans even after the resumption of peace talks was announced in July after months of mediation by the United States.

3. Two weeks before the General Assembly vote, Israel launched a large-scale, eight-day military offensive in the Gaza Strip, in which 165 Palestinians were killed, more than half of them civilians, and some 1,400 were injured, including many children. Six Israelis, including three civilians, were killed as a result of rocket fire. The humanitarian situation in Gaza remained critical, with high rates of poverty and unemployment. The long-standing restrictions on the movement of people and goods, imposed by Israel since 2007 in the form of a blockade, continued to undermine the living conditions of the 1.7 million Palestinians in Gaza. Reconstruction and rehabilitation also continued to be hampered by the blockade. Rocket and mortar fire by armed Palestinian groups into southern Israel also continued, endangering the lives of the Israeli population.

4. Israel continued its frequent military raids and incursions in the West Bank, resulting in the killing and injuring of Palestinians, including children. While overshadowed by reports of the release of some Palestinian prisoners by Israel as part of a goodwill gesture, at least 3,583 Palestinians, including women and children, were arrested in over 3,000 arrest operations during the reporting period alone, in addition to the thousands of Palestinians that remain in Israeli jails and detention centres. Many unarmed civilians were subjected to the excessive use of force by the Israeli occupying forces during demonstrations against the occupation. Israel continued to expand its illegal settlements in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and approved thousands more new settlement units. The construction of the separation wall continued in defiance of the International Court of Justice advisory opinion (2004), resulting in further confiscation of Palestinian land and demolition of properties, further harming socioeconomic conditions and causing the displacement of more Palestinian families. The situation in Occupied East Jerusalem remained alarming, with continued land confiscations, house demolitions and evictions of Palestinian residents, and the intensification of acts of aggression and vandalism against Christian and Muslim holy sites in the City.

5. The Palestinian State-building efforts continued to be challenged by a serious budget deficit as well as by restrictions and obstacles imposed by Israel on the

Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, which continued to prevent the normal movement of persons and goods, economic activity and sustained development and growth. In addition, a decrease in foreign aid and the failure of donor countries to fulfil their financial pledges contributed to the dire situation.

6. During the reporting period, the activities of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and its Bureau focused on mobilizing wide support for ending the Israeli occupation and realizing the two-State solution, in order for the Palestinian people to achieve its inalienable rights, including the right to self-determination. In that context, the Committee welcomed the resumption of Israeli-Palestinian peace talks in August with the active mediation of the United States. The Committee monitored the situation on the ground and the political developments, implemented its programme of international meetings and conferences, held consultations with representatives of Governments, national parliaments and inter-parliamentary organizations, as well as civil society, and reached out to its partners worldwide using new communications media. The Committee reiterated its position of principle that a permanent settlement of the question of Palestine could be reached only by ending the occupation that began in 1967, achieving the independence of the State of Palestine on the basis of the pre-1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital and achieving a just and agreed solution to the Palestine refugees issue on the basis of General Assembly resolution 194 (III).

7. The annual seminar on assistance to the Palestinian people, organized by the Committee in Rome in February 2013, addressed the challenges and opportunities of developing a self-sustaining economy in the new reality of a State under occupation. The seminar was followed in April by a regional meeting in Addis Ababa that focused on African solidarity with the Palestinian people for the achievement of the sovereignty and independence of the State of Palestine. An international meeting held in Beijing in June focused on reviving collective international engagement towards a two-State solution.

Chapter II

Mandate of the Committee

8. The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People was established by the General Assembly by its resolution 3376 (XXX) of 10 November 1975, with the task of recommending a programme designed to enable the Palestinian people to exercise its inalienable rights, as recognized by the Assembly in its resolution 3236 (XXIX) of 22 November 1974.

9. The recommendations made by the Committee in its first report to the General Assembly (A/31/35) were endorsed by the Assembly as a basis for the solution of the question of Palestine. In its subsequent reports,¹ the Committee has continued to stress that a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, must be based on the relevant United Nations resolutions, including Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), as well as on the following essential principles: the withdrawal of Israel, the occupying Power, from the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem, and from the other occupied Arab territories; respect for the right of all States in the region to live in peace within secure and internationally recognized boundaries; and the recognition and exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. The recommendations of the Committee contained in its first report could not be implemented, and each year the Assembly has renewed the Committee's mandate and requested it to intensify efforts in pursuit of its objectives.

10. The Committee has consistently supported the objective of two States, Israel and Palestine, living side by side within secure and recognized borders on the basis of the 1949 armistice lines, in accordance with relevant United Nations resolutions, including Security Council resolutions 1397 (2002) and 1515 (2003). The Committee welcomed and supported the Quartet's road map and called upon the parties to implement it. In keeping with its mandate, the Committee has continued to work towards creating conditions for the successful conduct of negotiations on a permanent settlement allowing the Palestinian people to realize its inalienable rights. The Committee has also promoted support and assistance by the international community to the Palestinian people.

11. On 30 November 2012, the General Assembly renewed the mandate of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (resolution 67/20), requested the Secretary-General to continue to provide the Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat with the necessary resources to carry out its programme of work (resolution 67/21) and requested the continuation of the special information programme on the question of Palestine of the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat (resolution 67/22). The Assembly also adopted resolution 67/23, entitled "Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine".

¹ Since the thirty-first session, the Committee has submitted annual reports to the General Assembly; all such reports have been issued as supplement No. 35 of the sessional documentation of the Assembly.

Chapter III

Organization of work

A. Membership and officers

12. During the reporting period, the Plurinational State of Bolivia joined the Committee as a new member on 22 August 2013.

13. The Committee is composed of the following Member States: Afghanistan, Belarus, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Cuba, Cyprus, Ecuador, Guinea, Guyana, India, Indonesia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mali, Malta, Namibia, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Pakistan, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of).

14. The observers at the Committee meetings are: Algeria, Bangladesh, Bulgaria, China, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Niger, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka, the Syrian Arab Republic, the United Arab Emirates, Viet Nam and Yemen, as well as the State of Palestine, the African Union, the League of Arab States and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation.

15. At its 348th meeting, on 5 February 2013, the Committee elected Abdou Salam Diallo (Senegal) as Chair, Zahir Tanin (Afghanistan) and Rodolfo Reyes Rodríguez (Cuba) as Vice-Chairs and Christopher Grima (Malta) as Rapporteur. At its 354th meeting, on 4 October 2013, the Committee decided to elect three additional Vice-Chairs to its Bureau: Desra Percaya (Indonesia), Wilfried Emvula (Namibia) and María Rubiales de Chamorro (Nicaragua).

B. Participation in the work of the Committee

16. As in previous years, the Committee reconfirmed that all United Nations Member States and observers wishing to participate in the work of the Committee were welcome to do so. In accordance with established practice, the State of Palestine participated in the work of the Committee as an observer, attended all of its meetings and made briefings, observations and proposals for consideration by the Committee and its Bureau.

Chapter IV

Review of the situation relating to the question of Palestine

Political developments

17. On 23 September 2011, President Mahmoud Abbas submitted to the Security Council the application of the State of Palestine for admission to full membership in the United Nations. With the application pending before the Council, the General Assembly adopted resolution 67/19 on 29 November 2012, which accorded Palestine non-member observer State status in the United Nations. The resolution was adopted by a vote of 138 in favour to 9 against, with 41 abstentions. Israel rejected the move and reacted immediately by deliberately announcing plans to build over 3,000 settlement units, including in Occupied East Jerusalem, and withholding the transfer of Palestinian tax and customs revenues collected on behalf of Palestinians.

18. International efforts to restart Israeli-Palestinian peace talks continued to be thwarted by Israel's continued expansion of illegal settlements and other illegal measures, but after months of mediation by the United States, the Secretary of State, John Kerry, announced, in Amman on 19 July 2013, that an agreement had been reached that established a basis for resuming direct final status negotiations between Palestinians and Israelis. Israeli and Palestinian negotiators held a series of preparatory meetings in Washington, D.C., on 29 and 30 July 2013, where they agreed on an agenda towards achieving a final status agreement over the next nine months. On 14 August, the first formal peace talks since September 2010 were held in Jerusalem, hours after Israel, as part of a goodwill gesture to the Palestinians, released 26 Palestinian prisoners who had been detained prior to the signing of the Oslo Accords. The negotiators were to meet weekly thereafter, alternating between Jerusalem and Jericho.

19. During the reporting period, Grenada, Guatemala and Haiti recognized the State of Palestine and Guyana and El Salvador established diplomatic relations with the State of Palestine. In addition, Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, Lithuania and Sweden decided to upgrade the status of the Palestinian delegations in the countries to that of an embassy or similar entity.

Settlements

20. Israel, the occupying Power, continued and intensified its illegal settlement activity in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics reported in August 2013 that, in 2012, the number of settlers in the 144 settlements in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, had been 563,546 (360,370 in the West Bank and 203,176 in East Jerusalem), an increase of 24,765 compared with 2011.

21. During the reporting period, the following were announced, approved or issued by Israel: tenders for the construction of 72 housing units in the "Ariel" settlement (6 November); the construction of nearly 700 new units in "Itamar" and other areas near Nablus (12 November); the construction of 3,000 new units, including preliminary zoning and planning work for thousands of units in East Jerusalem and settlement blocks, including "Ma'ale Adumim" and the "E1" area (30 November); tenders to build 92 units in "Ma'aleh Adumim" (11 December); an advanced plan to build 523 units in "Gush Ezion" (19 December); the construction of 523 units in

“Gva’ot” (20 December); plans for 170 new units and 84 units in “Rotem” in the Jordan Valley (13 January 2013); tenders for the construction of 114 new units in “Efrat” and 84 in “Kiryat Arba” (16 January); tenders for 128 units in “Beitar Illit” (25 January); plans to build 346 units in “Gush Etzion” (31 January); the construction of 200 new housing units in “Tekoa” and 146 in “Nokdim” (2 February); plans to construct 90 new units in “Beit El” (11 February); 296 new units in “Beit El” (8 May); plans to build more than 1,000 housing units in “Itamar” and “Bruchin” (13 June); the construction of 732 units in “Modi’in Ilit” and 19 in “Kfar Adumim” (17 July); the construction of 230 units in “Ma’on” (6 August); tenders for the construction of 394 units in the West Bank (11 August). In addition, Peace Now reported on 31 October that Israel had actively supported the establishment of two new so-called settlement outposts, “Nahalei Tal” and “Tzofin North”, for the first time since 2005. On 24 December, Israel upgraded a college in the “Ariel” settlement to a university. On 7 January, Israel undertook measures to “legalize” the “Rahim” settlement near Nablus after merging two outposts.

22. In Occupied East Jerusalem, the following were announced, approved or issued: a plan to build 797 housing units west of the “Gilo” settlement (18 October 2012); tenders for the construction of 607 housing units in “Pisgat Ze’ev” and 606 in “Ramot” (6 November); the construction of 1,500 apartments in “Ramat Shlomo” (17 December); the building of 2,612 units in “Givat Hamatos” (19 December); the construction of 1,242 units in “Gilo” (25 December); the construction of an additional 120 units in “Givat Ze’ev” (29 April 2013); the construction of 300 new units in “Ramot” (30 May); the construction of 69 homes in the City (26 June); tenders for the construction of 793 units in the City (11 August); a construction plan for 942 housing units in “Gilo” (13 August). In addition, on 16 January, the “Jerusalem Committee for Planning and Construction” approved the construction of a new college for the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) next to the Mount of Olives in East Jerusalem. On 8 July, the same Committee approved the establishment of a new national park in southern Jerusalem on Palestinian land.

23. The international fact-finding mission to investigate the implications of the Israeli settlements on the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of the Palestinian people throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, appointed by the Human Rights Council and led by Christine Chanet, Judge of the Court of Cassation of France and member of the Human Rights Committee, published its findings on 31 January 2013 ([A/HRC/22/63](#)), stating that numerous of the human rights of the Palestinian people were being violated owing to the Israeli settlement campaign and stressing that the violations were interrelated and formed part of an overall pattern of breaches characterized principally by the denial of the right to self-determination and systematic discrimination against the Palestinian people occurring daily. Since 1967, the Governments of Israel had openly led, directly participated in, and had full control of the planning, construction, development, consolidation and encouragement of the settlements and private entities had enabled, facilitated and profited from the construction of the settlements. The mission considered that, in relation to the settlements, Israel was committing serious breaches of its obligations under the right to self-determination and certain obligations under international humanitarian law, including the obligation not to transfer its population into the occupied territory and that, in compliance with article 49 of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War of 1949 (Fourth Geneva Convention), Israel must

cease all settlement activities without preconditions. It also stated that ratification by the State of Palestine of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, which establishes the jurisdiction of the Court over the deportation or transfer, directly or indirectly, by the occupying Power of parts of its own population into the territory it occupies, might lead to accountability for gross violations of human rights law and serious violations of international humanitarian law and justice for victims.

24. On 19 July, the European Commission published new guidelines, effective 1 January 2014, prohibiting the funding of entities connected to the Israeli settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem or the Golan Heights. The Commission is also reportedly seeking to draft comprehensive guidelines on labelling settlement products by the end of 2013. In addition, the Ministry of Economic Affairs of the Netherlands issued a directive on 6 March to all retail chains in the country to state the origin of products from the occupied territories.

Settler violence

25. Settler-related violence in the West Bank and East Jerusalem continued to be a source of serious concern. According to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs of the Secretariat, there were at least 84 incidents leading to Palestinian casualties and 228 incidents leading to damage to Palestinian property or land during the reporting period (as of August 2013). In addition, there were at least 37 incidents leading to Israeli casualties and 8 incidents leading to damage to Israeli property or land. The Office had recorded damage to 7,272 Palestinian-owned olive trees and saplings by settlers in 2013 (as of July). In 2012, over 8,600 trees were reported burned, uprooted or otherwise vandalized.

26. The Israeli human rights organization Yesh Din reported in July 2013 that between 2005 and 2013, only 8.5 per cent of the investigations opened by Israeli authorities following complaints submitted by Palestinians with the organization's assistance had resulted in the indictment of Israelis suspected of harming Palestinians and their property. The international fact-finding mission noted in its report (A/HRC/22/63) that the identities of settlers responsible for violence and intimidation were known to the Israeli authorities, yet these acts continued with impunity, and concluded that there was institutionalized discrimination against the Palestinian people when it came to addressing violence.

Jerusalem

27. The Association for Civil Rights in Israel reported in May 2013 that 371,844 Palestinians constituted 39 per cent of the total population of Jerusalem. Some 79.5 per cent of residents and 85 per cent of children in East Jerusalem lived below the poverty line, the worst rate of all time. There remained a chronic shortage of more than 1,000 classrooms in East Jerusalem's education system. Palestinians were permitted to build on only 14 per cent of East Jerusalem. A third of Palestinian land in East Jerusalem had been expropriated since 1967, and thousands of settlement housing units had been built on it. Israel's building of the separation wall, the closing of passage points and the implementation of a strict "entry permit" regime had effectively cut off East Jerusalem from the West Bank, exacerbating the already dire economic and social condition of Palestinian residents. In 2012, Israel had

revoked the residency status of 116 Palestinians from Jerusalem. Since 1967, the residency status of 14,263 Palestinians had been revoked and rescinded by Israel.

Area C

28. According to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, approximately 150,000 Palestinians live in 542 communities in “Area C”, constituting over 60 per cent of the West Bank, where Israel retains near exclusive control under the Oslo Accords with a complex system of physical and administrative measures. Some 325,000 Israeli settlers live in some 135 settlements and about 100 outposts in Area C. Palestinian construction in 29 per cent of Area C is heavily restricted, and less than 1 per cent has been planned for Palestinian development. In addition, 5,000 Palestinians reside in 38 communities located in areas designated as “firing zones” for military training, increasing their vulnerability and risk of displacement.

The wall

29. Israel continued the illegal construction of the wall in the Occupied West Bank, including in and around Occupied East Jerusalem, in defiance of the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice of 9 July 2004. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs reported in July 2013 that the wall’s total length was approximately 712 km, more than twice the length of the 1949 Armistice Line (Green Line) between the West Bank and Israel. Approximately 62 per cent of the wall was complete. If completed as planned, some 85 per cent of the route would run inside the West Bank, rather than along the Green Line, isolating 9.4 per cent of the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. Around 11,000 Palestinians living in 32 communities located between the wall and the Green Line depend on the granting of Israeli permits or special arrangements to live in their own homes. Approximately 150 Palestinian communities have land located behind the wall, forcing residents to seek special permits or “prior coordination” with the Israeli authorities to access it.

Demolitions and displacements

30. According to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Israel carried out the demolition of at least 594 Palestinian-owned structures during the reporting period, displacing at least 924 people (as at 30 September). There was a significant rise in demolitions and displacement in East Jerusalem, and, as of August 2013, the number of people displaced in the City in 2013 was greater than 250, more than the combined total of persons displaced in all of 2011 and 2012. The entire Bir Nabala Bedouin community in East Jerusalem was demolished in August, displacing 39 people, including 18 children, on the grounds that the residential and livelihood structures lacked building permits issued by Israel.

Security

31. On 14 November 2012, Israel launched a large-scale military offensive, “Operation Pillar of Defence”, in the Gaza Strip, with the targeted assassination of the acting chief of the military wing of Hamas. Palestinian armed groups responded by firing rockets into Israel, and the hostilities lasted until 21 November, when a ceasefire agreement was reached. According to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, during the eight days of hostilities, Israel targeted more than

1,500 sites throughout the Gaza Strip and 165 Palestinians were killed, of whom 99 were believed to be civilians, including 33 children and 13 women. The Gaza Ministry of Health reported that 1,399 Palestinians had been injured, the majority of whom were believed to be civilians. During the same period, Palestinian armed factions fired 1,506 rockets towards Israel, according to IDF, and six Israelis, including three civilians, were killed as a result of the rocket attacks and 224 others were injured, the vast majority of whom were reportedly civilians.

32. Overall, Israeli forces killed at least 196 Palestinians and injured more than 1,600 in the Gaza Strip during the reporting period (as at 30 September) in incidents involving air strikes and the enforcement of access restrictions near the border fence. In addition, 3 Palestinians, including 2 children, were killed and 24 Palestinians, including 19 children, were injured in incidents involving unexploded ordnance.

33. In the West Bank, Israeli occupying forces continued to conduct routine military raids and arrests. During the reporting period (as at 30 September), 20 Palestinians were killed and more than 4,200 injured by Israeli forces in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, including during clashes with demonstrators. Israeli forces arrested at least 3,583 Palestinians in more than 3,000 search-and-arrest operations.

34. Palestinian civilians engaged in demonstrations against the occupation continued to be killed and injured by the excessive use of force by Israel, including live ammunition and rubber-coated bullets. The Israeli human rights organization B'Tselem, in a report issued in July 2013 on the routine use by the Israeli army of rubber-coated metal bullets as a means of dispersing demonstrations in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, stated that since 2000, at least 19 Palestinians, including 12 minors, had been killed by such bullets. It also stated that Israeli security forces made routine use of other crowd-control weapons, such as tear gas, stun grenades, water cannons and pepper spray, in unlawful and dangerous ways, with minimal accountability to prevent the recurrence of such conduct.

Gaza Strip

35. The long-standing restrictions on the movement of people and goods to, from and within the Gaza Strip continued to undermine the living conditions of its 1.7 million Palestinian residents. According to a report released by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in July 2013, 57 per cent of Gaza households are food-insecure and about 80 per cent are aid recipients, 34.5 per cent of those able and willing to work are unemployed. A long-standing electricity deficit and shortages in fuel result in power outages of up to 12 hours per day. More than 12,000 people are currently displaced owing to their inability to reconstruct their homes that were destroyed during hostilities. Since 2007, at least 230 Palestinian civilians have been killed and over 400 injured while working in tunnels used for the transfer of restricted goods between Gaza and Egypt. During the reporting period, 15 people were killed and 20 injured in tunnel-related incidents (as of August).

36. Fewer than 200 people per day (on average) were allowed out of Gaza by way of Israel in the first half of 2013, compared with 26,000 in the equivalent period in 2000. Less than one truckload of goods per day (on average) exited Gaza in the first half of 2013, compared with 38 during the first half of 2007 (before the imposition of the blockade). Access to land within 300 m from the fence erected by Israel

surrounding Gaza is generally prohibited, and access to farming areas several hundred metres beyond is dangerous. Palestinian fishermen are allowed to access less than one third of the fishing areas allocated to them under the Oslo Accords (6 of 20 nautical miles) and are denied access to the most profitable fishing areas off the Gaza coast. The livelihoods of thousands of families have been impacted by the access restrictions: from 2000 to 2013, the number of fishermen declined from around 10,000 to only 3,500, some 95 per cent of whom rely on international aid.

Water

37. Israel, the occupying Power, retains almost exclusive control over all underground and surface water resources, the construction of new wells and cisterns and the upgrading of existing wells and other water infrastructure in the West Bank. According to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, approximately 1 million Palestinians in 492 communities in the West Bank access or consume 60 litres of water per capita per day or less, significantly below the World Health Organization recommendation of 100 litres per capita per day. In addition, an estimated 313,000 Palestinians from 113 communities are not connected to a water network, which translates into enormous costs related to water purchase. Israeli settlers in the West Bank consume approximately six times the water consumed by Palestinians. In some cases, the discrepancies are even wider: the Dead Sea settlements of “Mitzpe Shalem” and “Qalya” consume approximately 700 litres per capita per day, while the neighbouring Palestinian village of Al-Jiftlik has access to only 66 litres per capita per day and the Palestinian villages of Al-Nuweï’ma and Al-Hadidiya are at humanitarian crisis levels with 24 and 22 litres per capita per day, respectively.

38. In Gaza, according to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, only a quarter of households receive running water every day, but only during several hours, and over 90 per cent of the water extracted from the Gaza aquifer is unsafe for human consumption. Some 90 million litres of untreated and partially treated sewage are dumped in the sea off the Gaza coast each day, creating public health hazards.

Women and children

39. In March 2013, the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics reported that, despite a rise in female participation in the labour force over the past 10 years, the participation rate remained low at 17.4 per cent in 2012, compared with 10.3 per cent in 2001. The female unemployment rate increased to 32.9 per cent in 2012 compared with 13.8 per cent in 2001. In 2012 in the West Bank, 20.7 per cent of local council members were female and 40.6 per cent of public sector employees were female.

40. In a report issued in March 2013, the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) stated that the ill-treatment of Palestinian children in the Israeli military detention system appeared to be widespread, systematic and institutionalized. The pattern of ill-treatment includes the arrests of children at their homes between midnight and 5 a.m. by heavily armed soldiers; the practice of blindfolding children and tying their hands with plastic ties; physical and verbal abuse during transfer to an interrogation site, including the use of painful restraints; the lack of access to water, food, toilet facilities and medical care; interrogation using physical violence

and threats; coerced confessions; and the lack of access to lawyers or family members during interrogation. Treatment inconsistent with child rights continues during court appearances, including the shackling of children; the denial of bail and imposition of custodial sentences; and the transfer of children outside the Occupied Palestinian Territory to serve their sentences inside Israel. The incarceration isolates them from their families and interrupts their studies. UNICEF stated that these practices were in violation of international law that protects all children against ill-treatment when in contact with law enforcement, military and judicial institutions.

Prisoners

41. The Committee continued to monitor with serious concern the conditions of the Palestinian prisoners held by Israel in jails and detention centres in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and in Israel. On 22 February, a 30-year-old Palestinian gas station attendant, Arafat Jaradat, died while undergoing interrogation in an Israeli facility, days after his arrest by IDF. The Palestinian Ministry for Prisoners' Affairs reported that he had been tortured savagely and subjected to psychological pressure on suspicion that he had thrown stones at Israeli troops. Israeli officials claimed that he had died of cardiac arrest. The United Nations called for an international, independent investigation into his death, but that has not been implemented.

42. The Palestinian organization Addameer reported in June 2013 that, since 1967, 73 Palestinian detainees had died from torture at the hands of Israeli interrogators. According to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, at the end of July 2013, 4,828 Palestinian security detainees and prisoners were being held in Israeli prisons, including 134 administrative detainees, 193 minors and 11 women.

43. On 28 July, the Israeli Cabinet, with a view to facilitating the resumption of Israeli-Palestinian talks, voted to approve the release of 104 Palestinian prisoners who had been held for more than 20 years. On 14 August, Israel released 26 of the prisoners, hours before the first round of formal peace talks were held in Jerusalem.

Palestinian State-building

44. On 20 October 2012, the first municipal elections since 2005 were successfully held in the West Bank. Elections in the Gaza Strip did not take place, since Hamas authorities did not allow the Central Elections Commission to carry out voter registration and related electoral preparations. In February, Hamas allowed the Commission to conduct registration in Gaza for eventual national elections, but Israel banned the transfer of registration forms from Gaza to Ramallah. The Commission used scanners to digitally transfer the data, and the Head of the Commission handed the updated voter register to President Abbas on 12 April and informed him that the Commission was technically ready to organize any election once it was so decided. On 6 June, following the resignation of the Prime Minister, Salam Fayyad, a new Palestinian Cabinet was sworn in under the leadership of the newly appointed Prime Minister, Rami Hamdallah, to carry on the administration of the State's affairs until a national consensus government was formed. Meanwhile, a series of reconciliation meetings between Fatah and Hamas, mediated by Egypt, did not yield tangible results.

45. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) reported in September 2013 that, with the persistence of Israeli restrictions on mobility in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, gross domestic product had

decelerated and poverty and unemployment had increased in 2012. The Palestinian fiscal crisis had deepened, owing to less aid and the withholding of Palestinian revenue by Israel. The crisis was exacerbated by the leakage of Palestinian fiscal revenues from smuggling and lost tax on imports from Israel, estimated at \$300 million annually.

United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East

46. The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) continued to provide extensive services and emergency assistance to the Palestine refugees in all its fields of operations in Jordan, Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic and the Occupied Palestinian Territory. The Agency continued to experience a grave and recurrent financial crisis, which threatened its ability to sustain its services, continue its emergency assistance programmes and complete essential projects, such as the reconstruction of the Nahr El Bared camp in Lebanon. In the light of the escalating conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic, the Agency is particularly concerned about the more than 500,000 Palestine refugees who have lived in the Syrian Arab Republic for decades. As of July 2013, more than two thirds of the community had been displaced, with approximately 235,000 persons displaced inside the Syrian Arab Republic, 92,000 displaced persons in Lebanon and over 8,000 displaced persons in Jordan. As the conflict has become increasingly violent and indiscriminate, it has exacted a heavy toll on Palestine refugees, with most of the 12 Palestine refugee camps in the Syrian Arab Republic being severely affected.

47. While the Government of Israel undertook some measures to ease the movement of goods into and out of the Gaza Strip, the blockade persisted and those measures fell well short of the level required to meet the needs of the Palestine refugee population and the Agency's reconstruction requirements, or to ensure the revival of the economy which would reduce the dependency on UNRWA services. The Committee again expresses its appreciation for the dedication of UNRWA and its entire staff to its mission and calls upon all donors to increase contributions, particularly in the light of prevailing crises and needs, to ensure the continuity of needed services and the well-being of approximately 5 million registered Palestine refugees under the mandate of the Agency.

United Nations Development Programme/Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

48. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), through its Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People, continued to respond to the development needs in the State of Palestine. In support of the Palestinian Authority's National Development Plan and Statehood Agenda, UNDP proceeded with the implementation of its consolidated plan, "Development for Freedom: Empowered Lives, a Resilient Nation 2012-2014". The three-year plan focuses on democratic governance and the rule of law, economic empowerment and private sector investment, environment and management of natural resources, as well as public and social infrastructure. In support of Palestinian statehood, the UNDP plan places empowerment, resilience and sustainability at the centre of its operation and focuses on three priority areas: the Gaza Strip, East Jerusalem and Area C, where the needs are the greatest.

49. The Committee also remained appreciative of the important work of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. It noted that the consolidated appeal for 2013 focused on delivering humanitarian assistance, increased protection of civilians, enhanced monitoring and reporting on the humanitarian situation and the strengthening of United Nations humanitarian coordination structures.

Chapter V

Action taken by the Committee

A. Action taken in accordance with General Assembly resolution [67/20](#)

1. Action taken in the Security Council

50. During the reporting period, the Security Council continued to monitor the situation on the ground and the efforts to resume Israeli-Palestinian peace talks. It held monthly briefings throughout the year under the agenda item entitled “The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question”.

51. During the open debates at the Council held on 15 October 2012, 23 January, 24 April and 23 July 2013, the Chair of the Committee delivered statements (see [S/PV.6847](#), Resumption 1; [S/PV.6906](#), Resumption 1; [S/PV.6950](#), Resumption 1; [S/PV.7007](#)).

2. Action taken by the Bureau of the Committee

52. On 16 November 2012, the Bureau of the Committee issued a statement on the deadly military attacks by Israel, the occupying Power, in the Gaza Strip (GA/PAL/1247). On 6 December, the Bureau issued a statement on Israel’s illegal settlement activity in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem (GA/PAL/1252). Furthermore, on 16 April 2013, the Bureau issued a statement on the plight of Palestinian prisoners held by Israel (GA/PAL/1263).

B. Action taken by the Committee and the Division for Palestinian Rights in accordance with General Assembly resolutions [67/20](#) and [67/21](#)

1. Committee meetings at Headquarters

53. At its periodic meetings at Headquarters in New York, the Committee, among other things, was briefed on recent developments by the Chief Palestinian Negotiator, Saeb Erakat, and organized a screening of a documentary film on the life of the late Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat. Also, the Committee was briefed by members of the jury of the Russell Tribunal on Palestine on the outcome of its session held in New York in October 2012.

2. Committee meeting outside Headquarters

54. At the invitation of the Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, the Committee convened a special meeting in Caracas on 17 and 18 April 2013 to discuss the implications of General Assembly resolution [67/19](#) and initiatives to promote worldwide and regional solidarity with the Palestinian people. The meeting was opened by the Chair of the Committee, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the State of Palestine, Riad Al Malki, and the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Elías Jaua Milano. The meeting adopted a declaration and a comprehensive programme of action in support of the Palestinian people and their rights and legitimate national aspirations.

3. Programme of international meetings and conferences

55. In the period under review, the following international events were held under the auspices of the Committee in 2013:

(a) United Nations Seminar on Assistance to the Palestinian People, FAO headquarters, Rome, 27 and 28 February, on the challenges and opportunities in the new reality of a State under occupation;

(b) United Nations Meeting of Consultations with Civil Society Organizations active on the Question of Palestine, FAO headquarters, Rome, 1 March;

(c) United Nations International Meeting on the Question of Palestine, United Nations Conference Centre, Addis Ababa, 29 and 30 April, on African solidarity with the Palestinian people;

(d) United Nations International Meeting in Support of Israeli-Palestinian Peace, Beijing, 18 and 19 June, on collective international engagement towards a two-State solution.

56. The above-mentioned events were attended by representatives of Governments, intergovernmental organizations and United Nations system entities, as well as parliamentarians and representatives of civil society and the media. Detailed information about the meetings is being issued as publications of the Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat and available on the "Question of Palestine" website maintained by the Division.

57. In connection with the above-mentioned events, the Committee delegation held meetings with senior officials at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Italy on the margins of the seminar held in Rome. In Beijing, the Committee delegation met with high-level officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China, including the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Wang Yi, and the Middle East Envoy, Wu Sike.

4. Cooperation with intergovernmental organizations

58. Throughout the year, the Committee continued its cooperation with the African Union, the European Union, the League of Arab States, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation. The Committee is appreciative of the active participation of their representatives in the various international events held under its auspices.

5. Cooperation with civil society

Civil society organizations

59. The Committee continued its cooperation with civil society organizations worldwide. Representatives of civil society participated in all meetings organized under the auspices of the Committee, including the observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People on 29 November 2012. The meetings provided civil society representatives with an opportunity to discuss the situation on the ground and their programmes in support of the Palestinian people and to further advance the coordination of their activities. The Committee was appreciative of the work done by civil society organizations and encouraged them to continue contributing to efforts aimed at realizing a two-State solution.

60. The Committee has reactivated its Working Group and mandated it to implement the Committee's programme of cooperation with civil society. The Chair of the Working Group is the representative of Malta.

61. During the reporting period, eight civil society organizations were accredited to the Committee.

62. The Division for Palestinian Rights maintained a civil society page (<http://unispal.un.org/unispal.nsf/ngo.htm>) on the "Question of Palestine" website as a tool for the exchange of information and networking and for cooperation between civil society and the Committee.

63. The Division maintained a Facebook page to disseminate information about the work of the Committee, and the United Nations as a whole, on the question of Palestine. In addition, the Division continued to publish the periodic online bulletin *NGO Action News*, reaching out to more than 1,000 civil society organizations around the world, in order to catalogue and publicize civil society initiatives.

Parliaments and interparliamentary organizations

64. The Committee continued to attach great importance to developing its liaison with national and regional parliaments and their organizations. Representatives of parliaments and interparliamentary organizations participated in international events organized by the Committee during 2013. In particular, three Members of the Palestinian Legislative Council, one Member of the Israeli Knesset and a former Knesset Member participated as speakers in the international meeting held in Beijing.

6. Research, monitoring and publications

65. The Division carried out research and monitoring activities and responded to requests for information and briefings on the question of Palestine. Under the guidance of the Committee, which reiterated the relevance of the research, monitoring and publications programme, it also prepared the publications listed below for dissemination, including through the Internet:

(a) Monthly bulletin on action taken by the United Nations system and intergovernmental organizations relevant to the question of Palestine;

(b) Monthly chronology of events relating to the question of Palestine based on media reports and other sources;

(c) Reports of international meetings and conferences organized under the auspices of the Committee;

(d) Special bulletin and information notes on the observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People;

(e) Periodic reviews of developments related to the Middle East peace process;

(f) Annual compilation of resolutions and decisions of the General Assembly and the Security Council relating to the question of Palestine.

7. United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine

66. The Division for Palestinian Rights, in cooperation with relevant technical and library services of the United Nations Secretariat, continued to administer, maintain, expand and develop the United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine (UNISPAL) and the “Question of Palestine” website. That included the ongoing maintenance and upgrading of the technical components of the system to ensure the uninterrupted presence of UNISPAL (<http://unispal.un.org>) on the Internet and involved the expansion of the document collection to include relevant new and old United Nations and related documents. In addition, steps continued to be taken to enhance the user-friendliness and usefulness of UNISPAL, by creating a focus page on the status of Palestine at the United Nations in the light of its admission as a non-member observer State, continuing to provide titles to documents in French and incorporating additional multimedia content. RSS and Twitter feeds continued to alert users about newly posted materials.

8. Training programme for staff of the Government of the State of Palestine

67. The Division conducted the annual training programme for staff of the Government of the State of Palestine. Two staff members of the Ministry of National Economy participated in a three-week training programme at the United Nations Office at Geneva during the sixtieth session of the Trade and Development Board, from 16 September to 4 October 2013, where they familiarized themselves with the work of UNCTAD, including on trade facilitation and foreign direct investment. They also attended briefings on the work of other United Nations entities, including the Human Rights Council, the World Health Organization and the World Trade Organization. In addition, two staff members of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs are in the process of completing a three-month training programme at United Nations Headquarters in New York held from 11 September to 27 November 2013, in order to familiarize themselves with various aspects of the work of the Secretariat and other United Nations organs and bodies, including the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council.

9. International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People

68. The International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People was observed on 29 November 2012 at Headquarters in New York and the United Nations Offices at Geneva and Vienna. At Headquarters, in addition to a special meeting of the Committee, an art exhibit entitled “Palestine: memories, dreams, perseverance” was organized under the auspices of the Committee, in cooperation with the Permanent Observer Mission of the State of Palestine to the United Nations and the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat. The Committee noted with appreciation that the International Day of Solidarity had also been observed by United Nations information centres and other bodies in many cities throughout the world. Details on the observance are contained in the special bulletin issued by the Division.

Chapter VI

Action taken by the Department of Public Information in accordance with General Assembly resolution 67/22

69. The Department of Public Information, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 67/22, continued to implement its special information programme on the question of Palestine. In doing so, it strove to enhance dialogue and understanding, while sensitizing public opinion to the question of Palestine and the Middle East peace process.

70. To mark the 2012 observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People on 29 November, the Department widely disseminated the Secretary-General's message in the six official languages, while the United Nations information centres in several cities translated the message into the local languages and posted it on their social media accounts. Commemorative events and activities were organized at United Nations information centres around the world, with the support of the Department.

71. The Department's annual training programme for Palestinian journalists held at United Nations Headquarters from 5 November to 7 December 2012 focused, for the first time, on online journalism and digital media. Four male and four female journalists were selected to attend from the Gaza Strip, the West Bank and East Jerusalem. The group was briefed by senior United Nations officials and attended meetings of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee). They also met with leaders of the digital media industry from Google, Twitter, Tumblr, the *Huffington Post*, the British Broadcasting Corporation, Al Jazeera and Reuters, among others.

72. The Department also used all of its information outlets and products, including digital media platforms, to highlight the broad range of developments and issues related to the question of Palestine and the Middle East peace process. The multilingual United Nations News Centre portal covered the subject extensively, with its English and French language versions carrying more than 200 related stories and the Arabic, Chinese, Russian and Spanish versions providing further coverage. The Department also produced 108 press releases on the question of Palestine in English and French, which included summaries of formal meetings and press conferences, as well as statements by the Secretary-General and other United Nations officials.

73. Reporting on the work of alleviating the plight of Palestinians carried out by the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, UNRWA and other United Nations entities was also part of the extensive coverage provided by United Nations Radio in the six official languages of the United Nations and other languages.

74. Live television feeds from meetings at the United Nations, and news and feature programmes produced by United Nations Television and Video, were distributed by a variety of means and platforms, including the UNifeed satellite distribution system, *United Nations Webcast* and the United Nations channel on the Time Warner cable network in the New York City area. UNifeed packaged more than 20 Palestine-related stories during the reporting period for broadcasters around

the world, including reports from the field by UNRWA, UNICEF and the World Food Programme, and coverage of statements and activities by senior United Nations officials.

75. United Nations Photo staff covered related events at Headquarters and in the field, including the visit by the Secretary-General to the West Bank on 21 November 2012, the General Assembly vote on the status of Palestine and the daily life of Palestinians, especially children and youth.

76. The Guided Tours Unit maintained a revised tour route at Headquarters, which includes a stop at the permanent exhibit entitled “The question of Palestine and the United Nations”. During the reporting period, approximately 148,000 visitors took the guided tour. In addition, a total of 341 persons from seven groups of scholars, students and officials were briefed on the question of Palestine and the Middle East peace process. The United Nations public inquiries team responded to 55 queries relating to the Middle East peace process.

Chapter VII

Conclusions and recommendations of the Committee

77. The Committee remains firmly convinced that a negotiated peaceful settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in all its aspects and an end to the Israeli occupation remain central to peace and stability throughout the volatile Middle East region and merit the close attention of the international community. To that end, the Committee concentrated its efforts on promoting international awareness of the issue, and the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, in particular their right to an independent and sovereign Palestinian State based on 1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital. The Committee urged the international community to step up its engagement for the resumption of final status negotiations, within a clear framework based on internationally recognized parameters; promoted international action against obstacles in their path, such as the illegal Israeli settlement enterprise; encouraged solidarity with the Palestinians and their State; and engaged with diverse constituencies in support of peace. In its programme of work, the Committee analysed the ramifications of the new reality of a State under occupation. It actively sought to incorporate lessons learned from the history of anti-colonial and anti-apartheid struggles of other countries, in particular in Africa. It continued to mobilize international support for the Palestinian State-building programme, while highlighting the massive economic costs of the Israeli occupation. It urged increased donor support for the agencies of the United Nations system, in particular UNRWA, providing vital humanitarian support for the Palestinian people.

78. The Committee welcomed the admission of Palestine as a non-member observer State by the General Assembly, while calling upon all Member States to extend full diplomatic recognition to it. The Committee is of the view that the vote in the General Assembly constituted an important step towards the realization of the two-State solution, gave a new urgency to the resumption of the peace process, and vested the State of Palestine with important additional rights to join international legal frameworks and to contribute to the work of the United Nations system as a whole. The Committee stands ready to support Palestinian initiatives in this regard at the appropriate time. The Security Council should revisit the issue of the full membership of the State of Palestine in the United Nations in the light of the General Assembly vote.

79. The Committee condemned the illegal retaliatory measures undertaken by Israel following the adoption by the General Assembly of resolution [67/19](#), including the withholding of Palestinian revenues and the acceleration of the settlement campaign, which raised tensions on the ground and jeopardized Palestinian institutional and socioeconomic development. The Committee calls upon the donors to institute a financial safety net to prevent future damage to Palestinian institutions, the development of which donors have generously supported over the years. The Committee condemned other illegal measures by Israel, the occupying Power, such as the construction of the separation wall, the use of excessive force against Palestinian protesters, arrest raids, prisoner abuse, the continuation of the Gaza blockade and hundreds of checkpoints throughout the West Bank and measures that stymie development and cause the forced displacement of Palestinian civilians, particularly from East

Jerusalem and Area C. The Committee raised international awareness of the abusive practices experienced by the thousands of Palestinian prisoners held by Israel, including by prisoners undertaking hunger strikes, minors and those held without trial, and called for their prompt release and reintegration into Palestinian society.

80. The Committee remained deeply troubled by repeated bouts of violence. It condemned all attacks against civilians, in particular the military operation launched by Israel against Gaza in November 2012, the rocket fire from Gaza against Israeli civilian targets, settler violence, and the killings of unarmed protesters by Israeli forces. It calls upon the parties to adhere to the terms of the Gaza ceasefire agreement. It further calls upon the Security Council and the High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention to act urgently to uphold international humanitarian law and guarantee the protection of civilians.

81. The Committee welcomes the vigorous international diplomacy by the United States, the Arab League, the Secretary-General and many world leaders, which laid the basis for the resumption of direct negotiations between the Israelis and the Palestinians. The Committee salutes the demonstrated commitment of the Palestinian leadership to a peaceful settlement of the conflict, which should be reciprocated by the Israeli side. The Committee is looking forward to serious negotiations on the basis of pre-1967 borders which resolve all outstanding issues within the envisaged time frame, leading to the complete Israeli withdrawal from the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the independence of a truly sovereign, contiguous, viable and democratic State of Palestine. Sustained engagement and support by the international community, including a revitalized Quartet, is vital to ensure that the parties negotiate in good faith, live up to their commitments, and refrain from steps that jeopardize negotiations. Stepped-up international assistance and a tangible rollback of the measures of occupation are required to build popular support for negotiations. The current diplomatic initiative may represent the final window of opportunity to achieve a negotiated two-State solution on the basis of the relevant United Nations resolutions, the Madrid terms of reference, the Arab Peace Initiative and the Quartet Road Map. The Committee is concerned in this regard by continued Israeli settlement announcements that threaten to derail negotiations. The Committee also stresses the importance of Palestinian unity under the legitimate leadership of President Abbas to secure a comprehensive peace.

82. The Committee welcomed the findings and recommendations of the international fact-finding mission on Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, which highlighted the responsibility of States and private entities not to contribute to grave Israeli violations of Palestinian human rights, in particular in respect of settlements. It further welcomes in this regard the recently adopted European Union guidelines that prohibit funding by European Union institutions for Israeli entities connected with the settlements, as an overdue first step towards fulfilling obligations under international law. This measure should be followed up by further international action against settlements.

83. The Committee has consistently supported the Palestinian State-building and reform agenda. It is concerned that the accomplishments are now endangered owing to the chronic financial crisis and calls upon donors to meet their prior commitments and to provide additional aid to avert further deterioration. The Committee remains convinced, however, that sustainable economic development cannot take root under the existing regime of Israeli occupation.

84. The Committee and the Division for Palestinian Rights will continue through their mandated activities to generate heightened international awareness of the question of Palestine, as well as international support for the rights of the Palestinian people and the peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine. In this connection, the Committee emphasizes the useful and constructive contribution of the Division in support of its mandate. It notes with satisfaction: (a) the sustained level of dialogue, engagement and support on the part of the international community for the programme's objectives, as evidenced by the number of adopted resolutions, international meetings and conferences, commemorations of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People and increased membership of the Committee; (b) the continued involvement of civil society organizations in support of the efforts of the Committee and the United Nations towards a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine, as evidenced by the number of civil society conferences, public forums, meetings and consultations between the Committee and civil society organizations; and (c) an increase in international awareness of the United Nations policies and activities on the question of Palestine, as evidenced by the increased number of visits to the United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine (UNISPAL) and other information materials on the "Question of Palestine" website. The Committee also considers that the annual training programme for staff of the Palestinian Government, carried out annually by the Division, has proved its usefulness, as it directly contributes to Palestinian capacity-building efforts. The Committee strongly recommends that this important mandated activity be continued and, where possible, further enhanced.

85. The Committee will focus its programme of international meetings and conferences in 2014, to be implemented by the Division, on widening international support for the achievement of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. The programme will also focus on the creation of a favourable atmosphere for the success of the resumed permanent status negotiations. The Committee intends to mobilize increased international scrutiny of the developments on the ground, in particular settlement activities, and will emphasize responsibility and promote action by the international community to put an end to all illegal Israeli policies and practices in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. The Committee will examine the legal ramifications of the new international status of the State of Palestine, and will also continue to call attention to the plight of the Palestinian political prisoners in Israeli jails and urge a resolution of their plight.

86. The Committee will analyse lessons learned and the feedback received from participants in its events and adjust their format and substance, as appropriate. It will strive to involve prominent international personalities and

experts and the representatives of vulnerable populations, such as women and refugees, in its events, while giving due regard to gender balance.

87. The Committee will continue to enrich the format of its regular meetings. It will invite internationally renowned personalities to brief the Committee and the wider United Nations membership. The Committee also considers that the round-table meetings have proved particularly useful in generating practical proposals for action in the United Nations and beyond and will continue to utilize this format.

88. The Committee will continue to mobilize support for Palestinian institution-building and all other efforts to support and enhance the viability of the State of Palestine. It will reach out to and engage Governments, parliamentarians and civil society to mobilize support for a just solution to all permanent status issues, including the question of refugees, based on principles of international law and relevant United Nations resolutions, including resolution 194 (III). The Committee wishes to contribute to efforts towards ending incitement on both sides, as well as to promote peace education. It will pay particular attention to the inclusion and empowerment of women and youth and their organizations. The Committee also wishes to promote Palestinian reconciliation.

89. The Committee highly values civil society initiatives in support of the Palestinian people. A comprehensive peace will take root only if the relevant civil societies strongly demand it of their political leaderships. Special efforts are needed to revitalize the peace camp in Israel. The Committee lauds the courageous advocacy actions of countless activists, including eminent personalities and parliamentarians, who participate in demonstrations against the wall, try to break the siege of Gaza and keep their home constituencies informed about the harsh realities of life under occupation. The Committee encourages civil society partners to work with their national Governments, parliamentarians and other institutions with a view to gaining their full support for the work of the United Nations, including that of the Committee, on the question of Palestine. The Committee believes that the recommendations it adopted during the reporting period and its reactivated Working Group will help in building stronger partnerships with civil society. The Committee appreciates the support it receives from the Secretariat in this regard. The Committee encourages its members and observers to mobilize their respective civil societies at the national level, in particular the youth, and to establish solidarity committees with the State of Palestine.

90. The Committee looks forward to further developing its cooperation with parliamentarians and their umbrella organizations. Parliamentarians have a special responsibility to ensure that their Governments actively promote and support the realization of the two-State solution and uphold their obligations under international law, including humanitarian and human rights law.

91. The Committee will reach out to all regional groups at the United Nations with a view to expanding its membership. It will actively work to organize more thematic debates on the question of Palestine in various United Nations forums. The Committee intends to request that the General Assembly proclaim an International Year of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. The Committee

believes that its increased workload should be adequately supported by an expanded Bureau.

92. The Committee requests the Division to continue its substantive and secretariat support, the programme of research, monitoring and publications and other informational activities, in support of the Committee's communication strategy. The Division should pay special attention to continued development of the "Question of Palestine" portal, including the addition of a mobile-device-friendly version, and the use of web-based social information networks, such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. It should also continue to develop the UNISPAL document collection by reflecting current issues and events, as well as by continuing to digitize and upload historical documents and to add user-friendly search features. The Division should continue to collaborate with the United Nations Libraries at Headquarters and at Geneva in the search for historic documents. It should further enhance the annual training programme for staff of the Palestinian Government, paying special attention to the programme's gender balance, and optimize the use of resources to allow the maximum number of participants possible. Voluntary contributions from members and observers in line with their capacity are to be encouraged to put the programme on a solid financial footing. The Committee also commends its members and observers which instituted training programmes at the national level to build Palestinian capacity.

93. The Division should continue to organize the annual observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

94. The Committee is of the view that the special information programme on the question of Palestine of the Department of Public Information has made an important contribution to informing the media and the public of the relevant issues. It requests the continuation of the programme, with the necessary flexibility warranted by developments relevant to the question of Palestine.

95. Wishing to make its contribution to the achievement of a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine, and in view of the many difficulties facing the Palestinian people and their leadership and besetting the peace process, the Committee calls upon all States to join it in this endeavour and to extend their cooperation and support to the Committee, and invites the General Assembly again to recognize the importance of its role and to reconfirm its mandate.



Report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People



United Nations • New York, 2014

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Note

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Contents

<i>Chapter</i>	<i>Page</i>
Letter of transmittal	4
I. Introduction	5
II. Mandate of the Committee	7
III. Organization of work	8
A. Membership and officers	8
B. Participation in the work of the Committee	8
IV. Review of the situation relating to the question of Palestine	9
V. Action taken by the Committee	16
A. Action taken in accordance with General Assembly resolution 68/12	16
B. Action taken by the Committee and the Division for Palestinian Rights in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 68/12 and 68/13	16
VI. Action taken by the Department of Public Information in accordance with General Assembly resolution 68/14	21
VII. Conclusions and recommendations of the Committee	22

Letter of transmittal

[7 October 2014]

Mr. Secretary-General,

I have the honour to enclose herewith the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for submission to the General Assembly in accordance with paragraph 2 of its resolution 68/12 of 26 November 2013.

The report covers the period from 7 October 2013 to 6 October 2014.

(Signed) Fodé **Seck**
Chair of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights
of the Palestinian People

His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon
Secretary-General of the United Nations
New York

Chapter I

Introduction

1. At the outset, the reporting period was marked by efforts by the international community to help to advance the Israeli-Palestinian peace negotiations, mediated by the United States of America, that had started in July 2013. The talks, however, continued to be undermined by Israel's promotion of plans and tenders for the construction of thousands of new units in illegal settlements in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. On 28 March 2014, Israel postponed the release of the last batch of "pre-Oslo" Palestinian prisoners, breaching the United States-brokered agreement between the two sides. Soon thereafter, the Government of the State of Palestine deposited instruments of accession to the Geneva Conventions and to a number of international treaties — a step that had been postponed during the negotiations. Israel reacted with the announcement of hundreds more settlement units. On 23 April, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and Hamas reached a deal to end the division that began in 2007 and form a national consensus Government. While the international community welcomed the Palestinian reconciliation, Israel rejected it and suspended the peace talks on 24 April.

2. Soon thereafter, the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, rapidly deteriorated. Israel exploited the abduction and killing on 12 June of three Israeli teenagers studying in illegal settlements in the West Bank in order to launch a massive military operation in the West Bank. Israeli occupying forces carried out hundreds of military raids, killed six Palestinian civilians, and injured and arrested hundreds of others during the operation.

3. Tensions surrounding the Gaza Strip increased in June after Israel's targeted assassination of a Palestinian militant and an accompanying child and as a result of the Israeli military operations in the West Bank. On 7 July, Israel launched "Operation Protective Edge", with the claimed objective of stopping Palestinian rocket fire from Gaza. During the 50-day operation, Israel killed 2,189 Palestinians, 67 per cent of them civilians, including 513 children and 269 women, and injured more than 11,000. Sixty-six Israeli soldiers were killed, as well as five civilians, including one foreign national. The homes of more than 100,000 Palestinians in Gaza were destroyed or severely damaged. The massive destruction worsened the living conditions of the 1.8 million people living in Gaza, which was already at a crisis point owing to the Israeli blockade, now in its eighth year. The Committee has repeatedly condemned the excessive and disproportionate use of force by Israel, the occupying Power, targeting Palestinian civilians and infrastructure and has repeatedly called for the Israeli blockade to be lifted. It has also condemned the indiscriminate rocket fire from Gaza targeting Israeli cities and civilian infrastructure.

4. Israel continued its frequent military raids and incursions in the West Bank, resulting in the killing and injuring of Palestinians, including children. Thousands of Palestinians, including women and children, were arrested during the reporting period. This is in addition to the more than 5,000 Palestinians who remain in Israeli jails and detention centres. Unarmed Palestinian civilians continued to be subjected to the excessive use of force by the Israeli occupying forces during demonstrations against the occupation. Israel continued to expand its illegal settlements in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and approved thousands more new settlement units.

Ten years after the 2004 advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice was rendered, the construction of the separation wall and its associated regime still continue, fragmenting the Palestinian land, obstructing movement and access, further isolating East Jerusalem and harming the socioeconomic conditions of the Palestinian people. During the reporting period, the situation in occupied East Jerusalem remained alarming, with increased numbers of incursions by extremist Israelis into the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound and acts of incitement and provocation, as well as continued land confiscations, excavations near holy sites, house demolitions, revocations of identity cards and evictions of Palestinian residents.

5. Palestinian State-building and institution-building efforts continued but were undermined by restrictions and obstacles imposed by Israel on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, which continued to prevent the normal movement of persons and goods, economic activity and sustained development and growth. After the State of Palestine deposited the instruments of accession in April, its accession to the Geneva Conventions took effect immediately. Seven of the nine core human rights treaties and one of the substantive protocols have entered into force.

6. During the reporting period, the activities of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and its Bureau focused on bringing the attention of the international community to the 2014 International Year of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, as proclaimed by the General Assembly in its resolution 68/12, with the objective of mobilizing wide support for ending the Israeli occupation and realizing the two-State solution, in order for the Palestinian people to achieve its inalienable rights, including the right to self-determination. The Committee monitored the situation on the ground and the political developments, implemented its programme of international meetings and conferences, and held consultations with representatives of Governments, national parliaments and interparliamentary organizations, as well as civil society. The Committee continued to reiterate its position of principle that a permanent settlement of the question of Palestine could be reached only by ending the Israeli occupation that began in 1967, achieving the independence of the State of Palestine on the basis of the pre-1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital and achieving a just and agreed solution to the issue of Palestine refugees on the basis of General Assembly resolution 194 (III).

7. An international meeting organized by the Committee in Quito in March focused on the recognition of the State of Palestine by countries in the region and support for the two-State solution. In April, the Committee held a round table in Geneva on legal aspects of the question of Palestine. This was followed by an international meeting on the question of Jerusalem, held in Ankara in May. The meeting was organized in cooperation with the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and the Government of Turkey. A seminar on assistance to the Palestinian people, held in Nairobi, focused on solidifying the economic underpinnings of an independent State. Also, the Committee organized a series of events within the framework of the International Year, including a joint meeting with the League of Arab States in Cairo, a special meeting to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the wall, high-level briefings and film screenings at Headquarters in New York.

Chapter II

Mandate of the Committee

8. The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People was established by the General Assembly by its resolution 3376 (XXX) of 10 November 1975, with the task of recommending a programme designed to enable the Palestinian people to exercise its inalienable rights, as recognized by the Assembly in its resolution 3236 (XXIX) of 22 November 1974. Further information is available on the website maintained by the Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat at <http://unispal.un.org/unispal.nsf/com.htm>.

9. On 26 November 2013, the General Assembly renewed the mandate of the Committee (resolution 68/12), requested the Secretary-General to continue to provide the Division for Palestinian Rights with the necessary resources to carry out its programme of work (resolution 68/13) and requested the continuation of the special information programme on the question of Palestine of the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat (resolution 68/14). The Assembly also adopted resolution 68/15, entitled "Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine".

Chapter III

Organization of work

A. Membership and officers

10. The Committee is composed of the following Member States: Afghanistan, Belarus, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Cuba, Cyprus, Ecuador, Guinea, Guyana, India, Indonesia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mali, Malta, Namibia, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Pakistan, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of).

11. The observers at the Committee meetings are: Algeria, Bangladesh, Bulgaria, China, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Niger, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka, the Syrian Arab Republic, the United Arab Emirates, Viet Nam and Yemen, as well as the State of Palestine, the African Union, the League of Arab States and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation.

12. At its 357th meeting, on 16 January 2014, the Committee re-elected Abdou Salam Diallo (Senegal) as Chair, and Zahir Tanin (Afghanistan), Rodolfo Reyes Rodríguez (Cuba), Desra Percaya (Indonesia), Wilfried Emvula (Namibia) and María Rubiales de Chamorro (Nicaragua) as Vice-Chairs, and Christopher Grima (Malta) as Rapporteur. At its 364th meeting on 3 October, the Committee elected Fodé Seck (Senegal) as the new Chair, replacing Abdou Salam Diallo, who had been assigned by his Government to another post.

B. Participation in the work of the Committee

13. As in previous years, the Committee reconfirmed that all States Members of the United Nations and observers wishing to participate in the work of the Committee were welcome to do so. In accordance with established practice, the State of Palestine participated in the work of the Committee as an observer, attended all of its meetings, gave briefings, made observations and developed proposals for consideration by the Committee and its Bureau.

Chapter IV

Review of the situation relating to the question of Palestine

Political developments

14. The Israeli-Palestinian peace talks mediated by the United States, which started in July 2013, were repeatedly thwarted by Israel's continued expansion of settlements and other illegal measures in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. The Israeli settlement monitoring organization, Peace Now, reported that, during the nine-month period following the beginning of the talks in July 2013, the Government of Israel promoted plans for the construction of at least 13,851 housing units in settlements in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem — an average of 50 units per day.

15. On 28 March 2014, Israel postponed the release of a fourth and final batch of 26 pre-Oslo Palestinian prisoners, which had been agreed under the United States-brokered deal that led to the restart of negotiations. On 1 April, the State of Palestine submitted accession instruments to 21 international treaties and conventions. Israel reacted with the announcement of 708 reissued tenders for illegal settlement construction in East Jerusalem on the same day. On 23 April, PLO and Hamas achieved reconciliation and agreed that a national consensus Government would be formed within five weeks and elections held no later than six months after the Government's formation. In retaliation, the following day, the Israeli Cabinet took the decision to suspend the peace negotiations.

16. On 2 June, President Abbas swore in the Government of national consensus headed by Prime Minister Rami Hamdallah. Israel publicly declared its opposition to the unity Government and reacted with the announcement of the construction of thousands of new settler homes, while the international community, including the United Nations Secretary-General and the European Union, welcomed the consensus Government and the United States expressed its readiness to work with it.

17. During his address to the General Assembly in September, President Abbas stated that the State of Palestine and the Arab Group were preparing for the introduction of a draft Security Council resolution affirming the goal of ending the Israeli occupation and achieving the two-State solution within a specified time frame.

Security

18. On 12 June, three Israeli teenagers were abducted and killed in the West Bank on their way back home to Israel from yeshivas in two illegal settlements. Israeli occupying forces launched large-scale, violent military operations throughout the West Bank, during which they killed six Palestinian civilians, including a 15-year-old boy, and arrested hundreds of others, mostly alleged members of Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad, including over 50 Palestinians previously released as part of the exchange deal for the Israeli soldier, Gilad Shalit. Occupying forces also imposed further stringent movement restrictions, which disrupted the access by Palestinians to services, markets and workplaces, resulting in significant economic losses. On 30 June, occupying forces found the bodies of the three teenagers near Hebron. In retaliation, a group of Israelis abducted a 16-year-old Palestinian boy from East Jerusalem and burned him alive on 2 July. Widespread protests and violent clashes followed throughout East Jerusalem and spread to the West Bank, as

a result of which nearly 570 Palestinian civilians were injured by Israeli forces, including 31 by live ammunition.

19. The November 2012 ceasefire understanding between Israel and Hamas has gradually weakened since December 2013, and tensions in and around Gaza increased on 11 June, when the Israeli Air Force targeted and killed an alleged militant, along with a 10-year-old child accompanying him, in Beit Lahiya in the northern Gaza Strip. Palestinian factions responded by firing projectiles at southern Israel, to which the Israeli military responded with air strikes targeting alleged military installations in Gaza. Tensions escalated after the abduction of the three Israeli youths in the West Bank and subsequent Israeli military action.

20. On 7 July, Israel launched a large military operation in the Gaza Strip, code-named "Operation Protective Edge", with the claimed objective of stopping the Palestinian firing of rockets at southern Israel and destroying the military infrastructure of Hamas and other armed groups. Excessive aerial and navy bombardment and ground operations throughout the Gaza Strip resulted in heavy Palestinian casualties, mostly civilians. According to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the Israeli military used 5,830 missiles in 4,028 air raids, as well as 16,507 artillery and tank projectiles and 3,494 naval shells aimed at targets in the Gaza Strip. During the offensive, 2,189 Palestinians were killed, 1,486 of them identified as civilians, including 513 children and 269 women, and 11,100 were injured, including 3,374 children, 2,088 women and 410 elderly persons. It is estimated that up to 1,000 of the injured children will have a permanent disability and up to 1,500 orphaned children will need sustained support from the child protection and welfare sectors. Over 1,000 homes were directly targeted by Israeli air strikes and 18,000 housing units were totally destroyed or severely damaged, leaving approximately 108,000 people homeless. At the height of the hostilities, an estimated 485,000 people, 28 per cent of the population of Gaza, were internally displaced, including 290,000 who took shelter in schools administered by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). On three occasions, Israeli occupying forces directly hit UNRWA schools, with full knowledge that they were being used as shelters for displaced persons, killing 45 Palestinians, including 17 children, and injuring 317. An estimated 118 UNRWA installations sustained damage.

21. During the Israeli offensive, 1 hospital and 7 clinics were totally destroyed and 16 hospitals and 51 clinics were damaged. Fourteen ambulances were completely destroyed and 33 others were partially damaged. The majority of the Gaza population has lost its productive assets: 419 businesses and workshops were damaged, with 128 completely destroyed, further decimating the economy and resulting in the unemployment of another 30,000 people. Israeli attacks also caused substantial direct damage to Gaza's 17,000 hectares of cropland as well as much of its agricultural infrastructure. As at late August, around 7,000 unexploded ordnance were estimated to be present, threatening the lives of both civilians and humanitarian workers. As at 6 October, the ceasefire agreed on 26 August largely continued to hold. The Gaza power plant damaged in an Israeli air strike on 29 July remained inoperable and electricity outages of 18 hours a day continued in most areas across Gaza. The Government of the State of Palestine estimated that rebuilding Gaza would cost \$7.8 billion.

22. Human rights organizations have expressed serious concerns regarding incidents where civilians or civilian objects were directly hit by Israeli air strikes, in circumstances where there was allegedly no rocket fire or armed group activity in the close vicinity. Human Rights Watch reported several incidents in which Israeli soldiers opened fire on fleeing civilians. Amnesty International reported that there was mounting evidence that Israel had launched apparently deliberate attacks against hospitals and health professionals, which left six medics dead. On 23 July, the Human Rights Council adopted a resolution addressing the crisis and deciding, inter alia, to dispatch an independent, international commission of inquiry to investigate all violations of international law in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, in particular in Gaza, since 13 June (resolution S-21/1).

23. On the Israeli side, 66 soldiers, one security coordinator, four civilians, including a four-year-old, and one foreign national were killed, and some 130 civilians were injured during the Gaza operation. Palestinian armed groups reportedly fired 4,844 rockets and 1,734 mortars at Israel.

24. Prior to 7 July, Israeli forces killed 22 Palestinians and injured more than 200 in the Gaza Strip during the reporting period in incidents involving air strikes and live fire at Palestinians near the border fence. One Israeli repairing the fence between Gaza and Israel was killed by a Palestinian sniper. In the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, Israeli occupying forces killed 53 Palestinians and injured more than 4,800 during the reporting period (as at 29 September), including during clashes with demonstrators. Five Israeli civilians were killed by Palestinians in the West Bank and East Jerusalem.

Settlements

25. Israel, the occupying Power, continued and intensified its illegal settlement activity in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, which further diminished the viability of the two-State solution based on the pre-1967 borders. On 3 March, the Israel Central Bureau of Statistics stated that construction in the settlements had more than doubled in 2013 compared with 2012, from 1,133 to 2,534 housing units.

26. During the reporting period, the following were announced, approved, advanced or issued by Israel, or disclosed by watchdog/media organizations: the construction of 860 housing units in the “Ariel”, “Ma’aleh Adumim”, “Givat Ze’ev”, “Betar Illit”, “Karnei Shomron” and “Elkana” settlements and 2,500 other new units throughout the West Bank (31 October); tenders for 283 units in “Elkana”, 114 in “Ma’aleh Adumim”, 196 in “Karnei Shomron”, 102 in “Givat Zeev”, 18 in “Ariel”, 80 in “Adam” and 238 in “Beitar Illit” (3 November); plans to build 19,786 units in the West Bank (12 November); the construction of 829 new settler homes in the West Bank (25 November); plans for 250 units in “Ofra” and 22 in “Karnei Shomron” (5 January 2014); the construction of 801 units in the West Bank (10 January); plans to build 381 homes in “Givat Ze’ev” (21 January); plans for 256 units in “Nofei Prat” and 5 in “Ariel” (22 January); tenders for 900 units in the West Bank (4 June); the unfreezing of planning processes for 1,800 units that had been suspended (5 June); plans for 1,083 settler homes in the West Bank as part of its response to the newly formed Palestinian unity Government (week of 13 June); tenders for 283 new homes for “Elkana” (5 September). On 13 April, the Government of Israel retroactively approved measures for “legalizing” a settlement outpost at “Gush Etzion”, appropriating private Palestinian land. On 31 August,

Israel declared four square kilometres of land west of Bethlehem as State land, unprecedented in its scope since the 1980's.

27. In Occupied East Jerusalem, the following were announced, approved, advanced or issued by Israel, or disclosed by watchdog/media organizations: the building of 58 housing units in the "Pisgat Ze'ev" settlement in East Jerusalem (9 October); plans for the construction of 80 units in "Har Homa" (10 October); the construction of 1,500 units in "Ramat Shlomo" (30 October); tenders for 311 units in "Gilo", 387 in "Ramat Shlomo" and 130 in "Har Homa" (3 November); 397 units in "Gilo" (4 November); plans to build 4,000 units in the City (12 November); the construction of 1,076 units in the City (10 January 2014); the construction of 1,800 units in "Armon" (28 January); the construction of 558 homes in "Har Homa", "Neve Yaakov" and "Pisgat Ze'ev" (5 February); the construction of a yeshiva in Sheikh Jarrah (12 February); the construction of 184 units in the City (19 March); tenders for 708 units in "Gilo" (1 April); the construction of 50 units "Har Homa" (26 May); a plan to build a "national park" on the land of the villages of Al-Issawiya and Al-Tur (27 May); tenders for 560 units in the City (4 June); the construction of 172 apartments in "Har Homa" (18 June); a plan featuring 2,200 housing units and 130 hectares for infrastructure in the Jabel Mukaber neighbourhood (3 September); and a plan to build 2,610 units in "Givat Hamatos" (24 September).

Settler-related incidents

28. Settler-related incidents in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, including acts of terror, provocation and destruction by settlers, continued to be a source of serious concern. According to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, as at August 2014, there had been at least 92 incidents leading to Palestinian casualties and 155 incidents leading to damage to Palestinian property or land during the reporting period. In 2013, 10,142 trees were reported burned, uprooted, or otherwise vandalized, including in areas adjacent to settlements, compared with 8,259 trees in 2012.

Jerusalem

29. According to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 35 per cent of the land in occupied East Jerusalem has been confiscated for Israeli settlement use, and only 13 per cent of East Jerusalem is zoned for Palestinian construction, much of which is already built-up. At least a third of all Palestinian homes in East Jerusalem lack Israeli-issued building permits, which are difficult to obtain, potentially placing over 90,000 residents at risk of displacement, which has a negative socioeconomic and psychological impact on the Palestinian residents of the City. Since 1967, the Israeli authorities have demolished some 2,000 houses in East Jerusalem. Several hundred Palestinian residents of East Jerusalem are also at risk of forced displacement owing to settler activities, in particular in the Old City, Silwan and Sheikh Jarrah.

30. Tensions were heightened by increasing numbers of incursions by Israeli extremists and political leaders, including Government officials, into the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound. Those provocations led to clashes with Palestinian worshippers, in which some were injured, tear-gassed and detained. On 25 February, the Knesset held a debate regarding attempts to impose Israeli sovereignty on Al-Haram Al-Sharif.

Demolitions and displacements

31. According to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, as at 29 September, Israel had carried out the demolition of at least 515 Palestinian-owned structures in Area C in the West Bank and 61 in East Jerusalem during the reporting period, displacing at least 975 and 164 Palestinians, respectively. On 1 July, the Israeli High Court of Justice sanctioned the punitive demolition of parts of the house of the family of a Palestinian from Hebron suspected of killing an Israeli policeman in April 2014.

Water

32. According to a report issued by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in March 2014, groundwater in Gaza is being drawn at a higher rate than natural replenishment, and sea water from the Mediterranean has infiltrated the groundwater, raising the salinity to unsafe levels. Sewage and agricultural fertilizer infiltration have also contributed to water contamination with high levels of chloride and nitrates, in some areas as high as six times the World Health Organization (WHO) limit. More than 90 per cent of the water extracted from the territory's sole aquifer has been found to be unsafe for human consumption. Over-abstraction of groundwater could render the aquifer unusable by 2016. Since the tap water is often saline and undrinkable, more than four out of five Gazans buy their drinking water from unregulated, private vendors, a heavy burden on already impoverished families. Some families are spending as much as a third of their household income on water. An estimated four fifths of the water sold by private vendors is contaminated.

33. According to the Palestinian Water Authority, the water distribution network in Gaza suffered \$34.4 million in damage as a result of the Israeli military offensive in July and August 2014: 11 water wells were completely destroyed and 15 partially destroyed; 17 kilometres of water supply networks were completely destroyed; two desalination units were completely destroyed and four partially damaged; 12 pumping sewage stations were severely damaged and 4 wastewater treatment stations partially destroyed.

34. According to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, in the West Bank, more than 70 per cent of the Palestinian communities located entirely or mostly in Area C are not connected to the water network and rely on tankered water at a vastly increased cost, and water consumption in some of these communities is as low as 20 litres per capita per day, one fifth of the WHO recommendation.

Women and children

35. The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) reported in August 2014 that the reproductive and maternal health situation in Gaza remained desperate. It estimated that nearly 46,000 women in Gaza were pregnant at the time of the Israeli military aggression, with 10,000 of them displaced as a result of the Israeli offensive. Maternity clinics were closed, as were a number of private maternity centres. Other facilities were overstrained and, in some, maternity beds were being used for the wounded. Shifa Hospital reported a 15 to 20 per cent increase in premature births, which were linked to the stress of the bombardments. Also, home deliveries were reportedly on the rise, increasing the risks for women and their babies.

36. According to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, at least 219 schools (141 Government and 75 UNRWA) in Gaza were damaged during the Israeli offensive, 22 of them so severely that they can no longer be used. Among those still standing, 103 were turned into collective shelters for some 330,000 displaced people, half of them children. Nearly 500,000 children could not return to school on 24 August, when the new academic year started. At least 373,000 children require direct and specialized psychological support. Children are showing symptoms of increasing distress, including bed-wetting, clinging to parents and nightmares. The education sector was already in crisis prior to the start of the Israeli operation, suffering from a shortage of almost 200 schools, with nearly 80 per cent of classes running double shifts to deal with the high number of students.

37. In East Jerusalem, there is also a chronic shortage of classrooms: 2,200 additional classrooms are required to accommodate Palestinian children, and many existing facilities are substandard or unsuitable.

Prisoners

38. The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics and the Palestinian Ministry of Prisoners' Affairs reported in April that since 1967, Israel had arrested more than 805,000 Palestinians and 205 Palestinians had died in Israeli jails as a result of torture, denial of medical treatment or deliberate killing. According to the Israeli human rights organization B'Tselem, at the end of August, 5,505 Palestinian security detainees and prisoners were being held in Israeli prisons, including 473 administrative detainees and 201 minors. On 9 June, the Knesset gave initial approval to a law allowing force-feeding of Palestinian prisoners on hunger strike. On 24 June, 63 Palestinian prisoners agreed to suspend their two-month-old hunger strike in protest against Israel's use of administrative detention without charge or trial after reaching a deal with the Israeli authorities according to which their conditions were to be improved.

Palestinian State-building

39. On 2 April, the State of Palestine deposited its instruments of accession to the four Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949 as well as a number of international treaties. The accession by the State of Palestine to the Geneva Conventions took effect immediately, and the following core human rights treaties and protocol have entered into force: International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women; Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities; International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination; Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment; Convention on the Rights of the Child; Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict.

40. In a report issued in September, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) stated that economic growth in the Occupied Palestinian Territory had declined from an average of about 11 per cent in 2010 and 2011 to a mere 1.5 per cent in 2013, the lowest rate since 2006, owing to the severe effects of the Israeli restrictions on the movement of Palestinian people and goods, pervasive uncertainty, the persistent fiscal crisis and gloomy economic horizons.

United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East

41. UNRWA continued to experience a grave and recurrent financial crisis, which threatened its ability to sustain its services, continue its emergency assistance programmes and complete essential projects. In the light of the escalating conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic, the Agency expressed particular concern about the more than 500,000 Palestine refugees who have lived in the country for decades. As at August, over 270,000 Palestine refugees were displaced within the Syrian Arab Republic, 53,070 in Lebanon and over 13,836 in Jordan. Some 65,000 Palestine refugees were in besieged areas, including 18,000 in Yarmouk, to which UNRWA has had only limited access since July 2013. A recent survey revealed that over 54,000 Palestinian refugee homes in the Syrian Arab Republic had been destroyed or damaged.

42. Prior to June, approximately 800,000 people in the Gaza Strip — almost half of the population — were receiving quarterly food aid rations from UNRWA. After the launch of the Israeli military operation, dozens of UNRWA schools were turned into shelters for hundreds of thousands of displaced people, and emergency food distribution was required to meet the needs of 1.2 million people. Eleven UNRWA staff members were killed in the line of duty during the Israeli offensive. In addition, thousands of refugee homes were destroyed by the occupying forces. The devastating conflict will have severe implications for the Agency's future work in Gaza.

43. The Committee again expresses its appreciation for the dedication of UNRWA and its entire staff to its mission and calls upon all donors to increase contributions to the Agency, in particular in the light of prevailing crises and needs, to ensure the continuity of needed services and the well-being of approximately 5 million registered Palestine refugees under the mandate of the Agency.

United Nations Development Programme/Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

44. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), through its Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People, continued to respond to the development needs in the State of Palestine. In support of the Palestinian Statehood agenda, UNDP proceeded with the implementation of a three-year plan focusing on democratic governance and the rule of law, economic empowerment and private sector investment, environment and management of natural resources, as well as public and social infrastructure. UNDP will also be responding to the destruction wrought by the Israeli military attacks in the Gaza Strip by enhancing livelihoods through emergency employment and leading early recovery activities to alleviate the suffering of the Gaza population, in spite of the blockade. UNDP continued to place empowerment, resilience and sustainability at the centre of its operation and focus on three priority areas: the Gaza Strip, East Jerusalem and Area C, where the needs are the greatest.

45. The Committee also remained appreciative of the important work of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. The Committee calls upon all donors to increase contributions to the funding requirements of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, in particular to the Gaza Crisis Appeal.

Chapter V

Action taken by the Committee

A. Action taken in accordance with General Assembly resolution 68/12

1. Action taken in the Security Council

46. During the open debates at the Security Council held on 22 October 2013, 20 January, 29 April and 22 July 2014, the Chair of the Committee delivered statements (see [S/PV.7047](#); [S/PV.7096](#), Resumption 1; [S/PV.7164](#); [S/PV.7222](#)).

2. Action taken by the Bureau of the Committee

47. On 7 November 2013, the Bureau of the Committee issued a statement on Israel's illegal settlement activity in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem (GA/PAL/1278). On 10 December, it issued a statement on the passing of Nelson Mandela (GA/PAL/1283). On 20 January 2014, the Bureau issued a statement on the deteriorating humanitarian situation in the Yarmouk refugee camp in the Syrian Arab Republic (GA/PAL/1286). On 5 March, it issued a statement on increased tensions in Occupied East Jerusalem (GA/PAL/1287). On 4 June, the Bureau issued a statement welcoming the formation of the Palestinian national consensus Government (GA/PAL/1300). On 27 June, it issued a statement on Israel's massive military onslaught on the Palestinian civilian population in the West Bank (GA/PAL/1302). On 11 and 21 July, the Bureau issued statements condemning the Israeli military aggression in the Gaza Strip (GA/PAL/1310 and 1311).

B. Action taken by the Committee and the Division for Palestinian Rights in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 68/12 and 68/13

1. Committee meetings at Headquarters

48. In its resolution 68/12 of 26 November 2013, the General Assembly proclaimed 2014 the International Year of Solidarity with the Palestinian People and requested the Committee to organize related activities in cooperation with Governments, United Nations organizations, intergovernmental organizations and civil society organizations. In addition to its periodic meetings, the Committee organized the following events within the framework of the International Year:

(a) Screening of the documentary film *Where Should the Birds Fly?*, followed by a discussion, 20 January;

(b) Screening of the Academy Award-nominated documentary film *5 Broken Cameras*, followed by a discussion, 19 February;

(c) Briefing by a representative of Defence for Children International Palestine, 24 February;

(d) Screening of the Academy Award-nominated film *Omar*, followed by a discussion, 1 May;

(e) Screening of *Flying Paper*, a documentary on Palestinian youth in Gaza, followed by a briefing by the UNRWA Director of Operations in Gaza, Robert Turner, and a discussion with the director of the film, 21 May;

(f) Special Meeting of the Committee to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the *Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory*, 9 July (a Committee statement was adopted at the meeting);

(g) Briefing by Hanan Ashrawi, member of the PLO Executive Committee, 2 September.

2. Committee meeting away from Headquarters

49. On 10 March, the Committee held a joint meeting with the League of Arab States at its headquarters in Cairo aimed at reinforcing the critical support of all Arab States for the International Year of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. A joint declaration was adopted at the end of the meeting.

3. Programme of international meetings and conferences

50. The following international events were held under the auspices of the Committee in 2014:

(a) United Nations International Meeting on the Question of Palestine, Quito, 25 and 26 March;

(b) United Nations Meeting of Civil Society in Support of Israeli-Palestinian Peace: Engaging civil society in Latin America and the Caribbean for the two-State solution, Quito, 27 March;

(c) United Nations Round Table on Legal Aspects of the Question of Palestine, United Nations Office at Geneva, 24 and 25 April;

(d) International Meeting on the Question of Jerusalem, jointly organized with OIC and the Government of Turkey, Ankara, 12 and 13 May;

(e) Public Forum on the Question of Jerusalem, organized in cooperation with the Centre for Middle Eastern and Strategic Studies, Ankara, 14 May;

(f) United Nations Seminar on Assistance to the Palestinian People, United Nations Office at Nairobi, 1 and 2 July.

51. The above-mentioned events were attended by representatives of Governments, intergovernmental organizations and United Nations system entities, as well as parliamentarians and representatives of civil society and the media. Detailed information about the meetings is being issued in publications of the Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat and is available on the "Question of Palestine" website maintained by the Division.

52. On the margins of the United Nations International Meeting in Quito, the Committee delegation met with Ricardo Patiño Aroca, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Human Mobility of Ecuador, and other senior officials at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. On the margins of the United Nations Round Table in Geneva, the Committee delegation held meetings with senior officials of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, UNCTAD and the International

Committee of the Red Cross. While in Geneva, the delegation also met with the Director-General of the World Health Organization and the Acting Secretary General of the Inter-Parliamentary Union. In Ankara, on the margins of the International Meeting, the Committee delegation met with Ahmet Davutoğlu, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Turkey, and other senior officials at the Ministry, as well as with representatives of OIC, including Secretary General Iyad bin Amin Madani.

4. Cooperation with intergovernmental organizations

53. Throughout the year, the Committee continued its cooperation with the African Union, the European Union, the League of Arab States, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and OIC. The Committee is appreciative of the active participation of their representatives in the various international events held under its auspices.

5. Cooperation with civil society

Civil society organizations

54. The Committee continued its cooperation with civil society organizations worldwide, which was bolstered by the proclamation of 2014 as the International Year of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. Civil society representatives participated in all meetings organized under the auspices of the Committee. The Committee commends the important work of civil society organizations and encourages them to continue contributing to efforts aimed at attaining a comprehensive, just, lasting and peaceful solution to the question of Palestine in all its aspects and achieving the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.

55. The Committee maintained its cooperation with national, regional and international coordinating mechanisms and established new liaisons with a large number of individual organizations. Moreover, at the United Nations Round Table on Legal Aspects of the Question of Palestine held in Geneva, eight Palestinian human rights organizations took part in the deliberations with leading legal experts. While in Quito in March and in Ankara in May, the Committee organized joint events with local universities.

56. The Working Group of the Committee, chaired by the representative of Malta, met periodically and hosted three briefings by civil society representatives and the above-mentioned four film screenings at Headquarters.

57. During the reporting period, 12 civil society organizations were accredited to the Committee and 2 organizations became observers.

58. The Division for Palestinian Rights maintained a civil society page (<http://unispal.un.org/unispal.nsf/ngo.htm>) on the “Question of Palestine” website and developed the United Nations Platform for Palestine website (<http://unpfp.un.org>) as a tool for outreach to civil society organizations and to foster civil society networking and cooperation.

59. The Division maintained its Facebook and YouTube pages as well as Twitter feeds to disseminate information about the work of the Committee, and the United Nations as a whole, on the question of Palestine. In addition, the Division continued to publish the periodic online bulletin *NGO Action News*, reaching out to more than

1,000 civil society organizations around the world, in order to catalogue and publicize civil society initiatives.

Parliaments and interparliamentary organizations

60. The Committee continued to attach great importance to developing its liaison with national and regional parliaments and their organizations. Representatives of parliaments and interparliamentary organizations participated in international events organized by the Committee during 2014. In particular, a member of the Israeli Knesset and the Vice-President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean participated as speakers in the International Meeting on the Question of Jerusalem, held in Ankara. Moreover, in Quito, the Committee delegation met with the Chair of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the National Assembly of Ecuador. In Geneva, the Committee delegation held meetings with senior officials of the Inter-Parliamentary Union and, in New York, the Chair of the Committee met in December with a delegation of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean headed by its President.

6. Research, monitoring and publications

61. The Division carried out research and monitoring activities and responded to requests for information and briefings on the question of Palestine. Under the guidance of the Committee, which reiterated the relevance of the research, monitoring and publications programme, it also prepared the publications listed below for dissemination:

- (a) Monthly bulletin on action taken by the United Nations system and intergovernmental organizations relevant to the question of Palestine;
- (b) Monthly chronology of events relating to the question of Palestine based on media reports and other sources;
- (c) Reports of international meetings and conferences organized under the auspices of the Committee;
- (d) Special bulletin and information notes on the observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People;
- (e) Periodic reviews of developments related to the Middle East peace process;
- (f) Annual compilation of resolutions and decisions of the General Assembly and the Security Council relating to the question of Palestine;
- (g) Study entitled "Origins and Evolution of the Palestine Problem, Part V (1989-2000)".

7. United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine

62. The Division for Palestinian Rights, in cooperation with relevant technical and library services of the United Nations Secretariat, continued to administer, maintain, expand and develop the United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine and the "Question of Palestine" website (<http://unispal.un.org/unispal.nsf/home.htm>). That included the ongoing maintenance and upgrading of the technical components of the system and involved the expansion of the document

collection to include relevant new and old United Nations and other documents. RSS and Twitter feeds continued to alert users about newly posted materials.

8. Training programme for staff of the Government of the State of Palestine

63. The Division conducted the annual training programme for staff of the Government of the State of Palestine. One staff member of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs participated in a three-week training programme at the United Nations Office at Geneva during the sixty-first session of the UNCTAD Trade and Development Board, which started on 15 September 2014. In addition, three staff members of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs are in the process of completing a 70-day training programme at Headquarters in New York, from 9 September to 27 November 2014, in order to familiarize themselves with various aspects of the work of the Secretariat and other United Nations organs and bodies, including the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council. Training was also provided for five staff members of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs who were attending the Geneva Round Table on Legal Aspects of the Question of Palestine, and for one staff member participating in the nineteenth Rhodes Academy of Oceans Law and Policy training programme at Rhodes, Greece, in July 2014.

9. International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People

64. The International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People was observed on 25 November 2013 at Headquarters in New York and on 29 November at the United Nations Offices at Geneva and Vienna. At Headquarters, the Committee organized a special meeting, as well as a concert featuring Nai Barghouti and her troupe and Mohammed Assaf, UNRWA Regional Youth Ambassador and 2013 winner of the Arab Idol contest, in cooperation with the Permanent Observer Mission of the State of Palestine to the United Nations and the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat. The Committee noted with appreciation that the International Day of Solidarity had also been observed by United Nations information centres and other bodies in many cities throughout the world. Details on the observance are contained in the special bulletin issued by the Division.

Chapter VI

Action taken by the Department of Public Information in accordance with General Assembly resolution 68/14

65. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 68/14, the Department of Public Information continued to implement its special information programme on the question of Palestine.

66. During the reporting period, two United Nations International Media Seminars on Peace in the Middle East were organized by the Department. The first was held in Istanbul, Turkey, on 8 and 9 October 2013, in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey. The second, arranged in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, was held in Tokyo on 9 and 10 June 2014. The seminars were attended by journalists, bloggers, activists and representatives of civil society, current and former policymakers, academics and senior United Nations officials.

67. The Department's five-week annual training programme for Palestinian journalists was organized in New York and Washington, D.C. from 4 November to 6 December 2013. The selected group of eight Palestinian journalists participated in a series of briefings by United Nations officials and media industry leaders. They also worked through an intensive online journalism curriculum with regular workshops, assignments and a final project.

68. The Department continued to use all its platforms, including multimedia, to highlight the broad range of developments and issues related to the question of Palestine and the Middle East peace process.

69. The declaration of 2014 as the International Year of Solidarity with the Palestinian People was prominently covered by all the Department's communications platforms, including social media channels. The Department developed an online portal dedicated to the Year in the six official languages and co-organized, with the Division for Palestinian Rights, screenings of two Academy Award-nominated Palestinian films at Headquarters.

70. United Nations information centres and services publicized the observance of the International Day and Year of Solidarity with the Palestinian People in the media and widely disseminated information materials in official and non-official languages. Commemoration activities organized by the information centres included a series of outreach activities, such as cultural events, quizzes, exhibits, screenings and panel discussions. The United Nations Regional Information Centre for Western Europe (located in Brussels) and UNRWA, in association with several Belgian civil society groups, organized the "Yalla Palestina" festival in May. About 5,000 people attended the event. The information centre in Jakarta launched the monthly e-newsletter *Halo Palestine* in Indonesian.

71. The Department continued to maintain its tour route at United Nations Headquarters, which includes a stop at the permanent exhibit "The question of Palestine and the United Nations". During the reporting period, approximately 138,000 visitors took the guided tour. In addition, a total of 132 scholars and students were briefed on the question of Palestine and the Middle East peace process.

Chapter VII

Conclusions and recommendations of the Committee

72. During the reporting period, the Committee intensified its work, in implementation of its mandate contained in General Assembly resolution 68/12, to organize activities in 2014 for the International Year of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. Operating within existing regular budget resources and with support from its partners, including the Arab League and OIC, the Committee was able to convene additional events throughout the year, in addition to its regular meetings and conferences. The Committee wishes to express its deep appreciation to its partners who contributed extrabudgetary resources, logistical and substantive support, and its gratitude for their active participation in these events, which made them a success. The Committee wishes to thank its members and observers who organized solidarity events during the International Year at the national level and encourages them to continue such activities. To sustain the momentum generated by the International Year, the Committee recommends that the General Assembly make provisions for follow-up activities by the Committee in 2015 and thereafter, in order to review key challenges and the progress being made by the Palestinian people towards the realization of their inalienable rights and long-denied freedom, justice and peace.

73. The Committee is convinced that a negotiated peaceful settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in all its aspects, in accordance with United Nations resolutions, and an urgent end to the Israeli occupation remain central to peace and stability throughout the volatile Middle East region and should be a top priority of the international community. The recent tragic events in Gaza, which has undergone three devastating Israeli military assaults in six years, reinforce this view. The ceasefire should be solidified and the root causes of the crisis fully addressed, including a lifting of the illegal blockade on Gaza.

74. The Committee notes with appreciation the emergence of an international consensus that there should not be a return to the status quo ante in Gaza. The cycle of war and rebuilding should end. The establishment of the national consensus Government, which the Committee strongly supported, provides a window of opportunity to stabilize Gaza. All States Members of the United Nations should support the administration of Gaza by the Palestinian national consensus Government under the leadership of President Mahmoud Abbas, which should in turn consolidate and unify the administrative and security apparatuses under its command. National elections should be held according to schedule. Gaza crossings should be open to the legitimate and sustained flow of persons and goods, including construction materials, humanitarian aid and commercial flows, with support from the European Union border assistance mission and in accordance with Security Council resolution 1860 (2009) and the 2005 Agreement on Movement and Access. Exports from Gaza to the West Bank, Israel and the outside world should be allowed to resume, enabling the legitimate economy to rebuild. Long-dormant projects such as the Gaza airport and seaport, a safe passage route to the West Bank and offshore gas fields should be revitalized. The normalization in Gaza would significantly reduce tensions and facilitate the resumption of the political process.

75. The tragic events in Gaza underscore the urgency of reaching a peaceful settlement to the question of Palestine as a whole. The Committee supported the efforts spearheaded by the United States to reach a final status agreement between the parties by April of 2014. The Committee sought to contribute to peace efforts as it urged the international community to step up its support of negotiations, while promoting international action against obstacles in their path, such as the illegal Israeli settlements and the wall; drew international attention to key permanent status issues; examined legal options available to the State of Palestine; urged solidarity with the Palestinian people and their State; and engaged with diverse constituencies in support of peace. It continued to mobilize international support for the Palestinian National Development Plan, while highlighting the massive economic costs of the Israeli occupation. It urged increased donor support for the Government of the State of Palestine and United Nations agencies providing vital humanitarian support on the ground, as well as for the effective use of international assistance for sustainable growth.

76. The latest round of negotiations regrettably failed, as did previous such efforts in 2000-2001 and 2007-2008, in large part owing to the acceleration of Israel's illegal settlement campaign in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and its failure to honour the agreement to release Palestinian prisoners. The Committee observes that, in each case, the failure of negotiations was followed by an outbreak of violence. The repeated failure to reach agreement, despite the stepped-up engagement by the international community, also reflects the limitations of the traditional format of bilateral Israeli-Palestinian final status talks facilitated by a single Member State. In that regard, the Committee would welcome proposals for innovative approaches and formats that could help to break the deadlock and accelerate the end of the 47-year Israeli military occupation and the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, in particular their right to an independent and sovereign Palestinian State based on the 1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital, and their right to return. The Committee recalls in that regard that the Quartet road map endorsed by the Security Council in its resolution 1515 (2003) envisages the creation of a Palestinian State prior to the conclusion of negotiations on permanent status issues. The Committee urges the Security Council and the General Assembly to give positive consideration to all such proposals and intends to contribute to a healthy and necessary discussion of the issues through its programme of conferences and international meetings.

77. The Committee considers that the United Nations has a permanent responsibility in respect of the question of Palestine, as well as a responsibility to protect the Palestinian civilian population in accordance with international humanitarian law. However, large protection gaps have been exposed, both in Gaza and in the West Bank. The Committee welcomes the fact-finding mission established by the Human Rights Council as an important step towards accountability for violations of humanitarian and human rights law. There is no justification for the targeting of innocent civilians and there should be no impunity for its perpetrators. The Committee welcomes the request by the Palestinian leadership addressed to the Secretary-General that the territory of the occupied State of Palestine be placed under an international protection system by the United Nations. The Committee calls upon the Secretary-General

to expedite the review of that request and to submit his recommendations to the Security Council and the General Assembly as appropriate. The Committee expresses its readiness to contribute to the consideration of proposals in the relevant forums. The Committee calls upon the Human Rights Council and the General Assembly to also take practical steps to follow up on the findings of previous fact-finding missions.

78. The Committee welcomes the accession by the State of Palestine to a number of international conventions and treaties and encourages its Government to take all steps towards full compliance with those instruments, subject to the constraints imposed by the Israeli occupation. The Committee encourages the signature by the State of Palestine of additional international instruments, which would allow it to pursue justice and accountability for Palestinian victims through the available international legal mechanisms. The Committee stands ready to contribute to Palestinian capacity-building in that area through its training programme for staff of the Government of the State of Palestine. The Committee is ready to organize further round tables to raise awareness among Palestinian policymakers regarding the legal options available under the status of non-Member observer State.

79. The Committee underscores the responsibility of States and private entities not to contribute to grave Israeli violations of Palestinian human rights, in particular in respect of settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. It welcomes in that regard the entry into force of European Union guidelines that prohibit funding by European Union institutions for Israeli entities connected with settlements and the importation of settlement agricultural produce. It welcomes further steps taken by Governments and private businesses to dissociate themselves from settlements.

80. The scale of the humanitarian catastrophe unfolding in Gaza is unprecedented. Clean water, sanitation and electricity remain scarce, with vast networks having been destroyed by the Israeli aggression, while hundreds of thousands of Palestinians remain homeless and destitute, since their houses were destroyed or rendered uninhabitable by the Israeli bombardments. The Committee calls upon the United Nations members and observers to provide generous support to UNRWA, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, UNICEF, the World Food Programme (WFP), UNDP and other organizations working on the ground to alleviate the catastrophic conditions in Gaza and to expedite the massive rebuilding effort that is vital.

81. The year 2014 marks the tenth anniversary of the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice, which determined that the wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory built by Israel, the occupying Power, is contrary to international law. The Court called upon the United Nations, and especially the General Assembly and the Security Council, to consider further action to bring an end to that illegal situation. As the work of the Register of Damage caused by the Construction of the Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, established by the General Assembly, nears completion, the Committee invites the Assembly to consider further steps to redress the illegal situation.

82. The Committee has consistently supported the Palestinian State-building and reform agenda. It is concerned that the accomplishments are now endangered owing to the chronic political, security and financial crises and calls

upon donors to meet their prior commitments and to provide additional aid to avert further deterioration. The Committee remains convinced, however, that sustainable economic development cannot take root under the existing regime of Israeli occupation, which exacts annual costs of an estimated \$7 billion, borne by the Palestinian economy, in particular in Gaza and in Area C of the West Bank. In that regard, the Committee calls upon the General Assembly to establish provisions for a mechanism that would allow the United Nations to document those costs. Moreover, unequal economic arrangements resulting from the Oslo Accords need to be revisited by the parties to allow the Palestinian economy to develop.

83. The Committee and the Division for Palestinian Rights will continue through their mandated activities to generate heightened international awareness of the question of Palestine, as well as international support for the rights of the Palestinian people and the peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine. In that connection, the Committee emphasizes the useful and constructive contribution of the Division in support of its mandate. It notes with satisfaction: (a) the sustained level of dialogue, engagement and support on the part of the international community for the programme's objectives, as evidenced by the number of international meetings and conferences and commemorations of the International Day and Year of Solidarity with the Palestinian People; (b) the continued involvement of civil society organizations in support of the efforts of the Committee and the United Nations towards a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine; and (c) an increase in international awareness of the United Nations policies and activities on the question of Palestine, as evidenced by the increased number of followers of social media sites maintained by the Division. The Committee also considers that the annual training programme for staff of the Government of the State of Palestine, carried out annually by the Division, has proved its usefulness, as it directly contributes to Palestinian capacity-building efforts. The Committee strongly recommends that this important mandated activity be continued and, where possible, further enhanced.

84. The Committee will focus its programme of international meetings and conferences in 2015, to be implemented by the Division, on widening international support for the achievement of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. The Committee intends to mobilize increased international scrutiny of the developments on the ground, in particular settlement activities, and will emphasize responsibility and promote action by the international community to put an end to all illegal Israeli policies and practices in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and in the meantime, to promote accountability for Israeli violations and the needed protection for the Palestinian people. The Committee will also continue to examine the legal ramifications of the new international status of the State of Palestine and will continue to call attention to the plight of the Palestinian political prisoners in Israeli jails and urge a resolution of their plight. The Committee will strive to involve prominent international personalities and experts and the representatives of vulnerable populations, such as women and refugees, in its events, while giving due regard to gender balance.

85. The Committee will continue to invite internationally renowned personalities to brief the Committee and the wider United Nations membership.

The Committee also considers that round-table meetings have proved particularly useful in generating practical proposals for action in the United Nations and beyond and will continue to utilize that format.

86. The Committee will continue to mobilize support for Palestinian institution-building and all other efforts to support and enhance the viability of the State of Palestine. It will reach out to and engage Governments, parliamentarians and civil society to mobilize support for a just solution to all permanent status issues, including the question of refugees, based on principles of international law and relevant United Nations resolutions, including resolution 194 (III). It will pay particular attention to the inclusion and empowerment of women and youth and their organizations.

87. The Committee highly values civil society initiatives in support of the Palestinian people. A comprehensive peace will take root only if the relevant civil societies strongly demand it of their political leaderships. Special efforts are needed to revitalize the peace camp in Israel. The Committee lauds the courageous advocacy actions of countless activists, including eminent personalities and parliamentarians, who participate in demonstrations against the occupation and keep their home constituencies informed about the harsh realities of life under occupation. The Committee encourages civil society partners to work with their national Governments, parliamentarians and other institutions with a view to gaining their full support for the work of the United Nations, including that of the Committee, on the question of Palestine. The Committee encourages its members and observers to mobilize their respective civil societies at the national level, in particular young people, and to establish solidarity committees with the State of Palestine.

88. The Committee looks forward to further developing its cooperation with parliamentarians and their umbrella organizations. Parliamentarians have a special responsibility to ensure that their Governments actively promote and support the realization of a peaceful and just solution to the question of Palestine and uphold their obligations under international law, including humanitarian and human rights law. The Committee will reach out to new audiences such as local Governments, which have an important role to play in promoting local economic development and other initiatives at the decentralized level.

89. The Committee will reach out to all regional groups at the United Nations, with a view to expanding its membership. It will actively work to organize more thematic debates on the question of Palestine in various United Nations forums. Recognizing the growing importance of developing countries and regional and subregional organizations, it will make a special effort to step up engagement with those countries and organizations in its work.

90. The Committee requests the Division to continue its substantive and secretariat support, the programme of research, monitoring and publications and other informational activities, in support of the Committee's communication strategy. The Division should pay special attention to continued development of the "Question of Palestine" portal, including the addition of a mobile-device-friendly version, and the use of web-based social information networks, such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. It should also continue to develop the United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine

document collection by reflecting current issues and events, as well as by continuing to digitize and upload historical documents and to add user-friendly search features. The Division should continue to collaborate with the United Nations libraries at Headquarters and at Geneva in the search for historic documents. It should further enhance the annual training programme for staff of the Government of the State of Palestine, paying special attention to the programme's gender balance, and optimize the use of resources to allow the maximum number of participants possible. Voluntary contributions from members and observers in line with their capacity are to be encouraged to put the programme on a solid financial footing.

91. The Division should continue to organize the annual observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

92. The Committee is of the view that the special information programme on the question of Palestine of the Department of Public Information has made an important contribution to informing the media and the public of the relevant issues. It requests the continuation of the programme, with the necessary flexibility warranted by developments relevant to the question of Palestine.

93. Wishing to make its contribution to the achievement of a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine, and in view of the many difficulties facing the Palestinian people and their leadership and besetting the peace process, the Committee calls upon all States to join it in this endeavour and to extend their cooperation and support to the Committee, and invites the General Assembly again to recognize the importance of its role and to reconfirm its mandate.



Report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People



United Nations • New York, 2015

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Note

Symbols of United Nations documents are composed of letters combined with figures. Mention of such a symbol indicates a reference to a United Nations document.

[6 October 2015]

Contents

<i>Chapter</i>	<i>Page</i>
Letter of transmittal	4
I. Introduction	5
II. Mandate of the Committee	8
III. Organization of work	9
A. Membership and officers	9
B. Participation in the work of the Committee	9
IV. Review of the situation relating to the question of Palestine	10
V. Action taken by the Committee	19
A. Action taken in accordance with General Assembly resolution 69/20	19
B. Action taken by the Committee and the Division for Palestinian Rights in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 69/20 and 69/21	19
VI. Action taken by the Department of Public Information in accordance with General Assembly resolution 69/22	23
VII. Conclusions and recommendations of the Committee	24

Letter of transmittal

[6 October 2015]

Mr. Secretary-General,

I have the honour to enclose herewith the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for submission to the General Assembly in accordance with paragraph 2 of its resolution 69/20 of 25 November 2014.

The report covers the period from 7 October 2014 to 6 October 2015.

(Signed) Fodé **Seck**
Chair of the Committee on the Exercise of the
Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon
Secretary-General of the United Nations
New York

Chapter I

Introduction

1. Among the developments that marked the reporting period were the efforts by the United Nations and the international community to support the reconstruction of the Gaza Strip following the Israeli military operations in the summer of 2014, which caused widespread destruction and physical and human devastation; the submission by the State of Palestine of documents to accede to a number of international treaties and conventions, including the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court; the Israeli parliamentary elections on 17 March and the subsequent formation of a right-wing Government under Benjamin Netanyahu; the further deterioration of the security situation in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, including the rise of settler violence and terror against Palestinian civilians; and endeavours for stronger involvement of the wider international community in the peace negotiations.

2. More than one year after the war on Gaza in the summer of 2014, the situation in the Gaza Strip remains very grave. Palestinian and international efforts to address the humanitarian situation and rebuild the lives, homes and livelihoods of the tens of thousands of people affected by the violence have been slow to proceed owing to the blockade and severe restrictions on the import of materials into Gaza imposed by Israel, the occupying Power, and also to unfulfilled donor pledges. As at August 2015, not a single one of the destroyed homes in Gaza had been rebuilt, and over 100,000 Palestinians are still homeless, forced to shelter in temporary housing with other families or in the ruins of their homes.

3. Israeli occupying forces continued to carry out frequent military raids and incursions in the West Bank, resulting in the killing and injuring of Palestinians, including children. Thousands of Palestinians, including women and children, were arrested during the reporting period, in addition to over 5,000 Palestinians who remain in Israeli jails and detention centres, many in administrative detention. Unarmed Palestinian civilians continued to be subjected to excessive force by Israeli forces during demonstrations against the prolonged occupation of their land. Israel continued to expand its illegal settlements in the West Bank, including in East Jerusalem, and approved plans to build thousands more new settlement units. Eleven years after the 2004 advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice was rendered, the construction of the separation wall and its associated regime continue, fragmenting the Palestinian land and communities, obstructing movement and access, further isolating East Jerusalem and severely harming the socioeconomic conditions of the Palestinian people. During the reporting period, the situation in occupied East Jerusalem remained alarming, with increased numbers of incursions by extremist Israelis into the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound and acts of incitement and provocation, as well as continued land confiscations, excavations near holy sites, house demolitions, revocations of residency permits and evictions of Palestinian residents.

4. Palestinian State-building and institution-building efforts continued, yet were undermined by restrictions and obstacles imposed by Israel on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, which continued to prevent the free movement of persons and goods, economic activity and sustained development and growth. After the State of Palestine deposited instruments of accession to a number of international treaties and conventions, including the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court on

1 January 2015, to which it acceded the following week, Israel withheld the tax revenue that it collects on behalf of the Palestinian people pursuant to the 1994 Paris Protocol on Economic Relations, deepening the financial crisis of the Government of the State of Palestine, and did not release it until after the Israeli elections, following intense international pressure. On 25 June, the State of Palestine submitted a file to the International Criminal Court detailing possible war crimes in Gaza and settlement construction in the West Bank and East Jerusalem.

5. Following the suspension of bilateral and United States-mediated peace talks by Israel in April 2014 and the subsequent war on Gaza in July and August 2014, Member States and regional organizations embarked upon efforts to mobilize broader, more substantive international support to the peace process. These include proposals for the Security Council to shoulder its responsibilities and redouble efforts to enforce its resolutions on the question of Palestine, as well as enlisting the support of regional stakeholders and organizations in order to break the deadlock and cycle of violence and help to foster an environment that is conducive to peace. During the reporting period, Saint Lucia, Sweden and the Holy See officially recognized the State of Palestine, and a number of European parliaments passed non-binding resolutions calling upon their Governments to do so.

6. During the reporting period, the activities of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and its Bureau continued to draw the international community's attention to the issues of immediate urgency, such as the dire humanitarian situation and the reconstruction of the Gaza Strip, the international efforts to revitalize negotiations and the need to address ongoing Israeli settlement activities in the occupied West Bank and East Jerusalem, with the objective of mobilizing wide support for the Palestinian people's inalienable rights, including the right to self-determination and independence, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, international law and the provisions and calls made in numerous relevant United Nations resolutions. The Committee monitored the situation and the political developments on the ground, implemented its programme of international meetings and conferences and held consultations with representatives of Governments, national parliaments and interparliamentary organizations, as well as civil society. The Committee continued to reaffirm and promote the United Nations position that a just and permanent settlement of the question of Palestine could be reached only by ending the Israeli occupation that began in 1967, achieving the full independence of the State of Palestine on the basis of the pre-1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital and reaching a just and agreed solution to the issue of Palestine refugees on the basis of General Assembly resolution 194 (III).

7. Until the end of 2014, the Committee continued its series of events within the framework of the International Year of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. An international meeting of parliamentarians organized by the Committee at United Nations Headquarters in November focused on their role in ensuring respect for international law. An international conference organized by the Committee in Seville, Spain, in December was aimed at better understanding the role of local governments and civil society organizations in the struggle for the realization of Palestinian rights. A seminar on assistance to the Palestinian people held in Vienna in March 2015 focused on key aspects of the reconstruction of Gaza. The Committee held a round table in May at The Hague, Netherlands, on legal aspects of the question of Palestine, followed in July by an international meeting in support of

Israeli-Palestinian peace held in Moscow. An international meeting held in September in Brussels, organized in cooperation with the League of Arab States and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), focused on the issue of Israeli settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem as an obstacle to peace.

Chapter II

Mandate of the Committee

8. The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People was established by the General Assembly by resolution 3376 (XXX) of 10 November 1975, with the task of recommending a programme designed to enable the Palestinian people to exercise its inalienable rights, as recognized by the Assembly in its resolution 3236 (XXIX) of 22 November 1974. Further information is available on the website maintained by the Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat at <http://unispal.un.org/unispal.nsf/com.htm>.

9. On 25 November 2014, the General Assembly renewed the mandate of the Committee (resolution 69/20), requested the Secretary-General to continue to provide the Division for Palestinian Rights with the necessary resources to carry out its programme of work (resolution 69/21) and requested the continuation of the special information programme on the question of Palestine of the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat (resolution 69/22). The Assembly also adopted resolution 69/23, entitled "Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine".

Chapter III

Organization of work

A. Membership and officers

10. The Committee is composed of the following Member States: Afghanistan, Belarus, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Cuba, Cyprus, Ecuador, Guinea, Guyana, India, Indonesia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mali, Malta, Namibia, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Pakistan, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of).

11. The observers at the Committee meetings are: Algeria, Bangladesh, Bulgaria, China, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Niger, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka, the Syrian Arab Republic, the United Arab Emirates, Viet Nam and Yemen, as well as the State of Palestine, the African Union, the League of Arab States and OIC.

12. At its 368th meeting, on 10 February 2015, the Committee re-elected Fodé Seck (Senegal) as Chair, Zahir Tanin (Afghanistan), Rodolfo Reyes Rodríguez (Cuba), Desra Percaya (Indonesia), Wilfried Emvula (Namibia) and María Rubiales de Chamorro (Nicaragua) as Vice-Chairs, and Christopher Grima (Malta) as Rapporteur.

B. Participation in the work of the Committee

13. As in previous years, the Committee reconfirmed that all States Members of the United Nations and observers wishing to participate in the work of the Committee were welcome to do so. In accordance with established practice, the State of Palestine participated in the work of the Committee as an observer, attended all of its meetings and gave briefings, made observations and developed proposals for consideration by the Committee and its Bureau.

Chapter IV

Review of the situation relating to the question of Palestine

Political developments

14. During the reporting period, a number of States members of the European Union moved forward on the path to recognizing the State of Palestine. Sweden officially recognized the State of Palestine on 30 October 2014. The parliaments of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (13 October), Spain (18 November), France (2 December), Ireland (10 December), Portugal (12 December), Belgium (5 February 2015) and Italy (27 February 2015) adopted non-binding resolutions that call upon their respective Governments to recognize the State of Palestine. The Holy See and Saint Lucia officially recognized the State of Palestine on 26 June and 14 September respectively.

15. On 17 December, Switzerland, the depositary of the Geneva Conventions, convened, in Geneva, the Conference of High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention, at which a declaration was adopted in which the high contracting parties emphasized the continued applicability and relevance of the Fourth Geneva Convention and called upon the occupying Power to fully respect the Convention in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem.

16. On 30 December, the Security Council failed to adopt a draft resolution (S/2014/916) calling for a final status agreement and an end to the Israeli occupation by the end of 2017, owing to the lack of the required number of nine favourable votes. The following day, Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas signed instruments of accession to the following 18 international conventions and treaties: Convention on the Political Rights of Women; Convention on the Recognition and Enforcement of Foreign Arbitral Awards (the “New York Convention”); Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal; Convention on Biological Diversity and the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety to the Convention on Biological Diversity; Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and relating to the Protection of Victims of Non-International Armed Conflicts (Protocol II); Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and relating to the Adoption of an Additional Distinctive Emblem (Protocol III); Convention on the Law of the Non-Navigational Uses of International Watercourses; Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Crimes against Internationally Protected Persons, including Diplomatic Agents; United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime; Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel and the Optional Protocol thereto; United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea; Convention on the Non-Applicability of Statutory Limitations to War Crimes and Crimes against Humanity; Agreement on the Privileges and Immunities of the International Criminal Court; Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court; Declaration in accordance with the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court; Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects; Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons; Convention on Cluster Munitions.

17. On 3 January 2015, in retaliation against the Palestinian move to join the International Criminal Court, Israel decided to freeze approximately \$127 million in

tax revenues for the month of December, collected on behalf of the Palestinian people under the Paris Protocol to the Oslo Accords. The freeze deepened the Palestinian financial crisis and continued until the adoption of an agreement on 17 April between Israel and the State of Palestine under which Israel transferred more than \$470 million that had previously been withheld.

18. After the general elections in Israel on 17 March, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu continued in his post. Many hardline statements, put forward in the final days of campaigning by the Prime Minister, raised serious doubts about Israel's commitment to the two-State solution. The new Government of Israel was confirmed on 14 May; its guidelines state that it will strive for peace with the Palestinians and all its neighbours, while safeguarding the security and historical and national interests of Israel. In the following months, Prime Minister Netanyahu reaffirmed his commitment to the idea of a sustainable two-State solution.

19. After its general elections, Israel implemented measures to ease restrictions on Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza, particularly during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, although some have been revoked ostensibly in response to rocket fire from Gaza. In July, the Government of Israel decided to grant an additional 8,000 new work permits for Palestinians from the West Bank, bringing the number of permits issued for employment in Israel to a new high of approximately 60,000.

20. On 10 September, the General Assembly adopted resolution 69/320, in which it decided that the flags of non-member observer States maintaining permanent observer missions at United Nations Headquarters would be raised at Headquarters and United Nations offices following the flags of the States Members of the Organization. On 30 September, the flag of Palestine was raised at United Nations Headquarters in the presence of President Mahmoud Abbas.

Reconstruction of Gaza

21. On 12 October 2014, at the Cairo International Conference on Palestine: Reconstructing Gaza, which was co-organized by Egypt and Norway and focused on the reconstruction of Gaza, some 50 donor countries pledged \$5.4 billion in relief funds for the Occupied Palestinian Territory, of which \$3.5 billion (\$2.5 billion in new commitments) was pledged for Gaza. These funds for Gaza represent only 63 per cent of the cost of reconstruction and thus fall short of the funds needed to return Gaza to the situation prior to the Israeli military operation, when socioeconomic conditions were already at their worst since 1967.

22. The Gaza Reconstruction Mechanism, the temporary agreement between Israel and the State of Palestine brokered by the United Nations in September 2014 with the objective of enabling construction and reconstruction work on the large scale required in the Gaza Strip, started slowly, hampered by a delay in the disbursement of donor funds, but scaled up in the first quarter of 2015.

23. In June 2015, Israel and the State of Palestine reached an agreement on the "residential stream" of the Gaza Reconstruction Mechanism, a new mechanism to allow Palestinians in Gaza access to needed construction material for the reconstruction of fully destroyed homes and for new construction. As at 10 August 2015, a total of 89,431 households out of the 100,063 affected had procured the materials necessary to repair their homes under the mechanism's shelter stream. Under the residential stream, by the end of August, over 2,600 housing units had

been cleared for construction; the required construction materials have been procured for more than 1,200 of those units and, in many cases, the reconstruction of the homes has commenced.

24. According to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), by May, 20 per cent of Gaza's population, or 360,000 people, needed treatment for mental health conditions, and 400,000 children were in need of immediate psychosocial support. Moreover, in its annual report, UNCTAD reported that the Israeli blockade, three major wars and the social, health and security-related ramifications of high population density and overcrowding threatened to render Gaza uninhabitable by humans by 2020, when the population is expected to increase to 2.1 million.

25. There have been a number of significant achievements since the end of hostilities in August 2014. Notably, the last internally displaced persons left United Nations collective centres on 17 June 2015. In addition, as at 10 August, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) had removed 414,000 tons of rubble out of an estimated 2 million tons, and a similar amount has been removed by the Government and the private sector. According to the United Nations Mine Action Service, since December 2014, 592 explosive remnants of war risk assessments covering 1,480 dwellings have been conducted. Of an overall estimated 7,000 explosive remnants of war from the 2014 conflict, approximately one third have been cleared either directly or under the supervision of the United Nations Mine Action Service.

Palestinian State-building

26. During the reporting period, the Palestinian State-building efforts continued, supported by the international community. The first meeting of the Cabinet of the Government of national consensus was held in Gaza on 9 October 2014. Palestinian Prime Minister Hamdallah conducted his second visit to Gaza on 25 March 2015, and on 19 April, a delegation of Palestinian ministers travelled to Gaza to begin a process to reintegrate public sector employees. On 17 June, the Palestinian Government of national consensus, formed on 2 June 2014, resigned after President Mahmoud Abbas said that it was unable to operate in the Gaza Strip. On 22 June, the Executive Committee of the Palestinian Liberation Organization decided to establish a committee to consult with all Palestinian factions in order to form a national unity Government. On 31 July, the Government of the State of Palestine was reshuffled and five new ministers, for agriculture, education, local governance, national economy and transportation, were appointed.

27. On 29 January 2015, the International Monetary Fund reported that in 2014, the Palestinian economy had contracted for the first time since 2006. According to UNCTAD, socioeconomic conditions are at their lowest point since 1967. The World Bank assessed that unemployment and poverty have increased markedly. In the fourth quarter of 2014, unemployment in Gaza reached 43 per cent, the highest in the world, with youth unemployment at a staggering 60 per cent. The aggregate poverty rate for Gaza and the West Bank stood at 25 per cent. The economic gap between Gaza and the West Bank is growing, owing primarily to the impact of the ongoing restriction on the free movement of people and goods to and from the Gaza Strip.

28. The socioeconomic prospects for the immediate future remain bleak, owing to volatile political conditions, reduced aid flows, the slow pace of reconstruction in Gaza and the lingering effects of Israel's withholding of Palestinian tax revenue during the first four months of 2015. The latter caused an economic crisis in the Palestinian territory, which in Gaza was exacerbated by an equally severe financial crisis related to the lack of civil service reform. The overall efficacy of donor support, however, continues to be seriously undermined by the occupation, rather than by the inadequacy of the policies of the State of Palestine or poor donor coordination. The fiscal burden of the humanitarian crises and the occupation-related fiscal losses have diverted donor aid from development to humanitarian interventions, including emergency aid, and budget support. No amount of aid would be sufficient to place any economy on the path of sustainable development under conditions of frequent military strikes and destruction of infrastructure, isolation from global markets, fragmentation of domestic markets, and confiscation of and denial of access to national natural resources.

Security

29. The reporting period was marked by continued tensions, military incursions and raids by the Israeli occupying forces, and clashes with Palestinian youths and protesters in many parts of East Jerusalem and the West Bank, which have been taking place on an almost daily basis. According to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs of the Secretariat, as at 28 September, Israeli forces had killed 44 Palestinians and injured 3,387, including children. On 10 December, Palestinian Minister Ziad Abu Ein died during a confrontation with Israeli occupying forces in the course of a protest against Israel's settlements in the West Bank. In a positive development, since the ceasefire of 26 August 2014, violence across the Occupied Palestinian Territory has declined, with June 2015 recording the lowest number of Palestinian injuries in more than three years. The recent aggravation of tensions, however, especially in occupied East Jerusalem and at the holy sites are cause for concern and risk leading to a further destabilization of an already fragile situation.

30. In Gaza, there have been allegations that Palestinian factions rearmed after the Gaza war of the summer of 2014. There has been test-firing of rockets into the Mediterranean Sea. Militants began firing rockets towards Israel in October and on 20 December, Israel conducted its first air strike on Gaza since the ceasefire of 26 August. Israel also continues to conduct frequent incursions into the Gaza border area using military vehicles and continues its harassment of and shooting at unarmed farmers in the "no-go zone" near the Gaza-Israel border and its harassment of fishermen inside the Gaza fishing zone.

31. As at 1 August 2015, unexploded ordnance from the numerous Israeli military incursions and wars on Gaza had killed 2 Palestinians, including 1 child, and injured 40, including 21 children.

32. In a report submitted to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon in April, the United Nations Headquarters Board of Inquiry concluded that some incidents during the 2014 Gaza conflict at schools of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), in which at least 44 Palestinians were killed and 227 injured, were attributable to the Israeli military. On 14 June, Israel published a report on its internal investigations into its actions during the

conflict, including the shelling of United Nations facilities, in which it was concluded that Israel's military actions had been "lawful" and "legitimate".

33. In its report issued on 24 June, the United Nations Independent Commission of Inquiry on the 2014 Gaza Conflict ([A/HRC/29/52](#)), which was established by the Human Rights Council, stated that it had gathered substantial information pointing to serious violations of international law by both Israel and Palestinian armed groups, some of which might amount to war crimes. The Commission expressed concern that impunity prevailed across the board for violations of international humanitarian law and human rights law allegedly committed by Israeli forces, many of which constituted grave breaches of the Fourth Geneva Convention and thus might amount to war crimes, including deliberate attacks against civilians and civilian objects and wanton destruction of civilian property. With regard to Palestinian armed groups, the Commission expressed serious concern at the inherently indiscriminate nature of most of the projectiles directed towards Israel and at the targeting of civilians, which might amount to a war crime.

34. On 29 June, Israeli forces detained a Swedish-flagged vessel in international waters 100 nautical miles off the coast of Gaza and forced it to sail to the Israeli port of Ashdod. The vessel had been part of a four-boat flotilla aiming to bring humanitarian aid to Gaza and protest the Israeli blockade. The other ships turned back. Among the detainees were former Tunisian President Moncef Marzouki, Spanish Member of the European Parliament Ana Miranda, and Arab Member of the Israeli Knesset Basel Ghattas, along with several civil society representatives.

35. In response to intensifying acts of violence and terror, in particular by Israeli settlers, as reflected in the arson attack of 31 July 2015 against a Palestinian home in Duma in the West Bank, in which an 18-month-old boy, Ali Dawabsha, was burned alive, his father and mother died from their injuries and their 4-year-old son was orphaned, the Government of Israel decided on 2 August to strengthen the legal and institutional means of addressing terrorism by Jewish extremists, but also extended the use of the system of prolonged administrative detention, which is used almost exclusively to detain Palestinians without charge for long periods.

Jerusalem

36. Provocations and attacks against religious sites and incitement by Israeli religious extremists and officials escalated in November 2014, leading to the highest monthly number of Palestinian casualties (over 1,000). On 13 November, after a trilateral meeting with King Abdullah II of Jordan and United States Secretary of State John Kerry, Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu gave assurances that there would be no changes to the status quo of the holy sites in Jerusalem, in accordance with its agreement with Jordan. Constructive steps promised to de-escalate the tensions surrounding the holy sites in occupied East Jerusalem included a decrease in the number of Jewish activists at the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound, the lifting of access restrictions and, for the first time since 2007, permission for Palestinians from the Gaza Strip to worship at the Al-Aqsa Mosque.

37. On 18 November, a retaliation attack on a synagogue in West Jerusalem killed five Israelis and injured several others. It was followed on 29 November by an arson attack and the vandalization of a joint Jewish-Arab school in Jerusalem, allegedly perpetrated by Jewish extremists.

38. Provocative visits to the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound in occupied East Jerusalem by Jewish extremists and officials, under the protection of Israeli occupying forces, continued throughout the reporting period and repeatedly led to violent confrontations with Palestinian worshippers. In late September and early October, the confrontations escalated, concomitantly with clashes between Palestinians and Israeli settlers and increased Israeli military raids in Palestinian cities, towns, villages and refugee camps in the West Bank, resulting in a number of civilians killed or injured. This was followed by the decision by the Government of Israel to substantially increase the number of Israeli security forces in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and to impose further restrictions on access to the Old City of Jerusalem for non-resident Palestinians.

Settlements and settler-related incidents

39. Notwithstanding the international calls for a cessation of all settlement activities, which constitute violations of international law, namely, the Fourth Geneva Convention, and Security Council and General Assembly resolutions, Israel continued its policy of illegal settlement-building in the occupied West Bank and East Jerusalem. At the end of 2014, according to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, there were 150 Israeli settlements, 16 of which are in East Jerusalem, with a settler population of around 600,000, of whom 210,000 live in East Jerusalem. According to the Israel Central Bureau of Statistics of Israel, during the fourth quarter of 2014 and the first half of 2015, the construction of 1,260 structures was begun and 1,498 structures were completed. According to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, settlers outnumber Palestinians in Area C, which comprises 61 per cent of the West Bank, with 341,000 settlers living in 235 settlements and so-called settlement outposts, compared with 300,000 Palestinians.

40. According to the Israeli non-governmental organization Peace Now, in 2014, settlement construction in occupied East Jerusalem grew by 260 per cent, from 464 settlement buildings in 2013 to 1,209 in 2014. After accelerating the construction of 1,000 Jewish settler homes on 27 October, in November, Israel advanced plans for 500 more settler homes in the city. Tendering of new settlement construction also accelerated throughout the West Bank and East Jerusalem, with 4,599 units overall tendered in 2014 compared with 3,710 in 2013, a 20 per cent increase, and 2,359 units tendered in the West Bank in 2014 compared with 1,695 in 2013, a 40 per cent increase.

41. On 25 December, the Israeli Supreme Court ordered the evacuation and demolition of Amona, the largest settlement outpost in the West Bank, within two years. On 30 January 2015, the Government of Israel decided to issue tenders for the additional construction of about 450 residential units in West Bank settlements, and on 8 February, the Jerusalem municipality approved the construction of 64 Jewish settler homes north of the city.

42. Shortly after the formation of the new Government in May 2015, Israel approved the construction of 900 settler homes in occupied East Jerusalem. Following the decision on 29 July by the Israeli Supreme Court that two buildings in the West Bank settlement of Beit El adjacent to the city of Ramallah, which had been built on private Palestinian land, should be destroyed, the Israeli Prime Minister approved, the same day, the immediate construction of 300 housing units in

the same settlement and advanced plans for 504 new housing units in Israeli settlement areas in occupied East Jerusalem.

43. Israeli settlers continued to harass and attack Palestinian civilians, especially farmers and herders, with clashes occurring on an almost daily basis. According to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, as at 28 September, a total of 229 settler-related incidents had occurred during the reporting period, causing either Palestinian casualties, including to children, and/or damages to Palestinian property or land, averaging 19 each month. These included the destruction of Palestinian houses, mosques, churches and orchards, many in so-called price tag attacks, with the aim of scaring Palestinians off their lands and forcing Palestinians to end their resistance against the Israeli settlement enterprise. On 12 November, suspected Jewish settlers torched a mosque near Ramallah. In January 2015 alone, some 5,600 trees were uprooted or vandalized. On 31 July, an arson attack against a Palestinian family in the occupied West Bank committed by extremist Jewish settlers killed an 18-month-old baby and his father and mother and critically injured the 4-year-old brother, who is the only surviving member of the family.

44. According to a report by Israeli human rights organization Yesh Din published in May, only 7.4 per cent of Israeli police investigations initiated in the West Bank following complaints by Palestinian victims of offences committed against them or their property by Israeli settlers result in indictments. The remaining investigations have been closed, in most cases (some 85 per cent) owing to investigative failure.

Demolitions and displacements

45. Israel has continued its policy of demolition of Palestinian homes and structures built without Israeli-issued permits. Such permits are nearly impossible for Palestinians living under Israeli occupation to obtain. It has also reinstated the practice of punitive demolitions after having halted it almost completely for close to a decade. In August, the Israeli Supreme Court legitimized the applicability of the 1951 Absentee's Property Law to Palestinian property in East Jerusalem when the owner is residing elsewhere in the West Bank, allowing for the expropriation of property from Palestinians who have become absentees through no fault of their own. Israeli courts continued the practice of evicting Palestinian residents and owners of properties in East Jerusalem that, prior to 1948, had belonged to Jewish residents, while Palestinians cannot avail themselves of the same procedure, namely, reclaiming property previously under Palestinian ownership and now under Jewish-Israeli control.

46. According to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, as at 28 September, a total of 590 Palestinian structures had been demolished during the reporting period, of which 106 were in East Jerusalem, displacing 765 Palestinians in total and 96 from East Jerusalem.

47. Some 7,000 Palestinian Bedouins in 46 residential areas of the West Bank are threatened with forcible transfer, linked to the expansion of illegal settlements and the wall in the E1 area, east of Jerusalem.

Palestinian prisoners

48. According to the Israeli human rights organization B'Tselem, at the end of July, a total of 5,369 Palestinian detainees and prisoners were being held in Israeli

prisons, 346 of them from the Gaza Strip. An additional 972 Palestinians were being held in Israel Prison Service facilities for being in Israel illegally, 13 of them from the Gaza Strip. A total of 342 of those Palestinian prisoners are being held in administrative detention. On 12 July, the Israeli authorities released the Palestinian prisoner Khader Adnan, who had been arrested and placed in administrative detention in July 2014, after a 56-day hunger strike.

49. On 20 July, the Israeli Parliament amended the Penal Code to extend harsh punishments for throwing stones at moving vehicles, allowing sentences of up to 20 years, which is likely to disproportionately affect Palestinian children. On 30 July, the Knesset approved a law to permit force-feeding of prisoners on hunger strike under certain conditions, which potentially affects all detainees but particularly Palestinian detainees who have resorted to hunger strikes to protest their conditions, including their prolonged administrative detention without charge. The adoption of the law has led to widespread protests, including by the Israeli Medical Association, which refuses to comply as that would constitute a breach of the Hippocratic Oath.

Water

50. According to the Emergency Water and Sanitation Hygiene Group, one year after the Gaza war of 2014, which resulted in \$34 million in damage to major water and sanitation infrastructure, some 120,000 Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, or 7 per cent of the population in the territory, are still not connected to the water network, while 23 per cent remain disconnected from the sewage system. As a result of the unrepaired war damages to wastewater facilities, untreated and partially treated wastewater is discharged into the environment, infiltrating and polluting the coastal aquifer, the sole freshwater source for the Gaza Strip, making 96 per cent of the water from the aquifer unfit for human consumption. According to the Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, the water installations operate at approximately 50 per cent capacity owing to energy shortages and maintenance challenges caused by shortages of parts as a result of the blockade. Some 65 per cent of the population receives several hours of water once every three or four days and 15 per cent receives water for six to eight hours every day.

United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East

51. UNRWA continued to provide extensive services and emergency assistance to over 5 million Palestine refugees in all its fields of operations in Jordan, Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic and the Occupied Palestinian Territory. While it endeavours to serve this community in accordance with its General Assembly mandate, UNRWA is confronted with the most severe financial crisis since its establishment in 1949, which is jeopardizing its ability to live up to core responsibilities in providing basic education, health care and relief and social services. Although donor responses to this crisis in August helped UNRWA to avert the shutdown or delayed opening of its schools in all fields of operation, the financial deficit continues to affect operations, requiring more substantive solutions to the chronic underfunding of the Agency.

52. One year after the Israeli military operations of July and August 2014, the devastating conflict continues to have severe implications for the work of UNRWA in the Gaza Strip. A total of 9,117 Palestine refugee homes were totally demolished and 138,391 damaged during the conflict. The level of destruction, coupled with the

worsening socioeconomic situation of Gaza Strip residents in the context of the blockade, presents an extremely challenging environment for Palestine refugees in the Gaza Strip, severely affecting their well-being, socioeconomic conditions and future potential.

53. In the light of the escalating conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic, the Agency is particularly concerned about the more than 560,000 Palestine refugees who have lived in the country for decades, over 50 per cent of whom have now been displaced within the Syrian Arab Republic, with an additional 12 per cent forced to seek refuge in neighbouring countries. In Lebanon, UNRWA has registered 45,000 Palestine refugees from the Syrian Arab Republic, and 15,000 Palestine refugees in Jordan and some 1,000 in the Gaza Strip have approached UNRWA for assistance. In Egypt, 4,000 Palestine refugees are also reported to have come from the Syrian Arab Republic and large groups are found further afield. Inside the Syrian Arab Republic, some 65,000 Palestine refugees are in hard-to-reach areas, including Yarmouk camp on the outskirts of Damascus, which has witnessed a dramatic escalation of violence that continues to endanger the lives of 18,000 Palestine refugees and Syrian residents of the camp. Although it has had limited access since July 2013, in 2015, UNRWA was able to serve the vast majority (over 90 per cent) of the Palestine refugee population in the Syrian Arab Republic with regular humanitarian assistance and services. However, the access situation declined significantly during the summer of 2015, particularly in the Dera'a and Aleppo areas.

54. The Committee again expresses its appreciation for the dedication of UNRWA and its entire staff to its mission and calls upon all Member States to address the critical financial situation in which the Agency finds itself, to enable the continued provision of vital support to the Palestine refugee population in all fields of operation.

United Nations Development Programme/Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

55. UNDP, through its Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People, continued to respond to the development needs of the State of Palestine and its national consensus government. In support of the Palestinian statehood agenda, UNDP focuses on democratic governance and the rule of law, economic empowerment and private sector development, environment and management of natural resources, as well as public and social infrastructure. Notwithstanding the blockade of the Gaza Strip, UNDP is also alleviating the suffering of the population in the coastal enclave by enhancing livelihoods through emergency employment, cash assistance, the reconstruction of shelters and schools, the removal of rubble, and institutional integration. The Programme places empowerment, resilience and sustainability at the centre of its operation and focuses on three priority areas: the Gaza Strip, East Jerusalem and Area C of the West Bank, where the needs are the greatest.

56. The Committee remained appreciative of the important work of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. It noted that the consolidated appeal for 2015 focused on the delivery of humanitarian assistance, increased protection of civilians, enhanced monitoring and reporting on the humanitarian situation and the strengthening of United Nations humanitarian coordination structures.

Chapter V

Action taken by the Committee

A. Action taken in accordance with General Assembly resolution 69/20

1. Action taken in the Security Council

57. During the open debates at the Security Council held on 21 October 2014, 15 January 2015, 21 April 2015 and 23 July 2015, the Chair of the Committee delivered a statement (see [S/PV.7281](#); [S/PV.7360](#); [S/PV.7430](#); [S/PV.7490](#)).

2. Action taken by the Bureau of the Committee

58. On 10 November 2014, the Bureau of the Committee issued a statement on the situation in East Jerusalem (GA/PAL/1315). On 18 December, the Bureau issued a statement welcoming the Declaration of the Conference of High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention (GA/PAL/1323).

B. Action taken by the Committee and the Division for Palestinian Rights in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 69/20 and 69/21

1. Committee meetings at Headquarters

59. During the reporting period, the Committee held periodic meetings at United Nations Headquarters in New York. At its 366th meeting, on 19 November 2014, the Committee approved for submission to the General Assembly four draft resolutions entitled “Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People”, “Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat”, “Special information programme on the question of Palestine of the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat” and “Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine”. At its 368th meeting, on 10 February 2015, attended by the Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations, the Committee re-elected its Chair, Vice-Chairs and Rapporteur. At its 369th meeting on 1 May 2015, the Director of the UNRWA New York Office addressed the Committee on the occasion of the sixty-fifth anniversary of the commencement of the Agency’s operations.

60. In addition to its periodic meetings, during the reporting period, the Committee organized the following events at United Nations Headquarters in New York within the framework of the 2014 International Year of Solidarity with the Palestinian People:

(a) Lecture by Noam Chomsky, Professor Emeritus of Linguistics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 14 October 2014;

(b) Fashion show by Jamal Taslaq, Palestinian-Italian designer, 10 November 2014.

2. Programme of international meetings and conferences

61. During the reporting period, the following international events were held under the auspices of the Committee:

(a) United Nations International Meeting of Parliamentarians in Support of Israeli-Palestinian Peace, United Nations Headquarters, New York, 21 November 2014;

(b) International Conference of Local Governments and Civil Society Organizations in Support of Palestinian Rights, Seville, Spain, 2 and 3 December 2014;

(c) United Nations Seminar on Assistance to the Palestinian People, Vienna, 31 March and 1 April 2015;

(d) United Nations Round Table on Legal Aspects of the Question of Palestine, The Hague, Netherlands, 20 to 22 May 2015;

(e) United Nations International Meeting in Support of Israeli-Palestinian Peace, Moscow, 1 and 2 July 2015;

(f) International Meeting on the Question of Palestine, Brussels, 7 and 8 September 2015;

(g) Consultations of the Committee delegation with civil society organizations active on the Question of Palestine, Brussels, 9 September 2015.

62. The above-mentioned events were attended by representatives of Governments, intergovernmental organizations and United Nations system entities, as well as parliamentarians and representatives of civil society and the media. Detailed information about the meetings is being issued in the form of publications of the Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat and is available on the "Question of Palestine" website maintained by the Division.

63. In the margins of the United Nations Seminar on Assistance to the Palestinian People held in Austria, the Committee delegation met with high-ranking officials of the Federal Ministry for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs of Austria. In the margins of the United Nations Round Table on Legal Aspects of the Question of Palestine held in The Hague, the Committee delegation met with high-level officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands and of the European External Action Service. In the margins of the United Nations International Meeting in Support of Israeli-Palestinian Peace in Moscow, the Committee delegation held meetings with high-ranking officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States and the Assistant Secretary-General of OIC, respectively. In the margins of the International Meeting on the Question of Palestine held in Brussels, the Committee delegation met with officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation of Belgium.

3. Cooperation with intergovernmental organizations

64. Throughout the year, the Committee continued its cooperation with the African Union, the European Union, the League of Arab States, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and OIC. The Committee is appreciative of the active participation of their representatives in the various international events held under its auspices and the co-sponsorship provided by the League of Arab States and OIC in organizing the International Meeting on the Question of Palestine held in Brussels in September.

4. Cooperation with civil society

Civil society organizations

65. The Committee continued its cooperation with civil society organizations worldwide. Civil society representatives participated in all international meetings organized under the auspices of the Committee. On 9 September, consultations between the Bureau of the Committee and civil society organizations were held in Brussels. The Committee commends the important work of civil society organizations and encourages them to continue contributing to efforts aimed at achieving a comprehensive, just, lasting and peaceful solution to the question of Palestine in all its aspects and achieving the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.

66. The Committee maintained its cooperation with national, regional and international coordinating mechanisms and established new liaisons with a large number of individual organizations.

67. The Working Group of the Committee, chaired by the representative of Malta, met periodically and hosted two briefings by civil society representatives at United Nations Headquarters in New York.

68. During the reporting period, three civil society organizations were accredited to the Committee and two organizations became observers.

69. The Division for Palestinian Rights maintained a civil society page (<http://unispal.un.org/unispal.nsf/ngo.htm>) on the “Question of Palestine” website as an outreach tool towards civil society organizations and to foster civil society networking and cooperation.

70. The Division maintained its Facebook, Twitter and YouTube pages to disseminate information about the work of the Committee, and the United Nations as a whole, on the question of Palestine. In addition, the Division continued to publish the periodic online bulletin *NGO Action News*, reaching out to more than 1,000 civil society organizations around the world, in order to catalogue and publicize civil society initiatives.

Parliaments, interparliamentary organizations and local governments

71. The Committee continued to attach great importance to developing its liaison with national and regional parliaments and their organizations. Representatives of parliaments and interparliamentary organizations participated in international events organized by the Committee during the reporting period. Among others, members of the Palestinian Legislative Council, the Israeli Knesset, the parliaments of Indonesia, Ireland, Jordan, Malta, Mexico, Pakistan, South Africa, Sweden, the regional parliament of Andalusia in Spain, as well as the European Parliament, the Inter-Parliamentary Union, the Arab Inter-Parliamentary Union and the French Senate participated in the international meetings held under the auspices of the Committee.

5. Research, monitoring and publications

72. The Division carried out research and monitoring activities and responded to requests for information and briefings on the question of Palestine. Under the guidance of the Committee, which reiterated the relevance of the research, monitoring and publications programme, it also prepared the publications listed below for dissemination:

(a) Monthly bulletin on action taken by the United Nations system and intergovernmental organizations relevant to the question of Palestine;

(b) Monthly chronology of events relating to the question of Palestine based on media reports and other sources;

(c) Reports of international meetings and conferences organized under the auspices of the Committee;

(d) Special bulletin and information notes on the observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People;

(e) Periodic reviews of developments related to the Middle East peace process;

(f) Annual compilation of resolutions and decisions of the General Assembly and the Security Council relating to the question of Palestine.

6. United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine

73. The Division for Palestinian Rights, in cooperation with relevant technical and library services of the United Nations Secretariat, continued to administer, maintain, expand and develop the “Question of Palestine” website (<http://unispal.un.org/unispal.nsf/home.htm>) and UNISPAL. That included the ongoing maintenance and upgrading of the technical components of the system and involved the expansion of the document collection to include relevant new and old United Nations and other documents.

7. Training programme for staff of the Government of the State of Palestine

74. The Division conducted the annual training programme for staff of the Government of the State of Palestine. Two staff members of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs are in the process of completing a six-week training programme at Headquarters in New York (7 September to 16 October) and an additional two staff members will complete the same programme between 19 October and 27 November. The training will allow the Palestinian staff to familiarize themselves with various aspects of the work of the Secretariat and other United Nations organs and bodies, including the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council. The training is financially supported by the OPEC Fund for International Development.

8. International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People

75. The International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People was observed on 24 November 2014 at Headquarters in New York, on 26 November at the United Nations Office at Geneva and on 28 November at the United Nations Office at Vienna. At Headquarters, the Committee held a special meeting and organized a photo exhibit entitled “The Long Journey” in cooperation with UNRWA and the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat, as well as a musical performance by the Joubran Trio in cooperation with the Permanent Observer Mission of the State of Palestine to the United Nations. The Committee noted with appreciation that the International Day of Solidarity had also been observed by United Nations Information Centres and other bodies in many cities throughout the world. Details on the observance are contained in the special bulletin issued by the Division.

Chapter VI

Action taken by the Department of Public Information in accordance with General Assembly resolution 69/22

76. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 69/22, the Department of Public Information continued to implement its special information programme on the question of Palestine.

77. On 26 and 27 May 2015, the Department held its annual United Nations International Media Seminar on Peace in the Middle East, in Astana, in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan. The seminar was attended by journalists, former and current policymakers, think tank members, academics and students from France, Israel, Kazakhstan, the United States of America and the State of Palestine. The event brought together some 350 participants.

78. The Department's annual five-week training programme for Palestinian journalists was organized in New York and Washington, D.C., from 3 November to 5 December 2014. The selected group of nine Palestinian journalists attended a series of briefings by United Nations officials and media industry leaders. They also worked through an intensive curriculum with regular workshops, assignments and final projects.

79. A number of outreach events to commemorate the 2014 International Day of Solidarity and the International Year of Solidarity with the Palestinian People were also organized both at Headquarters and in other locations through the global network of the United Nations Information Centres of the Department of Public Information.

80. In New York, the Department, in conjunction with UNRWA and the Division for Palestinian Rights, arranged for the display of the "Long Journey" exhibit in the Visitors' Lobby of United Nations Headquarters as part of the commemoration of Solidarity Day, from November 2014 to January 2015.

81. Guided tour routes for visitors to United Nations Headquarters continued to include a stop at the permanent exhibit "The Question of Palestine and the United Nations". During the reporting period, over 200,000 visitors took the guided tour.

82. The question of Palestine, the International Day and the Year of Solidarity were all promoted widely on the multilingual United Nations website, through United Nations social media accounts managed by the Department of Public Information and through the Department's traditional media platforms, including United Nations Radio, United Nations Television and the United Nations News Centre.

83. United Nations Television produced a special edition of its 21st Century television series, entitled "Palestine and Israel — Mending Hearts", which looked at how a heart surgery programme helped a critically sick Palestinian baby in the West Bank.

Chapter VII

Conclusions and recommendations of the Committee

84. The Committee remains convinced that a negotiated peaceful settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in all its aspects in accordance with United Nations resolutions, an urgent end to the Israeli occupation, and the realization of the rights of the Palestinian people, including to self-determination, remain central to peace and stability throughout the volatile Middle East region and should be a top priority of the international community. As has consistently emerged during the international meetings organized by the Committee, any resolution of the conflict will require a comprehensive regional solution, conceivably with support from the reinvigorated Quartet, that includes greater engagement with key Arab States and the other States concerned. The Arab Peace Initiative remains a significant contribution to such a regional settlement. The Committee is supporting those efforts and will continue its enhanced cooperation with the League of Arab States and OIC.

85. In its continued support to revitalize the peace negotiations, the Committee aligns itself with the view that the previous paradigm of bilateral negotiations, which after more than two decades have not yielded any success, should be revised. There is a need to obtain a firm commitment from Israel with regard to the two-State solution on the basis of the pre-1967 borders and in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions. Serious efforts are needed between the parties to overcome their deeply entrenched mistrust, including confidence-building efforts with the support of the international community, and to demonstrate the courage and leadership that is required at this time. If the two parties do continue to seek an outcome of two neighbouring States living in peace and security, but are unable themselves at this juncture to agree on a meaningful framework to resume negotiations, the international community must consider presenting such a framework, including parameters. In that regard, it is the primary responsibility of the Security Council, under the Charter of the United Nations, to play its role in defining a new peace architecture for resolving the conflict. The Committee urges the Security Council and the General Assembly to give positive consideration to all proposals that endeavour to present a way out of the current impasse. The Committee intends to contribute to a healthy and necessary discussion of these issues via its programme of work.

86. The Committee notes that the reconstruction of Gaza has now commenced, one year after the devastating war. However, the pace of reconstruction remains inadequately slow and the humanitarian and security situation is fragile; clean water, sanitation and electricity are still scarce and the tens of thousands of Palestinians who were rendered homeless and destitute by the conflict remain so. Immediate steps are needed to solidify the ceasefire and to accelerate reconstruction efforts, focusing on the physical rebuilding and delivery of affordable energy and sufficient water and the amelioration of dire socioeconomic conditions. Continued donor funding has to be secured for the long term, including for UNRWA. There is need for continued funding for the Gaza Reconstruction Mechanism. Ultimately, in order to ensure respect for the rights of the Palestinian people, prevent deterioration beyond the breaking point and break the build-destroy-rebuild cycle, the Israeli blockade on the Gaza Strip must end and there must be a lifting of all closures within the

framework of Security Council resolution 1860 (2009). Palestinian reconciliation is also essential, and a Palestinian unity government has to take up governance and security functions in Gaza and exercise control over the crossings. The Committee reiterates its calls upon the United Nations members and observers to provide generous support to UNRWA, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, UNDP, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the World Food Programme (WFP) and other organizations working on the ground to alleviate the catastrophic conditions and to expedite the Gaza reconstruction efforts.

87. The Committee reiterates that violations of humanitarian and human rights law have to be investigated and that the perpetrators should be brought to justice. The primary responsibility for such investigations rests with the Member States but they could be conducted by relevant United Nations and other international bodies if necessary. The Committee welcomed the fact-finding mission established by the Human Rights Council and the report of the United Nations Independent Commission of Inquiry on the 2014 Gaza Conflict ([A/HRC/29/52](#)) as important steps towards achieving accountability for violations of humanitarian and human rights law. The findings and recommendations of the report should be vigorously followed up on by the relevant bodies and authorities with a view to ending impunity.

88. The Committee welcomes the accession by the State of Palestine to additional international conventions and treaties, including the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, and encourages its Government to take all steps towards full compliance with those instruments, to the extent allowed by the constraints imposed by the Israeli occupation. As became apparent during the legal round table organized by the Committee, the signature by the State of Palestine of additional international instruments can help to strengthen the rule of law and uphold human rights domestically, while making it possible to pursue justice and accountability for Palestinian victims through available international legal mechanisms. The Committee stands ready to further contribute to capacity-building in this area through its training programme for staff of the Government of the State of Palestine.

89. The Committee underscores the responsibility of States and private entities not to contribute to grave Israeli violations of Palestinian human rights, particularly in respect of settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. It welcomes in that regard the appropriate stance of the European Union on the importation of products from settlements and encourages the European Union and other organizations and States to adopt and implement other such policies that guarantee adherence to international conventions in regard of illegal settlements in occupied areas, particularly the Fourth Geneva Convention. It welcomes further steps taken by Governments and private businesses to dissociate themselves from policies that directly or indirectly support settlements.

90. Through its mandated activities, the Committee will continue to generate heightened international awareness of the question of Palestine and international support for the rights of the Palestinian people, including their right to self-determination and independence. In that connection, the Committee emphasizes the useful contribution of the Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat in support of its mandate. It notes with satisfaction:

(a) the sustained level of dialogue, engagement and support on the part of the international community for the programme's objectives, as evidenced by the number of and participation in international meetings and conferences, and commemorations of the International Day and Year of Solidarity with the Palestinian People; (b) the continued involvement of civil society organizations in support of the efforts of the Committee and the United Nations towards a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine; and (c) an increase in international awareness of the United Nations policies and activities on the question of Palestine, as evidenced by the increased number of visitors to the Question of Palestine website and followers of social media sites maintained by the Division. The Committee also considers that the annual training programme for staff of the Government of the State of Palestine, carried out annually by the Division, has proved its usefulness, as it directly contributes to Palestinian capacity-building efforts. The Committee expresses its appreciation for the funding of the programme in 2015 by the OPEC Fund for International Development and strongly recommends that this important mandated activity be continued and, where possible, further expanded.

91. The Committee will focus its programme of international meetings and conferences in 2016, to be implemented by the Division, on amplifying international support for the achievement of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, stressing the role and responsibility of the United Nations in that regard and in this year of the seventieth anniversary of the Organization. The Committee intends to work closely with other United Nations actors on the ground, such as the Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and UNRWA, to synergize efforts in fields of common concern. The Committee will also continue to examine the legal aspects of the question of Palestine.

92. The Committee will continue to mobilize support for Palestinian institution-building and all other efforts to support and enhance the viability of the State of Palestine. It will reach out to and engage Governments, parliamentarians and civil society to mobilize support for a just solution to all permanent status issues, including the question of refugees, based on principles of international law and relevant United Nations resolutions, including General Assembly resolution 194 (III). It will pay particular attention to the inclusion and empowerment of women and young people and their organizations.

93. The Committee highly values civil society initiatives in support of the Palestinian people. It will expand its efforts to engage with all the supporters of a just and peaceful solution to the question of Palestine, including in Israel. The Committee encourages civil society partners to work with their national Governments, parliamentarians and other institutions with a view to gaining their full support for the work of the United Nations, including that of the Committee, on the question of Palestine.

94. The Committee looks forward to further developing its cooperation with parliamentarians and their umbrella organizations. Parliamentarians have a special responsibility to ensure that their Governments actively promote and support the realization of a peaceful and just solution of the question of Palestine and uphold their obligations under international law, including humanitarian and human rights law. It will continue its outreach to new audiences such as local governments, which also have an important role to play in promoting the rights

of the Palestinian people and the responsibilities of Governments to adhere to international humanitarian and human rights laws and conventions.

95. The Committee will reach out to all regional groups at the United Nations with a view to expanding its membership. It will actively work to organize more thematic debates on the question of Palestine in various United Nations forums. Recognizing the growing importance of developing countries and regional and subregional organizations, it will make a special effort to step up engagement with those countries and organizations in its work.

96. The Committee requests the Division to continue its substantive and secretariat support, the programme of research, monitoring and publications and other informational activities, in support of the Committee's communication strategy. The Division should pay special attention to continued development of the "Question of Palestine" portal, the preparation of publications and information materials on various aspects of the question of Palestine and their widest possible dissemination, including in the official languages of the United Nations, and the use of web-based social information networks, such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. It should also continue to develop the UNISPAL document collection by reflecting current issues and events, as well as by continuing to digitize and upload historical documents and to add user-friendly search features. The Division should continue to collaborate with the United Nations Libraries at Headquarters and in Geneva in the search for historic documents. It should explore opportunities to expand the breadth and scope of the annual training programme for staff of the Government of the State of Palestine, paying special attention to the programme's gender balance, such as expanding the pool of potential participants to all offices and departments of the Government and optimizing the use of resources to allow the maximum number of participants possible. Continued voluntary contributions from member and observer States and international organizations in line with their capacity, such as from the OPEC Fund for International Development in 2015, are to be encouraged to put the programme on a solid financial footing.

97. The Division should continue to organize the annual observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

98. The Committee is of the view that the special information programme on the question of Palestine of the Department of Public Information has made an important contribution to informing the media and the public of the relevant issues. It requests the continuation of the programme, with the necessary flexibility warranted by developments relevant to the question of Palestine.

99. Wishing to make its contribution to the achievement of a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine, and in view of the many difficulties facing the Palestinian people and their leadership and besetting the peace process, the Committee calls upon all States to join it in this endeavour and to extend their cooperation and support to the Committee, and invites the General Assembly again to recognize the importance of its role and to reconfirm its mandate.

Annex

Economic costs of the Israeli occupation for the Palestinian people

Note by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

A. Introduction and objective

1. The year 2015 marks the forty-eighth year of Israel's occupation of the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. Despite numerous United Nations resolutions and condemnations of the illegal occupation of the Palestinian territory, little has been achieved to end the occupation and its damaging impacts. On the contrary, illegal settlements continue to expand and new ones are being built, the settler population is increasing, and the detrimental consequences are now engrained in the daily lives of the Palestinian population under occupation.

2. In recognition of this fact, on 25 November 2014, the General Assembly adopted resolution 69/20, in which it requested the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) to report to the Assembly on the economic costs of the Israeli occupation for the Palestinian people.

3. The objective of the present annex is to partially respond to that request. Reporting the cost of the occupation is, however, a substantial and multi-year task and requires more resources than are presently available to UNCTAD. The Conference therefore carried out preliminary work to reflect on how the task could be implemented; highlight historical precedents relating to similar situations; outline the scope and periodicity of the task; and assess the resources required to implement it. Specifically, the annex is aimed at providing Member States with background and the resource requirements for UNCTAD to fulfil the request contained in paragraph 9 of General Assembly resolution 69/20 and perform this task on a regular basis.

4. Hence, the annex does not contain a report on the qualitative and quantitative aspects of the cost of the occupation; rather, it underscores for Member States the critical importance of such an assignment and the need to equip the international community with an objective understanding of the effects of the occupation on the Palestinian people as a step towards achieving peace with justice and dignity.

B. Some perspectives on the economics of the occupation

5. Throughout history, colonization and military occupations have consistently had economic objectives and consequences. They take various shapes and forms, but always involve the exploitation, impoverishment, marginalization, displacement and appropriation of resources of the occupied indigenous people.

6. In almost all types of occupation, the economic dimension could be described as acts and measures taken by the occupier to appropriate assets, natural resources and economic benefits that rightfully belong to the colonized people. These acts often deprive the people under colonial rule of the internationally recognized human right to development by confiscating their national resources, preventing them from

accessing and utilizing those resources, depriving them of the ability to produce and thus forcing them to consume products produced by the occupier. These actions represent only a partial aspect of the economic costs incurred by the people under occupation. Equally damaging are the measures and policies that undermine the capacity of the occupied people to conduct normal trade and economic and social transactions with neighbours and traditional trading partners and to move freely within their country and territories.

C. Key references and historical precedents

7. This section highlights some relevant precedents where economic costs were taken into account as key elements for negotiating durable solutions to complex and intractable conflicts.

8. The United Nations Fact-finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict, which was established by the President of the Human Rights Council on 3 April 2009, concluded in its report to the General Assembly (A/HRC/12/48) that Israel's continuing occupation emerged as the fundamental factor underlying violations of international law and undermining prospects for development and peace.

9. The costs of the Israeli occupation have been staggering and are mounting. They continue to increase despite numerous United Nations resolutions calling for the dismantlement of the settlements and an end to the losses and suffering incurred by the Palestinian people. Equally relevant, in the context of economic development in conflict situations, are the international law statutes and principles and the international human rights and humanitarian law that deal with redress and reparation payments to injured parties in conflict situations. Resolutions, measures and precedents that should also apply to Palestinians under occupation include the following:

(a) **Decision by the Permanent Court of International Justice of 1928 in the landmark case concerning the factory at Chorzów.** It was determined in this decision that States are responsible for making reparation (return to status quo ante) for their breaches of international law;^a

(b) **General Assembly resolution 194 (III).** This resolution has served and continues to serve as the legal cornerstone for Palestinians on the refugee question and on compensation. The oft-cited resolution was adopted on 11 December 1948 during the ongoing mass displacement of Palestinians from areas that fell under Israeli control. The General Assembly has consistently reaffirmed the applicability of resolution 194 (III) to the settlement of refugee questions and compensation;

(c) **Pinheiro Principles.** More recently, the post-Cold War era witnessed significant normative and practical developments in the area of durable solutions for refugees and reparation payments. Numerous conflicts involving the mass displacement of persons and damages to property and people were resolved through agreements in the 1990s, including in Afghanistan, Cyprus, Guatemala and the former Yugoslavia. Several mass claim schemes were also implemented during this period to remedy human rights abuses, displacement and loss of property. Notable examples are the establishment of the Commission for Real Property Claims of

^a See http://www.icj-cij.org/pcij/serie_A/A_09/28_Usine_de_Chorzow_Competence_Arret.pdf.

Displaced Persons and Refugees in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo and the United Nations Compensation Commission for the victims of Iraq's invasion of Kuwait;^b

(d) **Advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.** The advisory opinion reaffirmed the principle of compensation and reparations to injured parties for actions of States that breach international law.^c

D. Need for an assessment of the economic cost of occupation

10. It follows from the precedents listed above that there is a cost borne by the people under occupation and those suffering damage from the actions of the occupying authority.^d Compensation for this cost, however, should not be considered as a price or a substitute to ending occupation. On the contrary, it is an essential remedy that should accompany steps towards reversing the negative impacts and economic distortions of occupation.

11. However, to this day, there is no systematic assessment or comprehensive record of the economic costs and consequences of the actions, measures and positions of Israel as an occupying Power in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Thus far, all the analyses performed and efforts made to quantify the cost of occupation have been done on an ad hoc basis, mostly by UNCTAD. Efforts made include the following:

(a) Since the mid-2000s, UNCTAD has prepared a number of studies and reports focusing on various aspects of the cost of occupation, such as the economic cost of the destruction of productive capacities, fiscal losses, the Israeli closure policy in the West Bank and the blockade in Gaza, the loss of Palestinian policy space and the Israeli control of Palestinian land, water and other natural resources;^e

^b See the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, [A/CONF.183/9](#) of 17 July 1998; Principles on Housing and Property Restitution for Refugees and Displaced Persons, [E/CN.4/Sub.2/2005/17](#), June 2005; and Basic Principles and Guidelines on the Right to a Remedy and Reparation for Victims of Gross Violations of International Human Rights Law and Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law, General Assembly resolution 60/147 of 16 December 2005.

^c See [www.icj-cij.org/docket/files/131/1671.pdf](#).

^d See [A/AC.25/W.81/Rev.2](#) (Annex I of March 1950 and II of October 1949), entitled "Historical precedents for restitution of property or payment of compensation to refugees" and "Compensation to refugees for loss of or damage to property to be made good under principles of international law or in equity", respectively, and General Assembly resolution 194 (III) of 11 December 1948.

^e See UNCTAD study entitled "Palestinian fiscal revenue leakage to Israel under the Protocol on Economic Relations", available from [unctad.org/en/PublicationsLibrary/gdsapp2013d1_en.pdf](#). See also the reports on UNCTAD assistance to the Palestinian people for 2008 ([TD/B/55/2](#)), 2010 ([TD/B/57/4](#)), 2011 ([TD/B/58/4](#)) and 2012 ([TD/B/59/2](#)), as well as UNCTAD/GDS/APP/2008/1 of May 2009 entitled "Policy Alternatives for Sustained Palestinian Development and State Formation", available from [unctad.org/en/Docs/gdsapp20081_en.pdf](#).

(b) In 2013, the World Bank provided partial estimates of the cost of occupation of Area C (61 per cent of the West Bank) in a report entitled *West Bank and Gaza: Area C and the future of the Palestinian economy*,^f

(c) The United Nations Register of Damage Caused by the Construction of the Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, established in 2007 (General Assembly resolution ES-10/17), focuses only on the damage emanating from the construction of the Israeli separation barrier within the West Bank;

(d) The Palestinian National Authority estimated the cost of Israeli occupation related to the heavy restrictions imposed on the Palestinian people and their lack of ownership and access to their own natural resources;^g

(e) In the information brief entitled “Palestinian Losses in 1948: Calculating Refugee Compensation”, Atif Kubursi elaborated on the rights of refugees in terms of restitution of property and compensation for lost opportunity, in line with General Assembly resolution 194 (III). The assessment focused on the property and human capital losses of the Palestinian refugees.^h

E. Concept of losses and their typology

12. Not all the occupation-related costs can be measured in monetary terms; for example, no dollar value can be assigned to the distress and agony of the loss and destruction of life, community, culture, shelter or a homeland, or the detention of a human being without due process and legal justification. Assessment of the cost of the occupation to the Palestinian people can be, at best, a partial measurement of the losses/costs incurred since the onset of the occupation.

13. The typology of the costs incurred by the Palestinian people under occupation that followed from the “de-development” policies imposed on the Palestinian economy calls for identifying, monitoring and measuring these losses in a systematic and periodical manner. The list includes but is not restricted to physical losses; loss of water and other natural resources; opportunity and economic losses; specific macroeconomic and fiscal losses; non-specific/miscellaneous macro- and micro-losses; human capital losses; loss of community and neighbourhood; and psychosocial losses.

14. The identification and quantification of each of these losses lie at the core of assessing the “cost of occupation”. For each type of loss, the conceptual question is twofold: (a) What actions taken by the occupation authorities can be considered harmful to the economy (the costs of which are borne by all the individuals of the Palestinian people)?; (b) What monetary value can be assigned to each action taken by the occupation authorities (and therefore be a fair assessment of the cost of the occupation)? Obviously, such quantification will be complex and multidimensional, requiring expertise in economics, law, history and politics.

^f See http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2014/01/23/000442464_20140123122135/Rendered/PDF/AUS29220REPLAC0EVISION0January02014.pdf.

^g Palestinian Ministry of National Economy, Applied Research Institute — Jerusalem, *The Economic Costs of the Israeli Occupation for the Occupied Palestinian Territory*, September 2011. Available from www.un.org/depts/dpa/qpal/docs/2012Cairo/p2%20jad%20isaac%20e.pdf.

^h Atif A. Kubursi, *Palestinian Losses in 1948: Calculating Refugee Compensation* (Washington, D.C., Center for Policy Analysis on Palestine, 2001).

F. Institutional set-up and budget implications

15. In the light of its existing mandate, UNCTAD is the only United Nations entity with proven expertise on the Palestinian economy, its constraints and development prospects; it is therefore well-positioned to assume the responsibilities of the evaluation of the economic cost of the occupation. However, this task cannot be implemented with the resources presently available to UNCTAD. Additional resources are required for the Conference to fulfil the request contained in General Assembly resolution 69/20. The assignment of these additional resources should be established through the appropriate United Nations mechanisms.

16. A preliminary assessment of the resources required to fulfil this task indicates that the establishment phase (the first three years) would require extrabudgetary resources to involve four or five internationally renowned experts and cover the cost of all other related activities. The maintenance of the monitoring capacity in the first and subsequent years would require augmenting the existing capacity of UNCTAD by three Professional staff members and one General Service staff member. Moreover, an annual regular budget would be required to cover the cost of recruiting consultants and staff travel.

G. Recommendations

17. Building on General Assembly resolution 69/20, it is recommended to allocate to UNCTAD, through the appropriate mechanisms, the resources required to institutionalize the stocktaking function and gather the documentary evidence by keeping a real-time record based on measuring the costs of occupation on a timely basis within the United Nations system.

18. With a view to facilitating future negotiations for a sustainable, just and peaceful settlement of the conflict, it is recommended that UNCTAD estimate the historical and recurrent economic costs of occupation in a systematic, scientific and evidence-based way on a regular basis, and that it regularly document, update and keep an inventory of historical and new actions taken by the occupying Power, particularly those that have a damaging economic impact on the Palestinian people, their livelihood and their immediate and future ability to maintain a viable and efficient economy.

Report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People



United Nations • New York, 2016

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Note

Symbols of United Nations documents are composed of letters combined with figures. Mention of such a symbol indicates a reference to a United Nations document.

Contents

<i>Chapter</i>	<i>Page</i>
Letter of transmittal	4
I. Introduction	5
II. Review of the situation relating to the question of Palestine	7
III. Mandate of the Committee	19
IV. Organization of work.	20
A. Membership and officers.	20
B. Participation in the work of the Committee.	20
V. Actions taken by the Committee.	21
A. Action taken in accordance with General Assembly resolution 70/12	21
B. Action taken by the Committee and the Division for Palestinian Rights in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 70/12 and 70/13	21
VI. Action taken by the Department of Public Information in accordance with General Assembly resolution 70/14 and by other United Nations entities	27
VII. Conclusions and recommendations of the Committee	29

Letter of transmittal

[5 October 2016]

Mr. Secretary-General,

I have the honour to enclose herewith the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for submission to the General Assembly in accordance with paragraph 2 of its resolution [70/12](#) of 24 November 2015.

The report covers the period from 7 October 2015 to 3 October 2016.

(Signed) Fodé **Seck**
Chair of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights
of the Palestinian People

His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon
Secretary-General of the United Nations
New York

Chapter I

Introduction

1. The reporting period from 7 October 2015 to 3 October 2016 was characterized by the further deterioration of the security and humanitarian situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. This included extrajudicial killings and excessive use of force by the Israeli occupying forces, raising serious concerns about the protection of civilians, including children; heightened provocations and tensions at the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound and other religious sites; ongoing illegal Israeli settlement activities and increasing house demolitions in the West Bank, including in East Jerusalem. These negative developments further stoked tensions and hopelessness. Notwithstanding recent initiatives for a stronger involvement of the wider international community, the impasse in the peace process continued.
2. The humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip remained dire. Palestinian and international efforts to address humanitarian needs and rebuild the homes and livelihoods of the tens of thousands affected by the war in 2014 were insufficient to achieve significant results owing to the blockade and severe import restrictions imposed by Israel, as well as unfulfilled donor pledges. At least 65,000 Palestinian civilians remain displaced owing to the destruction of or severe damage to their homes during Israeli military operations in 2014.
3. Israeli occupying forces continued to carry out frequent military raids and incursions in the West Bank, resulting in the killing and injuring of Palestinians; hundreds more, including children and young people, were arrested or detained. During the reporting period, more than 6,000 Palestinians remained in Israeli prisons and detention centres. Hundreds went on hunger strike to protest their administrative detention and ill-treatment.
4. Israel continued to expand its illegal settlements in the West Bank, including in East Jerusalem. Settlement construction was accompanied by official plans to build thousands of new settlement units, further fragmenting Palestinian land and disconnecting communities, and attempts to retroactively “legalize” settlement outposts. Hundreds of Palestinian families were forcibly displaced as a result of the increase in evictions and house demolitions. In occupied East Jerusalem, the increased number of incursions into the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound and acts of incitement and provocation by extremist Israelis significantly increased the risk of ethno-religious strife, which could become part of larger conflicts throughout the region.
5. Twelve years after the 2004 advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice was rendered, the construction of the wall by Israel continued, severely impairing the movement and access of the Palestinian population, including to their farmlands and to such essential services as education and health care, further isolating East Jerusalem and harming the socioeconomic conditions of the Palestinian people.
6. Against the backdrop of stalled Palestinian-Israeli peace talks since April 2014 and growing tensions, France launched a new initiative in October 2015 aimed at mobilizing international support for Palestinian-Israeli peace and providing a

framework for a credible political process. To that end, a ministerial meeting was convened on 3 June 2016 in Paris. On 1 July, the Middle East Quartet issued a long-awaited report with recommendations to address the prevailing situation and persistent obstacles on the path to peace and thus advance conditions conducive for negotiations aimed at the achievement of the two-State solution as a lasting settlement of the conflict. In May, Egypt appealed to Israel and the State of Palestine to achieve a peace agreement. In August, the Russian Federation offered to host direct talks between Israel and the State of Palestine.

7. Regional and other partners facilitated new reconciliation talks between Fatah and Hamas; the process is ongoing, however, and Palestinian unity has not yet been reached.

8. Municipal elections in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip scheduled for 8 October, in which Hamas had pledged to participate, were suspended on 8 September by a Palestinian high court ruling following a dispute over electoral lists in Gaza and the inability of Palestinians in East Jerusalem to participate.

9. Palestinian state- and institution-building efforts continued notwithstanding restrictions imposed by Israel on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, which continued to obstruct the free movement of persons and goods and viable political and economic activity and undermine sustained development and growth. The accession by the State of Palestine to a series of international conventions and instruments, their implementation and the reporting requirements have provided the State of Palestine the opportunity to build capacity, especially regarding human rights standards and good governance, to bring it to par with other signatory countries. Similarly, the commitment by the State of Palestine to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development under occupation has posed challenges to national institutions, along with opportunities to develop capacity.

10. The activities of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, its Bureau and Working Group continued to draw the attention of the international community to issues requiring urgent action, such as the dire living conditions and reconstruction of the Gaza Strip, international efforts to revitalize negotiations, the situation in occupied East Jerusalem and the challenges posed by the occupation with respect to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, with the objective of mobilizing wide support for the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including the right to self-determination and independence, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, international law and relevant United Nations resolutions.

11. The Committee continued to reaffirm and promote the United Nations position that a just and permanent settlement of the question of Palestine could be reached only by ending the Israeli occupation that began in 1967, achieving the full independence of the State of Palestine on the basis of the pre-1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital and reaching a just and agreed solution to the issue of Palestine refugees on the basis of General Assembly resolution 194 (III).

12. With the approach of the fiftieth anniversary of the Israeli occupation, the General Assembly, at its seventy-first session, is expected to declare 2017 as the “International Year to End the Israeli Occupation”, with activities and efforts to be organized to that end.

Chapter II

Review of the situation relating to the question of Palestine

Political developments

13. The reporting period saw new initiatives to revitalize the peace process. Recognizing the need to go beyond the bilateral mediation model that has proved ineffective for more than 20 years, on 15 October, France announced an initiative to launch a multilateral political process to move towards a just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine and salvage the two-State solution.

14. After a series of consultations with the parties and regional and international partners, on 3 June 2016, a ministerial meeting for the French peace initiative was held in Paris, with the participation of the Middle East Quartet, the European Union, the League of Arab States (LAS) and some 25 countries, including Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, Saudi Arabia and Turkey. The aim of the initiative was to provide a concrete political vision, with the establishment of an international support group to work on three key aspects: economic incentives and compensation measures; security arrangements; and confidence-building measures and institution-building in support of the Palestinian reconciliation process. The plan to convene an international conference later in 2016 would give a new impetus to diplomatic efforts to advance the prospects for peace. Subsequently, many participants, including the LAS member countries, expressed their support for the French initiative but voiced the need for a timeline for ending the conflict, along with clear terms of reference for the negotiations and the principle of a return to the pre-1967 borders.

15. Throughout the reporting period, the Middle East Quartet also remained engaged with the parties; its envoys visited Israel and the State of Palestine to encourage steps to promote the easing of tensions and a rebuilding of trust. In September 2015, the Middle East Quartet held its customary meeting in the margins of the General Assembly, for the first time in an expanded format including key regional, international and European partners. On 1 July 2016, the Quartet issued a report focusing on three major threats to the achievement of the two-State solution: incitement of violence and terrorism; settlement expansion in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem; and the continued lack of Palestinian reconciliation and control over Gaza by the Palestinian Government of national consensus. The recommendations contained in the report were criticized by the State of Palestine, its Arab partners and others for the artificial symmetry attributed to the parties and for the failure to propose innovative ways forward or a clear path towards reaching a lasting peace, the end of the occupation and the long overdue independence of the Palestinian State.

16. High-level officials from Egypt visited the State of Palestine and Israel in June and July 2016 to meet with the Palestinian President and the Israeli Prime Minister, respectively. In August, the Russian Federation offered to host direct talks between Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas in Moscow, which was in principle welcomed by both sides. Meeting on 23 September in New York, Quartet principals and the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Egypt and France agreed to coordinate all peace efforts.

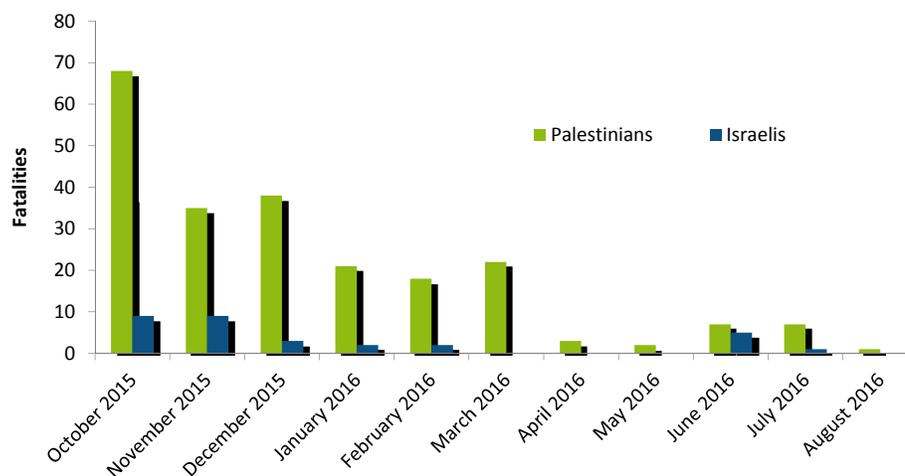
17. On 24 March, the Human Rights Council adopted four resolutions relating to the Occupied Palestinian Territory. In the three customary resolutions, adopted without a vote, the Council reaffirmed the inalienable, permanent and unqualified right of the Palestinian people to self-determination (resolution 31/33); demanded that Israel cease all practices and actions that violate the human rights of the Palestinian people or the character, status and demographic composition of the Occupied Palestinian Territory (resolution 31/34); and requested the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to investigate the implications of settlements on the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of the Palestinian people (resolution 31/35). Of particular significance was a new resolution (resolution 31/36) on Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and in the occupied Syrian Golan, in which the Council called upon Israel to immediately cease and reverse all settlement activities and called upon the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to produce a database of all actors conducting business in areas under Israeli military occupation, bearing in mind the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights.

18. On 24 March, the Human Rights Council appointed Stanley Michael Lynk (Canada) as Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967, replacing Makarim Wibisono (Indonesia), who had resigned in January over the failure by Israel to cooperate with his mandate.

Security

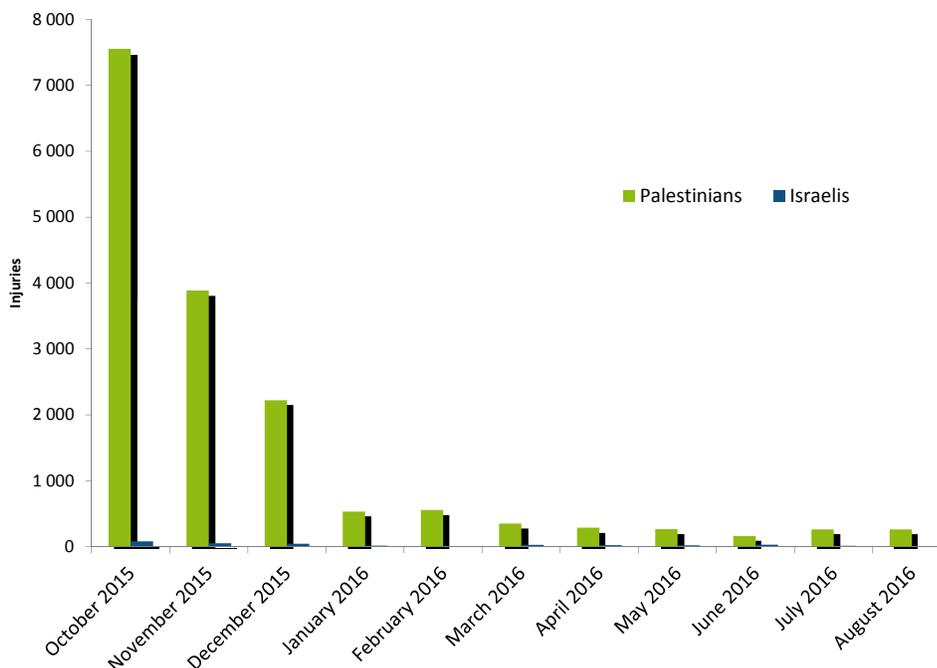
19. The reporting period was marked by continuing tensions, military incursions and raids by the Israeli occupying forces and clashes with Palestinian youth and protesters in many parts of the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, on an almost daily basis. According to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs of the Secretariat, as at 31 August, 388 Palestinians had been killed and 15,542 injured during the reporting period (see figs. 1 and 2 below). Attacks, which took the lives of Israeli civilians, also occurred during the reporting period.

Figure 1
Number of Israelis and Palestinians killed during the reporting period



Source: <http://www.ochaopt.org/>.

Figure 2
Number of Israelis and Palestinians injured during the reporting period



Source: <http://www.ochaopt.org/>.

20. The aggravation of tensions in October and November 2015, especially at the holy sites in occupied East Jerusalem, was cause for concern and risked bringing about further destabilization. In response to the escalation, on 16 October, at the request of Jordan, the Security Council held an urgent meeting to address the unlawful and arbitrary practices of Israel against the Palestinian people, including incursions into the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound, in an attempt to change the status quo in the city and at Al-Haram Al-Sharif.

21. Among the most egregious cases of extrajudicial killings, on 24 March 2016, an unarmed Palestinian man, who had been shot at a military checkpoint in Hebron and was lying on the ground without any medical attention, was shot in the head and killed by an Israeli soldier. On 27 April, a 23-year-old five-month pregnant woman and her 16-year-old brother were killed by Israeli soldiers at the Qalandiya checkpoint between Jerusalem and Ramallah. The limited scope of Israeli investigations of Israeli occupying forces who have committed extrajudicial killings, which to date have led to only one conviction, is commonly cited as an example of the refusal by Israel to abide by international law and standards and a source of further impunity.

22. In Gaza, the lives of the 1.9 million Palestinians living in the Strip continue to be disrupted by the illegal blockade imposed by Israel, which is now entering its tenth year. Two years after the 2014 conflict, the rate of investigations opened by Israel into the serious allegations contained in the report of the independent commission of

inquiry established pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution S-21/1 (A/HRC/29/52) remains low. In January 2015, the International Criminal Court launched a preliminary investigation with respect to alleged crimes committed in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. On 24 August, Israeli authorities announced that they had closed 13 criminal investigations into cases of Israeli soldiers accused of committing violations against Palestinian civilians during the 2014 war without imposing any punishment, while some 80 incidents were closed without opening a criminal investigation.

Jerusalem

23. The situation in East Jerusalem remained tense during the reporting period. Palestinians suffered from ongoing residency revocations and an increase in arrests, in particular of children, while some 20,000 Palestinian homes were threatened by demolitions. Israeli policies, seemingly aimed at shifting the demographic balance in the city, restricted opportunities for Palestinian economic and housing development, with one third of East Jerusalem expropriated for settlements and another 50 per cent zoned for infrastructure and green areas where Palestinians were not allowed to build. East Jerusalem continued to suffer from discrimination in the provision of infrastructure, education and municipal services. Of particular gravity was the situation of Palestinians living between the Israeli wall and the municipal border, who suffered from a lack of services and law and order, and access restrictions.

24. Provocative visits to the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound in occupied East Jerusalem by Jewish religious extremists and officials under the protection of Israeli occupying forces and serious breaches of the status quo escalated throughout the reporting period, repeatedly leading to violent confrontations with Palestinian worshippers.

25. In October 2015, in clashes between Palestinians and Israeli occupying forces, 68 Palestinians were killed and 1,118 injured. Nine Israelis were killed by Palestinians. In that month alone, a total of 22 violent incidents at religious sites were reported, including Israeli occupying forces entering the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound and firing rubber-coated steel bullets and stun and tear-gas grenades at worshippers. The following month saw 25 violent incidents at religious sites, concomitantly with clashes between Palestinian civilians and Israeli settlers and increased Israeli military raids on Palestinian cities, towns, villages and refugee camps in the West Bank.

26. Subsequently, the Government of Israel decided to substantially increase its military forces in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and to impose further restrictions on access to the Old City of Jerusalem for non-resident Palestinians. The incursions into the holy sites were perceived by the Palestinians as an attempt to change the status quo of the sites, as established under the existing agreements between Israel and Jordan, in its capacity as custodian of the holy sites, despite a public statement by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu that the status quo would be maintained.

Settlements

27. Israel continued its policy of illegal settlement-building in the occupied West Bank and East Jerusalem, in violation of international law (for example, the Fourth Geneva Convention) and Security Council and General Assembly resolutions and despite repeated international calls for a cessation of all settlement activities.

28. According to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, an estimated 150,000 Palestinians reside in Area C of the West Bank, over which Israel retains complete control and which contains the most significant land reserves available for Palestinian development, as well as the bulk of Palestinian agricultural and grazing land. While the number of Palestinian residents in Area C has steadily diminished owing to repressive Israeli policies in the area, 300,000 Israeli settlers are now living in approximately 135 Israeli settlements and 100 settlement outposts in Area C.

29. Israel has increased its control over Palestinian territory by declaring as “state land” tracts of Palestinian land that have not been registered as “private”. The policy is based on an interpretation of the Ottoman land code, which Israel adopted into its own legislation. For example, on 10 March, 580 acres south of Jericho were declared “state land”. In August, after the Israeli Supreme Court ruled that the illegal Israeli settlement outpost of Amona was to be dismantled, Israel announced plans to declare nearby Palestinian land as “state land” in order to relocate the settlers.

30. According to the General Bureau of Statistics of Israel, during the fourth quarter of 2015 and the first half of 2016, the construction of 817 settlement structures was begun, 999 structures were completed and 2,806 were still under construction as at 1 July.

31. Since the publication of the report of the Middle East Quartet on 1 July, Israel has persisted with such illegal actions and has advanced plans for more than 1,000 settlement units in occupied East Jerusalem and other settlements in the West Bank, including 770 housing units in the settlement of Gilo, between Bethlehem and East Jerusalem, and 200 settlement units in the Modi'in Illit settlement, west of Ramallah. In and around Hebron, Israel is planning to build new units in the settlement of Kiryat Arba and is examining plans for new settlement units for more than 100 Israelis on a portion of a military compound in the city.

32. Israel is also undertaking a new land survey to identify potential “state land” in the sensitive E2 area. This step could enable the establishment of a new settlement on the outskirts of Bethlehem, further restricting that city’s development, isolating it and contributing to the dismemberment of the West Bank.

33. Israel continued its attempts to retroactively “legalize” previously established settlement outposts and construction in existing settlements. In July, Israeli authorities advanced plans to legalize the outposts of Horesh Yaron and Rechelim and, on 31 August, they issued 179 building permits retroactively, legalizing under Israeli law housing units that had been erected in the settlement of Ofarim. These decisions drew strong condemnation from the international community, including the United States of America and the European Union.

34. Settler violence and terror against Palestinians and their property continued during the reporting period. The number of damaged, stolen or uprooted trees was

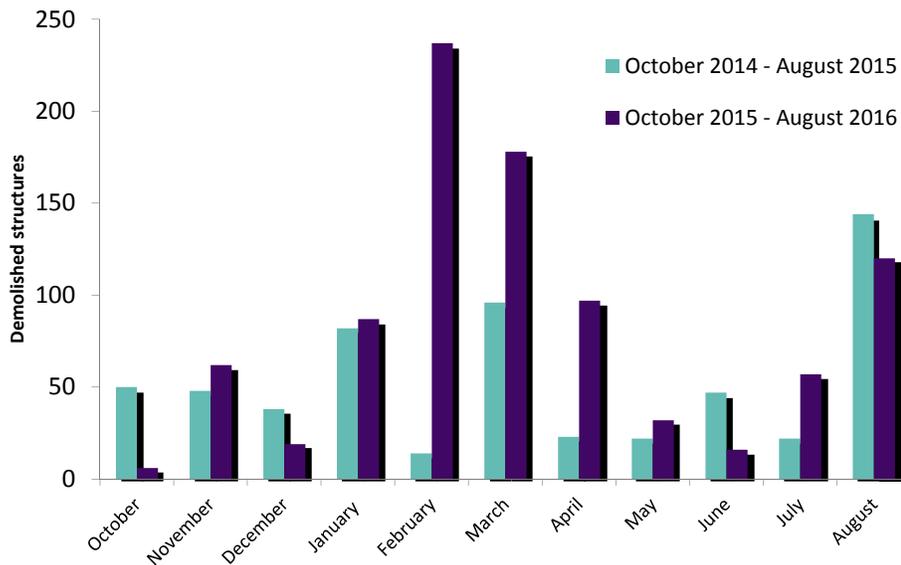
the highest since 2006. On 20 July, members of the Dawabsha family were victims of an arson attack similar to the one suffered by their relatives in July 2015, when Israeli settlers set their home on fire. Data collected by the Israeli human rights organization Yesh Din indicate that 85 per cent of Israeli investigations into ideologically motivated crimes against Palestinians are closed owing to police investigative failures and that there is a mere 1.9 per cent chance that a complaint filed by a Palestinian with the Israel authorities will result in the conviction of the perpetrator/s.

Demolitions and displacement

35. A significant trend during the reporting period was the surge in demolitions by Israel, the occupying Power, of Palestinian homes and structures built without Israeli-issued permits, which are nearly impossible to obtain. According to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, to date in 2016, Israeli occupying forces in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, have demolished 726 structures, displacing 1,020 Palestinians. The figures for the period from 1 January to 31 August surpass those of the entire year of 2015, when there were 533 demolitions and 688 people displaced (see figs. 3 and 4).

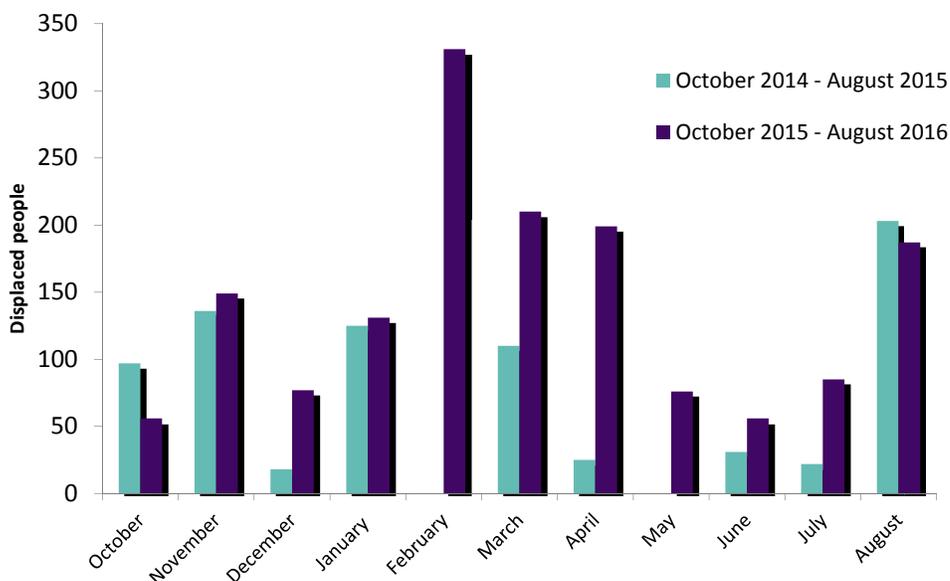
Figure 3

Comparison of the number of demolitions of Palestinian structures in the current and previous reporting periods



Source: <http://www.ochaopt.org/>.

Figure 4
Comparison of the number of Palestinians displaced by demolitions in the current and previous reporting periods



Source: <http://www.ochaopt.org/>.

36. Israeli authorities demolished multiple residences and structures, including European Union-funded Palestinian homes, in Sebastia, Umm al-Kheir, Umm al-Hiran and the Jericho villages of al-Jiftlik and Fasayil. The stated intention to completely destroy the villages of Susiya and Umm al-Hiran near Hebron has provoked outrage on the part of the international community, with the United States and the European Union as well as other States and regional organizations strongly condemning the plan.

37. Bedouin communities in the occupied West Bank, such as the community of Abu Nawar southwest of the Israeli settlement of Ma'ale Adumim, were forcibly transferred owing to plans by Israeli authorities to build thousands of homes for Jewish-only settlements in the E1 corridor, in Area C east of Jerusalem. Among the 85 recently destroyed or confiscated structures, 24 had been provided by donors as emergency relief, while Israel contends that they had been built without official permits.

Reconstruction of the Gaza Strip

38. On 12 October 2014, at the Cairo International Conference on Palestine: Reconstructing Gaza, some 50 donor countries pledged \$5.4 billion (\$2.5 billion in new commitments) in relief funds for the Occupied Palestinian Territory, of which \$3.5 billion was pledged for Gaza. At the time of the issuance of the present report, only 40 per cent of total pledges had been disbursed.

39. The Gaza Reconstruction Mechanism, namely, the temporary agreement between Israel, the State of Palestine and the United Nations to enable construction

and reconstruction work on the large scale required in the Gaza Strip, started slowly but made some headway in 2016. By August 2016, half of the homes that had suffered partial damage and a third of the destroyed homes had been rebuilt. All of the 78 hospitals and the 252 schools that had been damaged have been repaired. However, 65,000 people remain displaced and are in temporary shelters awaiting the reconstruction of their destroyed homes. The humanitarian needs in this regard are immense.

40. In July, following the Turkish-Israeli reconciliation agreement, the first Turkish shipment of more than 11,000 tons of humanitarian aid (food and non-food items) for 10,000 families arrived at the Israeli port of Ashdod and was transported onward to the Gaza Strip. Another shipment of 2,200 tons arrived in Gaza just before Eid al-Fitr. The agreement is expected to allow Turkey to work on a number of infrastructure projects in Gaza, including a power station and a desalination plant.

41. The economic gap between Gaza and the West Bank is growing, primarily as a result of the impact of the ongoing restriction on the free movement of people and goods to and from the Gaza Strip, including on exports, which has severely diminished livelihoods and damaged the economy. According to the World Bank, the Gaza economy is not expected to rebound to even its pre-2014 war level until 2018.

Palestinian state-building

Local elections

42. During the reporting period, Palestinian state-building efforts continued, supported by the international community. In a welcome development, on 21 June, the Government of the State of Palestine announced that on 8 October, local council elections would be held throughout the occupied West Bank, Gaza and the districts of East Jerusalem governorate that had not been unilaterally annexed by Israel. Subsequently, Hamas expressed its willingness to participate in the elections and to facilitate the process in the Gaza Strip. Five Palestinian left-wing movements entered the elections on a unified list, while Palestinian Islamic Jihad announced that it would not participate.

43. In accordance with the election calendar, voter registration was conducted from 23 to 27 July, resulting in some 74,000 new applications and a total of 2,051,598 registered voters. Almost half of the new voters registered online, while the rest registered in the 416 municipalities. On 29 August, the Central Elections Commission-Palestine published a total of 874 electoral lists and candidates, including 787 lists in the West Bank and 87 lists in Gaza. It reported that its registration officers did not face security threats or access restrictions in the West Bank and Gaza. However, on 25 August, political factions and institutions in Nablus decided to postpone the elections in the wake of violent confrontations between Palestinian security forces and local armed groups.

44. Candidate nominations took place from 16 to 25 August and the final register of electoral lists was expected to be published on 24 September. Political campaigning was scheduled for 24 September to 6 October. On 8 September, however, the Palestinian Supreme Court in Ramallah suspended the elections,

following a complaint about the disqualification of a number of Fatah lists by a Gaza court and owing to the inability to hold a vote in occupied East Jerusalem as a result of Israeli obstruction. On 4 October, one day after the Palestinian Supreme Court ruling to exclude the Gaza Strip from the elections, the Government of the State of Palestine decided to postpone the vote for four months.

Reconciliation

45. During the reporting period, Fatah and Hamas failed to significantly advance their reconciliation process. In March 2016, and again in June, their representatives met in Doha to continue discussions, without any progress. The South African non-governmental organization In Transition Initiative organized two intra-Palestinian dialogues with senior leaders from Fatah and Hamas and Palestinians from the whole political spectrum, as well as civil society, with a view to forging a common political vision for the future. In addition, Egypt has expressed its readiness to continue mediating the reconciliation process.

46. In August, Israeli Parliament members from the joint Arab list met with the Palestinian leadership to discuss the inter-Palestinian reconciliation efforts, in an attempt to play a bridging role not only between Israelis and Palestinians, but also between Fatah, Hamas and other Palestinian factions.

Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development

47. At the United Nations summit for the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda, held from 25 to 27 September 2015 in New York, the Government of the State of Palestine committed to the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development. Subsequently, the Government integrated the Sustainable Development Goals into its agenda through the creation of a national planning matrix and established a national coordinating committee for the Sustainable Development Goals in the State of Palestine under the leadership of Prime Minister Rami Hamdallah.

48. The United Nations Environment Programme worked on enhancing the capacity of the State of Palestine for climate change adaptation and mitigation, recognizing the critical impact that climate change might have on water availability, land degradation and agriculture. This included a capacity assessment of six national institutions and the preparation of a capacity development action plan. The State of Palestine acceded to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and became a full member on 17 March.

Socioeconomic issues

49. At its meeting in April 2016, the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee of the International Assistance to Palestinians pointed to the sharp decline in donor aid to the Palestinian Authority, which, combined with the political impasse, was impairing the perspective of preserving the two-State solution. However, despite the need for more vigorous and predictable donor support, no amount of aid was considered sufficient to place the economy on the path of sustainable development under conditions of frequent military strikes and destruction of infrastructure, isolation from global markets, fragmentation of domestic markets and confiscation of and denial of access to national natural resources.

50. The substantial challenges faced by Palestinians and young people in particular result from their social, economic and political marginalization under occupation. Two out of five Palestinian youths were unemployed during the first quarter of 2016, according to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics. The highest unemployment rate was among young people between 20 and 24 years old, reaching 43 per cent, compared with 39 per cent for young people aged 25 to 29. Unemployment among young graduates reached 51 per cent. In Gaza, the youth unemployment rate exceeds 60 per cent.

51. The limitations imposed by the Israeli occupation on a dignified existence include vital access to clean, safe drinking water. In June, during Ramadan, the Israeli company Mekorot, the main supplier of water to the West Bank, interrupted its provision in Jenin, Nablus and Salfit districts for several days, arguing that repairs needed to be done. Palestinians were left without access to safe drinking water while illegal Israeli settlements enjoyed an uninterrupted supply.

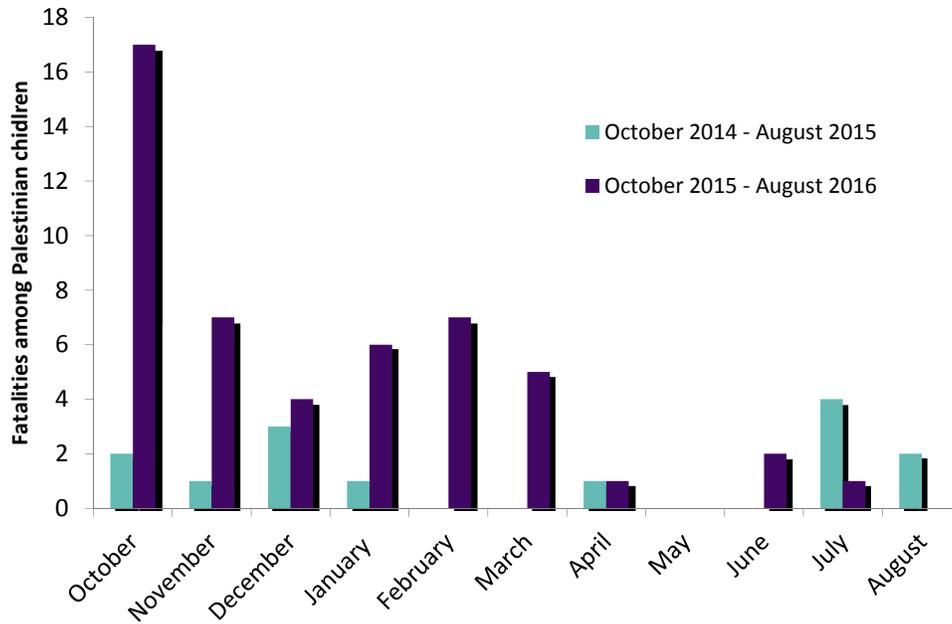
52. In July, in retaliation against attacks targeting Israeli civilians in the West Bank, Israel froze the transfer, to the Government of the State of Palestine, of tax revenues collected on behalf of the Palestinian people under the Paris Protocol to the Oslo Accords. The freeze deepened the Palestinian financial crisis and affected the livelihoods of thousands of Palestinians. In a report issued on 28 August, the World Bank estimated that the State of Palestine was losing \$285 million in annual revenues under the current economic arrangements with Israel.

53. In a report by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) on the economic costs of the Israeli occupation for the Palestinian people ([A/71/174](#)), prepared pursuant to General Assembly resolution [70/12](#), it was suggested that without the occupation, the Palestinian economy could be twice its current size.

54. In its resolution 2016/4 on the situation of and assistance to Palestinian women, and in an effort to tackle issues surrounding the advancement of women and social development, the Economic and Social Council expressed deep concern about the grave situation of Palestinian women in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, resulting from the severe impact of the ongoing illegal Israeli occupation and all of its manifestations, in addition to the high rates of poverty and unemployment, which affect women disproportionately.

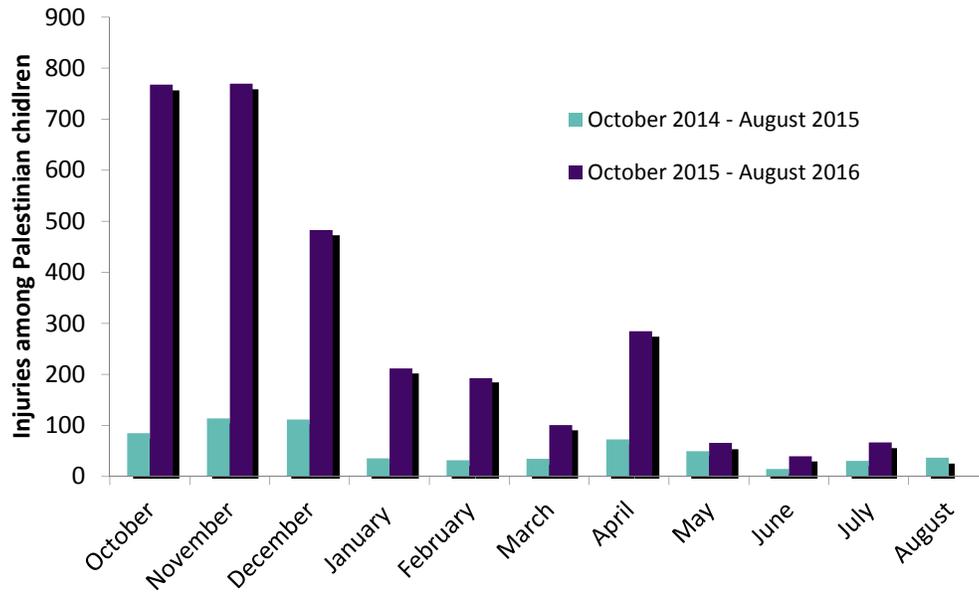
55. According to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the reporting period saw a significant increase in the number of Palestinian children killed and injured by Israeli occupying forces (see figs. 5 and 6 below). The report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict issued in April 2016 ([A/70/836-S/2016/360](#)) also highlights the increasing number of Palestinian children arrested and detained by Israeli occupying forces and prosecuted by juvenile military courts in the West Bank. According to the Israel Prison Service, the monthly average number of children in Israeli custody in 2015 increased by 15 per cent compared with 2014.

Figure 5
Comparison of the number of Palestinian children killed in the current and previous reporting periods



Source: <http://www.ochaopt.org/>.

Figure 6
Comparison of the number of Palestinian children injured in the current and previous reporting periods



Source: <http://www.ochaopt.org/>.

56. On 3 August, the Israeli Parliament approved the Youth Bill, allowing Israeli authorities to imprison Palestinian children as young as 12 years if convicted of “terrorism” against Israeli civilians or military personnel.

Palestinian prisoners

57. According to the Israeli human rights organization B’Tselem, at the end of April, 6,295 Palestinian security detainees and prisoners, including 414 minors, were held in Israeli prisons, 334 of them from the Gaza Strip. An additional 749 Palestinians were held in Israel Prison Service facilities for being in Israel illegally, 14 of them from the Gaza Strip. According to Addameer Palestinian Prisoner Support and Human Rights Association, as at July, 62 women were being held in Israeli prisons.

58. In August, more than 200 Palestinian prisoners in Israeli prisons went on hunger strike to protest their treatment. Another Palestinian prisoner, Bilal Kayed, was on a hunger strike for 71 days, until 25 August, when he reached an agreement whereby he will be freed in December. Israeli authorities have extended by three months the detention without trial of Palestinian journalist Omar Nazzal, also on hunger strike, who was due for release on 22 August.

59. In July, the International Forum for Democracy and Human Rights filed a submission under article 15 with the Office of the Prosecutor at the International Criminal Court concerning the widespread and systematic torture of Palestinian detainees by the Palestinian security services in the occupied West Bank.

Chapter III

Mandate of the Committee

60. The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People was established by the General Assembly by resolution 3376 (XXX) of 10 November 1975, with the task of recommending a programme designed to enable the Palestinian people to exercise their inalienable rights, as recognized by the Assembly in its resolution 3236 (XXIX) of 22 November 1974. Further information about the Committee is available on the website maintained by the Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat at <https://unispal.un.org/DPA/DPR/unispal.nsf/udc.htm>.

61. On 24 November 2015, the General Assembly renewed the mandate of the Committee (resolution 70/12), requested the Secretary-General to continue to provide the Division for Palestinian Rights with the necessary resources to carry out its programme of work (resolution 70/13) and requested the continuation of the special information programme on the question of Palestine of the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat (resolution 70/14). The Assembly also adopted resolution 70/15, entitled “Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine”.

Chapter IV

Organization of work

A. Membership and officers

62. The Committee is composed of the following Member States: Afghanistan, Belarus, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Cuba, Cyprus, Ecuador, Guinea, Guyana, India, Indonesia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mali, Malta, Namibia, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Pakistan, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of).

63. The observers at the Committee meetings are: Algeria, Bangladesh, Bulgaria, China, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Niger, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka, the Syrian Arab Republic, the United Arab Emirates, Viet Nam and Yemen, as well as the State of Palestine, the African Union, LAS and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC).

64. The day-to-day tasks of the Committee are undertaken by its Bureau. At its 375th meeting, on 27 January 2016, the Committee elected Fodé Seck (Senegal) as Chair, Mahmoud Saikal (Afghanistan), Rodolfo Reyes Rodríguez (Cuba), Desra Percaya (Indonesia), Wilfried Emvula (Namibia) and María Rubiales de Chamorro (Nicaragua) as Vice-Chairs and Christopher Grima (Malta) as Rapporteur. At its 377th meeting, on 4 August, the Committee elected Dian Triansyah Djani (Indonesia) as a new Vice-Chair, to replace Desra Percaya, and Carmelo Inguanez as the new Rapporteur, to replace Christopher Grima, who had been assigned by their Governments to another post.

65. The current composition of the Security Council includes, as elected members, five members and observers of the Committee, namely, Egypt, Malaysia, Senegal, Ukraine and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of).

B. Participation in the work of the Committee

66. As in previous years, the Committee reconfirmed that all States Members of the United Nations and observers wishing to participate in the work of the Committee were welcome to do so. In accordance with established practice, the State of Palestine participated in the work of the Committee as an observer, attended all of its meetings, gave briefings and put forward observations and proposals for consideration by the Committee and its Bureau.

Chapter V

Action taken by the Committee

A. Action taken in accordance with General Assembly resolution 70/12

1. Action taken in the Security Council

67. During the open debates at the Security Council held on 22 October 2015 and 26 January, 18 April and 12 July 2016, the Committee delivered statements highlighting the situation and calling upon the Council to take appropriate actions (see [S/PV.7540](#); [S/PV.7540](#), Resumption 1; [S/PV.7610](#); [S/PV.7673](#); [S/PV.7736](#)).

2. Action taken by the Bureau of the Committee

68. The members of the Bureau represented the Committee at all the international conferences organized in accordance with the programme of work. In the margins of those events, the Committee delegation met with senior officials from the respective host countries. In particular, the Committee delegation met with the Indonesian Minister for Foreign Affairs and parliamentarians. In Amman, it held consultations with high-ranking officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Jordan. In Dakar, the Committee delegation held consultations with the Foreign Relations Committee of the National Assembly of Senegal and the Minister of Justice and President of the Assembly of States Parties to the Rome Statute. In Stockholm, it met with high-ranking officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Sweden. In Geneva, the Committee delegation held consultations with the President of the International Committee of the Red Cross and with the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

69. On 12 November 2015, the Bureau held its first annual retreat to review the work of the Committee. Issues discussed included the need for periodic reviews of the efficacy of the programmes of work of the Committee and the Division for Palestinian Rights, the programme of work of the Committee for 2016, the work of the Bureau during the tenure of Senegal in the Security Council (2016-2017), capacity-building for the staff of the Government of the State of Palestine and engagement with civil society organizations.

B. Action taken by the Committee and the Division for Palestinian Rights in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 70/12 and 70/13

1. Committee meetings at Headquarters

70. During the reporting period, the Committee held six periodic meetings at United Nations Headquarters in New York, in addition to the informal meetings of its Bureau and the meetings of its Working Group. At its 372nd meeting, on 5 October 2015, the Committee adopted its annual report. At its 373rd meeting, on 10 November, the Committee approved for submission to the General Assembly four draft resolutions, entitled “Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People”, “Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat”, “Special information programme on the question of Palestine of the Department of Public Information of

the Secretariat” and “Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine”. Also at that meeting, UNCTAD briefed the Committee on the economic and social costs of the Israeli occupation for the Palestinian people. At its 375th meeting, on 27 January 2016, attended by the Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations, the Committee re-elected its Chair, Vice-Chairs and Rapporteur and adopted its annual programme of work. At its 376th meeting, on 7 April, the Committee focused on the reports on the international conferences held to date and adopted the programme for upcoming international conferences. At its 377th meeting, on 4 August, the Committee elected its Vice-Chair and Rapporteur. It also heard reports on international conferences and accredited two civil society organizations.

71. In addition to its periodic meetings, during the reporting period, the Committee organized a public event at United Nations Headquarters, namely, a briefing by Mahmoud Elkhafif, Coordinator of the UNCTAD Assistance to the Palestinian People Unit, and Atif Kubursi, Consultant to UNCTAD, which was held on 10 November.

2. Programme of international meetings and conferences

72. During the reporting period, the following international events were held under the auspices of the Committee:

(a) International Conference on the Question of Jerusalem, under the theme “Addressing the present and shaping the future of Jerusalem”, jointly organized with OIC, Jakarta, 14 and 15 December 2015;

(b) United Nations Civil Society Forum on the Question of Palestine, under the theme “Civil society action in support of justice in Palestine and ending the occupation”, Jakarta, 16 December. At the conference, attended by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Indonesia and the State of Palestine, participants provided up-to-date information on the current situation in Jerusalem to inform policy and decision makers, civil society and the general public and considered ways to enhance international efforts for a halt to unilateral Israeli actions as well as possible ways forward for Jerusalem. Speakers considered the efforts by the United Nations to find a solution to the long-standing Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the situation on the ground and regional and local civil society initiatives in support of Palestinian rights;

(c) United Nations Round Table on Legal Aspects of the Question of Palestine, under the theme “Instruments and institutions of international treaty law — theory and practice”, Amman, 15 to 17 March 2016. The round table, held in closed-door format, was aimed at developing the capacity and expertise of staff of the Government of the State of Palestine in the field of international treaty law, including implementation and reporting, in view of its accession in recent years to a series of international treaties and conventions. Participants discussed opportunities and strategies for the State of Palestine to utilize international legal instruments, explored relevant best practices and introduced attendees to the audiovisual international law library of the Office of Legal Affairs of the Secretariat;

(d) International Conference on the Question of Jerusalem, under the theme “Jerusalem at the heart of the peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine”, jointly organized with OIC, Dakar, 3 and 4 May. The conference, attended by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Senegal and the State of Palestine, provided up-to-

date information on the current situation in East Jerusalem under occupation; identified opportunities to intensify international support for resilience, protection and development in the city; explored possible scenarios for a just and lasting settlement of the question of Jerusalem; and provided a venue for an open exchange among experts, civil society activists and academics;

(e) United Nations Seminar on Assistance to the Palestinian People, under the theme “Agenda 2030: Paving the way towards a peaceful, independent and sustainable State of Palestine”, Stockholm, 19 and 20 May. Participants reviewed the challenges and constraints of the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals for the State of Palestine under the Israeli occupation. They also looked at ways of building: (i) resilient and sustainable economic growth while addressing humanitarian needs; (ii) long-term investment in young people and women as a key to building a peaceful and inclusive society; and (iii) international solidarity and partnerships for development;

(f) United Nations International Conference in Support of Israeli-Palestinian Peace, under the theme “Peace is possible — frameworks for a way forward”, Geneva, 29 and 30 June. The conference provided experienced peace negotiators, and representatives of Member States, United Nations entities and civil society, a venue to: (i) discuss lessons learned from past stages of the peace process and initiatives such as the Arab Peace Initiative; (ii) assess recent initiatives such as the French peace initiative; and (iii) discuss new proposals for a lasting solution to the conflict. Questions were raised as to whether the long-standing formula of bilateral peace negotiations had reached its limits. Reference was made to other multilateral negotiations as examples to be followed, with the international community acting together to support Israeli-Palestinian peace.

73. The public events mentioned above were attended by representatives of Governments, intergovernmental organizations and United Nations system entities, as well as parliamentarians and representatives of civil society and the media. Detailed information about the meetings is being issued in the form of publications of the Division for Palestinian Rights and is available on the “Question of Palestine” website maintained by the Division.

3. Cooperation with intergovernmental and regional organizations

74. Throughout the year, the Committee continued its cooperation with intergovernmental organizations. The Committee is appreciative of the active participation of their representatives in the various international events held under its auspices and the co-sponsorship provided by OIC in the organization of the two International Conferences on the Question of Jerusalem, held in Jakarta, which the Secretary General of OIC attended, and in Dakar, respectively. The Committee is also grateful for the financial support provided by the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) Fund for International Development for the annual training programme for Palestinian staff organized by the Division in October 2015 to familiarize them with various aspects of the multilateral work of the Secretariat and other United Nations organs and bodies. The African Union, LAS and OIC, as observers to the Committee, regularly attend the meetings of the Committee and its Working Group and participate in their work.

4. Cooperation with civil society

Civil society organizations

75. The Committee continued its cooperation with civil society organizations worldwide, through its Working Group and other outreach activities carried out by the Division for Palestinian Rights. During the reporting period, two civil society organizations were accredited to the Committee. Civil society representatives participated in all public international meetings organized under the auspices of the Committee. On 16 December 2015, a civil society forum was organized by the Committee in Jakarta, in conjunction with the International Conference on the Question of Jerusalem.

76. The Working Group of the Committee, chaired by the Deputy Permanent Representative of Malta, met periodically and hosted various events at Headquarters, including:

(a) Briefing by representatives of the human rights organization Adalah (the Legal Center for Arab Minority Rights in Israel) on the recent situation in East Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza, 9 November 2015;

(b) Panel discussion on the theme “Women’s role in the search for Israeli-Palestinian peace” in the margins of the sixtieth session of the Commission on the Status of Women, on 14 March 2016. Hiba Hussein, Legal adviser for the peace negotiations and founding member of the Al-Mustaqbal Foundation, and Lihi Joffe, Board member of the Coalition of Women for Peace, spoke about their efforts for peace in a public discussion moderated by Sarah Taylor, Women, Peace and Security Advocate at Human Rights Watch;

(c) Screening of the film “Giraffada”, organized in cooperation with the Department of Public Information, 7 April;

(d) Briefing by Sahar Francis, Director of Addameer Prisoner Support and Human Rights Association, and Khaled Quzmar, General Director of Defense for Children International-Palestine, moderated by Sarah Leah Whitson, Executive Director of the Middle East and North Africa Division of Human Rights Watch, on the situation of detained children in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, 27 April.

77. The Division for Palestinian Rights maintains a civil society page (<https://unispal.un.org/DPA/DPR/unispal.nsf/udc.htm>) on the “Question of Palestine” website and the UN Platform for Palestine site (www.unfpf.org) as a tool for outreach to civil society organizations and to foster civil society networking and cooperation. During the reporting period, it continued to publish the periodic online bulletin *NGO Action News*, reaching out to more than 900 civil society organizations around the world, in order to catalogue and publicize civil society initiatives, and organized brown-bag sessions.

Parliaments, interparliamentary organizations and local governments

78. The Committee continued to attach great importance to developing its liaison with national and regional parliaments and their organizations. Representatives of parliaments and interparliamentary organizations participated in international events organized by the Committee during the reporting period. Among others, members of

the Palestinian Legislative Council, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean, the Israeli Knesset, the Swedish Riksdag and the National Assembly of Senegal participated in the international meetings held under the auspices of the Committee. The Committee delegation held meetings with parliamentarians at the Parliament of Indonesia and the National Assembly of Senegal on the sidelines of the conferences in Jakarta and Dakar, respectively.

5. Research, monitoring and publications

79. The Division for Palestinian Rights carried out research and monitoring activities and responded to requests for information and briefings on the question of Palestine. Under the guidance of the Committee, the Division prepared the following publications for dissemination:

- (a) Monthly bulletin on action taken by the United Nations system and intergovernmental organizations relevant to the question of Palestine;
- (b) Monthly chronology of events relating to the question of Palestine based on media reports and other sources;
- (c) Reports of international meetings and conferences organized under the auspices of the Committee;
- (d) Special bulletin and information notes on the observance of International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People;
- (e) Periodic reviews of developments related to the Middle East peace process;
- (f) Annual compilation of resolutions and decisions of the General Assembly and the Security Council relating to the question of Palestine.

6. United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine

80. The Division for Palestinian Rights, in cooperation with relevant technical and library services of the United Nations Secretariat, continued to administer, maintain, expand and upgrade the United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine and the “Question of Palestine” website (<https://unispal.un.org/DPA/DPR/unispal.nsf/udc.htm>). The Division maintained its Facebook, Twitter and YouTube pages to disseminate information about the work on the question of Palestine by the Committee and the United Nations as a whole. As part of its efforts to improve on access to its publications and document collection, the Division for Palestinian Rights is in the process of redesigning the website on the “Question of Palestine” and aligning it with current United Nations organizational standards.

7. Capacity-building programme for staff of the Government of the State of Palestine

81. As part of its efforts to develop the annual capacity-building programme for staff of the Government of the State of Palestine, as mandated by General Assembly resolutions, including resolution 70/13, and in consultation with the Permanent Observer Mission of the State of Palestine to the United Nations in New York, the Division for Palestinian Rights organized and administered a number of capacity-

building initiatives. In October 2015, the Division organized the annual training programme for staff of the Government of the State of Palestine. These training activities allow the Palestinian staff to familiarize themselves with various aspects of the multilateral work of the Secretariat and other United Nations organs and bodies, including the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council. The training is financially supported by the OPEC Fund for International Development. In March 2016, 25 Palestinians received training at the United Nations Round Table on Legal Aspects of the Question of Palestine, held under the theme “Instruments and institutions of international treaty law — theory and practice”, which took place in Amman. In May, in collaboration with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Division arranged for two Palestinian staff members to travel to Geneva and observe a session of the Committee against Torture.

8. International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People

82. International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People was observed on 23 November 2015 at Headquarters in New York, on 24 November at the United Nations Office at Vienna and on 30 November at the United Nations Office at Geneva. At Headquarters, the Committee held a special meeting with the participation of the Deputy Secretary-General, the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council and organized a photo exhibit entitled “Palestinian Children: Overcoming Tragedies with Hope, Dreams, Resilience and Dignity”. The Committee noted with appreciation that International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People had also been observed by United Nations Information Centres and other bodies in many cities throughout the world. Details on the observance can be found on the website (unispal.un.org) maintained by the Division.

Chapter VI

Action taken by the Department of Public Information in accordance with General Assembly resolution 70/14 and by other United Nations entities

83. During the reporting period, the Department of Public Information continued to implement its special information programme on the question of Palestine in accordance with General Assembly resolution 70/14.

84. The Department organized the annual five-week training programme for 10 Palestinian journalists, held from November to December in New York and Washington, D.C., and its annual International Media Seminar on Peace in the Middle East, held in Pretoria from 31 August to 2 September.

85. The Department continued to regularly cover the broad range of issues and developments related to the question of Palestine and the Middle East peace process across its multilingual news platforms. Live coverage was provided and materials made available on demand through United Nations Television, on the Department website and on social media.

86. The Arabic Website Unit of the Department of Public Information provided support for campaigns and online appeals run by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, focusing on the humanitarian situation affecting the Palestinian people and the Palestine refugee populations in the Middle East.

87. The Department's global network of more than 60 United Nations Information Centres organized a number of outreach activities, including exhibitions, film screenings and conferences, and translated and disseminated information materials on the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.

88. In addition, a number of outreach events to commemorate the 2015 International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People were organized at Headquarters and with United Nations Information Centres, including those in Cairo; Canberra; Dakar; Dar es Salaam, United Republic of Tanzania; Harare; Mexico City; and Tehran.

89. In June, the Birzeit University main library was designated the first United Nations depository library in the State of Palestine.

90. The Department is also finalizing the revised and updated edition of *The UN and the Question of Palestine*, a publication for journalists, academics, students and the public at large.

United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East

91. UNRWA continued to provide extensive services and emergency assistance to over 5 million Palestine refugees in all its fields of operations in Jordan, Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic and the Occupied Palestinian Territory. While it endeavours to serve this community in accordance with its mandate from the General Assembly, the Agency has been confronted with recurring and severe

financial crises, including in 2016, jeopardizing its ability to deliver its core programmes.

92. The Agency continues to be particularly concerned about the more than 450,000 Palestine refugees who remain in the Syrian Arab Republic, 60 per cent of whom are displaced. Overall, 95 per cent of Palestine refugees in the country are now reliant on UNRWA for assistance. The wider destabilization of the region, resulting from the conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic, continues to pose major socioeconomic and security concerns for Jordan and Lebanon, who host large numbers of refugees from the Syrian Arab Republic, in addition to existing resident populations of Palestine refugees.

United Nations Development Programme/Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

93. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), through its Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People, continued to work on multiple levels in order to deliver on and implement the developmental needs of the State of Palestine. In supporting the Palestinian statehood agenda, the UNDP Programme focused on key areas: democratic governance and the rule of law; economic empowerment and private sector development; environment and management of natural resources; and public and social infrastructure. The programme is also critically engaged in supporting the harmonization of Gaza with the West Bank in terms of social, economic and political planning to better serve Palestinians. Similarly, in Area C, where continued barriers to the development of infrastructure are harming the status and livelihoods of vulnerable communities, the Programme has been a key agent in supporting and advocating for the basic rights of the local population to access health care, education and water.

Chapter VII

Conclusions and recommendations of the Committee

94. The Committee remains convinced that a negotiated peaceful settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in all its aspects, in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions, and an urgent end to the Israeli occupation and the realization of the rights of the Palestinian people, including to self-determination and independence, should be a top priority of the international community.

95. In its continued support for the revitalization of the peace negotiations, the Committee aligns itself with the view that the model of bilateral negotiations, which after more than two decades have not brought about the end of the Israeli occupation and the full independence of the State of Palestine on the basis of the pre-1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital, should be revised. The Committee welcomes the serious steps taken by the international community towards putting forward a new, expanded multilateral framework including key regional partners, in view of reigniting the peace process on a new political horizon with the necessary international support. Serious efforts are needed between the parties to overcome their deeply entrenched mistrust, including confidence-building efforts, and demonstrate the courage and leadership that are required at this time. The Committee supports efforts from any country able to advance this process, including through bilateral negotiations.

96. As has consistently emerged during the international meetings organized by the Committee, a resolution of the conflict remains central to peace and stability throughout the volatile Middle East region and to global peace and stability. As such, the conflict clearly requires a comprehensive regional solution, conceivably with support from the reinvigorated Quartet, that includes greater engagement with key Arab States and other States concerned. The Arab Peace Initiative remains a significant contribution to such a regional settlement. The Committee supports the efforts in that regard and will continue its enhanced cooperation with LAS and OIC.

97. The Committee urges the Security Council, which has a primary responsibility for maintaining peace and security under the Charter of the United Nations, and the General Assembly to play a constructive role in reaffirming the long-standing parameters for peace based on the relevant United Nations resolutions and defining a new peace architecture for resolving the conflict. Positive consideration should be given to all proposals that endeavour to offer a way out of the current impasse. The Committee intends to contribute to a healthy and necessary discussion of these issues through its programme of work.

98. The Committee reiterates that the international community must intensify its efforts, uphold its moral and legal responsibility and demand the lifting of the Israeli blockade of Gaza. It notes that, two years after the devastating war of 2014, important strides in the reconstruction of Gaza have been made. However, clean water, sanitation and electricity still remain scarce and the fact that more than 65,000 people remain displaced continues to have a significant impact on an already dire humanitarian situation. The Committee calls upon international donors to fulfil without delay all pledges in order to expedite the provision of

humanitarian assistance and the reconstruction process, essential for alleviating the distress of the Palestinians, including women and children.

99. Ultimately, in order to ensure respect for the rights of the Palestinian people, prevent deterioration beyond a breaking point and break the build-destroy-rebuild cycle, the Israeli blockade on the Gaza Strip must end and there must be a lifting of all closures within the framework of Security Council resolution **1860 (2009)**. A Palestinian unity government is also essential to take up governance and security functions in Gaza and exercise control over the crossings.

100. The Committee reiterates that violations of humanitarian and human rights law must be investigated and that perpetrators of such violations should be brought to justice. The Committee expresses its concern at the limited implementation by Israel, the occupying Power, of the findings and recommendations contained in the report of the independent commission of inquiry on the 2014 Gaza conflict (**A/HRC/29/52**). The Committee welcomes the appointment of Stanley Michael Lynk as Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967 and will strive to facilitate the implementation of his mandate.

101. The Committee underscores the responsibility of States and private entities not to contribute to grave Israeli violations of Palestinian human rights, in particular in respect of settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. It welcomes in that regard the adoption by the Human Rights Council of its resolution **31/36** calling for the creation of a database of all actors conducting business in areas under Israeli military occupation. The adoption of the resolution is in line with the appropriate stance of the European Union on the importation of products from settlements, encouraging its members and other organizations and States to adopt and implement policies that guarantee adherence to international conventions in regard of illegal settlements in occupied areas, in particular the Fourth Geneva Convention. It welcomes further steps taken by Governments and private businesses to dissociate themselves from policies that directly or indirectly support settlements.

102. The Committee will continue, through its mandated activities, to generate heightened international awareness of the question of Palestine and international support for the rights of the Palestinian people, including their right to self-determination and independence. In that connection, the Committee emphasizes the useful contribution of the Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat in support of its mandate and encourages it to make such adjustments to its approved programme of work as it may consider necessary in the light of developments. It notes with satisfaction: (a) the sustained level of dialogue, engagement and support on the part of the international community for the objectives of the programme, as evidenced by the number of and participation in international meetings and conferences as well as the commemorations of International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People; (b) the continued involvement of civil society organizations in support of the efforts of the Committee and the United Nations towards a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine; and (c) an increase in international awareness of the United Nations policies and activities on the question of Palestine, as evidenced by the number of visitors to the Question of

Palestine website and followers of the social media sites maintained by the Division. The Committee wishes to express its deep appreciation to its partners, in particular OIC, which contributed extrabudgetary resources, including for their active participation in conferences and events.

103. The Committee will focus its programme of international meetings and conferences in 2017, to be implemented by the Division, on amplifying international support for the achievement of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, stressing the role and responsibility of the United Nations in this regard and in this year marking the fiftieth anniversary of the Israeli occupation and the seventieth anniversary of the General Assembly resolution concerning the future government of Palestine and outlining the Plan of Partition (resolution 181 (II)). The Committee intends to work closely with other United Nations actors on the ground, such as the Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and UNRWA, to synergize efforts in fields of common concern and uphold the permanent responsibility of the United Nations towards the question of Palestine until it is resolved in all its aspects in a satisfactory manner in accordance with international legitimacy (see Assembly resolution 70/12, tenth preambular para.).

104. The Committee will continue to mobilize support and assistance for Palestinian institution-building and all other efforts to support and enhance the viability of the State of Palestine, in particular in the light of its efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It will reach out to and engage Governments, parliamentarians and civil society and pay particular attention to the inclusion and empowerment of women and young people and their organizations.

105. The Committee also considers that the annual capacity-building programme for staff of the Government of the State of Palestine, carried out by the Division, directly contributes to Palestinian efforts to establish a more efficient, accountable and transparent government. The Committee expresses its appreciation for the funding of this programme in 2015 by the OPEC Fund for International Development and strongly recommends that this important mandated activity be continued and, where possible, further expanded. Special attention should be paid to the gender balance of the programme, expanding the pool of potential participants to all offices and departments of the Government and optimizing the use of resources to allow the maximum number of participants possible. Continued voluntary contributions from Member and observer States and international organizations in line with their capacity are to be encouraged in order to place the programme on a solid financial footing.

106. The Committee highly values civil society initiatives in support of the Palestinian people. The Committee will continue to expand its efforts to engage additional civil society organizations and the public at large that support a just and peaceful solution to the question of Palestine, including in Israel. The Committee encourages civil society partners to work with their national Governments, parliamentarians and other institutions with a view to gaining their full support for the work of the United Nations, including that of the Committee, with the overall aim of promoting the achievement by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights.

107. The Committee looks forward to further developing its cooperation with parliamentarians and their umbrella organizations. Parliamentarians have a special responsibility to ensure that their Governments actively promote and support the realization of a peaceful and just settlement of the question of Palestine and uphold their obligations under international law, including humanitarian and human rights law.

108. The Committee will reach out to all regional groups at the United Nations with a view to expanding its membership. It will actively work to organize more thematic debates on the question of Palestine in various United Nations forums. Recognizing the growing importance of cooperation with developing countries and regional and subregional organizations in sharing and implementing sustainable, cost-effective and replicable experiences and solutions that work, it will make a special effort to step up engagement with such countries and organizations in the context of the framework of South-South and triangular cooperation.

109. The Committee requests the Division to continue its substantive and secretariat support and the programme of research, monitoring and publications and other informational activities, in support of the Committee's communication strategy. The Division should pay special attention to the continued development of the Question of Palestine portal, the preparation of publications and information materials on various aspects of the question of Palestine and their widest possible dissemination, including in the official languages of the United Nations, and the use of web-based social information networks, such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. It should also continue to develop the United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine document collection by reflecting current issues and events and by continuing to digitize and upload historical documents and to add user-friendly search features. The Division should continue to collaborate with the United Nations libraries at Headquarters and in Geneva in the search for historic documents.

110. The Division should continue to organize the annual observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

111. The Committee intends to request that the General Assembly proclaim 2017 as "International Year to End the Israeli Occupation".

112. The Committee is of the view that the special information programme on the question of Palestine of the Department of Public Information has made an important contribution to informing the media and the public of the relevant issues. It requests the continuation of the programme, with the necessary flexibility warranted by developments relevant to the question of Palestine.

113. Wishing to make its contribution to the achievement of a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine, and in view of the many difficulties facing the Palestinian people and their leadership and besetting the peace process, the Committee calls upon all States to join it in this endeavour and to extend their cooperation and support to the Committee, and invites the General Assembly again to recognize the importance of its role and to reconfirm its mandate.

Report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People



United Nations • New York, 2017



Note

Symbols of United Nations documents are composed of letters combined with figures. Mention of such a symbol indicates a reference to a United Nations document.

Contents

<i>Chapter</i>	<i>Page</i>
Letter of transmittal	4
I. Introduction	5
II. Review of the situation relating to the question of Palestine	6
III. Mandate of the Committee	16
IV. Organization of work	17
A. Membership and officers	17
B. Participation in the work of the Committee	17
V. Action taken by the Committee	18
A. Action taken in accordance with General Assembly resolution 71/20	18
B. Action taken by the Committee and the Division for Palestinian Rights in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 71/20 and 71/21	19
VI. Action taken by the Department of Public Information in accordance with General Assembly resolution 71/22	25
VII. Conclusions and recommendations of the Committee	26

Letter of transmittal

[7 September 2017]

Mr. Secretary-General,

I have the honour to enclose herewith the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for submission to the General Assembly and circulation to all the competent bodies of the United Nations for necessary action, as appropriate, in accordance with paragraphs 2 and 10 of its resolution [71/20](#) of 30 November 2016.

The report covers the period from 4 October 2016 to 5 September 2017.

(Signed) Fodé **Seck**
Chair of the Committee on the Exercise of the
Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

His Excellency Mr. António Guterres
Secretary-General of the United Nations
New York

Chapter I

Introduction

1. The present report by the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People has been submitted pursuant to resolution 71/20 (2016) of the General Assembly adopted on 30 November 2016. It contains information on the implementation by the Committee of its programme of work, designed to enable the Palestinian people to exercise their inalienable rights, including through maintaining international awareness of and mobilizing efforts aimed at achieving a just, comprehensive and lasting solution of the question of Palestine, enhancing international solidarity with the plight of the Palestinian people and supporting the Government of the State of Palestine in its capacity-building efforts to build a viable and sustainable future independent State of Palestine.
2. In chapter II the Committee reviews the situation relating to the question of Palestine, including events that have taken place on the ground.
3. Chapters III and IV outline the mandate of the Committee as set out by the General Assembly and provide information on the membership of the Committee and the organization of its work from 4 October 2016 to 5 September 2017.
4. Chapter V covers the action taken by the Committee, including participation in meetings of the Security Council and its continuing dialogue with intergovernmental organizations and civil society. The chapter also contains information about the international conferences and capacity-building workshops organized by the Committee, as well as other mandated activities and events carried out by the Division for Palestinian Rights on the Committee's behalf.
5. Chapter VI provides an overview of the special information programme on the question of Palestine carried out by the Department of Public Information in accordance with General Assembly resolution 71/22 of 30 November 2016.
6. The conclusions and recommendations of the Committee to the General Assembly are set out in chapter VII of the report.

Chapter II

Review of the situation relating to the question of Palestine

Security Council and resolution 2334 (2016)

7. On 14 October 2016, Malaysia, with Angola, Egypt, Senegal and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, hosted an Arrria formula meeting entitled “Illegal Israeli settlements: obstacles to peace and the two-State solution”, concerning the negative impact of Israeli settlements on the Palestinian people and their quest for self-determination and independence, and the prospects for achieving a just, lasting and peaceful solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The meeting heard first-hand information from experts and civil society representatives, as well as statements from members of the Security Council and other Member States condemning the ongoing expansion of Israeli settlements and demanding their cessation.

8. On 23 December 2016, the Security Council adopted resolution 2334 (2016), sponsored by Malaysia, New Zealand, Senegal and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, a landmark document in which the Council reiterated its vision of a region where two democratic States, Israel and Palestine, lived side by side in peace within secure and recognized borders. The Council reaffirmed its relevant resolutions, and the obligation of Israel, the occupying Power, to abide scrupulously by its legal obligations and responsibilities under the Fourth Geneva Convention. It stressed that the status quo was not sustainable and that significant steps, consistent with the transition contemplated by prior agreements, were urgently needed (a) to stabilize the situation and reverse negative trends on the ground, which were steadily eroding the two-State solution and entrenching a one-State reality; and (b) to create the conditions for successful final status negotiations and for advancing the two-State solution through those negotiations. The Council reaffirmed that establishment by Israel of settlements in the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem, had no legal validity and constituted a major obstacle to the achievement of the two-State solution and a just, lasting and comprehensive peace, and demanded their immediate and complete cessation. It also condemned all measures aimed at altering the demographic composition, character and status of the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem, and expressed grave concern that continuing Israeli settlement activities were dangerously imperilling the viability of the two-State solution. The Council also underlined that it would not recognize any changes to the 1967 lines, including with regard to Jerusalem, other than those agreed by the parties through negotiations. It called for immediate steps to prevent all acts of violence against civilians, including acts of terror, as well as acts of provocation and destruction, and called for accountability in that regard. The Council also called upon all parties to continue to exert collective efforts to launch credible negotiations on all final status issues in the Middle East peace process. It urged in that regard the intensification of international and regional diplomatic efforts aimed at achieving, without delay, a just, lasting and comprehensive solution, on the basis of the relevant resolutions, the Madrid terms of reference, the Arab Peace Initiative and the Quartet road map, and requested the Secretary-General to report to the Council every three months on the implementation of the resolution.

9. In addition to reporting pursuant to resolution 2334 (2016), the Secretary-General continued the efforts of his predecessors in support of a peaceful solution to the question of Palestine. In his statements, including on 5 June 2017 on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the 1967 Arab-Israeli War, he reiterated the position of the international community, enshrined in the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council, that the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territory had to end through a negotiated two-State outcome that would

meet Israeli security needs and Palestinian aspirations for statehood and sovereignty, and would achieve the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. From 28 to 30 August he visited Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory, where he held talks with the leaders of both States.

Human Rights Council

10. In his annual report to the Human Rights Council on the human rights situation in Palestine and other occupied Arab territories ([A/HRC/35/19](#)), the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights assessed the overall rate of “full implementation” by Israel of its human rights obligations in the Occupied Palestinian Territory at 0.4 per cent. In its response to the second report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review, contained in the addendum to the report, despite the fact that the International Court of Justice, Security Council and General Assembly have clearly affirmed the applicability of the Fourth Geneva Convention to the Occupied Palestinian Territory, along with the core international human rights covenants, Israel expressed the view that the human rights conventions do not apply beyond its territory (see [A/HRC/25/15/Add.1](#), para. 56).

11. On 24 March, the Human Rights Council adopted four resolutions in which it: (a) emphasized the need to ensure accountability and justice for all violations of international law in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem (resolution 34/28); (b) reaffirmed the inalienable, permanent and unqualified right of the Palestinian people to self-determination (resolution 34/29); (c) demanded that Israel cease all practices and actions that violate the human rights of the Palestinian people or alter the character, status and demographic composition of the Occupied Palestinian Territory (resolution 34/30); and (d) demanded that Israel immediately cease all settlement activities and reverse the settlement policy, and requested that all parties concerned, including United Nations bodies, ensure the implementation of the recommendations contained in the report of the independent international fact-finding mission to investigate the implications of settlements on the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of the Palestinian people throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem (resolution 34/31).

12. Pursuant to resolution 31/36, the Human Rights Council requested the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) to produce a database of all business enterprises involved in the activities described in the report of the independent international fact-finding mission to investigate the implications of the Israeli settlements on the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of the Palestinian people throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem ([A/HRC/22/63](#), para. 96), to be updated annually, and to transmit the data therein in the form of a report to the Council at its thirty-fourth session. At its organizational meeting on 13 February 2017, the Council decided, for one time only, to defer its consideration of that report to the end of December 2017.

13. During its annual field visit to the region in July 2017 to gather information for the annual report to the General Assembly, the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories observed that the Israeli authorities continued with policies and practices that negatively impact the human rights situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.¹

¹ See OHCHR, “End of mission statement of the United Nations Special Committee to investigate Israeli practices”, 17 July 2017. Available from <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=21881&LangID=E>.

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

14. On 2 May 2017, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) adopted resolution 201 EX/PX/DR.30.1, entitled “Occupied Palestine”, in which it, inter alia, reaffirmed the importance of the Old City of Jerusalem for the three monotheistic religions, reminded that all actions by Israel altering the character of Jerusalem were null and void; and reaffirmed that the sacred sites in Bethlehem and Hebron were an integral part of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, shared the conviction affirmed by the international community that the two sites are of religious significance for Judaism, Christianity and Islam, and deplored the ongoing Israeli works which harmfully affect the integrity of the site as well as the denial of access to places of worship. On 7 July (WHC/17/41.COM/18), the UNESCO World Heritage Committee inscribed Hebron/ Al-Khalil Old Town, which is the site of the Cave of the Patriarchs/Ibrahimi Mosque, sacred to Jews and Muslims, on the World Heritage List, and stated that the property was faced with serious threats which could have deleterious effects on its inherent characteristics and for which an immediate action by the World Heritage Committee was needed.

Restrictions on non-governmental organizations and peace activists

15. On 3 March 2017, the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967, Michael Lynk, and the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders, Michel Forst, expressed deep concern about the escalating restrictions the Government of Israel was placing on human rights defenders in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, and called on Israel to observe its obligations under international law to protect human rights defenders and promote their work.

Intra-Palestinian reconciliation

16. The ongoing Palestinian political divide continued to be an impediment to the fulfilment of Palestinian national aspirations. On 16 March, Hamas announced the formation of an administrative committee to manage the Gaza Strip, a de facto parallel government. On 3 May, the movement unveiled its new charter that, while falling short of recognizing Israel, accepted for the first time the idea of a Palestinian State within the 1967 borders.

17. Since April, the Government of the State of Palestine has reduced the payments to nearly 60,000 public sector employees in the Gaza Strip, and in May also reduced payment for electricity supplied to the enclave by Israel, arguing that Hamas, as the receiver of taxes in Gaza, should pay for such services.

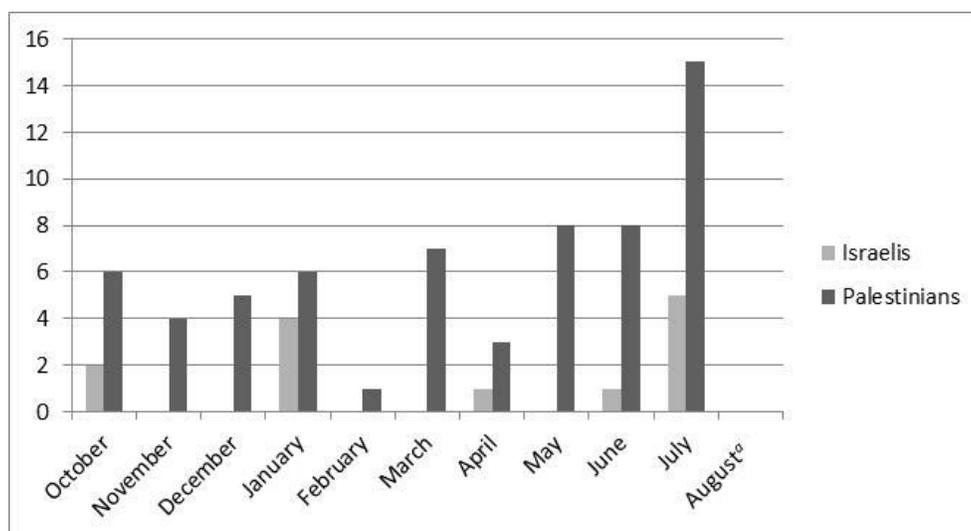
18. Municipal elections were held in the West Bank, excluding East Jerusalem, on 13 May. A boycott by Hamas, in addition to Islamic Jihad and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, prevented the holding of elections in the Gaza Strip. According to the Central Elections Commission, Fatah maintained a majority of the 3,253 local council seats (1,260 by acclamation, 429 in contest). Independent candidates won 1,204 seats (195 by acclamation, 1,009 in contest). Other parties and lists gained the remaining 360 seats.

19. Prospects of reconciliation between Hamas and Fatah remain low. Both continue to issue calls for a unified government and open elections, including for the Palestinian parliament and President, throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory, but have not been able to agree on modalities. A number of reconciliation meetings and efforts by third parties, including by Egypt, Qatar and the Russian Federation, have not yielded any measurable progress.

Security

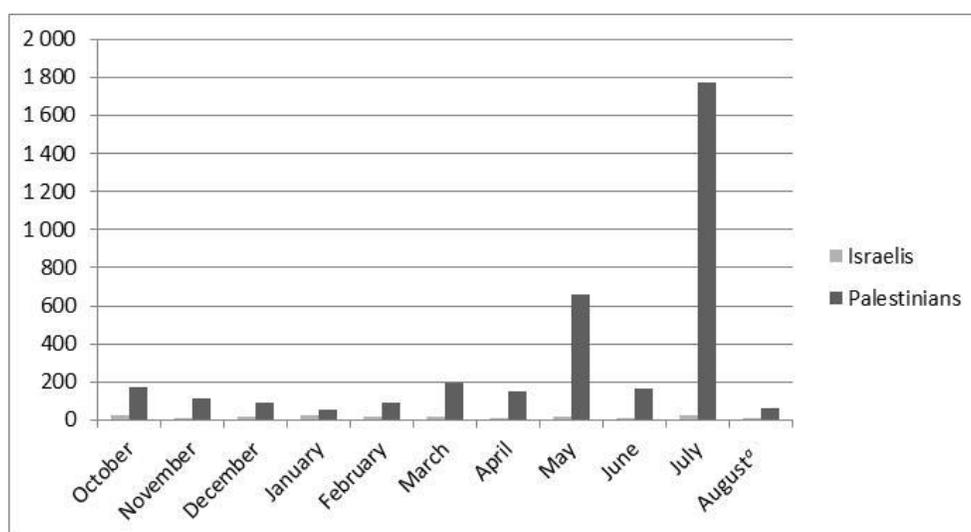
20. The reporting period was marked by continuing tensions, military incursions and raids by the Israeli occupying forces and clashes with Palestinian youth and protesters in many parts of the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, on an almost daily basis. Settler violence against the Palestinian civilian people also continued. During the reporting period, a total of 52 Palestinians, including 4 women and 10 children, and 8 Israelis, including 5 women and 1 child, were killed in conflict-related violence, and many more were injured (see figures I and II).

Figure I
Number of Israelis and Palestinians killed during the reporting period



Source: Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. Available from <http://www.ochaopt.org/>.
^a As at 14 August 2017.

Figure II
Number of Israelis and Palestinians injured during the reporting period



Source: Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. Available from <http://www.ochaopt.org/>.
^a As at 14 August 2017.

Jerusalem

21. Israeli occupying forces in East Jerusalem have at times increased restrictions on movement and access to the holy sites, fomenting discontent, resistance and even violent actions. In July, an attack on Israeli security officers by Israeli Arab citizens at Al-Haram al-Sharif and the subsequent change of the historic status quo at the holy site resulted in a crisis that also involved Jordan, custodian of the Muslim and Christian holy sites in the City, and the Islamic Waqf. International efforts helped to solve the crisis and the Government of Israel agreed to revert to the original security procedures at the compound. In confrontations during the crisis, 14 people were killed (6 Palestinians, 6 Israelis and 2 Jordanians) and over a thousand injured, the vast majority of them Palestinians. On 21 July, in the course of the crisis, Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas suspended contacts of the State of Palestine with Israel on all levels, including security coordination.

22. According to the Ministry of Interior of Israel, from the beginning of the occupation in 1967 until the end of 2016, Israel revoked the residency status of at least 14,595 Palestinians from East Jerusalem. The discriminatory system pushes many Palestinians to leave in what amounts to forcible transfers, a serious violation of international law, which could amount to a war crime under the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.

The Gaza Strip

23. The blockade imposed by Israel on the Gaza Strip since 2007, in breach of international law, continued into its tenth year. As the occupying Power,² Israel has an obligation to the civilian population, in particular, to facilitate rapid and unimpeded passage of humanitarian relief. Despite warnings issued for years, including by the United Nations country team, Gaza has continued on its trajectory of socioeconomic de-development. Ongoing humanitarian assistance and international service delivery, especially through the services of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), are partially mitigating the impact, but cannot stop the downward spiral that would make Gaza “unliveable” by 2020.³

24. Israel also continues to enforce access restrictions in unilaterally determined wide buffer areas inside the enclave along Gaza’s perimeter areas and to severely restrict access to the sea by Palestinian fishermen, routinely harassing them and firing at them, endangering lives and impairing their livelihoods.

25. Agricultural land damaged in the 2014 conflict is years away from yielding a harvest comparable to pre-conflict levels. Most of the damaged businesses have been unable to fully resume operations. Over 1 million Palestinians in Gaza are

² See *Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Advisory Opinion, I.C.J. Reports 2004*, p. 136, para. 101. Available from <http://www.icj-cij.org/files/case-related/131/131-20040709-ADV-01-00-EN.pdf>. See also, for example, Security Council resolutions [1860 \(2009\)](#) and [2334 \(2016\)](#); General Assembly resolutions [62/181](#) and [63/98](#); Human Rights Council resolution [10/18](#); and reports of the Secretary-General, including [A/HRC/34/38](#), para. 9. Claims by Israel that its disengagement from Gaza in 2005 amounted to the end of the occupation of the Gaza Strip were rejected on the basis that the control that Israel retained of Gaza’s air space, sea space and external borders continuously amounted to effective control (see report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967, [A/61/470](#), para. 7).

³ See United Nations country team in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, “Gaza ten years later”, July 2017. Available from https://unsco.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/gaza_10_years_later_-_11_july_2017.pdf.

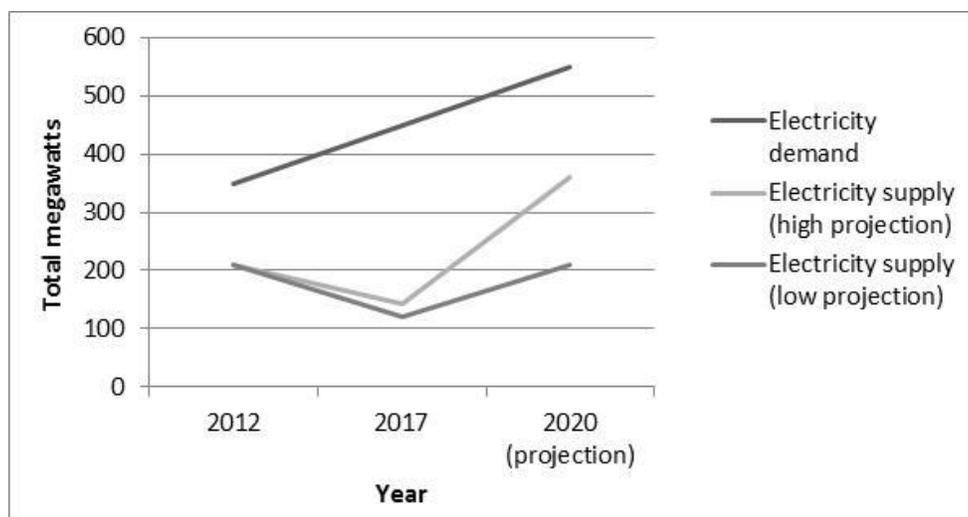
moderately to severely food insecure, despite many of them already receiving food assistance or other forms of social transfers.

26. The Gazan economy remains stagnant, and the poverty level stands at about 40 per cent. Over 42 per cent of Gazans are unemployed. Especially hard hit are the youth; as of the end of 2016, 60.3 per cent of 20 to 24-year-olds and 52.1 per cent of 25 to 29-year-olds were out of work, an increase of 10 and 16 per cent, respectively, over the previous 10 years. In the last 10 years, unemployment among women almost doubled, to 64.4 per cent, making women's labour force participation in Gaza among the lowest in the world. In the meantime the ability of Palestinians to move in and out of Gaza remains an important lifeline for their living conditions.

27. Young persons in the Gaza Strip — 43 per cent of the population is below the age of 15 — face many challenges. They face social, cultural and economic marginalization and isolation. In exchange for protection or a shelter for them and their families, some of them drop out of school to work low-skilled jobs, leave their jobs or marry at an early age.

28. Recent months have seen a significant decline in energy supply, including shortages caused by the continuing impasse between the Government of the State of Palestine and Hamas. As the Government stopped waiving taxes on fuel for the Gaza Power Plant and the de facto authorities refused to purchase the taxed fuel, the operation of the power plant came to a halt in April. As a result, Gaza's energy supply was reduced to only 120 megawatts and daily blackouts reached 20 hours per day (see figure III).

Figure III
Electricity in the Gaza Strip: supply and demand



Source: Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. Available from <http://www.ochaopt.org/>.

29. By the end of 2017, the only water source in Gaza will be depleted, and irreversibly so by 2020, unless immediate remedial action is taken. Access to safe drinking water in Gaza through the public water network plummeted from 98.3 per cent in 2000 to a mere 10.5 per cent in 2014, compared to almost 97 per cent in the West Bank. Palestinians in Gaza are forced to rely on, and pay for, water from water tanks, containers and bottled water.

Table
Water and sanitation in the Gaza Strip

<i>Indicator</i>	<i>2012</i>	<i>2017</i>	<i>2020 (projection)</i>
Share of aquifer water	10%	20%	0%
Year when aquifer may become unusable	2016	2017	Aquifer will be irreversibly damaged
Amount of untreated or partially treated wastewater pumped into the ocean	90,000 cm per day	100,000-108,000 cm per day	120,000 cm per day

Source: Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. Available from <http://www.ochaopt.org/>.

Settlements

30. During the reporting period, there was an alarming increase in settlement construction by Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory in violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention and, most recently, Security Council resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#).

31. On 23 November 2016, the occupying authorities decided to advance plans for 500 new settlement units in the illegal settlement of Ramat Shlomo, further encroaching on the East Jerusalem neighbourhood of Beit Hanina.

32. In January, two major announcements were made for a total of 5,500 settlement units in several settlements in Area C of the occupied West Bank. On 1 February 2017, the occupying Power announced its intention to establish a new settlement to house the residents of the illegal Amona outpost, following the demolition of the latter on 2 February by order of the Israeli High Court of Justice. Construction in at least four East Jerusalem settlements was enabled by the granting of building permits for over 900 units.

33. On 6 February, the Israeli Knesset passed a law (the so-called “regularization bill”) that would retroactively “legalize” Israeli settlements on privately owned Palestinian land. The bill was roundly condemned by the international community; Israeli and Palestinian non-governmental organizations have since appealed the ruling in the Israeli Supreme Court.

34. Spring 2017 saw a further substantial increase in settlement-related announcements, with plans for nearly 4,000 settlement units advanced and 2,000 tenders issued. Plans for some 3,200 units were also advanced through the various stages of the planning process in 22 settlements in Area C of the occupied West Bank, including over 2,800 housing units. In East Jerusalem 770 units reached the final approval stage, and building permits for more than 360 additional units were granted by the occupying authorities.

35. In July, plans were advanced for over 2,300 settlement units in East Jerusalem — 30 per cent more than were advanced during all of 2016. This includes plans for some 1,600 units expanding a ring of settlements north of East Jerusalem, as well as other plans that may involve demolition of Palestinian houses. In addition to the confiscation of Palestinian land and properties as a result of such settlement activities, the construction of all of the above-mentioned settlement units will entail the transfer of tens of thousands more Israeli settlers to the Occupied Palestinian Territory, in grave breach of the Fourth Geneva Convention.

36. On 25 July, Israeli settlers seized an apartment in a building located in the H2 area of Hebron city, in violation of an Israeli order declaring part of the building

as a closed military area pending a three-year-old challenge by a Palestinian family to the settlers' ownership claims. A Palestinian family of 16, half of them children, residing in another apartment of the same building, have reported access restrictions and intimidation since the takeover.

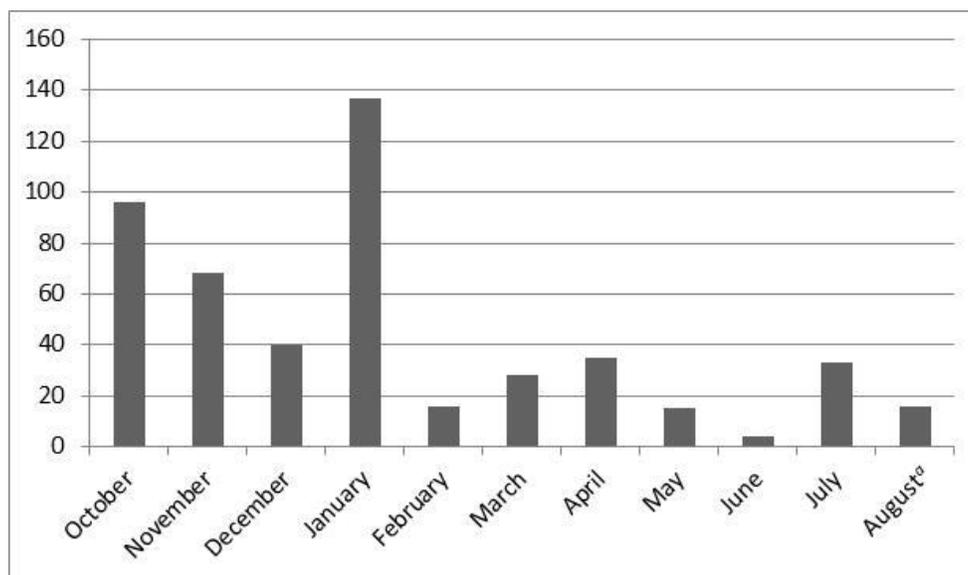
37. There are currently at least 370,000 Israelis living in some 130 settlements in Area C, including at least 85,000 settlers deep in the West Bank. Combined with some 200,000 in East Jerusalem, this brings the total Israeli settler population in the Occupied Palestinian Territory to at least 570,000.

Demolitions and displacement

38. No progress was noted during the reporting period on return to homes and return of property of Palestine refugees. Meanwhile, the demolition of Palestinian homes and structures escalated, with most destroyed under the pretext that they were built without Israeli-issued permits, and continued to exacerbate Palestinian civilian displacement, including among the Bedouin community (see figures IV and V).

Figure IV

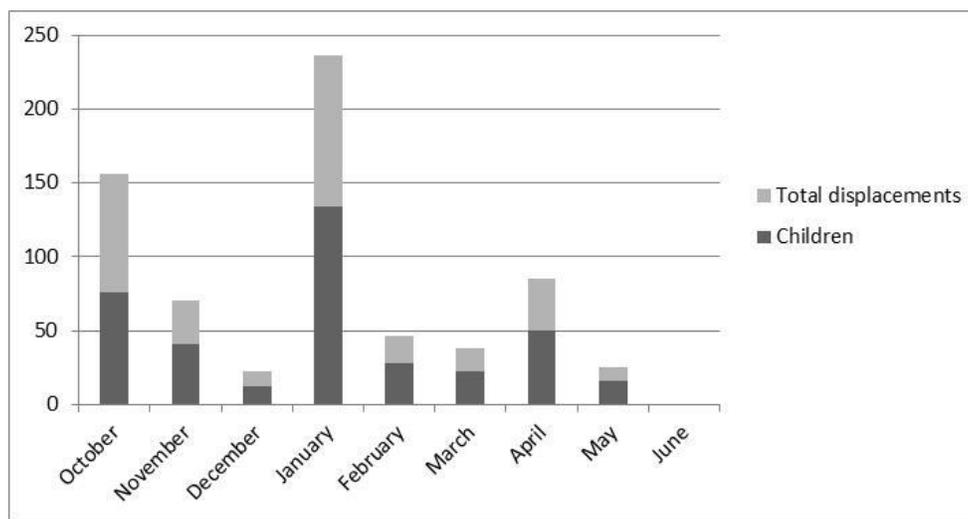
Demolitions of Palestinian structures during the reporting period



Source: Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. Available from <http://www.ochaopt.org/>.

^a As at 14 August 2017.

Figure V
Number of Palestinians displaced through demolitions during the reporting period



Source: Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. Available from <http://www.ochaopt.org/>.

39. As noted by the Quartet, 70 per cent of Area C has been unilaterally taken for exclusive Israeli use, mostly through inclusion in the boundaries of local and regional settlement councils or designations of “State land”. Nearly all of the remaining 30 per cent of Area C, much of which is private Palestinian property, is effectively off-limits for Palestinian development because it requires permits from the Israeli occupying authorities that are almost never granted. The process of designating additional “State land” in Area C, which potentially impacts any land that cannot clearly be established as Palestinian private property, is ongoing, causing high insecurity to hundreds of Palestinian families and threatening them with forced displacement.

Restriction of movement

40. Israel continued to maintain security barriers restricting Palestinian movement in Area C and other areas of the West Bank in addition to those around the Gaza Strip, resulting in the physical fragmentation of the Palestinian territory and the separation and isolation of Palestinian communities. During the reporting period, increased restrictions were imposed, affecting the access of farmers to their agricultural land isolated by the wall under construction by Israel since 2002, 88 per cent of which is inside the Occupied Palestinian Territory. In East Jerusalem, the wall physically divides Palestinian communities into two separate sides, in place of what was previously only a jurisdictional division. In May, Israeli occupying forces added new measures to the already severe limitations on Palestinian movement in Hebron, a city that is segregated into areas Palestinians are forbidden to enter and areas where they are permitted to reside.

41. The construction of Israeli-only transportation corridors, or bypass roads, in the occupied West Bank pointed to a steady effort towards annexation of those areas. In the absence of measures to ease freedom of movement for Palestinians in the occupied West Bank to Israel and the Gaza Strip, the location of the corridors continued to be clearly aimed at facilitating and supporting the presence of settlers in the West Bank.

Palestinian prisoners

42. According to the Israel Prison Service, as of May 2017 a total of 6,020 Palestinians were held in Israeli prisons, 475 of them under administrative detention. Palestinian detainees are jailed inside Israel, in contravention of international law that stipulates that they be held within the occupied territory, in turn leading to restrictions on family visits.

43. On 17 April 2017, 1,500 Palestinian prisoners held by Israel launched an open-ended mass hunger strike to press for basic rights and draw attention to the difficult humanitarian conditions endured by Palestinian prisoners and detainees. Following international pressure and assurances from Israel, the strike ended on 27 May with an agreement between Palestinian prisoners and Israeli authorities.

44. The United Nations has also documented a growing use of administrative detention by Palestinian security forces in the West Bank and arbitrary detention by Hamas against perceived political opponents, including members of Fatah and former personnel of the Palestinian Authority in the Gaza Strip. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights has also consistently received and documented reliable allegations of torture and ill-treatment of Palestinian detainees in the West Bank and in Gaza, including cases that led to death.

Socioeconomic situation

45. As of early 2017, one in two Palestinians in the Occupied Palestinian Territory was in need of humanitarian assistance, according to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. All 4.8 million Palestinians in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, are now affected by protection risks, including 350,000 Palestinians living in 67 West Bank communities vulnerable to settler violence.

46. On 22 February, the Government of the State of Palestine launched the National Policy Agenda for 2017-2022,⁴ in which it identified ending the occupation as its first national priority. Aligned with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the agenda has three pillars: path to independence, Government reform and sustainable development. It identifies 30 national policies. The United Nations Development Assistance Framework for the State of Palestine aims to support those national development priorities.

47. Israel, as the occupying Power, controls all shared surface and ground water resources, leaving only 15 per cent for Palestinian use. In January both sides agreed to renew the activity of the Israeli-Palestinian Joint Water Committee to improve water infrastructure and supply in the occupied West Bank and Gaza.

48. The protracted occupation has significantly undermined agriculture in Palestine, as both horizontal and vertical expansion of the agriculture sector has been restricted for decades. In addition to constraints on water use resulting from access restrictions, land resources in Area C are underutilized. Irrigating the unexploited area as well as accessing additional range and forest land could deliver an additional \$704 million in value-added to the Palestinian economy, equivalent to 7 per cent of gross domestic product.

49. According to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the wall has had a significant impact on agricultural productivity in the West Bank, with some farmers having been separated from their lands on the other side of the wall. For example, the yield of olive trees in the area between the wall and the Green Line has been reduced by approximately 65 per cent in comparison with equivalent trees in areas accessible all year round.

⁴ Available from https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/npa_english_final_approved_20_2_2017_printed.pdf.

Chapter III

Mandate of the Committee

50. The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People was established by the General Assembly by resolution 3376 (XXX) of 10 November 1975, with the task of recommending a programme designed to enable the Palestinian people to exercise their inalienable rights to self-determination and to national independence and sovereignty, and to return to the homes and property from which they had been displaced, as recognized by the Assembly in its resolution 3236 (XXIX) of 22 November 1974. The mandate of the Committee has evolved considerably over the years into greater advocacy for the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and the mobilization of assistance. Additional information about the Committee is available on the website maintained by the Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat at <http://www.un.org/unispal/>.

51. Most recently, on 30 November 2016, the General Assembly renewed the mandate of the Committee (resolution 71/20), requested the Secretary-General to continue to provide the Division for Palestinian Rights with the necessary resources to carry out its programme of work (resolution 71/21) and requested the continuation of the special information programme on the question of Palestine of the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat (resolution 71/22). The Assembly also adopted resolution 71/23, entitled “Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine”, in which it reaffirmed the near-consensus international position regarding the components of a just, lasting and comprehensive solution.

52. The work of the Committee is fully aligned with the decisions of the main United Nations intergovernmental bodies such as the Security Council, the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council, and with the work of the Secretary-General and the programmes, funds and specialized agencies of the United Nations system, with which it collaborates extensively.

Chapter IV

Organization of work

A. Membership and officers

53. The Committee is composed of 26 Member States, representing different regional groups and supporting the international consensus for a two-State solution: Afghanistan, Belarus, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Cuba, Cyprus, Ecuador, Guinea, Guyana, India, Indonesia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mali, Malta, Namibia, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Pakistan, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

54. The 24 observers at the Committee meetings are Algeria, Bangladesh, Bulgaria, China, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Niger, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka, the Syrian Arab Republic, the United Arab Emirates, Viet Nam and Yemen, as well as the State of Palestine, the African Union, the League of Arab States (LAS) and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC).

55. The day-to-day tasks of the Committee are undertaken by its Bureau. At its 381st meeting, on 16 February 2017, the Committee elected Fodé Seck (Senegal) as Chair, and Mahmoud Saikal (Afghanistan), Anayansi Rodríguez Camejo (Cuba), Dian Triansyah Djani (Indonesia), Neville Melvin Gertze (Namibia) and María Rubiales de Chamorro (Nicaragua) as Vice-Chairs, and Carmelo Inganez (Malta) as Rapporteur. The State of Palestine participates in the Bureau's work as an observer.

56. The current composition of the Security Council includes, as elected members, four members and observers of the Committee: Bolivia, Egypt, Senegal and Ukraine.

B. Participation in the work of the Committee

57. As in previous years, the Committee reconfirmed that all States Members of the United Nations and observers wishing to participate in its work were welcome to do so. In accordance with established practice, the State of Palestine participated in the work of the Committee as an observer, attended all of its meetings, conducted briefings and made observations and proposals for consideration by the Committee and its Bureau. All efforts were made by the Working Group of the Committee to guarantee participation of civil society organizations, including Israeli pro-peace actors.

Chapter V

Action taken by the Committee

A. Action taken in accordance with General Assembly resolution 71/20

1. Action taken in the Security Council

58. During the open debates at the Security Council held on 19 October 2016 and 17 January, 20 April and 25 July 2017, the Committee delivered statements highlighting the situation and calling upon the Council to take appropriate actions to address ongoing violations and to uphold its responsibilities to contribute to a peaceful settlement of the conflict (see [S/PV.7792](#); [S/PV.7863](#); [S/PV.7929](#); [S/PV.8011](#) (resumption 1)).

2. Action taken by the Bureau of the Committee

59. The Members of the Bureau represented the Committee at all international conferences organized in accordance with the programme of work. On the margins of those events, the Committee delegation met with senior officials from the respective host countries. In particular, in Managua, the Committee delegation met with the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Nicaragua and parliamentarians. In Mexico City, the Committee delegation held consultations with high-ranking officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Mexico and parliamentarians. In Baku, the Committee delegation met with high-ranking officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan.

60. On 2 November 2016, the Bureau held its second annual retreat to review the work of the Committee. Issues discussed included the 2017 programme of work of the Committee, the goals for and organization of international events of the Committee and ideas for better outreach to and engagement with Member States and civil society.

61. On 22 March 2017, the Bureau met with the new Secretary-General, António Guterres, to familiarize him with the work of the Committee and to ensure his continuing support. The Bureau conveyed the sense of urgency among Member States regarding the implementation of the two-State solution on the basis of the pre-1967 borders, in the face of the continuing Israeli occupation and the deteriorating human rights and humanitarian situation, the spike in settlement activities and the one-State reality emerging. The alleviation of the suffering of the Palestinian people and the realization of their inalienable rights continues to be perceived as a litmus test of the credibility of the Organization. In particular, the Bureau requested the Secretary-General to make full use of one of the main tools currently at his disposal, his quarterly reports on the implementation of Security Council resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#).

62. On 18 May 2017, in a letter addressed to the Secretary-General, the Committee conveyed its position regarding the quarterly report, namely, that the report should be substantive, in writing, and should clearly indicate whether the relevant parties are in compliance with the provisions of the resolution.

63. The Chair of the Committee delivered a statement at the meeting of the Council of Foreign Ministers of OIC, held in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, on 10 and 11 July 2017.

B. Action taken by the Committee and the Division for Palestinian Rights in accordance with General Assembly resolutions [71/20](#) and [71/21](#)

1. Committee meetings at Headquarters

64. During the reporting period, the Committee held six periodic meetings at United Nations Headquarters in New York, in addition to the eight informal meetings of its Bureau and the meetings of its Working Group. At its 378th meeting, on 3 October 2016, the Committee adopted its annual report. At its 379th meeting, on 15 November, the Committee approved for submission to the General Assembly four draft resolutions entitled “Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People”, “Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat”, “Special information programme on the question of Palestine of the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat” and “Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine”. The 380th meeting, on 29 November, marked the observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. At its 381st meeting, on 16 February 2017, attended by the Chef de Cabinet of the Secretary-General, the Committee re-elected its Chair, Vice-Chairs and Rapporteur and adopted its annual programme of work. At its 382nd meeting on 17 May, the Committee focused on the reports of the international conferences already held and approved the programmes for upcoming international conferences. At its 383rd meeting, on 8 August, the Committee received reports on its most recent international meetings.

65. On 17 March, the Committee organized a public event on the margins of the sixty-first session of the Commission on the Status of Women at United Nations Headquarters in New York, entitled “In conversation with Dr. Hanan Ashrawi”. Ms. Ashrawi is a member of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization.

66. To mark Palestinian Prisoners’ Day, on 18 April, the Committee, in cooperation with the Permanent Observer Mission of the State of Palestine to the United Nations, organized the screening of the film, *Ghost Hunting*.

67. The above-mentioned public events and others organized by the Working Group of the Committee (see paras. 80-85) were attended by representatives of Governments, intergovernmental organizations and entities of the United Nations system, as well as parliamentarians and representatives of civil society and the media.

2. Programme of international meetings and conferences

68. During the reporting period the following international events were held under the auspices of the Committee:

(a) United Nations Roundtable on the Question of Palestine, entitled “Building Bridges with the Palestinian Diaspora in Central America”, Managua, 4 February 2017, and Committee delegation visit to Mexico City, 7 February 2017

69. The Round Table built on the outcome of the 2016 Palestinian diaspora convention in Bethlehem and facilitated interaction between Palestinians in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and the diaspora, the latter from 10 countries in Central and South America. Participants discussed how to strengthen international advocacy to end the Israeli occupation and promote socioeconomic development in Palestine. The Round Table adopted the Managua Declaration, committing participants and their organizations to strengthening cooperation between a variety of diaspora communities, with the aim of establishing a regional bloc in Central America, attending upcoming meetings at Headquarters in June and in Santiago de Chile in October 2017 and increasing the number of visits to Palestine.

70. On 7 February, after participating in the Round Table, the Committee delegation visited Mexico City for meetings with high-level officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Chairs of two foreign affairs commissions of the Senate, as well as with the President of the Mexico-Palestine Friendship Group in the Chamber of Deputies. The Permanent Representative of Nicaragua and the Permanent Observer of Palestine also gave a presentation to students, policymakers and diplomats at the Diplomatic Academy.

(b) United Nations Capacity-Building Workshop on Sustainable Development Goals for Staff of the State of Palestine, entitled “Partnerships for Empowering a Future State of Palestine: Sustainable Development Goal 17 and South-South and Triangular Cooperation”, Beirut, 27 and 28 April 2017

71. The Workshop was organized in cooperation with the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) for mid-level Palestinian civil servants engaged in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. It aimed to establish a common understanding of the practice of South-South and triangular cooperation as an important modality for attaining the Goals in Palestine and provided practical tools and methods to comprehend the inherent challenges and opportunities. The Workshop built in part on the 2016 United Nations Seminar on Assistance to the Palestinian People, under the theme “Agenda 2030: paving the way towards a peaceful, independent and sustainable State of Palestine”, and took into account other capacity-building initiatives of the United Nations country team in Palestine.

(c) United Nations Forum to Mark Fifty Years of Occupation, entitled “Ending the Occupation: the Path to Independence, Justice and Peace for Palestine” and “Creating the Space for Human Rights, Development and a Just Peace”, New York, 29 and 30 June 2017

72. The Forum consisted of two day-long events, the first of which focused on diplomatic and political aspects of the ongoing occupation and the second on civil society advocacy strategies and recommendations.

73. The first day brought together international experts, representatives of the diplomatic community and civil society, including Palestinians and Israelis, as well as academics and students of diverse backgrounds and views. A series of moderated interactive panels underscored the importance of ending the occupation as an antecedent step towards a peaceful resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Participants noted that, notwithstanding the costs to Israel, given its current prosperity and growing international relations, including within the Group of 77 and China, Israel does not have an incentive to end the occupation and act in favour of a two-State solution. Participants stressed the need for the international community to insist on ensuring accountability and enforcement of international law, including relevant United Nations resolutions, including resolution 2334 (2016). While experts recognized that a peaceful and lasting solution was not imminent, they nevertheless stressed the importance of multilateral peace efforts and of working constructively with civil society partners towards an eventual two-State solution.

74. On the second day, participants included representatives of leading Palestinian, Israeli and international human rights organizations, conflict prevention and diplomatic advisory groups, women’s and youth groups, political parties, churches, the Jewish community in the United States and the Palestinian diaspora, including in the United States and Chile. Discussions focused on field perspectives, the use of alternative frameworks for analysis and policy recommendations to ensure accountability and pave the way for a just and lasting peace, in addition to concerns expressed about the shrinking space for civil society in the absence of political will.

A common thread in the discussions was the call by and on civil society to make a difference through its own actions while continuing to pressure Governments to take measures to ensure respect for international law and United Nations resolutions.

(d) International Conference on the Question of Jerusalem, entitled “Jerusalem and the International Community: Providing Political and Economic Support”, Baku, 20 and 21 July 2017, in collaboration with OIC

75. The Conference aimed to present ideas and proposals about ways in which the international community, especially OIC member States, could provide concrete support to the Palestinian population in Jerusalem, with a focus on education and training to foster resilience and on economic recovery and development.

76. Against the backdrop of tensions and confrontations at the al-Aqsa Mosque, participants warned that a continued violation of the historic status quo at the Haram al-Sharif risked inflaming religious sensitivities and shifting the Israeli-Palestinian/Arab conflict from a political to a religious one. To address the deteriorating socioeconomic situation of the Palestinian population in East Jerusalem, the participants called for an increase in outside support, for example, through direct investment in tourism and education infrastructure, provision of education and capacity-building opportunities abroad and permission for Arab Christians and Muslims to go on pilgrimage to East Jerusalem while under occupation.

77. The Conference ended with the issuance of a communiqué on behalf of the organizers, the Committee and OIC, strongly condemning the closure of the al-Aqsa Mosque and calling upon the international community to reaffirm respect for the historic status quo and to compel Israel to rescind all measures violating it.

3. Cooperation with intergovernmental and regional organizations

78. Throughout the year, the Committee continued its cooperation with intergovernmental organizations. The Committee appreciates the active participation of the representatives of those organizations in the various international events held under its auspices and the co-sponsorship provided by OIC to organize the International Conference on the Question of Jerusalem. The African Union, LAS and OIC, as observers to the Committee, regularly attend the meetings of the Committee and its Working Group and participate in their work.

79. On 10 and 11 July 2017, a Committee delegation attended the forty-fourth session of the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers in Abidjan.

4. Cooperation with civil society

80. In October 2016, the Working Group of the Committee adopted a new strategy with the overarching objective of promoting the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people through strengthened cooperation with civil society.

81. In accordance with its new strategy, the Working Group of the Committee, chaired by the Deputy Permanent Representative of Malta, supported action by civil society organizations promoting the rights of Palestinians and a just peace through events at Headquarters, which all Member and observer States were invited to attend, including the following:

(a) Briefing by Al Haq, Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch on issues related to the human rights situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, 18 October 2016;

(b) Address by Suhad Babaa, Executive Director of Just Vision, at the special meeting of the Committee held in observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People on 29 November 2016;

(c) Conversation with Palestinian political leader Hanan Ashrawi, on 17 March 2017. The event was held on the margins of the sixty-first session of the Commission on the Status of Women;

(d) Civil society forum held on 30 June 2017, entitled “Ending the Occupation: Creating the Space for Human Rights, Development and a Just Peace”, as part of a two-day event to mark fifty years of occupation.

82. Support to Palestinian and other civil society organizations was further provided by inviting civil society representatives based in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and Israel to attend the Forum on 29 and 30 June. In addition, the Working Group facilitated speaking engagements by civil society representatives at other events, including a presentation by Nur Arafah, Policy Fellow with Al Shabaka: the Palestinian Policy Network, at a summer course entitled “Palestine: Half a Century of Occupation — a Legal, Political and Human Approach”, held in Madrid from 3 to 7 July 2017.

83. To expand its network of civil society partners, the Committee continued to reach out to Palestinian, Israeli and other organizations through its Working Group and the Division for Palestinian Rights. Civil society representatives were invited to participate in all public international meetings organized under the auspices of the Committee. Additional organizations and parliamentarians were involved in the work of the Committee through activities in Nicaragua and Mexico; liaison with United Nations field offices and focal points of non-governmental organizations at Headquarters; participation in conferences and meetings organized by civil society in New York and Washington, D.C.; informal consultations; and desk research.

84. During the reporting period, new civil society partnerships to mobilize international support for and assistance to the Palestinian people were developed with Palestinian diaspora communities in Latin America, Canada and the United States.

85. The Division for Palestinian Rights continued to maintain a web page on civil society and the question of Palestine (<https://unispal.un.org/DPA/DPR/unispal.nsf/ngo.htm>), supporting outreach to civil society organizations, increasing their awareness of Committee activities and fostering cooperation. The weekly online bulletin *NGO Action News* (<https://unispal.un.org/DPA/DPR/unispal.nsf/add2.htm>) kept the Working Group of the Committee updated on civil society action on the question of Palestine. Through its dissemination among approximately 900 civil society organizations from around the world, the publication supports efforts to exchange information, build alliances and coordinate civil society initiatives to promote the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, achieve an end to the occupation and advance a just and lasting peace.

Parliaments and inter-parliamentary organizations, and local governments

86. The Committee continued to attach great importance to developing its liaison with national and regional parliaments and their organizations. Representatives of parliaments and inter-parliamentary organizations participated in international events organized by the Committee during the reporting period. Among others, members of the Palestinian Legislative Council, Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean and the Israeli Knesset participated in international meetings held under the auspices of the Committee. The Committee delegation held meetings with parliamentarians in Nicaragua and Mexico.

5. Research, monitoring and publications

87. The Division for Palestinian Rights carried out research and monitoring activities and responded to requests for information and briefings on the question of Palestine. Under the guidance of the Committee, the Division prepared the following publications for dissemination (see <http://www.un.org/unispal>):

(a) Monthly bulletin on action taken by the United Nations system and intergovernmental organizations relevant to the question of Palestine;

(b) Reports of international meetings and conferences organized under the auspices of the Committee;

(c) Special bulletin and information notes on the observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People;

(d) Annual compilation of resolutions and decisions of the General Assembly, Security Council and Economic and Social Council relating to the question of Palestine;

(e) Periodic reviews of developments related to the Middle East peace process.

6. United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine

88. The Division for Palestinian Rights, in cooperation with relevant services of the Secretariat, continued to administer, maintain, expand and upgrade the United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine to heighten international awareness of the question of Palestine as well as international support for the rights of the Palestinian people and a just, peaceful solution through the work of the Committee. The Division also maintained its Facebook, Twitter and YouTube pages to disseminate information about the work on the question of Palestine by the Committee and the entities of the United Nations system.

7. Capacity-building programme for staff of the Government of the State of Palestine

89. As mandated by General Assembly resolutions, including resolution [71/20](#), and as part of its ongoing efforts to further expand the capacity-building programme for staff of the Government of the State of Palestine aimed at supporting the Government in enhancing the viability and sustainability of the future independent State of Palestine, the Division for Palestinian Rights organized and administered a number of capacity-building initiatives in consultation with the Permanent Observer Mission of the State of Palestine to the United Nations in New York. They included mobilizing international and regional support and resources, including within the framework of South-South and triangular cooperation, for national efforts with respect to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development, which pledges to “leave no one behind”.

90. In October and November 2016, the Division organized the annual training programme for the staff of the Government of the State of Palestine in New York and Geneva, respectively. The training programmes allow Palestinian staff to familiarize themselves with various aspects of the multilateral work of the Secretariat and other United Nations organs and bodies, including the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council, as well as the United Nations Office in Geneva. In addition, in November 2016 the Division organized, in cooperation with the UNESCO-IHE Institute for Water Education, a four-day training course on water conflict management for Palestinian civil servants in Ramallah, designed for water managers, decision makers and others involved in

integrated water resource management and negotiation. In the same month, the Committee funded the participation of Palestinian staff in an online course entitled “Introduction to Water Diplomacy”, developed by the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), to enhance their ability to assess, prevent and respond to tensions arising from situations of water scarcity and mismanagement. In March 2017, the Committee funded another online course through UNITAR, entitled “Climate Change Diplomacy: Negotiating Effectively under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change”, enhancing the understanding of the climate change policy framework by building an appreciation of the science, causes and impacts of climate change and the history of the policymaking process. Finally, in April, the Division organized, in Beirut, a workshop on the Sustainable Development Goals entitled “Partnerships for Empowering a Future State of Palestine: Sustainable Development Goal 17 and South-South and Triangular Cooperation”.

91. The Committee paid special attention to expanding the pool of potential participants to all offices and departments of the Government of the State of Palestine and optimizing the use of resources to allow the maximum number of participants possible. The Committee remains of the view that in selecting candidates for its capacity-building and training programme, special consideration should be given to achieving gender balance; of the 41 Palestinian individuals trained during the reporting period, 23 were men and 18 were women.

8. International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People

92. The International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People was observed on 29 November 2016 at Headquarters, the United Nations offices in Vienna, Geneva, and Nairobi and at the United Nations Information Centres and other entities in many cities throughout the world. At Headquarters, the Committee held a special meeting with the participation of the Deputy Secretary-General, the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council, and organized an exhibit entitled “Palestinian Embroidery: Threads of Continuity, Identity and Empowerment”.

93. The Committee also facilitated a presentation by Randa Siniora, General Director of the Women’s Centre for Legal Aid and Counselling, and Ignacio Álvarez-Ossorio, professor in the Department of Arab and Islamic Studies of Alicante University, at the colloquium entitled “General Overview of the Human Rights Situation in Palestine — Perspectives from the International Community and Academia”, held on 18 November 2017 in Bogota, organized to mark the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

Chapter VI

Action taken by the Department of Public Information in accordance with General Assembly resolution 71/22

94. During the reporting period, the Department of Public Information continued to implement its special information programme on the question of Palestine in accordance with General Assembly resolution 71/22 of 30 November 2016.

95. The Department organized its annual training programme for Palestinian journalists, from 7 November to 8 December, in which nine Palestinian media practitioners attended meetings and participated in discussions at United Nations Headquarters in New York and in Washington, D.C., and travelled to Doha to undergo a training course at Al Jazeera.

96. The Department continued to produce and disseminate news and information about the range of issues and developments related to the question of Palestine and the Middle East peace process on all its multimedia and multilingual platforms. All open intergovernmental meetings on the subject were covered by United Nations Television, the United Nations Photo Unit and United Nations Web TV. In addition, the Department produced a total of 76 press releases covering meetings, in both English and French.

97. The multilingual United Nations News Centre, and the Arabic unit in particular, produced numerous features on the question of Palestine, including a series of interviews with senior officials and policymakers. The Centre also produced stories from the field, for example, on the electricity and water crisis in the Gaza Strip.

98. The *Yearbook of the United Nations* reported regularly on relevant statements, resolutions, events and actions taken by the Committee.

99. The Department's global network of United Nations Information Centres organized a number of outreach activities, and translated and disseminated information materials on the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. For example, the Information Centre in Tehran organized a workshop on the Plan of Partition for Palestine (resolution 181 (II) of 29 November 1947); the Information Centre in New Delhi organized its second International Utopia Model United Nations Conference, raising awareness on the question of Palestine with youth; and the Information Centre in Warsaw galvanized youth to join a panel discussion with the visiting UNRWA Commissioner-General. Further activities and events were organized by a number of Information Centres in November 2016 to commemorate the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, including in Canberra, Dakar, Dar es Salaam, Manama, Nairobi, New Delhi and Tehran.

Chapter VII

Conclusions and recommendations of the Committee

100. In the fiftieth year of the Israeli occupation, the Committee **urges the international community to redouble its efforts aimed at achieving, without delay, a negotiated peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine** in all its aspects through an end to the Israeli occupation, the realization of the rights of the Palestinian people, including to self-determination and independence, and achievement of the two-State solution in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions.

101. In its continued support to the revitalization of peace efforts, the Committee aligns itself with the view that the model of bilateral negotiations, which after more than two decades has not brought about the end of the Israeli occupation and the full independence of the State of Palestine on the basis of the pre-1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital, should be revised. The Committee welcomes serious steps taken by the international community towards presenting **an expanded multilateral framework, including key regional partners**, with a view to reviving the peace process and a credible political horizon.

102. As has consistently emerged during meetings of the General Assembly and the Security Council, as well as the international meetings organized by the Committee, any resolution of the conflict will remain central to peace and stability throughout the volatile Middle East region and the world. As such, the conflict clearly **requires a comprehensive regional solution** that includes greater engagement with key Arab States and other concerned States. The Arab Peace Initiative remains a significant contribution to such a regional settlement. The Committee supports those efforts and will continue its enhanced cooperation with the LAS and OIC. The Committee also welcomes the contributions of other States in the region and outside the Middle East in exerting their influence to reach a peaceful solution of the question of Palestine.

103. The Committee urges the Security Council, which has a primary responsibility for maintaining peace and security under the Charter of the United Nations, and the General Assembly to play a constructive role in **ensuring fullest accountability and implementation of the long-standing parameters for peace reiterated in the relevant United Nations resolutions** in order to resolve the conflict. Positive consideration should be given to all proposals that endeavour to overcome the current impasse. In that regard, the Committee welcomes the adoption of Security Council resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#), which reaffirmed that the establishment by Israel of settlements in the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem, had no legal validity, and called for affirmative steps to be taken immediately to reverse the negative trends on the ground that are imperilling the two-State solution, thus generating a unique momentum for peace which needs to be maintained. Pursuant to paragraph 12 of the resolution, **the Committee requests the Secretary-General to present his third and subsequent reports to the Council on the implementation of the provisions of the resolution in a written format and to propose practical ways and means to hold Israel accountable for its illegal settlement activities and other violations.**

104. The Committee acknowledges that **intra-Palestinian relations** are an obstacle to progress towards an independent State of Palestine. Serious efforts are required to overcome mistrust between the parties, including through confidence-building efforts, and calls for a demonstration of the courage and leadership that is required at the present time. The **Committee offers its services and support to local, regional and international efforts, from any country and/or organization that is able to advance the process.**

105. Recalling the upcoming **seventieth anniversary of the expulsion of Palestine refugees from their homeland in 1948, remembered as the “Nakba”** (catastrophe), the Committee emphasizes the importance of the acknowledgment of that event and its impact upon the Palestinian people as a necessary requirement for a viable and lasting peace between Israelis and Palestinians, as well as for future reconciliation. It strongly advocates for **the right to return** (or compensation) of the Palestine refugees, as provided for in paragraph 11 of General Assembly resolution 194 (III). The Committee further encourages all Member States to work collectively to more sufficiently and predictably **fund UNRWA** as it is confronted with an increased demand for services resulting from widespread instability and socioeconomic decline in all fields of operation and the deepening poverty and vulnerability of the Palestine refugee population, particularly in the Gaza Strip, while facing severe shortfalls in budget, affecting the Agency’s capacity to provide assistance and protection in accordance with its mandate.

106. The Committee reiterates that the international community must intensify its efforts, uphold its moral and legal responsibility and **demand an end to the 10-year old Israeli air, land and sea blockade of Gaza** and the lifting of all closures within the framework of Security Council resolution [1860 \(2009\)](#). It notes that, two years after the devastating 2014 war, the reconstruction of Gaza has made some important strides. However, clean water, sanitation and electricity still remain scarce, and the fact that over 65,000 persons remain displaced continues to cause widespread suffering and has a significant impact upon an already dire humanitarian situation. The Committee calls upon **international donors to fulfil without delay all pledges** in order to expedite the provision of humanitarian assistance and the reconstruction process, essential for alleviating the distress of Palestinians, including women and children, and to support an urgent move from humanitarian assistance to development.

107. Ultimately, to ensure respect for the rights of the Palestinian people, to prevent deterioration beyond the breaking point and to stop the build-destroy-rebuild cycle, the Committee **recommends shifting from a humanitarian to a political and human rights framework**, which would take into account the legal obligations of all stakeholders, including in context of the Gaza Strip. A Palestinian unity government is also essential to take up governance and security functions in Gaza and exercise control over the crossings.

108. The Committee reiterates that **violations of humanitarian and human rights law must be investigated, and that perpetrators of such violations should be brought to justice**. The Committee expresses its concern at the limited implementation by Israel, the occupying Power, of the findings and recommendations contained in the report of the independent commission of inquiry on the 2014 Gaza conflict and of all other human rights recommendations directed at Israel. The Committee welcomes the appointment of Stanley Michael Lynk as Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967 and will strive to facilitate the implementation of his mandate.

109. The Committee **underscores the responsibility of States and private entities not to contribute to grave Israeli violations of Palestinian human rights**, particularly in respect of settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. It looks forward to the establishment of a database of all actors conducting business in areas under Israeli military occupation, as mandated by Human Rights Council resolution 31/36 of 2016. Within the context of that resolution and in accordance with paragraph 5 of Security Council resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#), which calls upon States to distinguish, in their relevant dealings, between the territory of the State of Israel and the territories occupied since 1967, the Committee urges further steps by Governments, private businesses and other

relevant bodies, including the European Union, to dissociate themselves from policies that directly or indirectly grant legitimacy to or support for illegal Israeli settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem and the occupation at large.

110. The **Committee notes with appreciation the useful contribution of the Division for Palestinian Rights** in support of its mandate and its activities through the following:

(a) Efficient provision of substantive and secretariat support, including to official meetings of the Committee as well as informal meetings of the Bureau and Committee visits to the field, and effective liaison with and strategic guidance to the Committee, its Bureau and the Working Group; organization of briefings, including for new Committee delegates; execution of the decisions of the Committee, including by preparing Committee correspondence to national authorities and regional organizations; and timely preparation and issuance of the necessary parliamentary documentation;

(b) Organization of four international meetings and conferences contributing to the sustained level of dialogue, engagement and support on the part of the international community for the Committee's programme objectives, as evidenced by the number and level of participation in its international meetings and conferences, and commemorations of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People;

(c) An increase in international awareness of United Nations policies and activities relating to the question of Palestine, through the preparation of publications and information materials and their widest possible dissemination; and maintenance, upgrading and continued development of *The Question of Palestine* website as well as the use of such web-based social information networks as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube;

(d) Enhanced assistance and support to the Government of the State of Palestine in building efficient, accountable and resilient institutions through workshops and training of Palestinian civil servants, particularly in the light of its efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda;

(e) Continued involvement of civil society organizations in support of the efforts of the Committee and the United Nations towards a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine.

111. The Committee will **continue, through its mandated activities implemented by the Division for Palestinian Rights, to generate heightened international awareness on the question of Palestine, as well as international support for the rights of the Palestinian people, including their right to self-determination and independence, in this year marking the fiftieth anniversary of the Israeli occupation and the seventieth anniversary of the General Assembly resolution to partition Palestine.**

112. The Committee requests the **Division to continue its substantive and secretariat support of all aspects of its mandate**; the organization of the annual observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People; the programme of international meetings and conferences; the programme of research, monitoring and publications and other informational activities in support of the Committee's communications strategy; and the expansion of the training and capacity-building programme, taking into account the National Policy Agenda of the State of Palestine and its efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development. In that context, the Committee recognizes the growing importance of cooperation among developing countries and regional and subregional organizations for sharing and implementing sustainable, cost-effective and replicable experiences

and solutions that work, and supports special efforts by the Division to **facilitate such exchanges within the framework of South-South and triangular cooperation**. Lastly, it **urges Committee Members and observer States and others to actively participate in its programme, including through voluntary contributions** to offer training experiences and to put the programmes on a solid financial footing.

113. The Committee is of the view that the **special information programme on the question of Palestine of the Department of Public Information** has made an important contribution to informing the media and the public of the relevant issues. It requests the continuation of the programme, with the necessary flexibility warranted by developments relevant to the question of Palestine.

114. The Committee highly **values civil society initiatives** in support of the Palestinian people and will continue to expand its efforts to engage additional civil society organizations, including by convening regular civil society forums, and the public at large in its work to support a just and peaceful solution to the question of Palestine, including in Israel. The **Committee encourages civil society partners to work with their national Governments, parliamentarians and other institutions with a view to gaining their full support for the work of the United Nations and the Committee, and for the overall aim of promoting the achievement by the Palestinian people of their inalienable rights, full recognition of the State of Palestine and its independence**. Furthermore, following the productive engagement with the Palestinian diaspora during the reporting period, the Committee will continue to expand the engagement, with a view to synergizing efforts to raise awareness and gain practical support for a just solution to the question of Palestine and for the socioeconomic development of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

115. Wishing to make its contribution to the achievement of a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine, and in view of the many difficulties facing the Palestinian people and their leadership and besetting the peace process, the **Committee intends to work closely with other United Nations actors on the ground**, including the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and UNRWA, to synergize efforts in fields of common concern and uphold the permanent responsibility of the Organization towards the question of Palestine until it is resolved in all its aspects in a satisfactory manner in accordance with international legitimacy (General Assembly resolution 71/20, last preambular paragraph). The Committee wishes to express its deep **appreciation to its partners, in particular OIC, for the contribution of extrabudgetary resources and their active participation in its conferences and events**.

116. The Committee will also **reach out to all regional groups at the United Nations with a view to expanding its membership**. It calls upon all States to join it in this endeavour and to extend their cooperation and support to the Committee, and invites the General Assembly again to recognize the importance of its role and to reconfirm its mandate.





United Nations

Report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

**General Assembly
Official Records
Seventy-third Session
Supplement No. 35**



Report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People



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Note

Symbols of United Nations documents are composed of letters combined with figures. Mention of such a symbol indicates a reference to a United Nations document.

Contents

<i>Chapter</i>	<i>Page</i>
Letter of transmittal	4
I. Introduction	5
II. Review of the political context relating to the question of Palestine	6
III. Mandate of the Committee	18
IV. Organization of work	19
A. Membership and officers	19
B. Participation in the work of the Committee	19
V. Action taken by the Committee	20
A. Action taken in accordance with General Assembly resolution 72/13	20
B. Action taken by the Committee and the Division for Palestinian Rights in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 72/13 and 72/11	20
VI. Action taken by the Department of Public Information in accordance with General Assembly resolution 72/12	27
VII. Conclusions and recommendations of the Committee	28

Letter of transmittal

[4 September 2018]

Mr. Secretary-General,

I have the honour to enclose herewith the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for submission to the General Assembly and circulation to all the competent bodies of the United Nations for necessary action, as appropriate, in accordance with paragraphs 2 and 10 of Assembly resolution [72/13](#) of 30 November 2017.

The report covers the period from 6 September 2017 to 4 September 2018.

(Signed) Cheikh **Niang**
Chair of the Committee on the Exercise of the
Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

His Excellency Mr. António Guterres
Secretary-General of the United Nations
New York

Chapter I

Introduction

1. The present report by the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People has been submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution [72/13](#), adopted on 30 November 2017. It covers the implementation by the Committee of its programme of work ([A/AC.183/2018/1](#)), formulated to enable the Palestinian people to exercise their inalienable rights. Its objectives include maintaining international awareness, mobilizing efforts aimed at achieving a just, comprehensive and lasting solution of the question of Palestine, enhancing international solidarity with the plight of the Palestinian people and supporting the Government of the State of Palestine in its capacity-building efforts towards a viable and sustainable future independent State of Palestine.
2. Chapter II consists of a review of the political context relating to the question of Palestine by the Committee during the reporting period, from 6 September 2017 to 4 September 2018.
3. Chapters III and IV outline the mandate of the Committee as set out by the General Assembly and provide information on the membership of the Committee and the organization of its work.
4. Chapter V covers the action taken by the Committee, including its participation in meetings of the Security Council and its continuing dialogue with intergovernmental organizations and civil society. It also covers international conferences, delegation visits and capacity-building workshops organized by the Committee, as well as other mandated activities carried out and events held by the Division for Palestinian Rights on behalf of the Committee.
5. Chapter VI provides an overview of the special information programme on the question of Palestine implemented by the Department of Public Information in accordance with General Assembly resolution [72/12](#) of 30 November 2017.
6. The conclusions and recommendations of the Committee to the General Assembly are set out in chapter VII of the report.

Chapter II

Review of the political context relating to the question of Palestine

Jerusalem

7. During the reporting period, several unilateral measures threatened the status of Jerusalem and the consensus on the two-State solution. In October and November 2017, the Israeli authorities approved multiple building permits for housing units in settlements in East Jerusalem.¹ On 6 December, the United States of America announced its recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and its intention to move its embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. The Secretary-General immediately reiterated that unilateral measures would jeopardize the prospect of peace for Israelis and Palestinians² and that Jerusalem remained a final status issue. The Committee issued a statement³ calling upon the United States to rescind its decision, stressing that there was no alternative to the two-State solution. On 14 May 2018, the United States inaugurated its embassy in Jerusalem to coincide with the seventieth anniversary of its recognition of Israel. In the week that followed, Guatemala and Paraguay opened embassies in Jerusalem. In late May, Czechia reopened its honorary consulate in Jerusalem; however, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Czechia issued a statement expressing full respect for the common European Union position of considering Jerusalem as the future capital of two States.

8. On 2 January, the Israeli Parliament, the Knesset, passed a bill that stipulated that any measure to relinquish control over any portion of Jerusalem to a foreign entity would require a two-third majority in the Knesset. On 17 July, the Knesset passed an amendment to the law on administrative affairs courts, transferring judicial authority over a range of issues in the Occupied Palestinian Territory from the High Court of Justice to the Jerusalem District Court, including freedom of information requests, planning and constructions matters, entry permits into Israel and freedom of movement and access.

9. On 3 July, the Prime Minister of Israel lifted the ban that prohibited members of the Knesset from visiting the Temple Mount, and on 8 and 9 July, several members of the Knesset violated the media ban by filming their visits. On 18 July, the Knesset passed a bill entitled “Basic Law: Israel as the Nation-State of the Jewish People”, which provided that the State viewed the development of Jewish settlements as a national value and would act to encourage and promote their establishment and consolidation. The law will apply within Israel as well as in areas annexed since 1967, including East Jerusalem. On 21 July, the Minister of Jerusalem Affairs and Heritage of Israel called upon Jews to “ascend the Mount”. On 27 July, on the first anniversary of the 2017 unrest at the Holy Esplanade, 10 Palestinians and 4 Israeli police officers were injured in clashes at the site (see S.PV/8329). The Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General to the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Palestinian Authority conducted a series of meetings with Christian, Jewish and Muslim religious leaders in Jerusalem to ensure that the status quo was preserved at the holy sites.

¹ .See https://unsc.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/security_council_briefing_-_20_november_2017.pdf.

² See <https://news.un.org/en/story/2017/12/638412-issue-jerusalem-must-be-resolved-through-direct-negotiations-between-parties-un>.

³ Available at www.un.org/unispal/document/committee-of-palestinian-rights-committee-statement-on-recognition-of-jerusalem-as-the-capital-of-israel/.

The Gaza Strip

10. The political and security situation in the Gaza Strip continued to be volatile. Lack of progress in implementing the intra-Palestinian reconciliation agreement, compounded by the Israeli blockade and access restrictions, continued to aggravate an already dire humanitarian situation.⁴

11. From 30 March to 15 May 2018, thousands of Palestinians staged the “Great March of Return”, weekly demonstrations to mark Land Day along the fence separating Gaza from Israel and call for the right of Palestine refugees to return to their homes lost in 1948. Israeli forces responded with live and other ammunition, killing and wounding civilians. On 31 March, the Secretary-General called for an independent inquiry into those acts of violence. On 6 April, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights noted that unjustified recourse to live fire could amount to wilful killing of civilians, which would be a breach of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War. The Chief Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court warned that acts of violence against civilians would constitute a crime under the Rome Statute, adding that the situation in Palestine was under preliminary examination by her office. The Committee issued a statement⁵ on 14 May demanding that the occupying power abide by its obligation to protect civilians under its control, in accordance with international law, and called for an end to the illegal blockade of the Gaza Strip that continued to punish the Gazan population collectively. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs reported that, between 30 March and 16 August, 177 Palestinians, including 29 children, had been killed and 18,006 had been wounded in the context of demonstrations and hostilities in Gaza.

12. July and August witnessed the largest escalation in violence in Gaza since the conflict of 2014. After one Israeli soldier was killed and another wounded in gunfire shot from Gaza on 20 July, Israeli airstrikes and ensuing clashes led to the deaths of more than 20 Palestinians, including eight children, and to more than 1,000 Palestinians suffering injuries. On 21 July, the Secretary-General called upon Hamas and other Palestinian militants to cease the launching of rockets and incendiary kites and provocations along the fence, and stressed that Israel must exercise restraint to avoid inflaming the situation further. With support from Egypt and the United Nations, an informal ceasefire was reached on 9 August. From 17 July to 15 August, the fishing zone was reduced by Israel from nine to three nautical miles. On 2 August, Israel reinstated the ban on the entry of fuel into Gaza, bringing critical services to the brink of collapse and prompting the United Nations Coordinator for Humanitarian and Development Activities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory to call for United Nations-purchased emergency fuel to be immediately allowed in to keep hospitals and essential water and sanitation facilities running.⁶ On 22 August, the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs informed the Security Council of a critical shortage of medicines and of funding for United Nations emergency fuel supplies (see [S/PV.8329](#)).

⁴ See www.ochaopt.org/content/only-marginal-improvement-humanitarian-situation-gaza-strip-wake-intra-palestinian.

⁵ Available at www.un.org/unispal/document/palestinian-rights-committee-statement-on-the-grave-situation-in-gaza/.

⁶ See www.ochaopt.org/content/entry-emergency-fuel-urgently-needed-avoid-closure-hospitals-and-overflow-sewage-gaza.

Efforts to resume the peace process

13. On 20 February, the President of the State of Palestine, Mahmoud Abbas, presented to the Security Council a peace plan⁷ calling for a multilateral international mechanism emanating from an international peace conference bringing together Israel, the State of Palestine and international stakeholders, notably the permanent members of the Security Council and the Quartet, in the same framework as the Conference for Peace in the Middle East held in Paris in 2017 and the meeting proposed to be held in Moscow in resolution 1850 (2008). He said that the outcome of the conference should include, inter alia, the admission of the State of Palestine as a full Member of the United Nations and the establishment of an international multilateral mechanism to facilitate time-bound negotiations between the two parties to resolve all permanent status issues. The terms of reference for negotiations would include respect for international law and relevant Security Council resolutions, the Arab Peace Initiative and signed agreements; the preservation of the principle of two States; the acceptance of minimal land swaps; East Jerusalem as the capital of the State of Palestine; ensuring the security of two States without undermining the independence and sovereignty of either of them; and a just and agreed solution for the Palestine refugees on the basis of General Assembly resolution 194 (III), as well as support for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), pending a just resolution for the refugees issue. The League of Arab States echoed the calls for a multilateral mechanism.⁸

Intra-Palestinian reconciliation efforts

14. On 12 October 2017, with the support of Egypt, Fatah and Hamas signed an agreement to enable the Government of the State of Palestine to resume its responsibilities in Gaza. The agreement was welcomed by the Committee. On 1 November, the Government of the State of Palestine regained control over Gaza crossings, while on 18 November, the Rafah crossing opened under government control for the first time in a decade. However, on 25 January 2018, the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process reported to the Security Council that the implementation of the agreement had effectively ground to a halt, as Hamas and Fatah were unable to agree on key issues. On 13 March, the situation was further strained by an assassination attempt against the Prime Minister of the State of Palestine, Rami Hamdallah, during his visit to Gaza. Negotiations facilitated by Egypt have since resumed between Hamas and Fatah.

Protection of Palestinian civilians

15. The reporting period was marked by almost daily military incursions and raids by Israeli forces and clashes with young Palestinian people and Palestinian protesters in many parts of Gaza and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. On 22 May, the State of Palestine submitted a State referral to the Prosecutor of the International Court of Justice, requesting investigation of past, ongoing and future crimes in all parts of the territory of the State of Palestine. On 13 July, the International Court of Justice called upon the “victims of the situation in Palestine” to approach the court with reports about crimes committed against them.

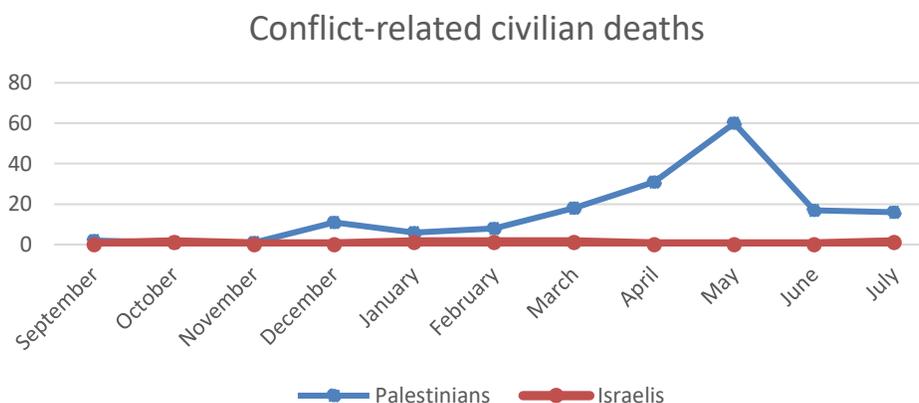
16. According to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, from 1 September 2017 to 30 July 2018, 171 Palestinian civilians were killed and 24,938 were injured (see figure I and the table below it), while attacks on Israelis resulted in five civilian deaths and 41 people injured in conflict-related casualties. Continued and disproportionate violence against Palestinian civilians and incitement have perpetuated mutual fear and suspicion. On 14 August, the Secretary-General issued a report on the protection of the Palestinian civilian population (A/ES-10/794),

⁷ See www.un.org/press/en/2018/sc13213.doc.htm.

⁸ See <http://english.wafa.ps/page.aspx?id=OyEgt7a96306934317aOyEgt7>.

pursuant to General Assembly resolution ES-10/20, in which he laid out options for affording better protection to the Palestinian civilian population, including by means of a more robust presence of the United Nations on the ground; dedicated civilian observers; better humanitarian access; and a mandated United Nations mission to provide physical protection. He noted that, in order to be viable, each of those options would require the cooperation of the parties concerned, including Israel, the sustained cessation of hostilities and additional resources.

Figure I
Number of Palestinians and Israelis killed during the reporting period^a



Source: Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.⁹

^a As at 30 July 2018.

Number of Palestinians and Israelis injured during the reporting period^a

	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	April	May	June	July
Palestinians	125	108	90	4 580	542	909	2 879	4 968	7 306	1 827	1 604
Israelis	2	4	8	1	2	5	1	5	6	0	7

Source: Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.¹⁰

^a As at 30 July 2018.

Settlements

17. Settlements have continued to expand, despite several Security Council resolutions, including resolution 2334 (2016), in which all settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory were declared illegal under international law. Reporting on behalf of the Secretary-General pursuant to Security Council resolution 2334 (2016), the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process noted that, during the period from 20 September to 18 December 2017, Israel approved the construction of 1,200 units in the occupied West Bank. Plans were also advanced to build units for settlers evicted from illegal outposts under court orders. The authorities also conditionally approved building permits for 31 housing units in the H2 zone of Hebron, the first such approvals since 2001. During the period from 18 December 2017 to 25 March 2018, Israel advanced 22 plans for some 1,500 housing units in Area C settlements. For the period from 26 March to 12 June, Israel advanced, approved or tendered out some 3,500 housing units in settlements in Area C, one third of which were in settlements in outlying locations deep in the West Bank. On

⁹ See also www.ochaopt.org/content/monthly-figures.

1 August, Israel confirmed its intention to legalize the settler outpost of Adei Ad, in the first such instance since 2014.

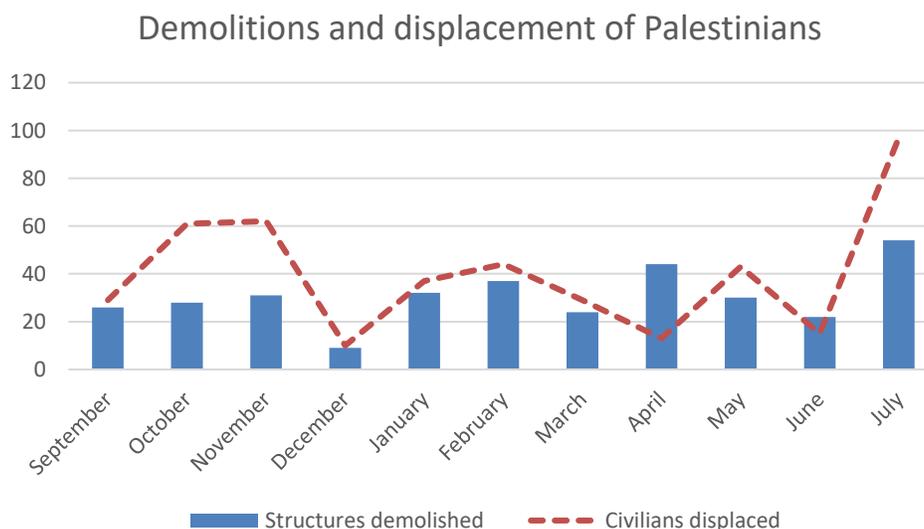
18. On 23 January, in line with European Union policy, the Parliament of Denmark passed a resolution with reference to Security Council resolution 2334 (2016) urging the inclusion of a clear statement in future agreements between Denmark and Israel indicating their inapplicability to occupied territory and encouraging the Government of Denmark to strengthen its guidance to private and public investors. On 11 July, the Seanad Éireann (the upper house) of Ireland passed a bill prohibiting trade with and economic support for settlements in occupied territory.¹⁰

Demolitions and displacement

19. Demolitions and confiscation of Palestinian-owned structures continued in 2018 across the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem (see figure II), albeit at a marginally lower rate than in the previous year (see S/2018/614). In his briefings to the Security Council, the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process repeatedly expressed concern¹¹ about Israeli plans to evict communities, including Bedouin herding communities through demolitions. On 19 July, the Special Coordinator, among others, called upon Israel to cancel plans to demolish the Khan al-Ahmar — Abu al-Helu Bedouin community's dwellings, in Area C.¹² The demolitions were accompanied by residency restrictions on those evicted, especially in East Jerusalem, and denial of access to essential services, such as water and sanitation (see A/72/564, para. 64). On 1 August, the High Court of Justice of Israel ordered a hold on the demolition of the village of Khan al-Ahmar, stating that it did not find sufficient reason for the action.

Figure II

Demolitions of Palestinian structures and displacement of Palestinians during the reporting period^a



Source: Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

^a As at 30 July 2018.

¹⁰ See www.theguardian.com/world/2018/jul/11/irish-senate-approves-ban-on-products-from-israeli-settlements.

¹¹ See S/PV.8072, S/PV.8108, S/PV.8128, S/PV.8138, S/PV.8139, S/PV.8167 and S/PV.8183.

¹² <https://reliefweb.int/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/nickolay-mladenov-special-coordinator-middle-east-peace-13>.

Detention, trial and imprisonment

20. During the reporting period, the number of Palestinians arrested by Israeli forces ranged from 300 to 700 a month. On 19 December 2017, Palestinian teenager Ahed Tamimi, aged 16, was arrested and sentenced to eight months in prison for slapping an Israeli soldier. On 13 February, the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967 and the Chair-Rapporteur of the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention issued a joint statement¹³ stating that the facts of the case did not appear to justify the teenager's detention before her trial, in particular given the concerns expressed by the Committee on the Rights of the Child. They observed in their statement that Israel detained and prosecuted between 500 and 700 Palestinian children in military courts every year. As of June 2018, 5,667 Palestinians remained in Israeli prisons, charged for offences related to the Israeli occupation.⁹

United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East and Palestine refugees

21. UNRWA, which provides core essential services to Palestine refugees in the region, was confronted with a major shortfall in budget during the reporting period, owing to an increase in the number of registered Palestine refugees, the growing extent of their vulnerability and their deepening poverty. Despite new contributions, as of June 2018, the Agency continued to face a shortfall of \$248 million in its programming budget of \$440 million. Its ability to continue education programmes is in question. In that context, UNRWA has launched a global fund-raising campaign.

Impact of the occupation on Palestinian women

22. Women continue to be adversely affected by the occupation. In a report issued in May 2018, the International Labour Organization (ILO) determined that women's unemployment rate in the Occupied Palestinian Territory was now the highest in the world, rising to 47.4 per cent in 2017, from 44.6 the previous year.¹⁴ In the Gaza Strip, even though job vacancy rates have shrunk steadily, the number of women seeking employment has increased by 200 per cent. On 8 June, the United Nations Population Fund reported that the negative impact of the blockade of Gaza had worsened women's conditions, by increasing psychological stress and threatening the stability of families. Mothers whose children were injured in the Great March of Return protests reported increased gender-based violence,¹⁵ and the risk of economic violence increased for women widowed during Israeli military action against protestors.

Freedom of movement

23. The numerous restrictions to freedom of movement imposed by Israel, as an occupying power, had a severe impact on access to economic, social and cultural rights in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, and on the enjoyment of the right to family life (see [A/HRC/37/38](#)). Gazan residents continued to face Israeli restrictions on movement into Israel through the Erez crossing (see figure III). During the month of Ramadan, Egypt kept the Rafah crossing open.¹⁶ Since 5 August, the import of

¹³ Available at www.ohchr.org/en/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=22654&LangID=E.

¹⁴ See www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_norm/---relconf/documents/meetingdocument/wcms_629263.pdf.

¹⁵ See <http://palestine.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/Situation%20Report%20Gaza%20-%202018%20June%202018%20-%20Great%20Return%20March%20-%20final.pdf>.

¹⁶ See https://unsc.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/statement_by_un_special_coordinator_mladenov_-_18_may_2018.pdf.

cooking gas to Gaza has compensated for shortages due to Israeli restrictions.¹⁷ From 9 July to 15 August, Israel temporarily suspended the import and export of all items through the Kerem Shalom crossing, except for basic humanitarian supplies.¹⁸ On 19 August, Israel closed the Erez crossing for Gaza and West Bank residents, except for humanitarian cases.

24. The enforcement measures used by the Israeli authorities in Gaza undermine the right of Palestinian fishermen and farmers to a livelihood and have a devastating impact on the rights to life and to physical and mental health (see [A/HRC/31/44](#), para. 43). The approval rate of Israeli exit permits from Gaza decreased from 72 per cent during the previous reporting period to 32.8 per cent during the present reporting period.¹⁹ Restrictions on movement also severely affected access to health care. The World Health Organization reported that dozens of patients died while waiting for their permits to be approved or after their applications had been denied.²⁰ Impediments to Palestinians' freedom of movement were further consolidated in the H2 zone of Hebron with the addition of new closures and the fortification of existing checkpoints. Israel continued to revoke the East Jerusalem residency status of Palestinians as a form of collective punishment (see [A/72/565](#), paras. 21–25), violating the right to liberty of movement and freedom to choose residence (see [A/HRC/37/43](#), para. 54, and [A/HRC/34/38](#), paras. 62–66). Restrictions on Palestinians' access to agricultural land and to critical natural resources in Area C remained in place, and markets in occupied East Jerusalem remained out of reach, severely curbing livelihood opportunities (see [A/HRC/37/38](#), para. 42).

¹⁷ See <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/protection-civilians-report-31-july-13-august-2018>.

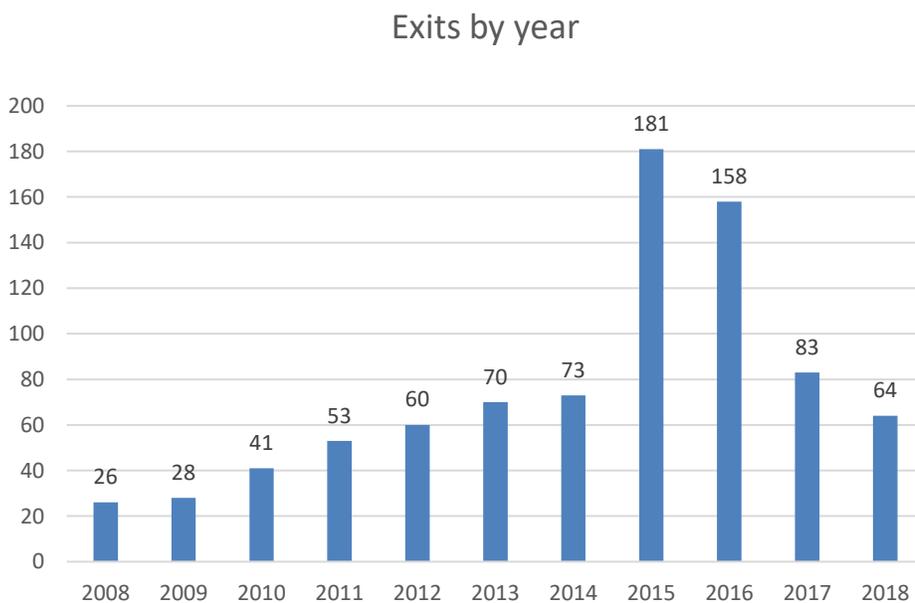
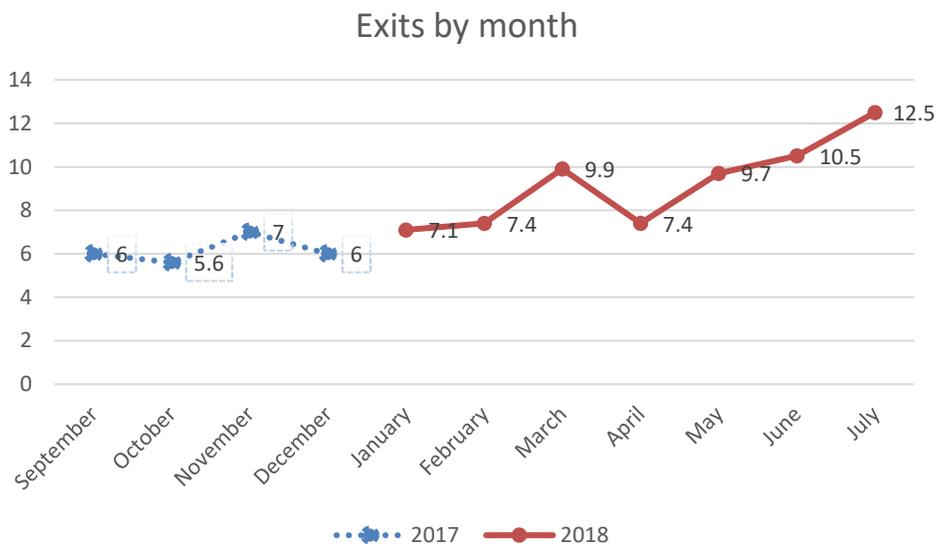
¹⁸ See <https://unsco.unmissions.org/statement-un-special-coordinator-mladenov-new-restrictions-kerem-shalom-crossing>.

¹⁹ Palestinian General Authority of Civil Affairs communications to OHCHR, 16 and 18 October 2016 and 26 November 2017.

²⁰ See www.emro.who.int/pse/publications-who/monthly-referral-reports.html.

Figure III
Exits and entries of people at the Erez crossing in Gaza^a

(Thousands)



Source: Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.²¹

^a As at 3 August 2018.

25. ILO noted that Palestinian access to farming remained restricted around and within Israeli settlements, as well as in the seam zone, where prior coordination or special permits were required. The approval rate for permit applications to access land in this area during the olive harvest fell from 58 per cent in 2016 to 55 per cent in

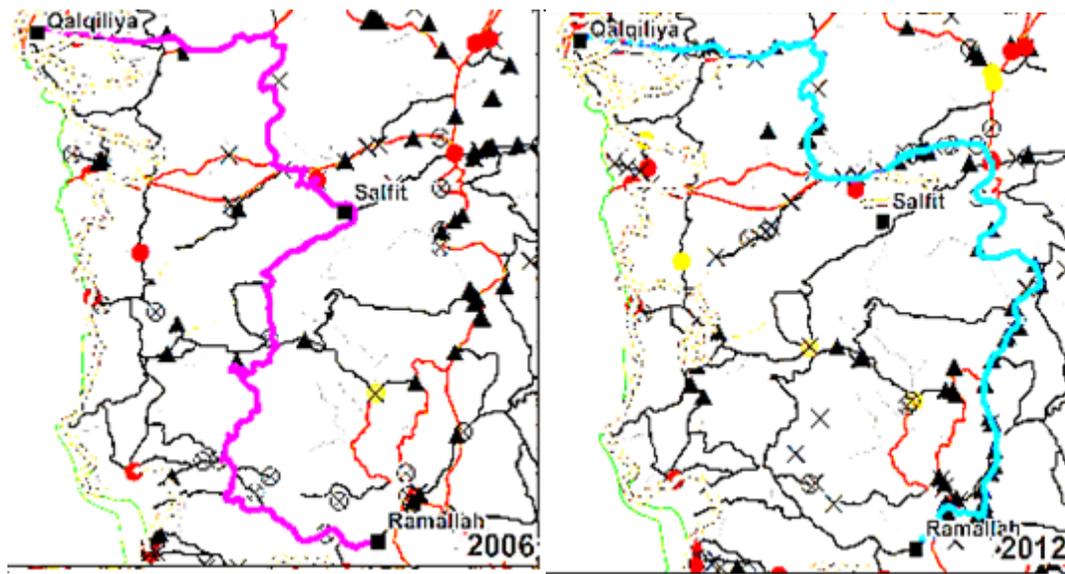
²¹ See www.ochaopt.org/page/gaza-crossings-movement-people-and-goods.

2017. Access to education, training and employment for Palestinians living on the West Bank side of “the Barrier” also remained severely constrained.¹⁴

26. In a research paper published on 27 March, the World Bank showed that the route deviations forced by the construction of the West Bank barrier by Israel had an economic impact, as seen in the deviation between 2006 and 2012 in the route from Ramallah to Qalqilyah (see figure IV). The World Bank also found that, during the period 2005–2012, market access constraints resulting from road closure obstacles reduced gross domestic product per capita in the West Bank by 4.1 to 6.1 per cent annually.²²

Figure IV

Impact of “the Barrier” on freedom of movement inside the West Bank



Source: World Bank report, 27 March 2018.

Socioeconomic situation

27. In a report released on 3 April, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development stated that restrictions on movement and access by Israel had stifled investment and limited the Palestinian private sector to small-scale operations with low capital intensity and efficiency.²³ Israel continued to maintain restrictions in several areas, including telecommunication spectrum, airspace, tourism, the exploitation of natural gas resources and water. Since the onset of the occupation, in 1967, Palestinians have lost access to more than 60 per cent of West Bank land and more than two thirds of grazing land, while, in the Gaza Strip, Palestinians have lost access to half the cultivable area. In the waters off Gaza, 85 per cent of fishery resources are inaccessible to Palestinian fishermen owing to limitations imposed by Israel on the distance that fishing boats may sail off the coast of Gaza, in violation of the United Nations Convention of the Law of the Sea.

28. The occupation has severely affected economic prospects for young Palestinian people. In its report released on 30 May,¹⁴ ILO found that the unemployment rate in the Occupied Palestinian Territory had now risen to the highest level in the world, at 27.4 per cent in 2017, and that women and young people were particularly affected.

²² See <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/135611522172009978/pdf/WPS8385.pdf>.

²³ See http://unctad.org/en/PublicationsLibrary/gdsapp2017d2_en.pdf.

The Palestinian labour force participation rate was currently the eleventh lowest in the world. A large number of Palestinian workers employed in Israel did not enjoy social benefits and were not employed with a written contract. ILO also observed that ending the occupation was a prerequisite for realizing workers' rights and for making decent work a reality.

Palestinian role in international institutions

29. In a sign of growing recognition of the role that the State of Palestine could play in multilateral forums, the State of Palestine was elected on 24 July 2018 to chair the Group of 77 group at the United Nations in 2019. Before that, the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) had elected the State of Palestine to its Bureau at its 12th session, held in Jeju, Republic of Korea, from 4 to 9 December 2017.

30. In a welcome breakthrough, on 19 April 2018, Palestinian and Israeli diplomats agreed on the text of a UNESCO resolution on occupied Jerusalem. Earlier on, on 12 October 2017, the United States had announced its withdrawal from UNESCO, accusing the agency of "anti-Israel bias". On 22 December 2017, Israel also announced its withdrawal from the agency. Both withdrawals, if followed through, will come into effect at the end of 2018.

Action in the General Assembly

31. On 22 December 2017, at an emergency special session and following a failed attempt in the Security Council,²⁴ the General Assembly adopted resolution ES-10/19 on the status of Jerusalem, after the unilateral decision by the United States to recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, in contravention of Security Council resolution 478 (1980). In its resolution, adopted by a majority of 128 countries in favour, to 9 against and 35 abstentions, the Assembly stressed that Jerusalem was a final status issue and affirmed that any decisions that purported to have altered the character, status or demographic composition of Jerusalem had no legal effect and were null and void.²⁵ On 13 June, at an emergency meeting, the Assembly adopted resolution ES-10/20 by 120 votes in favour to 8 against, deploring the use of excessive, disproportionate and indiscriminate force by Israeli forces against Palestinian civilians, in particular in the Gaza Strip. It requested the Secretary-General to submit a report within 60 days outlining proposals on ways and means for ensuring the safety of Palestinian civilians, including recommendations regarding an international protection mechanism.²⁶

32. From 17 to 20 July 2018, the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories visited Amman, where it met community representatives, non-governmental organizations, officials from the Government of the State of Palestine and United Nations representatives. The delegation was told that discriminatory measures against the Palestinians were on the rise in a climate of impunity, with the continuation by the occupying power of deliberate and unlawful policies and practices. The Government of Israel maintained its practice of

²⁴ See further details below, under "Action in the Security Council".

²⁵ For the full text of this and other relevant resolutions adopted on the question of Palestine in 2017, see the Committee's publication on [resolutions, decisions and voting records of the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council relating to the Question of Palestine](#).

²⁶ See also www.un.org/press/en/2018/ga12028.doc.htm.

non-cooperation with the Committee and the delegation was unable to visit the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

Action in the Security Council

33. On 18 December, owing to the negative vote exercised by a permanent member, the Security Council failed to adopt (with 14 votes in favour and 1 against) draft resolution [S/2017/1060](#), tabled by Egypt, in which regret was expressed at the unilateral decision of a Member State to recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and move its embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. On 15 May, the Council also failed to put to vote a draft resolution by Kuwait to condemn the killing of civilians in Gaza.

34. The Secretary-General continued to use his good offices to promote a peaceful settlement of the conflict based on the two-State solution. On 20 February, he expressed concern to the Security Council that the global consensus for a two-State solution could be eroding and that obstacles on the ground had the potential to create an irreversible one-State reality (see [S/PV.8183](#)). He also noted that conditions for Palestinians in Gaza were dire and felt that the shortfalls in the funding of UNRWA were a matter of international concern and called for concerted action by all parties.²⁷

35. In the monthly meetings of the Council on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question,¹¹ the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process reported that the failure of the forces of moderation was a win for the forces of radicalization and that unilateral moves that blocked the way back to the negotiating table would drive the situation further towards a one-State reality of perpetual occupation. He also highlighted the need to maintain support for Palestine refugees as a fundamental issue to the pursuit of peace and security in the region. The Special Coordinator also presented three reports on behalf of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Security Council resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#), the third of which was presented on 19 June and, in response to repeated requests by the Committee and other Member States, made available in writing.²⁸

36. On 22 February, Council members attended the Arria-formula meeting entitled “Prospects for the two-State solution for peace”. Participants in the briefing found that challenges to the prospect of a two-State solution included tensions regarding Jerusalem; a sharp deterioration in the humanitarian situation, in particular in Gaza; the financial difficulties faced by UNRWA; and the shrinking space for civil society, in particular human rights defenders and civilian protesters.

Action in the Economic and Social Council

37. On 25 July, ECOSOC adopted resolution [2017/30](#), in which it stressed the urgency of achieving without delay an end to the Israeli occupation that had begun in 1967. The Council stated that it was convinced that the Israeli occupation had gravely impeded the efforts to achieve environmentally sustainable development and a sound economic environment in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. It demanded that Israel comply with the Protocol on Economic Relations between the Government of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization signed in Paris on 29 April 1994.

²⁷ See also the Committee’s monthly bulletins for relevant statements of the Secretary-General and other United Nations officials on the question of Palestine (available at www.un.org/unispal/data-collection/monthly-bulletin/).

²⁸ Available at www.un.org/undpa/en/speeches-statements/20062017/middleeast.

Action in the Human Rights Council

38. In a report ([A/HRC/37/39](#)) submitted pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution 31/36, in which the Council called for a database of all business enterprises either explicitly linked to the settlements or forming part of processes that enabled and supported the establishment, expansion and maintenance of the settlements (see [A/HRC/22/63](#), para. 4), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) identified 206 companies that would be named in a future update after they had all been contacted. While asking for more resources to update the database, OHCHR stated that the presence of settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory served to depress the Palestinian economy and reduce opportunities for Palestinian businesses to thrive, which had a direct effect on the job market.

39. On 23 March, the Human Rights Council adopted four resolutions relating to the Occupied Palestinian Territory. The Council reaffirmed the inalienable, permanent and unqualified right of the Palestinian people to self-determination (resolution 37/34); demanded that Israel cease all practices and actions that violated the human rights of the Palestinian people (resolution 37/35); demanded that Israel cease all settlement activities in all the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and in the occupied Syrian Golan, and called upon Israel to cease immediately all actions causing the alteration of the character, status and demographic composition of the Occupied Palestinian Territory (resolution 37/36); and called upon all duty bearers and United Nations bodies to pursue the implementation of recommendations of, inter alia, the independent international fact-finding mission to investigate the implications of settlements on the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of the Palestinian people (resolution 37/37).

40. In his second report to the Human Rights ([A/72/556](#)), in October 2017, the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967 stated that the role of Israel as occupier had crossed the line into illegality, and he recommended to the General Assembly to commission a study and consider the advantages of seeking an advisory opinion from the International Court of Justice on the legality of the occupation. He also recommended to the Assembly to consider the adoption of a Uniting-for-Peace resolution with respect to the question of Palestine. In his third report ([A/HRC/37/75](#)), considered at the thirty-seventh session of the Council, the Special Rapporteur emphasized the urgent need to improve the desperate state of right to health in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and the plight of Palestinian children.

41. At the same session, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights submitted a report on ensuring accountability and justice for all violations of international law in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem ([A/HRC/37/41](#)), pursuant to resolution 34/28. In that report, the Commissioner called for accountability for the escalation of hostilities in Gaza in 2014 and observed that recent developments undermined confidence in the Israeli military justice system, as they appeared to reinforce a culture of impunity. The Commissioner also highlighted a lack of accountability for alleged violations impeding the work of human rights defenders and journalists in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem.

42. On 23 July, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights briefed the Committee, stressing that the root causes of the Great March of Return protests in Gaza needed to be addressed. He stated that only an end to the occupation could bring about lasting peace.²⁹

²⁹ See www.un.org/unispal/document/human-rights-commissioner-briefing-to-ceirpp-on-the-human-rights-situation-in-the-opt/.

Chapter III

Mandate of the Committee

43. The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People was established by the General Assembly by resolution 3376 (XXX) of 10 November 1975, with the task of recommending a programme designed to enable the Palestinian people to exercise their inalienable rights to self-determination, national independence and sovereignty, and to return to the homes and property from which they had been displaced, as recognized by the Assembly in its resolution 3236 (XXIX) of 22 November 1974. The mandate of the Committee has evolved considerably over the years into greater advocacy for the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and the mobilization of assistance. Additional information about the Committee is available on the website maintained by the Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat at <http://www.un.org/unispal/>.

44. On 30 November 2017, the General Assembly renewed the mandate of the Committee (resolution 72/13), requested the Secretary-General to continue to provide the Division for Palestinian Rights with the necessary resources to carry out its programme of work (resolution 72/11) and the continuation of the special information programme on the question of Palestine of the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat (resolution 72/12). The Assembly also adopted resolution 72/14, entitled “Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine”, in which it reaffirmed the near-consensus international position regarding the components of a just, lasting and comprehensive solution.

45. The work of the Committee is fully aligned with the decisions of the main United Nations intergovernmental bodies, such as the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, as well as with the work of the Secretary-General and the programmes, funds and specialized agencies of the United Nations system, with which it collaborates extensively.

Chapter IV

Organization of work

A. Membership and officers

46. The Committee is composed of 26 Member States, representing different regional groups and supporting the international consensus for a two-State solution: Afghanistan, Belarus, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Cuba, Cyprus, Ecuador, Guinea, Guyana, India, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mali, Malta, Namibia, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Pakistan, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of).

47. The 24 observers of the Committee are Algeria, Bangladesh, Bulgaria, China, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Niger, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka, the Syrian Arab Republic, the United Arab Emirates, Viet Nam and Yemen, as well as the State of Palestine, the African Union, the League of Arab States (LAS) and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC).

48. The day-to-day tasks of the Committee are undertaken by its Bureau. At its 388th meeting, on 5 February 2018, the Committee elected, in their personal capacity, Fodé Seck (Senegal) as Chair; Mahmoud Saikal (Afghanistan), Anayansi Rodríguez Camejo (Cuba), Dian Triansyah Djani (Indonesia), Neville Melvin Gertze (Namibia) and María Rubiales de Chamorro (Nicaragua) as Vice-Chairs; and Carmelo Inguanez (Malta) as Rapporteur. At its 390th meeting, on 23 July 2018, the Committee elected Cheikh Niang (Senegal) as the new Chair. The State of Palestine participates in the Bureau's work as an observer.

49. The Committee members and observers have actively advocated the rights of the Palestinian people, including in the Security Council. Currently, a member and an observer of the Committee, the Plurinational State of Bolivia and Kuwait, respectively, serve on the Council as elected members.

B. Participation in the work of the Committee

50. As in previous years, the Committee reconfirmed that all Member States of the United Nations and observers wishing to participate in its work were welcome to do so. In accordance with established practice, the State of Palestine participated in the work of the Committee as an observer. All efforts were made by the Committee to guarantee participation of civil society organizations, including from Israel.

Chapter V

Action taken by the Committee

A. Action taken in accordance with General Assembly resolution 72/13

1. Action taken in the Security Council

51. During the debates held by the Security Council on 18 October 2017 and 25 January, 26 April and 24 July 2018, the Committee delivered statements highlighting the deteriorating situation and calling upon the Council to uphold its responsibilities, take appropriate actions and contribute to a just, comprehensive and peaceful settlement of the conflict.³⁰

2. Action taken by the Bureau of the Committee

52. The members of the Bureau represented the Committee at all international conferences organized by the Committee and in all delegation visits, and they chaired and moderated various sessions of the conferences. On the margins of the conferences and during delegation visits, they held meetings with senior officials from the respective host countries.

53. On 3 October 2017 and 2 August 2018, respectively, the Bureau held its third and fourth annual retreats. Issues discussed on those occasions included the programmes of work of the Committee for 2018 and 2019, including priorities and proposals for the holding of international events; and better outreach to and engagement with Member States (including in the Security Council, in particular its elected members), regional organizations and civil society. Several strategic decisions were taken to guide the future work of the Committee.

54. On 15 August, the Bureau met with the Secretary-General and conveyed its concern regarding the deteriorating humanitarian, economic and social situation in Gaza and the urgency to establish a protection mechanism for Palestinian civilians, following the adoption by the General Assembly of resolution ES-10/20. The Bureau also conveyed the need to solve as a matter of urgency the shortfall in funding of UNRWA.

55. The Chair, on behalf of the Committee, issued three statements: in December 2017, to call upon the United States to rescind its decision to move its embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem; in February 2018, to share the outcome of the Committee delegation visit to Uganda; and in May, to call upon Israel to abide by its international obligations as an occupying power and ensure the protection of civilians in Gaza.

B. Action taken by the Committee and the Division for Palestinian Rights in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 72/13 and 72/11

1. Committee meetings at Headquarters

56. During the reporting period, the Committee held six open meetings in New York, in addition to the six informal meetings of its Bureau. At the open meetings, the Committee received updates on the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, reports of meetings organized by the Committee, reports from members of the

³⁰ See [S/PV.8072](#), [S/PV.8167](#), [S/PV.8244](#) and [S/PV.8316](#).

Committee on their activities in support of the Palestinian people, and briefings from invited speakers. Key aspects of those meetings included the following:

(a) At its 385th high-level meeting, on 15 November 2017, the Committee approved for submission to the General Assembly four draft resolutions entitled “Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People”, “Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat”, “Special information programme on the question of Palestine of the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat” and “Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine”, respectively. At the same meeting, the Committee heard a briefing by the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967;

(b) The 386th high-level meeting, on 29 November, marked the observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People;

(c) At its 387th meeting, on 14 December, the Committee heard the report of the Committee delegation visit to the United Republic of Tanzania and of its meetings with civil society organizations;

(d) At its 388th meeting, on 5 February 2018, attended by the Secretary-General, the Committee re-elected its Chair, Vice-Chairs and Rapporteur and adopted its annual programme of work;

(e) At its 389th meeting, on 28 March, the Committee heard a briefing by the Director of the UNRWA New York Liaison Office. The report of the Committee delegation visit to Uganda was also presented;

(f) At its 390th meeting, on 23 July, the Committee reviewed reports on its delegation visit to Panama, the United Nations Forum on the Question of Palestine, held at Headquarters on 17 and 18 May, and the International Conference on the Question of Jerusalem, held in Rabat from 26 to 28 June. At the same meeting, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights briefed the Committee on the deteriorating situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, the funding shortfall of UNRWA and the adoption by Israel of the discriminatory “Basic Law: Israel as the Nation-State of the Jewish People”.

2. United Nations Forum on the Question of Palestine: “70 Years after 1948 — Lessons to Achieve a Sustainable Peace”

57. The United Nations Forum on the Question of Palestine, held at Headquarters on 17 and 18 May, brought together Palestinian, Israeli and international experts and representatives of the diplomatic community and civil society to highlight the need to address issues related to the 1948 war and subsequent mass displacement of Palestinians. Panels focused on an evaluation of the Nakbah (“the catastrophe”) and its continued relevance today, the ongoing displacement of Palestinians, questions of accountability and transitional justice.

58. Key findings and recommendations included: the fact that ending the Israeli occupation was a necessary prerequisite for the freedom of the Palestinian people and a two-State solution; the need to address the root causes of the conflict and the interlinkages among development, peace and security, and human rights; the need for the international community to acknowledge the Nakbah and to hold Israel accountable for crimes committed in 1948 and thereafter; the need to establish a truth-seeking, reparations and reconciliation mechanism prior to a political agreement; the need to remind Israel of its obligations under international law and to request that it provide better international protection to Palestinians, including refugees; and the need to treat Palestine refugees as dispossessed nationals of a country — Palestine — rather than as stateless refugees.

59. On 15 May, just before the Forum was held and to mark the seventieth anniversary of the Nakbah, the Committee supported the Permanent Observer Mission of the State of Palestine to the United Nations in New York in organizing a commemorative concert by a renowned Palestinian music band, Trio Joubran.

60. On 16 May, closed consultations were held with civil society organizations based in Palestine and Israel.

3. Annual observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People

61. The International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People was observed on 29 November 2017 at Headquarters, the United Nations offices in Vienna, Geneva, and Nairobi, and at the United Nations information centres and other entities in many cities throughout the world. At Headquarters, the Committee held a special meeting with the participation of the Deputy Secretary-General, the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 72/11, the Committee organized an exhibit, entitled “The Palestinian People: Everlasting Roots, Infinite Horizons”, showcasing photos of eminent Palestinian individuals and groups in different walks of life. Palestinian Arab Idol Star Ameer Dandan performed on the occasion.

4. Programme of international meetings and conferences

62. During the reporting period, the Committee organized several international events,³¹ including:

Committee delegation visit to the United Republic of Tanzania

63. The purpose of the visit to the United Republic of Tanzania (3–6 December 2017) was to mobilize engagement for the two-State solution in that country and to inform local public opinion about the life of the Palestinian people after 50 years of Israeli occupation.

64. The delegation held meetings with the Minister for Foreign Affairs and East African Cooperation and the Minister of Information, Culture, Arts and Sports. The delegation also met with representatives of civil society organizations and the media and with a former Prime Minister and erstwhile Secretary-General of the African Union. A public lecture was organized at a local conference centre.

65. Interlocutors reaffirmed that the United Republic of Tanzania was opposed to the foreign occupation of territory or its acquisition by force, and that it remained committed to the two-State solution. The delegation received requests for more outreach and information in East Africa, including in the major regional language, Kiswahili.

Committee delegation visit to Uganda

66. The objective of the visit to Uganda (26–28 February 2018) was to strengthen political and diplomatic ties, enhance the support of that country for the two-State solution and understand the evolving position of the African countries on the question of Palestine.

67. The delegation held meetings with the President, the Prime Minister and the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, as well as the Speaker of Parliament and the Chair of the Parliament Committee on Foreign Affairs. At Makerere University,

³¹ For detailed reports of each event, see www.un.org/unispal/events/international-conferences/ and www.un.org/unispal/delegation-visit/.

the delegation had an interactive discussion with faculty and students. The delegation also met with representatives of civil society organizations.

68. Interlocutors reiterated the support of Uganda for the work of the Committee and the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. They also inquired about the concrete actions that the Committee was undertaking at United Nations Headquarters. They urged the Committee to focus on links between businesses and the Israeli occupation and to mobilize civil society, especially in the United States and Europe.

Committee delegation visit to Panama

69. The purpose of the visit to Panama (9 and 10 April 2018) was to enhance the support of that country for the two-State solution and advocate the recognition of the State of Palestine. The visit took place as part of the Committee's outreach efforts in Latin America.

70. The delegation held meetings with the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs and with the Foreign Affairs Committee of the National Assembly. Other activities included a briefing to trainees at the Diplomatic Academy and a conference hosted by the Departments of Law and Political Science and of Public Administration of the University of Panama. The delegation also met with representatives of local Palestinian solidarity groups and of the Palestinian diaspora.

71. Government interlocutors highlighted the traditional position of Panama, which was to foster dialogue and facilitate solutions. They informed the Committee about the intention to open a liaison office of Panama in Ramallah, as a first step toward strengthening relations with the State of Palestine. The encounters with the public and local media attention to the visit also indicated strong interest in the question of Palestine and support for the rights of the Palestinian people.

International Conference on the Question of Jerusalem in Rabat, supported by the Organization of Islamic Cooperation

72. The International Conference on the Question of Jerusalem, held in Rabat from 26 to 28 June 2018 under the theme "The question of Jerusalem after 50 years of occupation and 25 years of the Oslo Accords", brought together Palestinian, Israeli and international experts and representatives of the diplomatic community and of civil society to provide up-to-date information on the current situation in East Jerusalem, examine the latest legal developments having an impact on the political and social status of Palestinians, and explore practical ways for the international community to support the resilience and development of Jerusalem, in particular its youth.

73. The key messages and recommendations included the following: Jerusalem is a final status issue that must be resolved through direct negotiations; recent developments in Jerusalem, taken against international consensus and Security Council resolutions, have turned the focus back on the conflict, including the question of Jerusalem; the fundamental problem is the Israeli occupation, and Israeli reluctance to recognize the Palestinian people as an equal has resulted in a colonizer/colonized power dynamic between the two peoples; Israeli proposals for Palestinians in East Jerusalem to participate in local governance are a call for a de facto acceptance of the annexation of East Jerusalem; initiatives should be launched to provide socioeconomic and political support to Palestinians in Jerusalem and to enable them to stay in the city; international and regional organizations, such as the European Union, should take a more active political role and not restrict themselves to development funding; and future meetings on the question of Jerusalem should also be held outside the Arab Islamic world.

5. Cooperation with intergovernmental and regional organizations

74. Throughout the year, the Committee continued its cooperation with intergovernmental organizations. The Committee appreciates the active participation of the representatives of those organizations in the various international events held under its auspices and the co-sponsorship provided by OIC to organize the International Conference on the Question of Jerusalem. The African Union, LAS and OIC, as observers to the Committee, regularly attend the meetings of the Committee and its Working Group and participate in their work.

75. The Chair of the Committee delivered a statement at the forty-fifth session of the Council of Foreign Ministers of OIC, in Dhaka, on 5 and 6 May 2018.

6. Cooperation with civil society

76. The Working Group of the Committee, chaired by Malta and supported by the Division for Palestinian Rights, collaborates with civil society organizations, promoting the rights of Palestinian through the following activities:

(a) Briefings provided by civil society organizations (B'Tselem, Gisha: Legal Center for Freedom of Movement, Human Rights Watch, Women's Centre for Legal Aid and Counselling and Terrestrial Jerusalem) and organized by the Israel-Palestine NGO Working Group and United Nations agencies. The Division for Palestinian Rights facilitated briefings by the Association of International Development Agencies, the Norwegian Refugee Council and One Voice following the publication of the report of the Association of International Development Agencies entitled "50 Years of Occupation: Dispossession, Deprivation and De-development". The briefings raised awareness of the situation following recent developments in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including the humanitarian crisis in Gaza, the Great March of Return protests and the legal and political impact of new Israeli laws on Palestinians;

(b) A meeting of the Committee Bureau with the Israel-Palestine NGO Working Group on 23 February. Participants in the meeting were provided with updated information on the work of faith-based organizations of the United States in the Occupied Palestinian Territory;

(c) Civil society organization participation in the Forum on the Question of Palestine;

(d) Closed consultations with civil society organizations based in Palestine and Israel on 16 May, just before the Forum on the Question of Palestine. The consultations, attended by more than 20 organizations, provided an opportunity to meet with the Committee Working Group and member States. The civil society organizations recommended that the Committee adopt a more proactive advocacy policy within the United Nations to call for a systematic investigation into war crimes, compile research on best practices in relation to legal solutions for protracted displacement, and explicitly address the issue of business transactions in and with illegal Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, even in absence of an official United Nations database.

77. The Committee also invited youth representatives from East Jerusalem to attend the International Conference on the Question of Jerusalem and share their perspectives about the challenges that they faced under occupation.

78. The Division for Palestinian Rights continued to issue the weekly *NGO Action News* bulletin and maintain the Committee web page on civil society to increase awareness and foster cooperation.

79. The Committee Working Group is currently reviewing the policy for civil society organization accreditation and the mechanism for selecting such organizations for participation in Committee events.

7. Cooperation with parliaments and interparliamentary organizations

80. The Committee continued to attach great importance to developing its relations with national and regional parliaments and their interparliamentary organizations, and it held meetings with parliamentarians in Panama, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania during Committee delegation visits, as well as with parliamentarians in Morocco in the margins of the International Conference on the Question of Jerusalem.

8. Research, monitoring and publications

81. The Division for Palestinian Rights carried out research and monitoring activities and responded to requests for information and briefings on the question of Palestine. Under the guidance of the Committee, the Division prepared the following publications for dissemination:

(a) A monthly bulletin on actions taken by the United Nations system and intergovernmental organizations relevant to the question of Palestine;³²

(b) Reports of international meetings and conferences organized under the auspices of the Committee;³³

(c) An annual compilation of resolutions and decisions of the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council and the Human Rights Council relating to the question of Palestine.³⁴

82. The Committee is of the view that the Division should continue a review of the continued relevance of existing publications in consultation with the Bureau, discontinue those that are no longer considered relevant and reallocate resources to other publications.

9. United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine

83. The Division for Palestinian Rights, in cooperation with relevant services of the Secretariat, continued to administer, maintain, expand and upgrade the United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine³⁵ to heighten international awareness of the question of Palestine as well as international support for the rights of the Palestinian people and a just, peaceful solution through the work of the Committee. The Division also maintained its Facebook, Twitter and YouTube pages to disseminate information about the work on the question of Palestine by the Committee and the entities of the United Nations system. The Division, in cooperation with the Department of Public Information, undertook a major redesign and expansion of the Information System, which is now and for the first time available in all six official United Nations languages, on a more modern technological platform.

10. Capacity-building programme for staff of the Government of the State of Palestine

84. As mandated in General Assembly resolutions, including resolution 72/11, and as part of its ongoing efforts to further expand the capacity-building programme for

³² See www.un.org/unispal/?s=monthly+bulletin.

³³ See www.un.org/unispal/events/international-conferences/.

³⁴ See www.un.org/unispal/document/compilation-of-resolutions-and-decisions-adopted-in-2017-english-and-french-dpr-publication/.

³⁵ www.un.org/unispal.

staff of the Government of the State of Palestine aimed at supporting the Government in enhancing the viability and sustainability of the future independent State of Palestine, the Division for Palestinian Rights organized and administered the following capacity-building initiatives, in consultation with the Permanent Observer Mission of the State of Palestine to the United Nations in New York:

(a) In October 2017, the programme facilitated and funded a training session on effective multilateral environmental agreements, organized by the United Nations Environment Programme in collaboration with the University of Eastern Finland;

(b) The same month, the programme implemented, in collaboration with the United Nations System Staff College, a training session entitled “United Nations catalytic support to South-South and triangular cooperation in implementing the 2030 Agenda”;

(c) From 30 October to 1 November 2017, the programme collaborated with OHCHR and organized a study visit to observe the sixty-eighth session of the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women in order to help Palestinian officials to prepare for the Convention’s session in 2018, when the report of the State of Palestine would be discussed;

(d) In December 2017, the programme funded the participation of Palestinian officials in a workshop on conference diplomacy and multilateral negotiations;

(e) In February 2018, the programme funded the participation of Palestinian officials in an online course organized by the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), entitled “Women, leadership and peacebuilding”;

(f) In March 2018, the Programme funded the participation of Palestinian officials in another online UNITAR course, entitled “Multilateral conferences and diplomacy”.

85. The Committee paid special attention to expanding the pool of potential participants to all offices and departments of the Government of the State of Palestine, and it gave special consideration to achieving gender balance in the selection of candidates for its capacity-building programme. The Committee notes that, in September 2017, the annual capacity-building programme for Palestinian officials at United Nations Headquarters was not implemented for the first time since its advent, because candidates selected for the programme were unable to obtain visas to travel to New York in time.

86. The Division is currently undertaking a comprehensive evaluation of the programme, to make it more responsive to Palestinian capacity-building needs.

Chapter VI

Action taken by the Department of Public Information in accordance with General Assembly resolution 72/12

87. During the reporting period, the Department of Public Information continued to implement its special information programme on the question of Palestine in accordance with General Assembly resolution 72/12.

88. The Department held an international media seminar on peace in the Middle East in Vienna, on 5 and 6 October 2017, which focused on media narratives and public perceptions from Israeli and Palestinian perspectives; and the conflict through the lens of international media.

89. The Department organized its annual training programme for 10 Palestinian journalists from 30 October to 1 December 2017, thereby bringing to 190 the number of journalists trained under the programme since its inception, in 1995.

90. The Department completed a major review and update of its permanent exhibit on the question of Palestine, located along the guided tour route of United Nations Headquarters.

91. The Department issued a total of 90 press releases covering meetings, in English and French, and disseminated news and information about issues and developments related to the question of Palestine. All open intergovernmental meetings on the subject were covered by the United Nations Television and Video, United Nations Photo and the Webcast Unit.

92. United Nations News, and its Arabic unit in particular, produced a series of interviews with senior officials and policymakers. The *Yearbook of the United Nations* continued to cover relevant statements, resolutions, events and actions taken by the Committee. The first issue of *UN Chronicle* in 2018 contained an article focusing on a training programme in Palestine to achieve environmental sustainability in the region.³⁶

93. The global network of United Nations information centres organized a wide range of activities, including briefings, exhibitions, film screenings, workshops, social media campaigns and commemorations of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. Information centres across the world also helped to promote at the local level “Dignity is priceless”, the global fundraising campaign launched by UNWRA in January 2018.

³⁶ Available at <https://unchronicle.un.org/article/cewas-middle-east-supporting-entrepreneurs-address-water-sanitation-and-resource-management>.

Chapter VII

Conclusions and recommendations of the Committee

94. On the basis of its deliberations at Committee and Bureau meetings, Committee briefings, delegation visits, international conferences and events involving Member States, civil society organizations, and regional organizations, the Committee has developed the recommendations listed below.

95. Recalling that 2018 marked the seventieth anniversary of the expulsion of Palestine refugees from their homeland in 1948, remembered as the Nakbah (the catastrophe), and fifty-first anniversary of the Israeli occupation, the Committee urges the international community to redouble its efforts towards the achievement of the two-State solution based on the 1967 borders, in accordance with relevant United Nations resolutions, the Madrid principles, the Arab Peace Initiative and the road map of the Quartet.

96. The Committee reiterates the need to reframe the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. It is not a conflict between two parties over disputed territory. It is one of one State occupying, colonizing and annexing the territory of another State.

97. The Committee supports revising the existing model of bilateral negotiations into an expanded multilateral framework that includes key regional partners, with a view to reviving the peace process with a credible political horizon. In this context, the Committee welcomes the eight-point plan presented to the Security Council by President of the State of Palestine, Mahmoud Abbas, on 20 February 2018.

98. Any resolution of the conflict requires a comprehensive regional solution, such as that offered by the Arab Peace Initiative. The Committee will enhance its cooperation with LAS and OIC. The Committee calls upon other international and regional organizations, such as the European Union, to take on a more politically active role in mediating an end to the conflict.

99. The Committee acknowledges that intra-Palestinian unity is critical to achieving an independent State of Palestine. The Committee offers its services and support to local, regional and international efforts to advance the unity process.

100. The Committee urges the Security Council and the General Assembly to ensure the accountability and implementation of the long-standing parameters for peace stated in relevant United Nations resolutions, including Security Council resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#). The Committee requests the Secretary-General to continue to present his reports to the Council on the implementation of the resolution in a written format and, pursuant to paragraph 5 of the resolution, to include in his reports references to implementation by Member States. Pursuant to paragraph 11 of the resolution, the Committee also calls upon the Council to examine practical ways and means to secure the full implementation of relevant Council resolutions.

101. The Committee underscores the responsibility of States and private entities not to contribute to grave Israeli violations of Palestinian human rights, in particular with respect to settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. It looks forward to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights producing expeditiously a database of all business enterprises engaged in certain Israeli settlement activities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, as mandated by the Human Rights Council in its resolution 31/36.

102. The Committee calls upon the international community to shift from a humanitarian to a political and human rights framework in addressing the plight of the Palestinian people. It demands an end to the 11-year old Israeli air, land and sea blockade of Gaza and the lifting of all closures within the framework of Security

Council resolution 1860 (2009). It calls upon international donors to fulfil without delay all pledges to expedite the provision of humanitarian assistance, the reconstruction process and economic recovery, which are essential to alleviate the distress of Palestinians, including women and children.

103. The Committee deems unilateral decisions by Member States to recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and the transfer of embassies in Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem as null and void, as they are in violation of Security Council resolutions, including resolutions 476 (1980) and 478 (1980). The Committee calls upon Member States to rescind those decisions. Jerusalem remains a final status issue that must be resolved through direct negotiations between the two parties on the basis of relevant United Nations resolutions.

104. The Committee deplores the use of excessive, disproportionate and indiscriminate force by Israeli forces against Palestinian civilians, including during the protests in the Gaza Strip in 2018. The Committee hopes that every support will be provided to the Commission of Inquiry mandated by the Human Rights Council to conclude expeditiously its investigation into violations committed on the fence between Israel and the Gaza Strip during those protests.

105. The Committee urges Member States and the Organization to remind Israel of its obligations under international law. It welcomes the report of the Secretary-General pursuant to resolution ES-10/20 and emphasizes the need for the implementation of an international protection mechanism that can credibly ensure the safety and welfare of Palestinian civilians.

106. The Committee emphasizes the importance of the acknowledgment by Israel of the Nakbah and its impact upon the Palestinian people as a necessary requirement for a viable and lasting peace. Palestine refugees should be treated as dispossessed nationals of a country — Palestine — rather than stateless refugees. It strongly advocates the right to return (or compensation) of the Palestine refugees, as provided for in paragraph 11 of General Assembly resolution 194 (III). The Committee further encourages all Member States to work collectively to fund UNRWA sufficiently and predictably, in particular in view of the unprecedented shortfall in its funding.

107. The Committee notes with appreciation the diligent contribution of the Division for Palestinian Rights in support of its mandate and requests the Division to continue its substantive and secretariat support for all aspects of its mandate.

108. The Committee will continue, through its mandated activities implemented by the Division, to raise international awareness as well as international support for the rights of the Palestinian people. In that context, the Committee recognizes the growing importance of cooperation among developing countries and regional and subregional organizations within the framework of South-South and triangular cooperation for sharing replicable experiences of achieving self-determination and independence.

109. The Committee requests the continuation of the special information programme on the question of Palestine of the Department of Public Information, which has made an important contribution to informing the media and the public of the relevant issues.

110. The Committee highly values civil society initiatives in support of the Palestinian people and will continue to expand its efforts to engage civil society organizations, including by regularly convening civil society forums. It encourages civil society partners to work with their national Governments, parliamentarians and other institutions to promote the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and full recognition of the State of Palestine and its independence.

111. The Committee intends to work closely with other United Nations actors and entities, including the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and UNRWA, to synergize efforts in fields of common concern and uphold the permanent responsibility of the Organization towards the question of Palestine until it is resolved in all its aspects in a satisfactory manner and in accordance with international law. The Committee wishes to express its deep appreciation to its partners, and in particular OIC, for the contribution of extrabudgetary resources and their active participation in its conferences and events.

112. Lastly, the Committee urges its members, observer States and others to participate actively in its programme of activities. The Committee will also enhance its outreach to all Member States and regional groups at the United Nations to take a more effective approach towards the achievement of the two-State solution, and to expand the Committee's membership as a form of political support for the resolution of the question of Palestine. The Committee calls upon all Member States to join in this endeavour, and invites the General Assembly to reconfirm its mandate in recognition of the importance of its role.





United Nations

Report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

**General Assembly
Official Records
Seventy-fourth Session
Supplement No. 35**



**Report of the Committee on the Exercise
of the Inalienable Rights of the
Palestinian People**



United Nations • New York, 2019

Note

Symbols of United Nations documents are composed of letters combined with figures. Mention of such a symbol indicates a reference to a United Nations document.

Contents

<i>Chapter</i>	<i>Page</i>
Letter of transmittal	4
I. Introduction	5
II. Overview of the political context relating to the question of Palestine	6
III. Mandate of the Committee	9
IV. Organization of work	10
A. Membership and officers	10
B. Participation in the work of the Committee	10
V. Action taken by the Committee and the Division for Palestinian Rights in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 73/18 and 73/21	11
A. Introduction	11
B. Mobilization of the diplomatic community	11
C. Raising awareness of the question of Palestine	14
D. Cooperation with intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations and United Nations system entities	16
E. Capacity-building	18
VI. Action taken by the Department of Global Communications in accordance with General Assembly resolution 73/20	19
VII. Conclusions and recommendations of the Committee	21

Letter of transmittal

[4 September 2019]

Mr. Secretary-General,

I have the honour to enclose herewith the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for submission to the General Assembly and circulation to all the competent bodies of the United Nations for necessary action, as appropriate, in accordance with paragraphs 2 and 10 of Assembly resolution 73/18 of 30 November 2018.

The report covers the period from 5 September 2018 to 3 September 2019.

(Signed) Cheikh **Niang**
Chair of the Committee on the Exercise of the
Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

Chapter I

Introduction

1. The present report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People has been submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution [73/18](#), adopted on 30 November 2018. It covers the implementation by the Committee of its programme of work ([A/AC.183/2019/1](#)), formulated to promote the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including their right to self-determination. Its objectives include maintaining international awareness, mobilizing efforts aimed at achieving a just and comprehensive solution of the question of Palestine and lasting Israeli-Palestinian peace, enhancing international solidarity with the plight of the Palestinian people until those objectives are achieved and supporting the Government of the State of Palestine in its capacity-building efforts towards a viable and sustainable future independent State of Palestine.
2. Chapter II consists of an overview of the political context relating to the question of Palestine during the reporting period, from 5 September 2018 to 3 September 2019.
3. Chapters III and IV contain an outline of the mandate of the Committee as set out by the General Assembly and information on the membership of the Committee and the organization of its work.
4. Chapter V covers the action taken by the Committee, including its participation in meetings of the Security Council and its continuing dialogue with intergovernmental organizations and civil society. It also covers international conferences, visits of delegations and capacity-building workshops organized by the Committee, as well as other mandated activities carried out and events held by the Division for Palestinian Rights on behalf of the Committee.
5. Chapter VI provides an overview of the special information programme on the question of Palestine implemented by the Department of Global Communications in accordance with General Assembly resolution [73/20](#).
6. The conclusions and recommendations of the Committee to the General Assembly are set out in chapter VII of the report.

Chapter II

Overview of the political context relating to the question of Palestine

7. During the reporting period, the deteriorating political, security, human rights, humanitarian and socioeconomic situation continued unabated as a result of the further entrenchment of the 52-year Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, and diminishing prospects for realizing the two-State solution and a just peace.

8. Despite the demand reiterated by the Security Council in resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#), no steps were taken by Israel to immediately and completely cease all settlement activity in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. Settlement activity, facilitated through such measures as the approval of 6,000 additional housing units on 31 July, the seizure and demolition of Palestinian-owned structures and the forcible displacement of Palestinian families, continued and escalated across the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, not only in Area C, but also in Areas A and B, negatively affecting the Palestinian population, including women, girls and Bedouin communities. Those steps further undermined the contiguity of the Palestinian territory and the physical viability of the two-State solution based on the 1967 lines, making what is supposed to be a temporary situation of occupation indistinguishable from a one-State reality (see [A/73/447](#)).

9. To ensure accountability, the Committee and the wider membership reiterated calls for the implementation of relevant resolutions, including Security Council resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#), and for reports on the implementation of that resolution to include information on compliance with its paragraph 5, in which States are called upon to distinguish in their dealings between Israel and the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem (see [S/2019/251](#) and [S/2018/614](#)). They also reiterated their call for the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to publish in an expeditious manner the database of companies operating in Israeli settlements in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem.

10. The 12-year illegal Israeli blockade of the Gaza Strip continued to lead to human rights violations as well as humanitarian and socioeconomic distress among the Palestinian civilian population, which had no prospects for development or improved living conditions. The ongoing fuel and electricity crisis severely undermined the delivery of essential health, water and sanitation services, affecting women and girls in particular (see [E/CN.6/2019/6](#)). Moreover, demonstrations at the perimeter fence between Gaza and Israel continued on an almost daily basis. On 30 March 2019 alone, 18 demonstrators were killed and 703 wounded by Israeli security forces on the first anniversary of the Great March of Return, for which between 40,000 and 50,000 Palestinian protesters had gathered near the Israeli fence. In the report of the independent commission of inquiry established by the Human Rights Council to investigate violations committed during the large-scale civilian demonstrations held between 30 March and 31 December 2018, an investigation into possible war crimes and the prosecution of suspected perpetrators of international crimes were recommended (see [A/HRC/40/74](#)).

11. The protection of civilians in the Occupied Palestinian Territory continued to be an issue of the utmost concern (see General Assembly resolution [ES-10/20](#)). Regrettably, on 29 January, the mandate of the Temporary International Presence in Hebron was not renewed, and the international monitors left the city, removing an

essential element of protection for the local population.¹ The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict has continued to report on the violations suffered by children, verifying that the past year witnessed the highest number of Palestinian child casualties since the 2014 Israeli war on the Gaza Strip, and the continued arrest, interrogation, detention and imprisonment of Palestinian children by Israel, the occupying Power (A/73/907-S/2019/509, paras. 84–97).

12. The implementation of the Egyptian-brokered reconciliation agreement of October 2017 among Palestinian factions to advance the reunification of Gaza and the West Bank under a single, democratic and legitimate national Government remained stalled. In addition, a resolution to the serious financial crisis of the Government of the State of Palestine was not reached following the decision of Israel to punitively withhold Palestinian tax revenue from March 2019 onward, in violation of international law and existing agreements, in particular the Protocol on Economic Relations between the Government of the State of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (see, e.g., S/PV.8583). The support announced by the League of Arab States (LAS) and some Member States in April 2019 is expected to provide much-needed funding to ensure continuity in the functions of the Government of the State of Palestine.

13. The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and its core programme of providing educational, health, relief and social services and emergency assistance, including food aid, to more than 5.4 million Palestine refugees registered with it continued to be imperilled as a result of the lack of a reliable and sustainable funding arrangement. Notwithstanding the additional \$60 million contributed by donor countries and organizations at the pledging conference on 25 June, the Agency's 2019 budget shortfall remained at \$151 million, and resource mobilization efforts continue.

14. Israel continued to pursue measures to alter the legal, demographic and historical multicultural and multireligious character and status of Jerusalem and to consolidate its control over the city and its surroundings. Those and other violations of the basic rights of Palestinians in East Jerusalem, including the lack of freedom of movement and worship, exposed the fragility of the status of the city. Tensions at the flashpoint area of Haram al-Sharif continued, including during the last day of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, resulting in the loss of Palestinian lives. The Committee, as well as world leaders, including Pope Francis, the King of Jordan and the King of Morocco,² reiterated that the historic status quo of the holy sites in Jerusalem must be respected and that their preservation was the shared responsibility of the international community.

15. The relocation of embassies and diplomatic offices from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem by a small number of Member States, with recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, was met with a strong response from the international community. The Committee, the European Union and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) were among the many entities that considered those actions to be a flagrant violation of international law and relevant United Nations resolutions and reiterated calls for all Member States to comply with, inter alia, Security Council resolutions 476 (1980),

¹ United Nations, "UN chief hopes for new agreement after Israel concludes international observation mission". Available at <https://news.un.org/en/story/2019/02/1031892>.

² Report on the International Conference on the Question of Jerusalem, Rabat, 26–28 June 2018, annex III. Available at www.un.org/unispal/document/international-conference-on-the-question-of-jerusalem-rabat-morocco-26-28-june-2018.

478 (1980) and 2334 (2016) and to refrain from establishing diplomatic missions in Jerusalem.³

16. The United States of America, as part of its efforts aimed at achieving Israeli-Palestinian peace, organized the “Peace to Prosperity” workshop in Manama on 25 June 2019. Representatives of the international community reiterated that the solution to the conflict remained political and that economic support for the Palestinian people would not succeed without a political plan that addressed the historic injustice of occupation and the fulfilment of their inalienable rights, including to self-determination and independence.

17. The international community, including the African Union, the European Union, OIC, LAS and the Non-Aligned Movement, continued to reaffirm overwhelmingly the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and uphold the long-standing parameters of the two-State solution for a viable and just solution to the conflict, with Israel and Palestine living side by side in peace and security, based on the pre-1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as the capital of the State of Palestine and with negotiated outcomes for all final status issues, in accordance with international law, relevant United Nations resolutions, the Madrid principles and the Arab Peace Initiative. The Committee reiterated that the ongoing occupation should not prevent the State of Palestine from taking its rightful place among the community of nations and that Member States should extend formal recognition to the State of Palestine and support its full membership in the United Nations. As a reflection of that support, the State of Palestine was elected the 2019 Chair of the Group of 77 and China, the largest grouping in the General Assembly (see S/PV.8375, S/PV.8449, S/PV.8517 and S/PV.8583). In July 2019, Saint Kitts and Nevis became the 140th State to formally recognize the State of Palestine.

18. The observance in 2018 of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the signing of the Oslo Accords, a historic moment that filled Palestinians, Israelis and the world with the hope that a genuine and lasting peace could finally be realized, served as a sad reminder of a lost opportunity. Similarly, the seventieth anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and of the expulsion and flight of Palestine refugees from their homeland in 1948, remembered as the Nakbah (catastrophe), contrasted starkly with the unrealized rights and broken promises made to an entire people of a life of dignity and freedom.

³ See, e.g., the statement of the Chair of the Committee to the International Conference on the Question of Jerusalem (Geneva, 27–28 June 2019). Available at www.un.org/unispal/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Chair-opening-statement-ENG.pdf.

Chapter III

Mandate of the Committee

19. The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People was established by General Assembly resolution 3376 (XXX) of 10 November 1975 with the task of recommending a programme designed to enable the Palestinian people to exercise their inalienable rights to self-determination, national independence and sovereignty and return to the homes and property from which they had been displaced, as recognized by the Assembly in its resolution 3236 (XXIX) of 22 November 1974. The mandate of the Committee has evolved considerably over the years into greater advocacy for the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and the mobilization of assistance. Additional information about the Committee is available on the website maintained by the Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat (www.un.org/unispal).

20. On 30 November 2018, the General Assembly renewed the mandate of the Committee (resolution 73/18) and requested the Secretary-General to continue to provide the Division for Palestinian Rights with the resources necessary for its programme of work (resolution 73/21) and to continue to implement the special information programme on the question of Palestine of the Department of Public Information (renamed Department of Global Communications) of the Secretariat (resolution 73/20). The Assembly also adopted resolution 73/19, entitled “Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine”, in which it reaffirmed the near-consensus international position regarding the components of a just, lasting and comprehensive solution.

21. The work of the Committee is fully aligned with the decisions of the main intergovernmental bodies of the United Nations, such as the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council, as well as with the work of the Secretary-General and the programmes, funds and specialized agencies of the United Nations system, with which it collaborates extensively.

Chapter IV

Organization of work

A. Membership and officers

22. The Committee is composed of 26 Member States, representing different regional groups and supporting the international consensus for a two-State solution: Afghanistan, Belarus, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Cuba, Cyprus, Ecuador, Guinea, Guyana, India, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mali, Malta, Namibia, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Pakistan, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of).

23. The 24 observers of the Committee are Algeria, Bangladesh, Bulgaria, China, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, the Niger, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka, the Syrian Arab Republic, the United Arab Emirates, Viet Nam and Yemen, as well as the State of Palestine, the African Union, LAS and OIC.

24. The Bureau of the Committee, with geographically balanced representation, is elected each year from among the permanent representatives of Committee members. At its 394th meeting, on 15 February 2019, chaired by the Secretary-General, the Committee elected, in their personal capacity, Cheikh Niang (Senegal) as Chair; Adela Raz (Afghanistan), Ana Silvia Rodríguez Abascal (Cuba), Dian Triansyah Djani (Indonesia), Neville Melvin Gertze (Namibia) and Jaime Castillo Hermida (Nicaragua) as Vice-Chairs for the year; and Carmelo Inguanez (Malta) as Rapporteur until 15 May 2019. The State of Palestine participates in the Bureau's work as an observer.

25. The day-to-day tasks of the Committee are undertaken by its Bureau. The members of the Bureau represented the Committee at all international conferences organized by the Committee and on all visits of delegations, and they chaired and moderated various sessions of the conferences. On the margins of the conferences and during visits, they held meetings with senior officials from the respective host countries.

26. The Committee members and observers have actively advocated the rights of the Palestinian people, including in the Security Council. Currently, Committee members Indonesia and South Africa and observer Kuwait serve on the Security Council as elected members.

B. Participation in the work of the Committee

27. As in previous years, the Committee reconfirmed that all States Members of the United Nations and observers wishing to participate in its work were welcome to do so. In accordance with established practice, the State of Palestine participated in the work of the Committee as an observer. The Committee made every effort to guarantee the participation of civil society organizations, including those from Israel.

Chapter V

Action taken by the Committee and the Division for Palestinian Rights in accordance with General Assembly resolutions [73/18](#) and [73/21](#)

A. Introduction

28. In the implementation of its programme of work, as a subsidiary body of the General Assembly, the Committee is guided by its mandate to promote the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and support the achievement without delay of an end to the Israeli occupation that began in 1967 and of the two-State solution on the basis of the pre-1967 lines. Its work and activities are also fully aligned with Security Council resolutions on the question of Palestine; women and peace and security; international and humanitarian law; human rights frameworks such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; and, more recently, the Sustainable Development Goals and their achievement by the State of Palestine. As authorized by the General Assembly, the Committee frequently made adjustments to its approved programme of work that it considered appropriate and necessary in view of developments. Taking a rights-focused approach, the Committee has made every effort to support the universally recognized rights of an occupied people and the rights of all States and people to live in peace and security. To that end, the Committee utilized a wide range of instruments and activities, including engaging the diplomatic community in a sustained dialogue on the question of Palestine through its formal and informal intergovernmental processes; employing the good offices of the Secretary-General; organizing awareness-raising activities for the public that involved conferences, meetings, invited speakers and the media, including social media; promoting partnerships with Governments, relevant bodies of the United Nations system, intergovernmental organizations and civil society organizations; and building the capacities of the future State of Palestine.

B. Mobilization of the diplomatic community

29. The Committee utilized intergovernmental processes to continue to mobilize the international community in support of the realization of the two-State solution and a just, comprehensive and lasting solution to the question of Palestine in all its aspects through its diplomatic engagement with permanent missions in New York and around the world. It also held international conferences to allow the exchange of views among delegates and a wide range of partners.

30. During the reporting period, the Committee held four meetings at United Nations Headquarters, including a special meeting on the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People (see paras. 47–49 below). It also held seven Bureau meetings, including with special guests and briefers, and one Bureau retreat.

31. On 17 October 2018, the Bureau met to decide on the priorities and focus of the Committee's activities for the remainder of 2018 and the programme of work for 2019 in the light of updated information on the current political situation.

32. On 23 October, the Committee was briefed via videoconference by Michael Lynk, Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967, on his forthcoming report (to be issued under the symbol [A/HRC/40/73](#)), which pointed to the actions of an occupying Power seemingly bent on further territorial annexation. Mr. Lynk warned that failure by the international community to stop the expansion of settlements in the West Bank, including East

Jerusalem, and other Israeli legislative initiatives could prompt Israel to formalize de jure annexation.

33. On 15 November, the Committee endorsed four draft resolutions for submission to the General Assembly. They concerned the mandate of the Committee, the peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine, the special information programme on the question of Palestine of the Department of Public Information (since renamed the Department of Global Communications) of the Secretariat, and the Division for Palestinian Rights. On 30 November, the General Assembly, having before it the report of the Committee (A/73/35), adopted the four draft resolutions (resolutions 73/18, 73/19, 73/20 and 73/21).

34. At its meeting on 15 February 2019, the Committee officially adopted its programme of work for 2019 (A/AC.183/2019/1). At the same meeting, the Committee also elected its Bureau members for 2019 (see para. 24 above).

35. On 26 February, the Committee, through the Division for Palestinian Rights, organized its annual briefing session, which was open to all permanent missions to the United Nations, to familiarize delegates with the Committee's mandate and programme of work. A total of 20 participants attended the informative and interactive session, including 6 elected members of the Security Council. The Department of Global Communications also gave a presentation on the special information programme on the question of Palestine.

36. On 1 March, the Bureau, at the invitation of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, discussed with Jürgen Rüttgers, former Federal Minister of Germany, commonalities between the visions of the Committee and Germany for a peaceful and sustainable solution to the question of Palestine based on the two-State solution, as well as practical steps for its achievement, including by engaging young people on both sides of the conflict.

37. On 20 March, the Bureau met with the Chair and a member of the independent commission of inquiry established by the Human Rights Council to investigate all alleged violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. The briefing included the screening of footage of Israeli security forces killing and injuring Palestinian civilians at the Gaza fence.

38. As part of its priority to engage the European Union, the Committee sent delegations to Brussels and Berlin. The visit of the delegation to Brussels from 4 to 6 March 2019 mobilized regional and national support for the two-State solution and promoted concrete steps, such as the recognition of the State of Palestine and the protection of Palestinian civilians under occupation. Key action-oriented points raised during the visit included: accountability of Israel for its violations and the need for the European Union and the United Nations to be at the forefront of action to end impunity, with a view to safeguarding human rights and salvaging the prospects for realizing the two-State solution; compliance with the European Union policy of differentiation regarding products imported into the European Union from the Occupied Palestinian Territory, in particular from illegal Israeli settlements, and as a requirement of Security Council resolution 2334 (2016); the publication by the United Nations of a database of businesses profiting from the occupation of the Palestinian territory; protection of Palestinian civilians in the Gaza Strip and West Bank, especially in Hebron, and the lifting of the illegal blockade of Gaza; support for the mandate of UNRWA and for predictable, sufficient and sustained financing; and collective recognition of the State of Palestine by European Union member States as a means of promoting the peace process.

39. The United Nations Forum on the Question of Palestine was held at Headquarters on 4 April and the International Conference on the Question of Jerusalem was held at the United Nations Office at Geneva on 27 and 28 June. They served as important platforms for raising awareness, exchanging ideas and mobilizing the international community, Member States, international organizations and civil society organizations in the United States and abroad to shoulder the collective responsibility for safeguarding the two-State solution and exerting the efforts needed to support the realization of Palestinian rights and the achievement of lasting Israeli-Palestinian peace on the basis of that solution (see also paras. 55 and 56 below).

40. On 28 May, at Headquarters, the Bureau briefed the Group of African States on its mandate priorities and forthcoming activities in order to raise awareness of the Palestinian plight and foster support among regional United Nations groups.

41. On 21 June, the Bureau held its fifth annual retreat, at which it discussed the implications of international developments for the Committee and its work and identified priorities for 2019 and 2020. The Committee decided to strengthen outreach activities, including those regarding academia and the media, and to further develop its communication strategy. The decisions adopted at the retreat were shared with the Committee.

42. On 24 and 25 June, a Committee delegation visited Berlin and requested Germany to recognize the State of Palestine as a means of promoting the realization of the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination. The delegation met with officials from the Federal Chancellery and the Foreign Office and with parliament members, who confirmed that Germany remained committed to the two-State solution and opposed the annexation of the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

43. On 13 July, the Committee organized a visit to the Palestine Museum in Woodbridge, Connecticut, United States, to celebrate Palestinian cultural and artistic achievements through figurative art, music and dance. Representatives of Committee members and observers as well as the wider United Nations membership attended a lecture by a renowned Palestinian artist and scholar on the history and impact of Palestinian paintings and other works of art through the decades despite the occupation.

44. On 24 July, the Bureau held its annual meeting with the Secretary-General. The Chair conveyed the Committee's concerns regarding the deterioration of the situation and the continuing plight of the Palestinian people. He stressed that, while an overwhelming majority of Member States remained firmly committed to the two-State solution, that commitment had yet to be translated into concrete steps, including first and foremost the recognition of the State of Palestine as a sovereign and independent State and support for its full membership in the United Nations. The Secretary-General reaffirmed his unwavering support for the two-State solution.

45. The Chair delivered statements on behalf of the Committee at the quarterly debates of the Security Council on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question, on 18 October 2018 (S/PV.8375), 22 January 2019 (S/PV.8449), 29 April 2019 (S/PV.8517) and 23 July 2019 (S/PV.8583). He highlighted the deteriorating situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and the Committee's key activities and recommendations and called upon the Council to uphold its responsibilities under international law and take appropriate action that would lead to a just, comprehensive and peaceful settlement of the conflict in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the Council.

C. Raising awareness of the question of Palestine

46. The Committee has endeavoured to raise awareness of the political, human rights and humanitarian situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including the situation of Palestinian women, by facilitating up-to-date briefings by experts and exchanges of ideas on specific issues at Committee meetings at Headquarters, during side events, international conferences and visits of Committee delegations and through publications and its website. Details of each of the activities can be found on the website of the United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine (www.un.org/unispal).

47. As the major awareness-raising event organized by the Committee, the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, which was commemorated on 28 November 2018, saw an impressive display of support and solidarity by Member States, civil society and the public.

48. At the special meeting of the Committee on that date, statements were delivered the President of the General Assembly, the President of the Security Council and the Secretary-General. Other speakers included the Vice-Chair of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories, high-level representatives of the African Union, LAS, OIC and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and the Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations. Messages of solidarity were received from 22 Heads of State, six Heads of Government, nine Ministers for Foreign Affairs and others and published on the Committee's website.

49. All speakers expressed their unwavering support for the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and called upon the international community to work towards that objective. Many stressed the urgency of an expeditious solution and the responsibility of world leaders to make the Palestinian question a priority, underscoring the centrality of a just solution to regional and global peace and stability.

50. As is customary, similar events were coordinated in observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People at the United Nations Offices at Geneva, Vienna and Nairobi. The messages of the Chair and the Secretary-General were delivered at those events, and the United Nations was represented at the highest levels. The commemorations were attended by representatives of members and observers of the Committee and of the membership at large, who expressed their solidarity with the Palestinian people and support for the two-State solution. A message from the Secretary-General was issued in all six official languages.

51. The annual exhibition organized by the Committee on the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, in cooperation with the Permanent Observer Mission of the State of Palestine to the United Nations, was entitled "Unrealized rights, unfulfilled promises: 70 years of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and of the Palestinian people's Nakbah". It was displayed from 29 November 2018 to 4 January 2019 in the Visitors Lobby at Headquarters in the context of the seventieth anniversaries of both the expulsion and flight of Palestine refugees from their homeland in 1948, remembered as the Nakbah, and the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The exhibition served to raise awareness among visitors about the Nakbah and the denial of the rights of Palestine refugees that continues to this day.

52. The Chair, responding to an invitation from the Palestinian Return Centre, undertook a mission to London between 11 and 14 December 2018, where he met Members of Parliament and representatives of charities and delivered a public lecture

at the School of Oriental and African Studies of the University of London. During the visit, the Chair recalled the principles and parameters agreed upon by the international community to find a just and lasting solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and informed key interlocutors about the Committee's work.

53. Several briefings and activities were organized within the framework of Committee meetings to update Member States and participants on specific issues. On 15 February 2019, a Committee meeting at Headquarters featured a videoconference with Amnesty International from East Jerusalem in which it presented a briefing on its report entitled "Destination: occupation – digital tourism and Israel's illegal settlements in the occupied Palestinian territories". The briefing provided information about the role of transnational e-tourism businesses in maintaining the Israeli occupation and highlighted how, by listing accommodations, attractions and tours located in settlements or run by settlers, four companies helped to sustain illegal Israeli settlements in the West Bank. In its report, Amnesty International recommended that Member States take regulatory action to prevent digital tourism companies domiciled or headquartered on their territory from providing or facilitating tourism services in settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

54. Similarly, a Committee side event, organized on 7 March 2019 on the margins of the sixty-third session of the Commission of the Status of Women, featured the screening of a documentary entitled *Naila and the Uprising*. The film described the active role played by Palestinian women during the first intifada of 1987 and its political aftermath. The screening was followed by a panel discussion with Zahira Kamal, head of the Palestinian Democratic Union Party, and Rula Salameh, the producer of the film, who had travelled for the occasion from Ramallah, as well as Julia Bacha, the director of the producing company Just Vision. The event, chaired by the Deputy Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine, attracted about 300 attendees and generated wide media coverage.

55. The United Nations Forum on the Question of Palestine, held at Headquarters on 4 April 2019 on the theme "The threat of de facto annexation: what next for Palestine?", raised awareness among Member States of Israeli measures with the potential to produce a creeping annexation of the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and highlighted viable and practical strategies to end that annexation in accordance with international law. Experts and attendees underscored, inter alia, the detrimental unilateral steps taken by some Member States and asserted that the continuing construction of illegal Israeli settlements and infrastructure for the exclusive use of Israelis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory amounted to a de facto annexation along with the 1980 de jure annexation of East Jerusalem, in violation of international law and United Nations resolutions. Other major impediments to achieving a lasting solution included the development of archaeological projects and tourist sites privileging an Israeli nationalistic narrative. Participants emphasized that Member States and civil society could play an important role in upholding international law, including human rights and humanitarian law, through bilateral pressure on Israel and domestic legislative and judicial action, such as the recognition of the State of Palestine and the implementation of paragraph 5 of Security Council resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#).

56. The International Conference on the Question of Jerusalem, organized in cooperation with OIC, was held at the United Nations Office at Geneva on 27 and 28 June 2019 on the theme "Preserving the cultural and religious character of Jerusalem". It raised awareness of Israeli policies and measures aimed at changing the cultural and religious character of Jerusalem, which have significant political, legal and socioeconomic ramifications, including the threat of derailing prospects for a peaceful solution to the question of Palestine. Panellists and participants highlighted, inter alia, that Jerusalem was a final status issue and that, without a just

solution to its status, no Israeli-Palestinian agreement was possible; that Israeli plans risked upending the demographic make-up of the city; that the international community had a shared responsibility to preserve the historic status quo of the holy sites; that any unilateral actions, including by Member States, in contravention of United Nations resolutions and international law were null and void; that violations of the status quo could turn a political conflict into a religious conflagration, with repercussions throughout the region and beyond; and that there must be guarantees of free access for all worshippers to the city, with each group respecting the sanctity of the other's established holy sites.

57. The United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine, now in its twenty-fifth year of operation, remains a valuable resource on the question of Palestine for diplomats and researchers around the world, averaging 35,000 visitors per month. It consists of more than 37,000 documents and is considered to be the largest and most comprehensive online repository on the subject. The collection ranges from the latest United Nations documents to rare records dating back decades. In June 2019, with the support of the Department of Global Communications and an external consultant, the Division for Palestinian Rights completed a two-and-a-half year project to migrate the information system to a modern technological platform. Since its launch, the new site has received more than double the number of page views per month. Efforts to make all of the information on the website available in all six official languages of the United Nations are under way.

58. The Committee maintained a social media presence to disseminate information on the question of Palestine. During the reporting period, the Committee's Facebook⁴ and Twitter⁵ accounts recorded steady growth in the number of visitors.

59. Further to its monitoring mandate, the Committee also produced monthly bulletins compiling all official documents of the United Nations and other intergovernmental organizations relating to the question of Palestine,⁶ an annual compendium of United Nations resolutions distributed to 4,095 recipients, including research libraries and universities, and other relevant studies and publications on topics of interest.

60. Moreover, through its weekly publication entitled "NGO Action News", the Committee continued to raise awareness of the work of civil society and United Nations actors in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and around the globe towards the achievement of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.

D. Cooperation with intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations and United Nations system entities

61. The Committee continued its cooperation with intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations and United Nations system entities and expressed its appreciation for the active participation of representatives of those bodies at various events held under its auspices. It also expressed its appreciation to OIC for its annual co-sponsorship of the International Conference on the Question of Jerusalem. The African Union, LAS and OIC regularly attended the meetings of the Committee as observers and participated in its work. At its meeting on 4 September 2018, the Committee was briefed by the Director of the New York office of UNRWA. The

⁴ Reaching 2,234 people per month on average.

⁵ With 37,000 impressions per month on average and more than 16,000 followers.

⁶ Available at www.un.org/unispal/data-collection/monthly-bulletin.

Committee's interaction with the European Union was strengthened through its delegation's visit to Brussels from 4 to 6 March.

62. In the context of cooperation with OIC, on 1 and 2 March 2019, the Chair delivered a statement at the forty-sixth session of the Council of Foreign Ministers of OIC, held in Abu Dhabi.

63. The Committee continued to attach great importance to enhancing relations with national and regional parliaments and their interparliamentary organizations. In March and June 2019, Committee delegations held meetings with Belgian and German parliamentarians as well as members of the European Parliament, focusing on their role in ensuring that Member States and intergovernmental organizations implement United Nations resolutions and relevant provisions of international law and contribute to a just, peaceful and lasting solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

64. At the United Nations Forum on the Question of Palestine on 4 April, the Committee invited Senator Frances Black of Ireland, who had spearheaded a bill in line with paragraph 5 of Security Council resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#) and the European Union policy of differentiation regarding products imported from the Occupied Palestinian Territory. During those meetings, interlocutors recommended that the Committee organize events focused on the role of parliamentarians in finding a just solution for the question of Palestine.

65. Also on 4 April, the Chair delivered a statement at the event entitled "Palestinian Day on the Hill", organized by the Canada-Palestine Parliamentary Friendship Group. The Chair stressed that parliaments had an important role to play as representatives of the will of the people that can demand accountability from their own Governments and ensure that international law is ultimately applied. Ahead of the visit, the Chair and the Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine met in New York with the Foreign Minister of Canada.

66. During its activities, the Committee, through the Division for Palestinian Rights, continued its long-standing cooperation with the United Nations system, including the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), United Nations country teams, UNRWA, the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management, the Department of Global Communications (including the United Nations information centres and the United Nations Regional Information Centre for Western Europe, in Brussels), the Human Rights Council and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). The Division also liaised with the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) on the 2019 report of the Secretary-General on the situation of and assistance to Palestinian women ([E/CN.6/2019/6](#)) and with the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) in the context of the capacity-building programme.

67. On the margins of the International Conference on the Question of Jerusalem, a Committee delegation held bilateral meetings with the President of the Human Rights Council, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the President of the International Committee of the Red Cross to consider the stark humanitarian and human rights situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and progress on publishing the Human Rights Council-mandated database on businesses operating in the Israeli settlements.

68. The Committee continued its collaboration with civil society organizations promoting the rights of the Palestinian people. As is customary, a civil society representative was invited to speak at the special meeting of the Committee held on

28 November 2018 to commemorate the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. The Bureau held closed consultations with civil society representatives, including from Israel and the State of Palestine, in the margins of that observance as well as on the margins of the United Nations Forum on the Question of Palestine, held in New York on 3 March 2019. On 4 March, a Committee delegation met with Belgian and European civil society groups during its visit to Brussels.

69. Those meetings and interactions allowed the Committee to inform civil society about its mandate and activities, at Headquarters and abroad, as well as to learn about civil society concerns and actions. In turn, the rich exchanges have informed the programme of work, statements and reports of the Committee. The Committee has also continued to provide a space in which Israeli and Palestinian civil society organizations can interact, through the facilitation of their participation in Committee events, at a time when such interaction is increasingly circumscribed on the ground.

E. Capacity-building

70. As requested in General Assembly resolution [73/21](#), the Committee continued to develop training opportunities and programmes in order to expand the capacity of officials of the State of Palestine.

71. From 16 to 19 September 2018, a staff member of the Division for Palestinian Rights visited Ramallah and assessed the impact of the Committee's capacity-building programme, meeting with representatives of 10 ministries and 20 United Nations agencies. Apart from ensuring the alignment of the programme with activities of the rest of the United Nations system on the ground, the staff member conducted a needs assessment during the visit and identified specific areas and gaps in Palestinian capacity on which the Committee will now focus its efforts. The work undertaken serves to cement a demand-driven, national priority-focused capacity-building approach. An impact assessment of the annual training programme held in New York was also performed, and terms of reference for the selection of officials for the programme were also clarified and finalized.

72. From 5 September to 12 October 2018, the Committee carried out its annual six-week capacity-building training programme on multilateral diplomacy for Palestinian diplomats in New York, coinciding with the seventy-third session of the General Assembly. The objectives of the programme were revised and the classroom training element of the programme was strengthened, with the training content more customized to the job functions of participating Palestinian officials. The programme served to acquaint two female Palestinian diplomats with the work of the United Nations, its legal foundations, rules and regulations, and the functioning of its main organs and major items on their respective agendas, with a special focus on the question of Palestine. In December 2018, the Committee funded the participation of six Palestinian officials in an online course organized by UNITAR, entitled "Women, leadership and peacebuilding". The Committee, in cooperation with OHCHR, also supported the attendance, from 29 April to 3 May 2019, of a female Palestinian official at the ninety-eighth session of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, held in Geneva, in preparation for the presentation of the report of the State of Palestine to that Committee in August.

73. In response to multiple requests from Palestinian authorities, the Committee is collaborating with UNDP, UNESCO and the Office of the Prime Minister of the State of Palestine to build the communications and media relations capacity of officials in various ministries, including at the cabinet level.

Chapter VI

Action taken by the Department of Global Communications in accordance with General Assembly resolution 73/20

74. The Department of Global Communications continued to implement its special information programme on the question of Palestine pursuant to General Assembly resolution 73/20.

75. During the reporting period, the Department held its annual International Media Seminar on Peace in the Middle East in Moscow on 5 and 6 September 2018, in which the Chair of the Committee also participated. The seminar, organized in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation with the support of the United Nations Association of Russia, the Russian Peace Foundation and the United Nations information centre in Moscow, was attended by participants from the State of Palestine, Israel, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States, among others, who discussed a variety of issues relating to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

76. The Department organized its annual training programme for Palestinian journalists in New York from 29 October to 30 November 2018 and in Washington, D.C., for the week beginning on 12 November. Six Palestinian journalists from Gaza, the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and Jordan graduated in 2018, bringing the total number of journalists benefiting from the training programme to 196.

77. During the reporting period, all relevant open and intergovernmental meetings held at Headquarters were covered by United Nations Web TV and United Nations Photo.

78. The Meetings Coverage Section of the Department of Global Communications issued 73 press releases relating to the question of Palestine and the Middle East peace process in English and French. In addition, the Department produced a wealth of multimedia news articles and features about issues affecting the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people across its news and social media platforms in the six official languages, as well as in Kiswahili and Portuguese. United Nations News stories and social media posts on the flagship United Nations accounts were further amplified by media outlets and social media influencers. UNifeed video packages were aired 3,639 times by 315 global broadcasters, including Al Jazeera, the British Broadcasting Corporation, China Global Television News and Russia Today.

79. The Department's news and video teams conducted two field missions to the region, gathering information for features with a particular focus on children. Materials included exclusive reports, interviews and photos of senior United Nations officials visiting schools and training programmes sponsored by UNRWA in Gaza, the West Bank and Jordan.

80. With funding from Oman, the Department has been digitizing its audiovisual assets and has now posted 223 historical films and videos relating to the question of Palestine on its audiovisual library website.

81. Regarding the observance of the International Day of Solidarity in 2018, the Department worked closely with the Committee and the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs to provide communications support for all of the events that were held at Headquarters on 28 November. The Department continued to update the website for the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People in the six official languages and supported the revitalization of the website of the United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine, including the migration of data to preserve its rich historical record.

82. In addition, the global network of United Nations information centres organized a series of activities to highlight issues relating to the question of Palestine, including events in Brussels, Cairo, Canberra, Dakar, Dar es Salaam, United Republic of Tanzania, Geneva, Mexico City, Nairobi, Vienna and Washington, D.C.

83. The Dag Hammarskjöld Library was host to a series of four customized library training and coaching sessions for Palestinian delegates from 18 September to 8 October 2018, including training on United Nations documentation, treaty research and legal resources.

84. More than 256,700 visitors were briefed on the question of Palestine in front of the updated permanent exhibit, located along the route of the guided tour of Headquarters. Also during the reporting period, the updated permanent exhibit was mounted at the United Nations Office at Geneva.

85. The Envoy of the Secretary-General on Youth visited the West Bank and Gaza in June 2019 to raise awareness of the activities of UNRWA, in particular health and education services provided to young Palestine refugees. At the invitation of the Envoy, a delegation of UNRWA student parliamentarians attended the launch of the United Nations Youth Strategy on 24 September 2018.

Chapter VII

Conclusions and recommendations of the Committee

86. On the basis of its deliberations at Committee and Bureau meetings, briefings, visits of delegations, international conferences and events involving Member States, civil society organizations and regional organizations, the Committee has developed the recommendations set out below.

87. Recalling that 2019 marks the seventy-first anniversary of the expulsion and flight of Palestine refugees from their homeland in 1948, remembered as the Nakbah (catastrophe), and the fifty-second anniversary of the Israeli occupation, the Committee urges the international community to redouble its efforts towards the fulfilment of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including to self-determination and independence, and the achievement of the two-State solution based on the 1967 borders, in accordance with relevant United Nations resolutions, the Madrid principles, the Arab Peace Initiative and the road map of the Quartet.

88. The Committee reiterates the need to reframe the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. It is not a conflict between two equal parties over disputed territory. It is a conflict emanating from one State occupying, colonizing and annexing the territory of another State under oppressive, inhumane and discriminatory conditions.

89. Consistent with the responsibilities and obligations of the international community, the Committee supports revising the existing model of bilateral negotiations into an expanded multilateral framework, with a view to reviving the peace process with a credible political horizon. In this context, the Committee welcomes the eight-point plan presented to the Security Council by the President of the State of Palestine, Mahmoud Abbas, on 20 February 2018, reiterating the agreed long-standing international consensus on the question of Palestine and calling for the mobilization of efforts to actualize that consensus.

90. Any resolution of the conflict, apart from having the two-State formula at its core, requires a comprehensive regional solution, such as that offered by the Arab Peace Initiative. The Committee calls upon international and regional organizations, such as the European Union, LAS and OIC, to take on a more politically active role in mediating an end to the conflict.

91. The Committee acknowledges that intra-Palestinian unity is critical to the reunification of Gaza and the West Bank under a single, democratic and legitimate national Government and to achieving an independent State of Palestine. The Committee offers its support to local, regional and international efforts to advance the unity process.

92. The Committee urges the Security Council and the General Assembly to ensure the implementation of the long-standing parameters for peace affirmed in relevant United Nations resolutions, including Council resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#) and Assembly resolution [73/19](#). The Committee requests the Secretary-General to continue to submit his reports to the Council on the implementation of resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#) in written format and to include references to implementation by Member States of the provision contained in paragraph 5 of resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#). Pursuant to paragraph 11 of the resolution, the Committee also calls upon the Council to examine practical ways and means to secure the full implementation of relevant Council resolutions.

93. The Committee underscores the responsibility of States and private entities not to contribute to grave Israeli violations of Palestinian human rights, in particular with respect to settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. It looks forward to the publication, by OHCHR, of a database of all business

enterprises engaged in certain Israeli settlement activities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, as mandated by the Human Rights Council in its resolution 31/36.

94. The Committee calls upon the international community to shift from a humanitarian to a human rights framework in addressing the plight of the Palestinian people. It demands an end to the 12-year Israeli air, land and sea blockade of Gaza and the lifting of all closures within the framework of Security Council resolution 1860 (2009). It calls upon international donors to fulfil without delay all pledges to expedite the provision of humanitarian assistance, the reconstruction process and economic recovery, which are essential to alleviate the distress of Palestinians, including women and children, who face additional and gender-specific challenges that need to be addressed through targeted actions.

95. The Committee deems unilateral decisions by Member States to recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and the transfer of embassies in Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem as null and void, as they are in violation of Security Council resolutions, including resolutions 476 (1980) and 478 (1980). The Committee calls upon Member States to rescind those decisions and reiterates that the historic status quo of the holy sites in Jerusalem must be respected and that the international community shares the responsibility to preserve the legal, demographic and historical multicultural and multireligious character and status of the city.

96. The Committee deplores the use of excessive, disproportionate and indiscriminate force by Israeli forces against Palestinian civilians, including during the protests in the Gaza Strip in 2018 and 2019. The Committee calls for the implementation of the recommendations contained in the report of the commission of inquiry, mandated by the Human Rights Council to investigate violations committed on the fence between Israel and the Gaza Strip during those protests.

97. The Committee urges Member States and the Organization to remind Israel of its obligations under international law to protect civilians. It regrets that, on 29 January, the mandate of the Temporary International Presence in Hebron was not renewed, and that the international monitors left the city, removing an essential element of protection for the local population. Further to the report of the Secretary-General pursuant to General Assembly resolution ES-10/20, the Committee emphasizes the need for the implementation of an international protection mechanism that can credibly ensure the safety and welfare of Palestinian civilians.

98. The Committee emphasizes the importance of the acknowledgment by Israel of the Nakbah and its impact upon the Palestinian people as a necessary requirement for a viable and lasting peace. Palestine refugees should be treated as dispossessed nationals of a country – the State of Palestine – rather than as stateless refugees. It strongly advocates the right to return as well as just compensation for Palestine refugees, as provided for in paragraph 11 of General Assembly resolution 194 (III). The Committee further encourages all Member States to work collectively to fund UNRWA sufficiently and predictably.

99. The Committee notes with appreciation the diligent contribution of the Division for Palestinian Rights in support of its mandate and requests the Division to continue its substantive and secretariat support for all aspects of its mandate.

100. The Committee will continue, through its mandated activities implemented by the Division, to raise international awareness as well as international support for the rights of the Palestinian people in conformity with international law and United Nations resolutions. In that context, the Committee recognizes the growing importance of cooperation among developing countries and regional and subregional organizations within the framework of South-South and triangular cooperation for

sharing replicable experiences towards the achievement of self-determination and independence.

101. The Committee requests the continuation of the special information programme on the question of Palestine of the Department of Public Information (now the Department of Global Communications), which has made an important contribution to informing the media and the public.

102. The Committee commends civil society initiatives in support of the Palestinian people and will continue to expand its efforts to engage civil society organizations, including by regularly convening civil society forums. It encourages civil society partners to work with their national Governments, parliamentarians and other institutions to promote the achievement of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and the full recognition of the State of Palestine and its independence.

103. The Committee intends to continue to work closely with other United Nations actors and entities, including the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and UNRWA, to synergize efforts in fields of common concern and uphold the permanent responsibility of the Organization towards the question of Palestine until it is resolved in all its aspects in a satisfactory manner and in accordance with international law. The Committee wishes to express its deep appreciation to its partners, and in particular OIC, for the contribution of extrabudgetary resources and their active participation in its conferences and events.

104. Lastly, the Committee urges its members, observers and others to participate actively in its programme of activities. The Committee will also enhance its outreach to all Member States and regional groups at the United Nations to take a more active and effective approach towards the achievement of the two-State solution, and to expand the Committee's membership as a form of political support for the resolution of the question of Palestine. The Committee calls upon all Member States to join in this endeavour and invites the General Assembly to reconfirm its mandate in recognition of the importance of its role.



United Nations

Report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

**General Assembly
Official Records
Seventy-fifth Session
Supplement No. 35**



**Report of the Committee on the Exercise of
the Inalienable Rights of the
Palestinian People**



Note

Symbols of United Nations documents are composed of letters combined with figures. Mention of such a symbol indicates a reference to a United Nations document.

Contents

<i>Chapter</i>	<i>Page</i>
Letter of transmittal	4
I. Introduction	5
II. Overview of the political context relating to the question of Palestine	6
III. Mandate of the Committee	11
IV. Organization of work	12
A. Membership and officers	12
B. Participation in the work of the Committee	12
V. Action taken by the Committee and the Division for Palestinian Rights in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 74/10 and 74/12	13
A. Introduction	13
B. Mobilization of the diplomatic community	13
C. Raising awareness of the question of Palestine	15
D. Cooperation with intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations and United Nations system entities	18
E. Capacity-building	19
VI. Action taken by the Department of Global Communications in accordance with General Assembly resolution 74/13	20
VII. Conclusions and recommendations of the Committee	22
A. Immediate action by the Committee in response to annexation	22
B. Action taken with the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Human Rights Council	22
C. Advocacy and outreach activities with the international community and civil society	23
D. Action by Member States and regional organizations	23
E. Support action in response to the coronavirus disease pandemic	24
F. Action by the Secretariat and other United Nations entities	25

Letter of transmittal

[1 September 2020]

Mr. Secretary-General,

I have the honour to enclose herewith the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for submission to the General Assembly and circulation to all the competent bodies of the United Nations for necessary action, as appropriate, in accordance with paragraphs 2 and 10 of Assembly resolution [74/10](#) of 3 December 2019.

The report covers the period from 4 September 2019 to 1 September 2020.

(Signed) Cheikh **Niang**
Chair of the Committee on the Exercise of the
Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

Chapter I

Introduction

1. The present report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People has been submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution [74/10](#), adopted on 3 December 2019. It covers the implementation by the Committee of its programme of work ([A/AC.183/2020/1](#)), formulated to promote the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including their right to self-determination. Its objectives include maintaining international awareness, mobilizing efforts aimed at achieving a just and comprehensive solution of the question of Palestine and lasting Israeli-Palestinian peace, enhancing international solidarity with the plight of the Palestinian people until those objectives are achieved and supporting the Government of the State of Palestine in its capacity-building efforts towards a viable and sustainable future independent State of Palestine.
2. Chapter II consists of an overview of the political context relating to the question of Palestine during the reporting period, from 4 September 2019 to 1 September 2020.
3. Chapters III and IV contain an outline of the mandate of the Committee as set out by the General Assembly and information on the membership of the Committee and the organization of its work.
4. Chapter V covers the action taken by the Committee, including its participation in meetings of the Security Council and its continuing dialogue with intergovernmental organizations and civil society. It also covers international conferences, visits of delegations and capacity-building workshops organized by the Committee, as well as other mandated activities carried out and events held by the Division for Palestinian Rights on behalf of the Committee.
5. Chapter VI provides an overview of the special information programme on the question of Palestine implemented by the Department of Global Communications in accordance with General Assembly resolution [74/13](#).
6. The conclusions and recommendations of the Committee to the General Assembly are set out in chapter VII of the report.

Chapter II

Overview of the political context relating to the question of Palestine

7. During the reporting period, the political, security, human rights, humanitarian and socioeconomic situation continued to deteriorate across the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, owing to the ongoing entrenchment of the 53-year Israeli occupation and its illegal settlement activity, compounded by the ongoing illegal Gaza blockade and the threat of further de jure annexation of Palestinian lands. Moreover, the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has inflicted an additional negative shock on the fragile socioeconomic fabric of the State of Palestine and its vulnerable population, especially in the Gaza Strip.

8. As documented in regular United Nations reports to the Security Council,¹ Israel, the occupying Power, took no steps to abide by Council resolution 2334 (2016), including to immediately and completely cease all settlement activities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. Instead, the construction and expansion of settlements, the construction of the separation barrier and bypass roads, the confiscation of land, the demolition of homes, the seizure of Palestinian-owned structures, the destruction of agricultural, water, sanitation and hygiene facilities, evictions and threats of the forcible transfer of Palestinian families, human rights abuses and settler violence, including the intimidation, injuring and killing of Palestinians, continued to negatively affect the lives and livelihoods of the Palestinian population, including women and girls.

9. Arbitrary arrests, discrimination, administrative detention, including of children (see A/74/845-S/2020/525), restrictions on freedom of movement, violations of the right to worship, restrictions on access to education and health care and killings by Israeli security forces continued in the West Bank, including in East Jerusalem.²

10. The United Nations has frequently stated that the 53-year-old Israeli occupation prevents the Palestinian people from enjoying their human rights in freedom and peace. The actions described above constitute violations of international law and the human rights of the Palestinian people, are contrary to the legal obligation of Israel to protect the life and health of Palestinians under occupation and further jeopardize the possibility of realizing the two-State solution on the basis of the 1967 lines and a just peace.³ Furthermore, the impunity with which Israeli forces operate in the Occupied Palestinian Territory have been deemed a serious threat to a rules-based international order (see A/74/507).

11. The Secretary-General has reported limited compliance with paragraph 5 of resolution 2334 (2016), in which Member States were called upon to distinguish, in their relevant dealings, between Israel and the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem. The database of business enterprises operating in Israeli settlements in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, was published by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on 28 February 2020 (A/HRC/43/71).

¹ A list of briefings to the Security Council on the question of Palestine is available at www.un.org/unispal/document-source/security-council.

² United Nations, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, “Longstanding access restrictions continue to undermine the living conditions of West Bank Palestinians”, Humanitarian Bulletin: Occupied Palestinian Territory, March–May 2020.

³ United Nations, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and others, *Humanitarian Response Plan: OPT* (2020).

12. The illegal Israeli blockade of the Gaza Strip entered its thirteenth year, inflicting ongoing human rights violations and humanitarian and socioeconomic distress on the Palestinian civilian population, including Palestine refugees who constitute most of that population. The situation of Palestinian residents in Gaza has been described as “collective punishment” (see [A/74/507](#)). On 20 November 2019, the Committee was briefed by the Deputy Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, United Nations Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator for the Occupied Palestinian Territory, who indicated that the overflow of injuries caused by Israeli security forces firing on Palestinian civilian protesters during the Great March of Return, coupled with severe underfunding and the ongoing fuel and electricity shortages in Gaza, severely undermined the delivery of essential health, water and sanitation services. In addition, the chronic shortage of medicines and hospital beds, combined with population density, could have an irreparable impact if the COVID-19 pandemic spreads throughout the Strip.

13. The threat of conflict has persisted, as tensions and the cycle of violence between the two sides has remained inflamed. Israeli forces continued to carry out daily military raids and to perpetrate acts of violence against the Palestinian civilian population under occupation. In mid-November 2019, rockets were fired from the Gaza Strip into Israel, followed by Israel Defense Forces military strikes, two days after Israel and Palestinian Islamic Jihad had agreed to an Egyptian-mediated ceasefire. Additional exchanges of fire occurred in March, late June and early July 2020; in August, following the launch of incendiary balloons from Gaza, Israel retaliated with airstrikes, the prevention of fuel imports to the Strip and the reduction of the Gaza fishing zone from 15 to 8 nautical miles, causing serious distress among civilians. In April 2020, following the call issued on 23 March by the Secretary-General for a global ceasefire,⁴ the five United Nations Special Envoys for the Middle East, including the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General to the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Palestinian Authority, appealed for a ceasefire in the region and for an increase in local, regional and global cooperation to stop the rapid spread of the COVID-19 virus.⁵

14. The implementation of the Egyptian-brokered intra-Palestinian reconciliation agreement of October 2017 in view of reuniting Gaza and the West Bank under a single, democratic and legitimate national Government made limited progress, despite ongoing efforts to revive unity talks. In June 2020, Fatah and Hamas issued an unprecedented joint press statement against Israeli threats and plans to annex parts of the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

15. Measures taken by Israel to consolidate its unlawful annexation of Jerusalem and its surroundings threatened the legal status of the city, as well as its demographic composition and its historically multicultural and multireligious character. A new bypass connecting Jewish settlements to the north and south of Jerusalem – the so-called “American Road” – risks cutting off the eastern part of the occupied city from the rest of the West Bank. Incitement and provocation by Israeli officials and extremist settlers against the Haram Al-Sharif and the Aqsa Mosque also continued, violating the historic and legal status quo and aggravating religious tensions.

16. The humanitarian situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory has underscored the vital role played by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). In a context characterized by

⁴ United Nations, “Secretary-General calls for global ceasefire, citing war-ravaged health systems, populations most vulnerable to novel coronavirus”, 23 March 2020.

⁵ Office of the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, “Joint appeal by the United Nations Secretary-General’s envoys to the Middle East”, 11 April 2020.

worsening living conditions, widespread poverty and underdevelopment, the Agency provides vital educational, health, relief and social services and emergency assistance, including food aid, to more than 5.6 million Palestine refugees. On 31 August 2018, the Government of the United States of America announced that it would stop funding UNRWA, depriving the Agency of a long-standing source of donor support. At an extraordinary ministerial-level meeting hosted by the Governments of Jordan and Sweden on 23 June 2020, 75 Governments and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) pledged \$130 million in financial aid to sustain UNRWA operations, a contribution that was still far short of the funding gap. The Secretary-General has repeatedly echoed calls for the international community to guarantee predictable financing to sustain the work of the Agency at a time of regional instability, volatility and great vulnerability for Palestine refugees in its five fields of operation in Jordan, Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic and the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

17. The “Peace to Prosperity” plan, unveiled by the United States Administration on 28 January 2020, was rejected by the Government of the State of Palestine, the African Union Commission,⁶ the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC)⁷ and the League of Arab States (LAS), along with other individual Governments, who cited the failure of the plan to guarantee the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and to achieve international consensus on a just solution in accordance with international law and the relevant United Nations resolutions. Following the release of the plan, the Government of Israel announced its intention to annex 30 per cent of the Occupied Palestinian Territory by 1 July, including most of the Jordan Valley and more than 230 illegal Israeli settlements. Although settlement activity and de facto annexation measures have continued, the 1 July date passed with no formal action taken by the Israeli Government.

18. At the Security Council debate held on 24 June 2020 (see [S/2020/596](#)), the Secretary-General called the predicament in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, a “watershed moment” and urged Israel to abandon its annexation plans. Most Council members warned that annexation would constitute a grave breach of international law. At its 43rd session, the Human Rights Council condemned Israeli annexation plans and called on the High Commissioner to compile a report on the impact of annexation, to be presented in March 2021. On 16 June, the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied by Israel since 1967 and 47 other independent experts of the United Nations human rights system issued a statement⁸ expressing that the annexation of occupied territory was a serious violation of the Charter of the United Nations and the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and contrary to the fundamental rule affirmed many times by the Security Council and General Assembly that the acquisition of territory by war or force is inadmissible.

19. On 19 May 2020, the Palestinian leadership declared that it did not consider itself bound by “agreements and understandings” with the Governments of the United States and Israel, or by any of the obligations based on those understandings and agreements, including those related to security. The President of the State of Palestine, Mahmoud Abbas, reiterated his call for negotiations under an international framework, first made at the Security Council debate held on 11 February (see

⁶ Moussa Faki Mahamat, Chairperson of the African Union Commission, statement at the thirty-third ordinary session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government, Addis Ababa, 9 February 2020.

⁷ Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), “Against the background of the US administration’s announcement of its ‘Peace Plan’: OIC holds on to UN resolutions and the Arab peace plan”, 29 January 2020.

⁸ Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, “Israeli annexation of parts of the Palestinian West Bank would break international law – United Nations experts call on the international community to ensure accountability”, 16 June 2020.

S/PV.8717), including an expanded Quartet, and pledged to return to negotiations without preconditions. Several diplomatic initiatives, including by the Secretary-General, have been or are being pursued to create the conditions for such a meeting.

20. International and regional opposition to annexation has been widespread,⁹ from leaders in Europe, including the High Representative¹⁰ of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, leaders across the Arab world, OIC (see A/74/926-S/2020/584), LAS (see A/74/835-S/2020/356), the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see S/2020/341) and leaders in Latin America. Members and representatives of Israeli and Palestinian civil society, humanitarian organizations and think tanks, as well as legal scholars and academics, also expressed their opposition to annexation, as did hundreds of individuals from the professional sphere and the world of sports, arts and culture, trade union and political representatives and human rights activists, as well as faith-based leaders, members of the Elders group and Palestinian and international women leaders. On 25 June 2020, several members of the United States Congress and over 20 advocacy organizations sent a letter¹¹ to the Government of Israel, calling on it to shelve annexation plans and negotiate with the Palestinians. Multiple opinion polls revealed division among Israelis over the issue as well.

21. On 20 December 2019, the International Criminal Court announced that the statutory criteria under the Rome Statute of the Court had been met for the opening of a war crimes probe regarding the situation of Palestine and alleged crimes committed in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. The Prosecutor requested from Pre-Trial Chamber I a jurisdictional ruling on the scope of the territorial jurisdiction of the Court under article 12 (2) (a) of the Rome Statute in the State of Palestine.¹² The Pre-Trial Chamber will rule on the matter in due course.¹³

22. The reporting period has seen the unprecedented spread of COVID-19. On 5 March 2020, the Prime Minister of the State of Palestine, Mohammad Shtayeh, declared a state of emergency after the first confirmed cases. Stringent measures and aggressive testing by the Government of the State of Palestine, combined with coordination with Israeli authorities, initially contained the spread of COVID-19 in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. As reported by the World Health Organization (WHO), by 27 August, the total number of cases amounted to 26,762 infected persons and 152 deaths. The socioeconomic repercussions of the pandemic are dire, including economic contraction and gender-based violence, which reportedly increased by 47 per cent, and violence against children, a trend regrettably also seen in many parts of the world. The public health implications of the pandemic and the negative shock to the Israeli and Palestinian economies will have profound implications for public welfare, employment, social cohesion, financial and institutional stability in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. On 21 July, the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process warned the Security Council that the Palestinian Authority was on the verge of “total collapse” owing to the impact of COVID-19 and Israel’s pending

⁹ United Nations, Division for Palestinian Rights, “Bulletin on action by the United Nations system and intergovernmental organizations relevant to the question of Palestine”, vol. XLIII, No. 6 (June 2020).

¹⁰ United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine, “Middle East peace process discussed at European Union conference of Foreign Ministers (press conference by High Representative Borrell, excerpts)”, 16 June 2020.

¹¹ Members of Congress, United States of America, letter to Benjamin Netanyahu, Prime Minister of Israel, Benjamin Gantz, Alternate Prime Minister, Defense Minister, and Gabriel Ashkenazi, Minister of Foreign Affairs, 25 June 2020.

¹² Fatou Bensouda, Prosecutor, International Criminal Court, statement on the conclusion of the preliminary examination of the situation in Palestine, and seeking a ruling on the scope of the Court’s territorial jurisdiction, 20 December 2019.

¹³ International Criminal Court, “Preliminary examination: State of Palestine”, 2020.

annexation plans (see [S/2020/736](#)), although that assessment was rejected by the Government of the State of Palestine. On 3 April, the Chair of the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee for the Coordination of the International Assistance to Palestinians called for strong international donor support, and, on 2 June, 25 donor countries of the Liaison Committee committed themselves to creating conditions for a viable two-State solution.

23. The international community, including the African Union, the European Union, OIC, LAS and the Non-Aligned Movement, continued to reaffirm its support for the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and their quest for statehood, sovereignty and independence. The 140 countries that have formally recognized the State of Palestine and the compendium of United Nations resolutions adopted to date exemplify the international consensus on the question. In 2019, the State of Palestine served as Chair of the Group of 77 and China, the largest grouping in the General Assembly, demonstrating its ability and competence to engage as a rightful member of the international community and upholding its rights and obligations in that regard.

24. On 13 August 2020, the United States announced that it had brokered an agreement between Israel and the United Arab Emirates to work towards the full normalization of relations between the latter two countries.¹⁴ Under the deal, Israel would “suspend declaring sovereignty” over areas of the Occupied Palestinian Territory. The three States would continue their efforts “to achieve a just, comprehensive and enduring resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict”.

25. The State of Palestine subsequently rejected and denounced that agreement.¹⁵ Some regional partners expressed concern about the unilateral action taken by the United Arab Emirates. On 19 August 2020, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Saudi Arabia confirmed that his country remained committed to peace with Israel on the basis of the 2002 Arab Peace Initiative (see [A/56/1026–S/2002/932](#)). The Secretary-General expressed the hope that the agreement could create an opportunity for Israeli and Palestinian leaders to re-engage in meaningful negotiations that would realize a two-State solution in line with relevant United Nations resolutions, international law and bilateral agreements.¹⁶ Several European countries and other Arab countries welcomed the decision by Israel to suspend its planned annexation. Other Member States from Africa, Asia and Latin America expressed concern as to whether the agreement was aligned with earlier global and regional agreements and about the fact that that it did not involve the full participation of the people of Palestine.

¹⁴ White House, “Joint statement of the United States, the State of Israel and the United Arab Emirates”, 13 August 2020.

¹⁵ Palestine Liberation Organization, Department of Public Diplomacy and Policy, “Statement by the Palestinian leadership”, 13 August 2020.

¹⁶ Stéphane Dujarric, Spokesman for the Secretary-General, statement attributable to the Spokesman for the Secretary-General on the announcement of an agreement between Israel and the United Arab Emirates, 13 August 2020.

Chapter III

Mandate of the Committee

26. The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People was established by General Assembly resolution 3376 (XXX) of 10 November 1975 with the task of recommending a programme designed to enable the Palestinian people to exercise their inalienable rights to self-determination, national independence and sovereignty and return to the homes and property from which they had been displaced, as recognized by the Assembly in its resolution 3236 (XXIX) of 22 November 1974. The mandate of the Committee has evolved considerably over the years into greater advocacy for the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and the mobilization of assistance. Additional information about the Committee is available on the website maintained by the Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat (www.un.org/unispal).

27. On 3 December 2019, the General Assembly renewed the mandate of the Committee (resolution 74/10) and requested the Secretary-General to continue to provide the Division for Palestinian Rights with the resources necessary for its programme of work (resolution 74/12) and to continue to implement the special information programme on the question of Palestine of the Department of Global Communications of the Secretariat (resolution 74/13). The Assembly also adopted resolution 74/11, entitled “Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine”, in which it reaffirmed the near-consensus international position regarding the components of a just, lasting and comprehensive solution.

28. The work of the Committee is fully aligned with the decisions of the main intergovernmental bodies of the United Nations, such as the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council, as well as with the work of the Secretary-General and the programmes, funds and specialized agencies of the United Nations system, with which it collaborates extensively.

Chapter IV

Organization of work

A. Membership and officers

29. The Committee is composed of 25 Member States, representing different regional groups and supporting the international consensus for a two-State solution: Afghanistan, Belarus, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Cuba, Cyprus, Ecuador, Guinea, Guyana, India, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mali, Malta, Namibia, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Pakistan, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Tunisia, Turkey and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of).

30. The 24 observers of the Committee are Algeria, Bangladesh, Bulgaria, China, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, the Niger, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka, the Syrian Arab Republic, the United Arab Emirates, Viet Nam and Yemen, as well as the State of Palestine, the African Union, LAS and OIC.

31. The Bureau of the Committee is elected each year from among the permanent representatives of Committee members. At its 399th meeting, on 4 February 2020, chaired by the Secretary-General, the Committee elected, in their personal capacity, Cheikh Niang (Senegal) as Chair; Adela Raz (Afghanistan), Ana Silvia Rodríguez Abascal (Cuba), Dian Triansyah Djani (Indonesia), Neville Melvin Gertze (Namibia) and Jaime Castillo Hermida (Nicaragua) as Vice-Chairs for the year. Adela Raz (Afghanistan) was also elected as Acting Rapporteur. In accordance with established practice, the State of Palestine participates in the work of both the Committee and the Bureau as an observer.

32. The day-to-day tasks of the Committee are undertaken by its Bureau. Members of the Bureau represented the Committee at all international conferences organized by the Committee, including by chairing and moderating conference sessions, and on all delegation visits. On the margins of the conferences and during delegation visits, they held meetings with senior officials of the respective host countries.

33. The Committee members and observers have actively advocated the rights of the Palestinian people, including in the Security Council. Currently, three Committee members, Indonesia, South Africa and Tunisia, and two observers, the Niger and Viet Nam, serve on the Security Council as elected members.

B. Participation in the work of the Committee

34. As in previous years, the Committee reconfirmed that all States Members of the United Nations and observers wishing to participate in its work were welcome to do so. Committee activities regularly involve civil society organizations, including those from Israel.

Chapter V

Action taken by the Committee and the Division for Palestinian Rights in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 74/10 and 74/12

A. Introduction

35. In the implementation of its programme of work, as a subsidiary body of the General Assembly, the Committee is guided by its mandate to promote the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and support the achievement without delay of an end to the Israeli occupation that began in 1967 and of the two-State solution on the basis of the pre-1967 lines. Its work and activities are also fully aligned with Security Council and Assembly resolutions on the question of Palestine; the women and peace and security agenda; the programme of the United Nations country team; international law, including humanitarian law; human rights frameworks such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenants on Human Rights; and, more recently, the Sustainable Development Goals and their achievement by the State of Palestine. As authorized by the Assembly, the Committee has adjusted its approved programme of work in view of developments.

36. Taking a rights-focused approach, the Committee has made every effort to support the universally recognized rights of an occupied people and the rights of all States and peoples to live in peace and security. To that end, the Committee engaged the diplomatic community on the question of Palestine through formal and informal intergovernmental processes; employed the good offices of the Secretary-General; organized public awareness-raising activities that involved conferences, meetings, speakers' panels and the media, including social media; promoted partnerships with Governments, relevant bodies of the United Nations system, intergovernmental organizations, regional bodies and civil society organizations; and built capacities for the future State of Palestine.

37. Owing to the COVID-19 pandemic and the consequent lockdowns, starting from April 2020, the Committee converted its meetings and activities to online events, using a variety of platforms, in line with General Assembly decision 74/544, in order to ensure continuity in the delivery of its mandate.

B. Mobilization of the diplomatic community

38. Through its diplomatic engagement with permanent missions in New York and around the world, the Committee continued to mobilize the international community in support of the realization of the two-State solution and a just, comprehensive and lasting solution to the question of Palestine in all its aspects on the basis of international law and relevant United Nations resolutions.

39. During the reporting period, the Committee held seven meetings at United Nations Headquarters (four of which were held online), including a special meeting on the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People (see paras. 54–58 below). It also held eight Bureau meetings, including with special guests and briefers, and the annual Bureau retreat.

40. On 3 October 2019, prior to a legal seminar convened by the Committee in Galway (see para. 77 below), a Committee delegation led by the Chair of the Committee met in Dublin with the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Defense of Ireland, Simon Coveney, to discuss the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. Mr. Coveney assured the

delegation of his country's continued engagement and support for Palestinian rights and for a just solution to the question of Palestine, which ranked high on the foreign policy agenda of Ireland.

41. On 20 November 2019, the Committee endorsed four draft resolutions for submission to the General Assembly. They concerned the mandates of the Committee and the Division for Palestinian Rights, the peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine, and the special information programme on the question of Palestine of the Department of Global Communications of the Secretariat. On 3 December, the Assembly, having before it the report of the Committee (A/74/35), adopted the four draft resolutions (resolutions 74/10, 74/11, 74/12 and 74/13).

42. At its meeting on 4 February 2020, the Committee elected its Bureau members for 2020 (see para. 31 above). At the same meeting, the Committee officially adopted its programme of work for 2020 (A/AC.183/2020/1).

43. On 24 February, the Committee, through the Division for Palestinian Rights, organized its annual briefing session, which was open to all permanent missions to the United Nations, to familiarize delegates with the Committee's mandate and programme of work. A total of 35 participants attended the informative and interactive session, including members of the Security Council. The Department of Global Communications also gave a presentation on the special information programme on the question of Palestine.

44. On the margins of the International Conference on the Question of Palestine, held on 28 February in Kuala Lumpur, on the theme "South-East Asian support for the Rights of the Palestinian People" (see para. 59 below), the Committee delegation met, inter alia, with the then-Prime Minister of Malaysia, Mahathir bin Mohamad, who reiterated his country's commitment to supporting the cause of the Palestinian people and to finding a just solution to the question of Palestine in line with the two-State solution based on the pre-1967 borders.

45. On 2 and 3 March, a Committee delegation visited New Delhi and met with representatives of the Government, political parties and think tanks. The delegation discussed the implications of the plan proposed by the United States and the crucial role of India, as a member of the Committee having good relations with both Israel and the State of Palestine and a non-permanent member of the Security Council for the 2021–2022 term, in contributing to a just, peaceful and lasting solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

46. On 5 May, the Committee issued a statement¹⁷ in which it warned that the planned annexation of parts of the Occupied Palestinian Territory by Israel threatened the two-State solution and called on the international community, in particular the Security Council, to shoulder its responsibilities and take urgent action to counteract the threat of annexation.

47. At its 400th meeting, held online on 18 May, the Committee heard a briefing by the Prime Minister of the State of Palestine, who elaborated on the steps that his Government and the international community should take in order to support the two-State solution. The Prime Minister called upon the international community to use its political and economic weight to salvage the two-State solution and prevent Israeli annexation. The briefing also included an update of the impact of COVID-19 in Palestine.

¹⁷ United Nations, "Israel's planned annexation of occupied territory threatens two-state solution, Palestinian rights committee warns, urges global community to counter threat", press release, 5 May 2020.

48. At the 401st meeting, held online on 14 July, Committee members called for sustained international pressure to stop the planned annexation by Israel of parts of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, as it represented a threat to the two-State solution based on the pre-1967 borders and, if carried out, would grossly violate international law and United Nations resolutions, undermine the credibility of the United Nations, increase the suffering of the Palestinian people, who were already hit hard by the COVID-19 pandemic, and undermine the prospects for the achievement of a just and lasting solution.

49. On 16 July, the Bureau held its annual meeting with the Secretary-General, who outlined his vision on the question of Palestine and efforts to restart dialogue within an international framework. The Chair conveyed the Committee's appreciation for the principled position expressed by the Secretary-General at the Security Council meeting on 24 June and called for sustained international pressure to stop the annexation by Israel of parts of the Occupied Palestinian Territory. The need for accountability was stressed.

50. On 22 July, the Bureau held its sixth annual retreat to discuss activities planned for the remainder of 2020 and for 2021. The Bureau agreed to support United Nations and other efforts to overcome the current impasse; to step up outreach to key partners and to continue to adapt the Committee's working methods in the context of COVID-19. The Bureau also reviewed the proposed programme budget for 2021. The decisions adopted at the retreat were shared with the Committee.

51. Statements on behalf of the Committee were delivered before or provided to the Security Council in the context of its quarterly debates on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question, on 28 October 2019 and 21 January, 23 April and 21 July 2020 (see [S/PV.8648](#), [S/PV.8706](#), [S/2020/341](#) and [S/2020/736](#)). In those statements, the Committee highlighted the deteriorating situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, called for a halt to the illegal policies and practices of Israel, the occupying Power and drew attention to its key activities and recommendations. It also appealed to the Security Council to take appropriate action that would lead to a just, comprehensive and peaceful settlement of the conflict in accordance with international law and the relevant United Nations resolutions.

C. Raising awareness of the question of Palestine

52. The Committee has raised awareness about the political, human rights and humanitarian situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including the situation of Palestinian women, by facilitating up-to-date briefings by experts and exchanges of ideas on specific issues at Committee meetings at Headquarters, during side events, international conferences and visits of Committee delegations, as well as through the dissemination of publications, information and the Committee's website. Details of each of the activities can be found on the website.

53. The Committee maintained an expanded social media presence to disseminate information on the question of Palestine. During the reporting period, the Committee Facebook, YouTube, Instagram and Twitter accounts recorded steady growth in the number of visitors. All Committee events, including those held online, are regularly broadcast via United Nations Web TV and across its social media pages, garnering thousands of viewers per event, resulting in an aggregate total of 57,484 views since March 2020 (see para. 45). These efforts resulted in increased engagement with the public, extended outreach to new audiences and higher numbers of followers across Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and YouTube. In addition to English, the Committee is also increasingly posting in Arabic on its website and social media channels.

54. As the major awareness-raising event organized by the Committee, the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, commemorated on 27 November, saw an impressive display of support and solidarity by Member States, civil society and the public.

55. At the special meeting of the Committee on that date, statements were delivered by the President of the General Assembly, the President of the Security Council and the Secretary-General. Other speakers included the Chair of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories, high-level representatives of the African Union, LAS, OIC and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and the Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations. Messages of solidarity were received from 19 Heads of State, 6 Heads of Government, 8 Ministers for Foreign Affairs and others and were published on the Committee's website.

56. All speakers expressed their unwavering support for the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and called upon the international community to work towards that objective. Many stressed the urgency of an expeditious solution and the responsibility of world leaders to make the Palestinian question a priority, underscoring the centrality of a just solution to regional and global peace and stability.

57. As is customary, similar events were coordinated in observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People at the United Nations Offices at Geneva, Vienna and Nairobi. The messages of the Chair and the Secretary-General were delivered at those events, and the United Nations was represented at the highest levels. The commemorations were attended by representatives of members and observers of the Committee and other Member States, who expressed their solidarity with the Palestinian people and support for the two-State solution. A message from the Secretary-General was issued in all six official languages.

58. The annual exhibition organized by the Committee on the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, in cooperation with the Permanent Observer Mission of the State of Palestine to the United Nations, was entitled "Palestine: the most universal national cause". It was displayed from 26 November 2019 to 6 January 2020 in the Visitors Lobby at Headquarters. The display represented advocates and activists from a wide range of disciplines, including political and religious leaders, diplomats, artists and athletes who, through their words and action, expressed their solidarity with the Palestinian People.

59. The International Conference on the Question of Palestine on the theme "South-East Asian support for the rights of the Palestinian People" was held in Kuala Lumpur on 28 and 29 February in cooperation with the Government of Malaysia and the Perdana Global Peace Foundation. The event brought together Palestinian and international experts, as well as civil society actors in South-East Asia, in support of the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. The then Prime Minister of Malaysia, Mahathir Mohamad, delivered the keynote address. Speakers highlighted activism against the Israeli occupation and urged the United Nations and its Member States to fulfil their obligations under the Charter and international law towards the Palestinian people, including through sanctioning Israel.

60. On 14 April, the Bureau of the Committee held a public online event with the Director of UNRWA Operations in Gaza, Matthias Schmale, on the theme "The COVID-19 pandemic in Gaza and ways to mitigate its impact on Palestine refugees". The event addressed developments in the occupied Gaza Strip, the latter's preparedness for the COVID-19 pandemic, the assistance to Palestine refugees in the Strip provided through UNRWA and the need for continued international resolve to support the Agency, including with emergency funding.

61. On 21 April, the Committee held an online conversation with representatives of Palestinian civil society on the theme “The COVID-19 pandemic under occupation – national resilience and international support”. The event highlighted how the Palestinian population in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and Gaza was coping with the COVID-19 pandemic under the ongoing occupation and political uncertainty in Israel and threats of annexation.

62. The United Nations Forum on the Question of Palestine was held online on 4 June, on the theme “The Question of Palestine: threats of annexation and the prospects for peace”. Prominent speakers – a member of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and former member of the Palestinian negotiation team, Hanan Ashrawi; a former Israeli Minister and participant in the 1993 Oslo Accord negotiations, Yossi Beilin; and the founder and president of the Arab American Institute, James Zogby – raised awareness among Member States and civil society of the imminent threat posed by the illegal plans of Israel to annex areas in the occupied West Bank and the dangerous repercussions thereof, if implemented. They called for international efforts to avert such illegal actions and to mobilize efforts to achieve a just solution.

63. On 18 June, the Chair issued a video message in support of a solidarity campaign marking “53 years of occupation” initiated by the Negotiations Affairs Department of PLO.

64. The International Conference on the Question of Jerusalem, jointly organized with OIC, was held online in two separate panel discussions, on 28 July, on the theme “Annexation in practice – Palestinian lives in Jerusalem” and on 27 August, on the theme “Annexation in practice – Palestinian youth in Jerusalem”. The Conference raised the awareness of Member States and civil society on the situation of the Palestinian population in the occupied city after over 50 years of Israeli annexation policies and measures. The Conference also demonstrated how actions in Jerusalem epitomize gradual annexation by Israel of Palestinian land.

65. The United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine, now in its twenty-sixth year of operation, remains a valuable resource on the question of Palestine for diplomats and researchers around the world, averaging 35,000 visitors per month. It consists of more than 37,000 documents and is considered to be the largest and most comprehensive online repository on the subject. The collection ranges from the latest United Nations documents to rare records dating back decades. Since its launch, the new site has received more than double the number of page views per month. Efforts to make all of the information on the website available in all six official languages of the United Nations are under way, with a special emphasis on Arabic.

66. Further to its monitoring mandate, the Committee also produced monthly bulletins compiling all official documents of the United Nations and other intergovernmental organizations relating to the question of Palestine. The Committee also produced a compilation of United Nations resolutions and decisions and a quarterly newsletter on the activities of the Committee and has introduced an annual compilation of United Nations reports on the question of Palestine.

67. Through its weekly publication entitled “NGO Action News”, the Committee continued to raise awareness of the work of civil society and United Nations actors in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and around the globe towards the achievement of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.

68. All publications of the Committee are disseminated through a mailing list of over 5,000 subscribers, including research libraries and universities, as well as

prominent personalities and opinion leaders active on the question of Palestine, and are published on the Committee's website under the Publications section.

D. Cooperation with intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations and United Nations system entities

69. The Committee continued its cooperation with intergovernmental organizations, NGOs and United Nations system entities and expressed its appreciation for the active participation of representatives of those bodies at various events held under its auspices. OIC continued to jointly organize the Committee's annual International Conference on the Question of Jerusalem. The African Union, LAS and OIC regularly attended the meetings of the Committee as observers and participated in its work.

70. The Committee continued to attach great importance to enhancing relations with national and regional parliaments and their interparliamentary organizations. In March, as part of its visit to India, the Committee delegation held a meeting with a representative of the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party to appeal for support to promote a just, peaceful and lasting solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

71. During its activities, the Committee, through the Division for Palestinian Rights, which conducted regular visits to Palestine, continued its long-standing cooperation with the United Nations system, including the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, United Nations country teams, UNRWA, the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management, the Department of Global Communications (including the United Nations information centres and the United Nations Regional Information Centre for Western Europe, in Brussels), the Human Rights Council and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) and the United Nations System Staff College.

72. On 5 November, the Chair of the Committee met with a group of Palestinian journalists participating in the annual training programme organized by the Department of Global Communications (see para. 81 below). The Chair briefed the group about the work of the Committee and engaged the journalists in a lively informal discussion on the situation in the Middle East and the work of the United Nations.

73. The Committee continued its collaboration with civil society organizations promoting the rights of the Palestinian people. As is customary, a civil society representative was invited to speak at the special meeting of the Committee held on 27 November to commemorate the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. On the margins of the commemoration, the Chair held closed consultations with civil society representatives, including from Israel and the State of Palestine.

74. Representatives of civil society organizations, including from Israel, were invited to attend all public events of the Committee. Those meetings and interactions allowed the Committee to inform civil society about its mandate and activities, at Headquarters and abroad, as well as to learn about civil society concerns and actions. In turn, the rich exchanges have informed the programme of work, statements and reports of the Committee. The Committee has also continued to provide a space in which Israeli and Palestinian civil society organizations can interact, through the facilitation of their participation in Committee events, at a time when such interaction is increasingly circumscribed on the ground.

E. Capacity-building

75. As requested in General Assembly resolution [74/12](#), the Committee continued to identify training opportunities to expand the capacity of officials of the State of Palestine. The Committee continued to assess the impact of its programmes.

76. In November, on behalf of the Committee, staff of the Division for Palestinian Rights met with Palestinian and United Nations country team counterparts in Jerusalem to explore areas of cooperation. The Committee is supporting the development of a Palestinian-owned communications strategy led by experts in the field. The Committee is sponsoring diplomatic protocol training, in collaboration with the Government of Jordan, in the spirit of South-South cooperation. Owing to the COVID-19 pandemic, in 2020 those two in-person activities were postponed.

77. On 4 and 5 October, the Committee convened a closed-door legal seminar at the Irish Centre for Human Rights of the National University of Ireland in Galway on ongoing settlement activities by Israel and the threat of annexation of occupied Palestinian territory and third-party responsibilities under Security Council resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#). The seminar brought together 12 prominent practitioners in the fields of international law and human rights and yielded practical recommendations on possible ways to hold the occupying Power accountable for settlements, annexation or other international law violations, highlighting accountability as essential for enabling the achievement of a just solution.

78. From 21 to 25 October, the Government of Senegal and the Committee organized a study visit for Palestinian officials on best practices in water management and promoting South-South cooperation, held in Dakar. Through briefings and discussions with 15 Senegalese experts, the 10 Palestinian participant hydrologists and officials from the Palestinian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates working on the issue of water resources gained an overview of the legal and institutional framework of the Senegal River Basin Development Organization, its main achievements and challenges.

79. In collaboration with the United Nations System Staff College, the Committee supported the participation of two diplomats, from the Palestinian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates and the Palestinian International Cooperation Agency, in a training session on South-South and triangular cooperation in implementing the 2030 Agenda on 29–31 October, in Turin.

80. From 28 October to 6 December, the Committee carried out its annual six-week capacity-building training programme on multilateral diplomacy for two Palestinian diplomats in New York, coinciding with the seventy-fourth session of the General Assembly. The objectives of the programme were revised, and the classroom training element of the programme was customized to the job functions of participating Palestinian officials.

81. In response to the COVID-19 crisis, the Committee prioritized online training. From 22 to 24 April, the Committee, in collaboration with UNITAR, supported the participation of three senior officials of the Palestinian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates in the online training workshop on leadership in crisis. From 18 to 20 May, the Committee, in collaboration with UNITAR, supported the participation of three senior female Palestinian Government officials in an online workshop on women's leadership.

Chapter VI

Action taken by the Department of Global Communications in accordance with General Assembly resolution 74/13

82. The Department held its annual International Media Seminar on Peace in the Middle East on 11 and 12 September in Ankara. The Seminar was organized in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey. During the two-day event, diplomats, journalists, media experts and youth representatives of Israel, Palestine, Turkey, European countries, the United States and other parts of the world discussed, among many issues, media-related dynamics as they relate to coverage of the Israel-Palestine conflict and awareness and misperceptions in that regard.

83. The Department organized its annual training programme for Palestinian journalists from 4 November to 6 December at Headquarters, and in Washington, D.C., for the week beginning 18 November. Seven Palestinian journalists from Gaza, the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, Jordan, Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic participated in the 2019 programme, bringing the total number of graduates of the programme to 203.

84. During the reporting period, all of the open intergovernmental meetings held at Headquarters related to the question of Palestine were covered by United Nations Web TV, United Nations Photo and aired live and on demand for viewers around the world by United Nations Web TV.

85. The Meetings Coverage Section issued 67 press releases related to the question of Palestine and the Middle East peace process in English and French.

86. From September 2019 to June 2020, UNifeed produced 30 stories related to the question of Palestine.

87. On 5 September, the Department signed an agreement with the Palestinian Broadcasting Corporation, which now carries content from United Nations News, a trusted international news source for the people in the region.

88. The Social Media Section featured issues relating to the question of Palestine on all its social media accounts (in all six official languages, as well as in Portuguese, Kiswahili and Hindi), which have a total follower count of over 30 million.

89. United Nations News teams produced more than 200 stories and content on issues affecting the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. These included an interview with the Deputy Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, United Nations Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator for the Occupied Palestinian Territory on the situation of youth in the Gaza Strip, and an Arabic feature story highlighting an initiative by the United Nations Industrial Development Organization in Palestine called “Creative Palestine,”¹⁸ which is a joint creative laboratory for Palestinians that connects designers and businessmen with various arts and design institutions and universities.

90. As part of the COVID-19 communications response, Arabic News provided authoritative facts on the pandemic and produced inspiring stories, in a region where mistrust of news outlets is high, including about the welcoming by the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process of the strong Palestinian-Israeli cooperation to curb the spread of COVID-19, and an interview with the Head of WHO in Gaza about the Palestinians’ right to health as related to the pandemic.

¹⁸ United Nations Industrial Development Organization, “Energizing Palestinian products, creating positive impact”, 20 January 2020.

91. In the light of the COVID-19 crisis and the shift to different ways of work, the Department used available online networks, platforms and social media accounts to promote virtual events and activities organized by the Committee, including the United Nations Forum on the Question of Palestine on 4 June, the online conversation with Prime Minister of the State of Palestine, Mohammad Shtayyeh, on 18 May (see para. 47 above), and two other special events, on 14 April and 21 April, related to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

92. With regard to the observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People in 2019, the Department worked closely with the Committee and Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs to provide communications support for a number of public events that were held at Headquarters on 27 November. The Department updated the International Day of Solidarity website in the six official languages and supported the revitalization of the Committee's website, including by assisting in migrating data to preserve its rich historical records.

93. The global network of United Nations information centres organized commemorative events to mark the International Day of Solidarity in various capitals, including Ankara, Cairo, Canberra, Harare, Lusaka, Moscow, Nairobi, Pretoria and Rabat. Messaging about the Day was promoted across the centres' social media accounts and websites. For example, the information centre in Beirut promoted the Secretary-General's message and posts about the Day on its social media platforms. The message was also promoted on the website of the information centre in Beirut, which recorded more than 4,000 page views in November and December. The information centre in Cairo organized a media briefing at its premises to launch the 2019 report on United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) assistance to the Palestinian People by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (TD/B/EX(68)/4), which was attended by media professionals from Egypt and the region. The information centre promoted the event on its website and social media platforms and facilitated interviews with the UNCTAD representative.

94. From September 2019 to March 2020, approximately 110,000 visitors were briefed on the question of Palestine at the updated permanent exhibit located along the route of the guided tour of Headquarters. Tours have subsequently been suspended owing to the closure of United Nations premises to the general public in line with COVID-19 safety measures.

Chapter VII

Conclusions and recommendations of the Committee

95. On the basis of its deliberations at Committee and Bureau meetings, briefings, visits of delegations, international conferences and events involving Member States, civil society organizations and regional organizations, the Committee has developed the recommendations set out below.

A. Immediate action by the Committee in response to annexation

96. As affirmed in its statement of 5 May,¹⁹ the Committee rejects the stated intention of the Government of Israel to annex parts of the occupied West Bank, which would constitute a most serious violation of international law, including the Charter of the United Nations and the 1949 Geneva Conventions and would undermine the contiguity of the Palestinian territory and the physical viability of the two-State solution based on pre-1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as the capital of the State of Palestine, in accordance with international law, relevant United Nations resolutions, internationally agreed parameters, the Madrid terms of reference and the Arab Peace Initiative.

97. The Committee supports the Secretary-General's clear position on the question of Palestine, based on international law, countless United Nations resolutions and the search for a just solution.

98. The Committee will continue to advocate the resolution of the question of Palestine on the basis of an international framework and against annexation and in support of the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and independence.

99. The Committee notes the concerns expressed by the Palestinian leadership, and the response of the international community, with regard to the agreement between Israel and the United Arab Emirates, which suspended, but did not commit Israel to halting, plans to further extend its sovereignty over Palestinian territory and its people. The agreement neither bound Israel to negotiations with the Palestinians, guided by the internationally agreed parameters, nor included the Palestinian people. To that end, the Committee reiterates that annexation of any part of the Occupied Palestinian Territory is illegal. Any initiative aimed at a just solution to the question of Palestine must, foremost, consider the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people, engage the Palestinian leadership and be based on the two-State solution, according to international law, United Nations resolutions and agreements between the parties.

B. Action taken with the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Human Rights Council

100. The Committee urges the Security Council and the General Assembly to ensure the implementation of the long-standing parameters for peace affirmed in relevant United Nations resolutions, including Council resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#) and Assembly resolution [74/11](#). The Committee requests the Secretary-General to continue to submit his reports to the Council on the implementation of resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#) in written format and, pursuant to paragraph 5 of the resolution, to include references to implementation of the provision by Member States. Pursuant to paragraph 11 of the resolution, the Committee also calls upon the Council to examine practical ways and

¹⁹ United Nations, "Israel's planned annexation of occupied territory threatens two-State solution".

means to secure the full implementation of relevant Council resolutions, including the use of sanctions on States and private entities violating Council resolutions.

101. The Committee deplores the use of excessive, disproportionate and indiscriminate force by Israeli occupying forces against Palestinian civilians, including during the protests in the Gaza Strip in 2018 and 2019, and reiterates its call for the implementation of the recommendations contained in the report of the independent international commission of inquiry on the protests in the Occupied Palestinian Territory ([A/HRC/40/74](#)). The Commission was mandated by the Human Rights Council to investigate violations committed in the proximity of the fence between Israel and the Gaza Strip during those protests.

C. Advocacy and outreach activities with the international community and civil society

102. The Committee will continue to mobilize the international community to stop Israel's annexation plan and exert efforts to achieve the two-State solution on the pre-1967 borders. As the United Nations marks the seventy-fifth anniversary of the signing of the Charter of the United Nations, the Committee reiterates that the question of Palestine, whose fate is inherently bound to the history and existence of the Organization, should prompt the Member States to act on their commitment to the ideals and shared values of democracy, accountability and prosperity for everyone. The international community must redouble its efforts to advance the long-overdue realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and regional peace in the Middle East and maintain international peace and security.

103. Any resolution of the conflict requires a comprehensive regional solution, such as that offered by the Arab Peace Initiative. The Committee calls upon regional organizations, such as the European Union, LAS and OIC, to take on a more politically active role in mediating an end to the conflict.

104. The Committee calls upon the international community to shift from a humanitarian to a human rights framework in addressing the plight of the Palestinian people. It demands an end to the 13-year Israeli air, land and sea blockade of Gaza and the lifting of all closures within the framework of Security Council resolution [1860 \(2009\)](#). It calls upon international donors to fulfil without delay all pledges to expedite the provision of humanitarian assistance, the reconstruction process and economic recovery, which are essential to alleviate the distress of Palestinians, including women and children, who face additional and gender-specific challenges that need to be addressed through targeted actions. It stresses the urgency of providing funding to UNRWA to ensure its vital humanitarian and development assistance to the Palestine refugees.

D. Action by Member States and regional organizations

105. The Committee urges Member States and the Organization to call upon Israel to respect its obligations under international law to protect civilians. Further to the report of the Secretary-General pursuant to General Assembly resolution [ES-10/20](#), the Committee emphasizes the need for the implementation of an international protection mechanism that can credibly ensure the safety and welfare of Palestinian civilians.

106. The Committee emphasizes the importance of the acknowledgement by Israel of the Nakba and its impact upon the Palestinian people as a necessary requirement for a viable and lasting peace. Palestine refugees should be treated as dispossessed nationals of a country – the State of Palestine – rather than as stateless refugees. It

strongly advocates the right to return as well as just compensation for Palestine refugees, as provided for in paragraph 11 of General Assembly resolution [194 \(III\)](#).

107. The Committee deems unilateral decisions by Member States to recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and the transfer of embassies in Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem as null and void, as they are in violation of Security Council resolutions, including resolutions [476 \(1980\)](#) and [478 \(1980\)](#). The Committee calls upon Member States to rescind those decisions and reiterates that the historic status quo of the holy sites in Jerusalem must be respected and that the international community shares the responsibility to preserve the legal, demographic and historical multicultural and multireligious character and status of the city.

108. The Committee underscores the responsibility of States and private entities not to contribute to grave Israeli violations of Palestinian human rights, including with respect to settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. It welcomes efforts by Governments, parliamentarians and civil society actors to sanction support, including economic, for illegal Israeli settlement activities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

109. The Committee welcomes the release of the database of all business enterprises involved in certain activities relating to Israeli settlements in East Jerusalem and the West Bank ([A/HRC/43/71](#)), prepared by OHCHR pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution [31/36](#) and calls upon Member States to implement the relevant obligations under international law, including as set out in paragraph 5 of Security Council resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#), in which the Council called upon Member States to distinguish, in their relevant dealings, between the territory of the State of Israel and the territories occupied since 1967.

110. The Committee looks forward to the report of the High Commissioner for Human Rights on the effects of annexation, as requested by the Human Rights Council in paragraph 16 of its resolution [43/31](#). The Committee expresses appreciation for the work of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967 and his reports submitted to the Human Rights Council.

111. The Committee underscores the importance of preventing the annexation of any part of the Occupied Palestinian Territory and is encouraged by the numerous statements in support of international legality by members of the international community, including international civil society. Such a collective position, including in the Arab world, will be paramount to prevent annexation and to bring an end to the occupation in line with international law and the relevant United Nations resolutions.

E. Support action in response to the coronavirus disease pandemic

112. The Committee expresses concern about the unprecedented spread of COVID-19 throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory and commends the stringent measures adopted by the Government of the State of Palestine to contain the spread in the region. The Committee urges the international community to direct its attention to the dire socioeconomic situation, the deteriorating living conditions of Palestinians in the occupied territory and the predicament of the Palestinian Government, which is on the verge of “total collapse” owing to the twin combination of the adverse impact of COVID-19 and the ongoing Israeli occupation and pending annexation plans, and provide support and assistance.

F. Action by the Secretariat and other United Nations entities

113. The Committee notes with appreciation the contribution of the Division for Palestinian Rights in support of its mandate and requests the Division to continue its substantive and secretariat support for all aspects of its mandate and highlights the growing importance of cooperation among developing countries and regional and subregional organizations within the framework of South-South and triangular cooperation for sharing replicable experiences towards the achievement of self-determination and independence.

114. The Committee encourages the Division for Palestinian Rights to continue with efforts to disseminate information on the question of Palestine by broadening outreach and promoting multilingualism, with a special emphasis on Arabic, on its website and social media platforms. It also requests the Division to continue to implement projects aimed at further promoting the Committee's mandate.

115. The Committee requests the continuation of the special information programme on the question of Palestine of the Department of Global Communications, which has made an important contribution to informing the media and the public.

116. The Committee intends to continue to work closely with other United Nations actors and entities, including the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and UNRWA, to synergize efforts in fields of common concern and uphold the permanent responsibility of the Organization towards the question of Palestine until it is justly resolved in all its aspects in a satisfactory manner and in accordance with international law. The Committee wishes to express its deep appreciation to OIC and other partners for the contribution of extrabudgetary resources and their active participation in its conferences and events.

117. The Committee further encourages all Member States to work collectively to sufficiently and predictably fund UNRWA.

118. The Committee will continue to promote inclusivity and gender balance in all its activities, including its capacity-building programme for the civil servants of the State of Palestine, and encourages a full utilization of online capacity-building opportunities, especially in the context of COVID-related travel restrictions.





United Nations

Report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

General Assembly
Official Records
Seventy-sixth Session
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Report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People



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Note

Symbols of United Nations documents are composed of letters combined with figures. Mention of such a symbol indicates a reference to a United Nations document.

Contents

<i>Chapter</i>	<i>Page</i>
Letter of transmittal	4
I. Introduction	5
II. Overview of the political context relating to the question of Palestine	6
III. Mandate of the Committee	10
IV. Organization of work	11
A. Membership and officers	11
B. Participation in the work of the Committee	11
V. Action taken by the Committee and the Division for Palestinian Rights in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 75/20 and 75/21	12
A. Introduction	12
B. Mobilization of the diplomatic community	12
C. Raising awareness of the question of Palestine	14
D. Cooperation with intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations and United Nations system entities	17
E. Capacity-building	18
VI. Action taken by the Department of Global Communications in accordance with General Assembly resolution 75/23	19
VII. Conclusions and recommendations of the Committee	21
A. Immediate action by the Committee in response to annexation and settlement activities	21
B. Immediate action by the Committee in response to the conflict	22
C. Immediate action by the Committee in response to postponement of elections in Palestine	22
D. Action taken with the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Human Rights Council	22
E. Advocacy and outreach with the international community and civil society	23
F. Action by Member States and regional organizations	24
G. Support action in response to the coronavirus disease pandemic	24
H. Action by the Secretariat and other United Nations entities	25

Letter of transmittal

[1 September 2021]

Mr. Secretary-General,

I have the honour to enclose herewith the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for submission to the General Assembly and circulation to all the competent bodies of the United Nations for necessary action, as appropriate, in accordance with paragraphs 2 and 10 of Assembly resolution [75/20](#) of 2 December 2020.

The report covers the period from 2 September 2020 to 31 August 2021.

(*Signed*) Cheikh **Niang**
Chair of the Committee on the Exercise of the
Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

Chapter I

Introduction

1. The present report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People has been submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution [75/20](#), adopted on 2 December 2020. It covers the implementation by the Committee of its programme of work ([A/AC.183/2021/1](#)), formulated to promote the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including their right to self-determination. Its objectives include maintaining international awareness, mobilizing efforts aimed at achieving a just and comprehensive solution to the question of Palestine and lasting Israeli-Palestinian peace, enhancing international solidarity with the plight of the Palestinian people until those objectives are achieved and supporting the Government of the State of Palestine in its capacity-building efforts towards a future viable and sustainable independent State of Palestine.
2. Chapter II consists of an overview of the political context relating to the question of Palestine during the reporting period, from 2 September 2020 to 31 August 2021.
3. Chapters III and IV contain an outline of the mandate of the Committee as set out by the General Assembly and information on the membership of the Committee and the organization of its work.
4. Chapter V covers the action taken by the Committee, including its participation in meetings of the Security Council and its continuing dialogue with intergovernmental organizations and civil society. It also covers international conferences, including in virtual format, capacity-building workshops organized by the Committee and other mandated activities carried out by the Division for Palestinian Rights on behalf of the Committee.
5. Chapter VI provides an overview of the special information programme on the question of Palestine implemented by the Department of Global Communications in accordance with General Assembly resolution [75/23](#).
6. The conclusions and recommendations of the Committee to the General Assembly are set out in chapter VII of the report.

Chapter II

Overview of the political context relating to the question of Palestine

7. During the reporting period, several developments and trends continued to threaten the prospects of a two-State solution.

8. Israeli settlements continued to be constructed and expanded in the Occupied Palestinian Territory despite several Security Council resolutions, including resolution 2334 (2016), declaring them illegal under international law. As documented regularly to the Security Council by the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, including in his briefings to the Security Council of 25 March 2021¹ and 24 June,² contrary to international law and United Nations resolutions, Israel has entrenched its illegal occupation of the Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, through settlement construction, wall construction, demolitions and seizures of homes and structures, as well as expulsions and the forced displacement of Palestinian families. On 14 October, the Israeli authorities advanced plans for building some 5,000 settlement units in Area C settlements. In early November, United Nations human rights experts condemned the demolition of the homes and property belonging to a Palestinian Bedouin community in Khirbat Humsah, on 12 July in the northern Jordan Valley. At least 73 inhabitants, including 41 children, were displaced, and more than 75 structures were destroyed. In January, 1,200 units were built in the East Jerusalem settlement of Giv'at Hamatos, and 800 Palestinians were evicted from their homes in the same period.

9. Demolitions and confiscation of Palestinian property throughout the occupied West Bank and East Jerusalem continued relentlessly, according to data collected by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. On 26 January 2021, the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process reported to the Security Council that, in the previous three months, Israeli authorities had demolished, seized or forced owners to demolish 71 Palestinian-owned structures, including 19 residential structures, displacing 73 Palestinians, including 17 women and 37 children (see S/2021/91, annex 1). On 7 July, Israeli forces destroyed all standing structures in Khirbat Humsah in the Jordan Valley, forcing the transfer of the entire community situated adjacent to the settlement of Beqa'ot. Illegal actions intensified in East Jerusalem in the Sheikh Jarrah neighbourhood, where Palestinian residents live under a perpetual threat of forced expulsion and are subject to restriction of movement. Palestinians in the neighbourhoods of Shaykh Jarrah and Silwan in occupied East Jerusalem remain under threat of imminent evictions and forced displacement as Israeli settler organizations continue their attempts to seize their homes.

10. Violent incidents and provocations have continued daily throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory, with an alarming increase in scale and intensity, as reported by the Secretary-General (see S/2021/584). The Special Coordinator noted the increase in settler-related violence against Palestinians and urged Israel to ensure the safety and security of the Palestinian population, in line with its responsibilities as the occupying Power under international law. Clashes have also repeatedly broken out in Bayta village near Nablus in the West Bank, in the context of Palestinian protests against the seizure of land by Israeli settlers and the construction of a new Israeli settlement outpost. The deployment of Israeli forces at the Aqsa Mosque compound restricted access to thousands of Muslim worshippers during the final days of Ramadan, triggering tensions and clashes leading to widespread unrest and the military escalation between Palestinian armed groups in the Gaza Strip and Israel. On 24 June, the Security Council was informed by the Special Coordinator for the Middle

¹ https://unsco.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/security_council_briefing_-_25_march_2021_2334.pdf.

² https://unsco.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/security_council_briefing_-_24_june_2021_0.pdf.

East Peace Process that, on 15 June, several thousand Israeli extremists marched chanting racist slogans and threats against Arabs and Muslims, amid a heavy Israeli police presence, through the Old City of Jerusalem, leading to protests and clashes in East Jerusalem and other parts of the West Bank, where 66 Palestinians, including 12 children, were injured by rubber bullets, sound grenades and physical assaults. The Special Coordinator warned about the potential for Jerusalem to become the trigger for a larger conflict. Clashes continued throughout the West Bank. According to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, from 1 January to 21 July 2021, Israeli forces killed 50 Palestinians, including 11 children, and injured at least 11,231, including 584 children,³ throughout the West Bank.

11. Hostilities between Palestinian militant groups in Gaza and Israel broke out on 11 May and led to 11 days of intense fighting, the most severe and deadly escalation of violence since 2014. Israeli military airstrikes and bombardment caused a considerable number of casualties, humanitarian suffering and significant destruction to infrastructure in Gaza, including to educational facilities, hospitals, health centres and water pipes. Israeli air strikes on Gaza were considered disproportionate and failing to protect civilians. On 27 May, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights reported that at least 242 Palestinians, including 68 children, 37 women, 3 persons with disabilities and 1 journalist, were killed in Gaza by Israeli bombing of civilian areas. In some cases, entire Palestinian families, including women, children and infants, were killed in their homes. Long-range rockets launched from Gaza by Palestinian militants claimed the lives of 12 persons in Israel, including foreign nationals and two children. The hostilities displaced some 77,000 Palestinians, many of whom sheltered in United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) schools throughout Gaza.⁴

12. In his statement of 16 May to the Security Council, the Secretary-General demanded an immediate stop to the conflict. The international community welcomed a ceasefire reached on 20 May, following intense mediation efforts by Egypt, Jordan and Qatar and the United Nations. Continued Israeli evictions and demolitions threatened to undermine the ceasefire. For example, on 7 June, the Jerusalem Municipality issued demolition orders to 119 Palestinian families (1,500 persons) from al-Bustan suburb in the Silwan neighbourhood of occupied East Jerusalem to make way for an Israeli archaeological park. When Israeli officials allowed an extremist march in Old City of Jerusalem on 15 June, violent clashes between Israeli Forces and residents ensued. Militant groups in Gaza launched incendiary balloons into southern Israel allegedly as a response, to which Israel responded with reprisal military attacks. On 16 May, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights directly linked the escalation to protests and heavy response by Israeli forces, first in East Jerusalem then spreading to the entire Occupied Palestinian Territory and within Israel.⁵ On 27 May, while welcoming the ceasefire, the High Commissioner warned of further violence and civilian suffering on all sides unless the root causes of the violence were addressed in a genuine and inclusive peace process to bring the occupation to an end.⁶ Following the violence throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory and Israel in May, some 200 Israeli and Palestinian women's organizations released a joint statement⁷ on 30 June calling for negotiations, based on the principles of United Nations Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), to achieve long-term solutions to the conflict. Noting the particular importance of protecting women from all forms of violence, and ensuring women's representation in decision-making positions, they urged broader efforts towards a negotiated, long-term solution, "and not just a temporary calm."

³ Latest reports available at <https://www.ochaopt.org/updates>.

⁴ See www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/Pages/NewsDetail.aspx?NewsID=27116&LangID=E.

⁵ See www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=27095&LangID=E.

⁶ See www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=27116&LangID=E.

⁷ See www.itach.org.il/wp-content/uploads/English.pdf.

13. The violent escalation had severe humanitarian consequences, in particular in Gaza, which remains under a 14-year blockade imposed by Israel by air, land and sea. Humanitarian access to the enclave was severely curtailed owing to the hostilities. Border crossing points, including the two Gaza crossing points with Israel – Erez and Kerem Shalom – remained closed during and after the outbreak of hostilities. In the immediate aftermath of the cessation of hostilities and ceasefire agreement, on 27 May, Member States made financial pledges to the United Nations humanitarian country team flash appeal of \$95 million for Gaza, which included UNRWA needs.⁸ Several donors expressed a willingness to contribute to reconstruction efforts in Gaza, including Egypt, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, the United States of America, the European Union and the World Bank. On 6 July, a joint rapid damage and needs assessment report⁹ was released by the World Bank Group, the United Nations and the European Union, in close cooperation with the Palestinian Authority and in consultation with civil society in Gaza, in which recovery needs of up to \$485 million during the first 24 months were estimated.

14. During the emergency General Assembly debate on the situation in the Middle East (Assembly agenda item 37) and the question of Palestine (Assembly agenda item 38) on 20 May, many Member States condemned the violence and called for a ceasefire, for the protection of civilians and for a resumption of negotiations on the basis of the relevant United Nations resolutions, to lead to a long-term solution of the conflict, while the President of the General Assembly issued an appeal for peace.¹⁰ On 22 May, the Security Council issued a press statement (SC/14527) stressing the immediate need for humanitarian assistance to the Palestinian civilian population, in particular in Gaza, and supporting the Secretary General's call for a ceasefire.¹¹

15. At a special session on 27 May, the Human Rights Council adopted resolution [S-30/1](#), establishing an ongoing independent, international commission of inquiry to investigate in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and in Israel all alleged violations and abuses of international humanitarian law and international human rights law leading up to and since 13 April 2021, and all underlying root causes of recurrent tensions, instability and protraction of conflict, including systematic discrimination and repression based on national, ethnic, racial or religious identity.

16. Throughout the reporting period, human rights violations have continued with impunity in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, as reported by the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian Territory occupied since 1967, Michael Lynk, at the thirtieth special session of the Human Rights Council on 27 May.¹² Human rights abuses have taken a particularly heavy toll on women, children and minority groups. It is estimated that 234,000 children need mental health and psychosocial support, as a result of the humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip.

17. In a significant move towards ending impunity and ensuring justice, the International Criminal Court on 5 February confirmed its jurisdiction over grave crimes committed in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including potential war crimes, which led the Court's Prosecutor on 3 March to initiate an investigation covering crimes within the jurisdiction of the Court alleged to have been committed since 13 June 2014. Israel, which is not a member of the Court, chose not to cooperate

⁸ See www.unocha.org/story/un-and-ngos-launch-humanitarian-plan-support-palestinians-affected-recent-escalation.

⁹ https://sites.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/gaza_rapid_damage_and_needs_assessment_july_2021_1.pdf.

¹⁰ See www.un.org/unispal/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/PGALETTER_200521.pdf.

¹¹ See www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/statement/2021-05-20/secretary-general%E2%80%99s-press-stakeout-following-the-ceasefire-announcement-between-gaza-and-israel.

¹² See www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/PS/SS_OPT_Statement_SR_OPT_27May2021.pdf.

with the ruling. On 9 July, the Special Rapporteur called on the international community to designate Israeli settlements as a war crime under the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.¹³

18. On 15 January, the President of the State of Palestine, Mahmoud Abbas, issued a decree calling for legislative, presidential and Palestinian National Council elections in 2021. The Central Elections Commission embarked on voter and candidate registration, resulting in a published list of 36 parties and independent candidates for legislative elections, and a total of 2.55 million registered voters, including 1.247 million women and up to 800,000 young eligible voters. The Palestinian Government subsequently cancelled the legislative and presidential elections in the entire Occupied Palestinian Territory following the failure by Israel, the occupying Power, to guarantee that it would not impede the holding of the elections in East Jerusalem. In his June statement to the Security Council,¹⁴ the Special Coordinator described the postponement as compounding frustrations and undermining hope for many Palestinians.

19. The ongoing Palestinian political divide continued, while the Egyptian-led intra-Palestinian reconciliation, scheduled for June, failed to take place. In his statement of 24 June to the Security Council, the Special Coordinator also reiterated the firm support of the United Nations for Egyptian efforts and called upon all Palestinian factions to make serious efforts to ensure the reunification of Gaza and the West Bank under a single, legitimate, democratic, national government.

20. A new Israeli coalition government, with a member from the United Arab List, was sworn in on 13 June, under the Prime Minister, Naftali Bennett, and the Alternate Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Yair Lapid.

21. In November, UNRWA, which provides essential core services to Palestinian refugees in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and the region, confronted a major budgetary crisis due to the halt of United States funding and aggravated by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. The Commissioner-General of UNRWA, Philippe Lazzarini, welcomed the resumption by the United States of assistance to UNRWA in 2021 and confirmed plans by Jordan and Sweden to host an international conference later in 2021 to ensure sufficient, predictable and sustained funding for the Agency.

22. The COVID-19 pandemic in the Occupied Palestinian Territory saw a sharp increase in cases and remained a genuine threat to the health, security and prosperity of Palestinians and Israelis alike. In January, United Nations human rights experts¹⁵ called on Israel to ensure swift and equitable access to COVID-19 vaccines for the Palestinian people under occupation.

23. In its periodic deliberations, the Security Council encouraged the Middle East Quartet to revitalize the stalled peace process with the goal of resuming meaningful negotiations on the question of Palestine. The new United States administration outlined a different policy on the question of Palestine from that of its predecessor and in support of a mutually agreed two-State solution, renewed diplomatic engagement and resumption of United States assistance for the Palestinian people. The President of the United States, Joseph Biden, and the Secretary of State, Anthony Blinken, subsequently engaged directly with Israeli and Palestinian leadership during the May conflict.

¹³ See www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=27295.

¹⁴ https://unsco.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/security_council_briefing_-_24_june_2021_0.pdf.

¹⁵ www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=26655.

Chapter III

Mandate of the Committee

24. The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People was established by General Assembly resolution [3376 \(XXX\)](#) of 10 November 1975 with the task of recommending a programme designed to enable the Palestinian people to exercise their inalienable rights to self-determination, national independence and sovereignty and return to the homes and property from which they had been displaced, as recognized by the Assembly in its resolution [3236 \(XXIX\)](#) of 22 November 1974. The mandate of the Committee has evolved considerably over the years into greater advocacy for the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and the mobilization of assistance. Additional information about the Committee is available on the website maintained by the Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat.¹⁶

25. On 2 December 2020, the General Assembly renewed the mandate of the Committee (resolution [75/20](#)), and requested the Secretary-General to continue to provide the Division for Palestinian Rights with the resources necessary for its programme of work (resolution [75/21](#)), and to continue to implement the special information programme on the question of Palestine of the Department of Global Communications of the Secretariat (resolution [75/23](#)). As of 2020, the mandates of the Committee and the Division are biennial. The Assembly also adopted resolution [75/22](#), entitled “Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine”, in which it reaffirmed the near-consensus international position regarding the components of a just, lasting and comprehensive solution.

26. The work of the Committee is fully aligned with the decisions of the main intergovernmental bodies of the United Nations, such as the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council and the International Court of Justice, as well as with the work of the Secretary-General and the programmes, funds and specialized agencies of the United Nations system, with which it collaborates extensively.

¹⁶ www.un.org/unispal.

Chapter IV

Organization of work

A. Membership and officers

27. The Committee is composed of 25 Member States, representing different regional groups and supporting the international consensus for a two-State solution: Afghanistan, Belarus, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Cuba, Cyprus, Ecuador, Guinea, Guyana, India, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mali, Malta, Namibia, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Pakistan, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Tunisia, Turkey and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of).

28. The 24 observers of the Committee are Algeria, Bangladesh, Bulgaria, China, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, the Niger, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka, the Syrian Arab Republic, the United Arab Emirates, Viet Nam and Yemen, as well as the State of Palestine, the African Union, the League of Arab States (LAS) and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC).

29. The Bureau of the Committee is elected each year from among the permanent representatives of Committee members. At its 402nd meeting, on 4 February 2021, chaired by the Secretary-General, the Committee elected, in their personal capacity, Cheikh Niang (Senegal) as Chair; Adela Raz (Afghanistan), Pedro Luis Pedrosa Cuesta (Cuba), Mohammad Kurniadi Koba (Indonesia), Neville Melvin Gertze (Namibia) and Jaime Hermida Castillo (Nicaragua) as Vice-Chairs for the year. Adela Raz (Afghanistan) was also elected as Acting Rapporteur. In accordance with established practice, the State of Palestine participates in the work of both the Committee and the Bureau as an observer.

30. The day-to-day tasks of the Committee are undertaken by its Bureau. Members of the Bureau represented the Committee at all international conferences organized by the Committee, including by chairing and moderating conference sessions, and on all delegation visits. On the margins of the conferences and during delegation visits, they held meetings with senior officials of the respective host countries.

31. The Committee members and observers have actively advocated the rights of the Palestinian people, including in the Security Council. Currently, two Committee members, India and Tunisia, and two observers, the Niger and Viet Nam, serve on the Security Council as elected members.

B. Participation in the work of the Committee

32. As in previous years, the Committee reconfirmed that all States Members of the United Nations and observers wishing to participate in its work were welcome to do so. Committee activities regularly involve civil society organizations, including those from Israel.

Chapter V

Action taken by the Committee and the Division for Palestinian Rights in accordance with General Assembly resolutions [75/20](#) and [75/21](#)

A. Introduction

33. In the implementation of its programme of work, as a subsidiary body of the General Assembly, the Committee is guided by its mandate to promote the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and support the achievement, without delay, of an end to the Israeli occupation that began in 1967 and of the two-State solution on the basis of the pre-1967 lines. Its work and activities are also fully aligned with Security Council and Assembly resolutions on the question of Palestine; the women and peace and security agenda; the programme of the United Nations country team; international law, including humanitarian law; human rights frameworks such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenants on Human Rights; and, more recently, the Sustainable Development Goals and their achievement by the State of Palestine. As authorized by the Assembly, the Committee has adjusted its approved programme of work in view of developments.

34. Taking a rights-focused approach, the Committee has made every effort to support the universally recognized rights of an occupied people and the rights of all States and peoples to live in peace and security. To that end, the Committee engaged the diplomatic community on the question of Palestine through formal and informal intergovernmental processes; employed the good offices of the Secretary-General; organized public awareness-raising activities that involved conferences, meetings, speakers' panels and the media, including social media; promoted partnerships with Governments, relevant bodies of the United Nations system, intergovernmental organizations, regional bodies and civil society organizations; and built capacities for the future State of Palestine.

35. Owing to the COVID-19 pandemic and the consequent lockdowns, starting from April 2020, the Committee converted its meetings and activities to online events, using a variety of platforms, in line with General Assembly decision 74/544, in order to ensure continuity in the delivery of its mandate.

B. Mobilization of the diplomatic community

36. The Committee continued to mobilize the international community in support of the realization of the two-State solution and a just, comprehensive and lasting solution to the question of Palestine in all its aspects on the basis of international law and relevant United Nations resolutions.

37. During the reporting period, all the Committee meetings were held in virtual format, including a special meeting on the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People (see para. 52 below). It also held seven virtual Bureau meetings.

38. On 23 November 2020, the Committee endorsed four draft resolutions for submission to the General Assembly. They concerned the mandates of the Committee and the Division for Palestinian Rights, the peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine and the special information programme on the question of Palestine of the Department of Global Communications of the Secretariat. On 2 December, the Assembly, having before it the report of the Committee ([A/75/35](#)), adopted the four draft resolutions (resolutions [75/20](#), [75/22](#), [75/21](#) and [75/23](#)).

39. On 10 February, the Bureau met with the President of the seventy-fifth session of the General Assembly, Volkan Bozkır, and agreed to increase collaboration on mobilizing Member States' and regional groups' efforts to resolve the question of Palestine in accordance with United Nations resolutions and to increase support for UNRWA.

40. In a meeting officiated by the Secretary-General on 4 February 2021, the Committee elected its Bureau members for 2021 (see para. 31 above) and officially adopted its programme of work for 2021 (A/AC.183/2021/L.2).

41. On 25 February 2021, the Committee, through the Division for Palestinian Rights, held its annual briefing session to familiarize delegates with the Committee's mandate and programme of work. A total of 20 participants attended the informative and interactive session, including members of the Security Council. The Department of Global Communications also gave a presentation on the special information programme on the question of Palestine.

42. In March 2021, the Bureau initiated a series of outreach meetings to members of the Middle East Quartet and the Security Council, advocating for the long overdue realization of the Palestinian people's rights and a reinvigoration of the Middle East Peace Process. Bureau delegations met with the European Union (5 March), the Russian Federation (18 March), China (24 March), France (26 April), Ireland (12 May) and Mexico (30 June), with more meetings planned, in line with the Bureau decision to adapt the Committee's programme of work to fast-evolving developments and needs on the ground. Member States that met with the Bureau underlined the need to resolve the question of Palestine on the basis of the two-State solution and in line with relevant United Nations resolutions. As part of its outreach efforts, the Bureau also met with the President of the General Assembly on 10 February, the President of the Security Council on 28 April and the Secretary-General on xx August.

43. On 28 April, the Bureau sent a letter to the President of the Security Council on behalf of the Committee, asking him to ensure that Israel comply with its obligations and allow unhindered elections in East Jerusalem, and on 10 May issued a press statement on its concerns and calling for Security Council action.

44. The Chair made statements on behalf of the Committee to the Security Council in the context of its quarterly debates on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question, on 26 October 2020 and 26 January, 22 April and 28 July 2021. In those statements, the Committee highlighted the deteriorating situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, called for a halt to the illegal policies and practices of Israel, the occupying Power, and drew attention to the Committee's key activities and recommendations. It also appealed to the Security Council to take appropriate action that would lead to a just, comprehensive and peaceful settlement of the conflict in accordance with international law and the relevant United Nations resolutions. It reiterated its appeals for humanitarian assistance for the Palestinian people and support for UNRWA.

45. On 10 May, the Bureau, on behalf of the Committee, issued a press statement expressing grave concern at the violence at the Aqsa Mosque compound and condemning the acts against Palestinian worshippers and acts of provocation, incitement and inflammatory rhetoric. It further expressed alarm at the escalation of Israeli actions in the Gaza Strip and the firing of rockets by Palestinian militants and called for all indiscriminate attacks against civilians to stop.

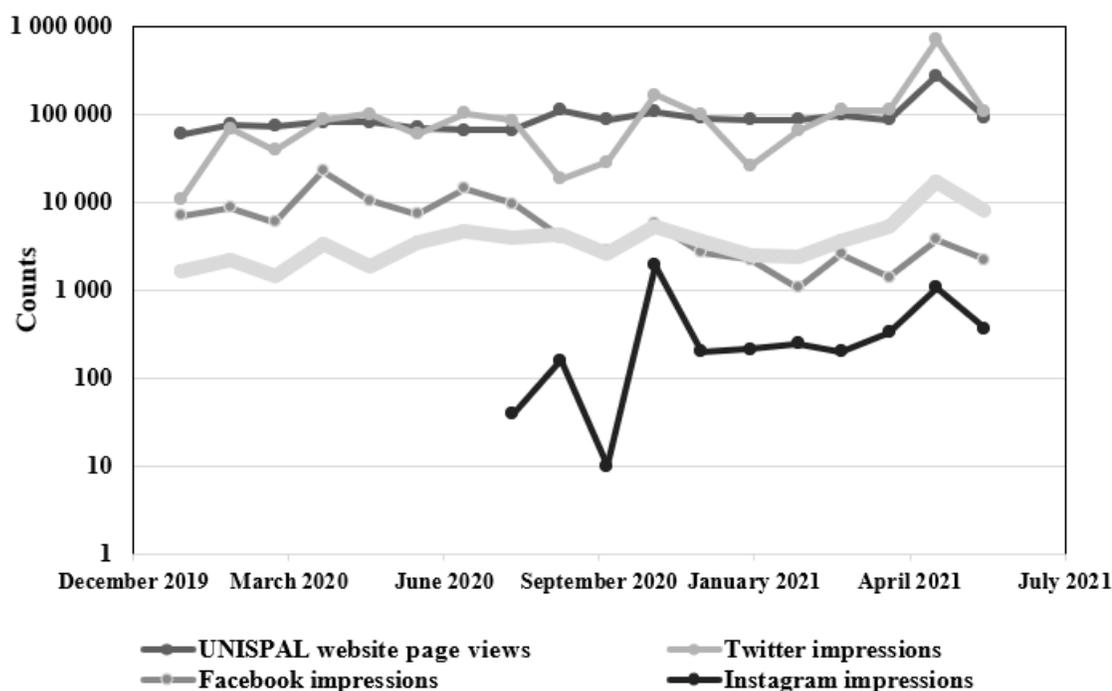
46. On 20 May, the Chair addressed the General Assembly formal plenary convened under agenda items 37 (The situation in the Middle East) and 38 (The Question of Palestine) in the context of the escalation in Jerusalem and conflict in Gaza.

C. Raising awareness of the question of Palestine

47. The Committee continued to raise awareness about the political, human rights and humanitarian situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including the situation of Palestinian women, by facilitating up-to-date briefings by experts and exchanges of ideas on specific issues during virtual Committee meetings, side events and virtual conferences, as well as through the dissemination of publications and information via several electronic platforms and the Committee’s website. Details regarding each activity can be found on the website.

48. The Committee maintained an expanded and enhanced social media presence to disseminate information on the question of Palestine. During the reporting period, the Committee Facebook, YouTube, Instagram and Twitter accounts recorded steady growth in the number of visitors and followers, as shown in the figure. The Twitter account alone had gained 3,429 new followers by 31 July (total 20,062), while the Committee mailing list grew by 2,032 new subscribers (total 74,114). The website was visited 1,114,994 times during the reporting period. All Committee public events, including those held online, are regularly broadcast via United Nations Web TV and across its social media pages, garnering thousands of viewers per event. As at 31 July, this has resulted in an aggregate total of 926,726 views since November 2020. These efforts resulted in increased engagement with the public, extended outreach to new audiences and higher numbers of followers across Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and YouTube. In addition to English, the Committee is also increasingly disseminating its documents in Arabic, Chinese, French, Russian and Spanish on its website. Conferences and events organized by the Committee during the reporting period were livestreamed on UN Web TV and United Nations social media platforms.

Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, social media statistics



Abbreviation: UNISPAL, United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine.

49. The International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, organized by the Committee and commemorated on 1 December, saw an impressive display of support and solidarity by Member States, civil society and the public despite the constraints imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic situation.

50. All speakers expressed their unwavering support for the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and called upon the international community to work towards that objective. Many stressed the urgency of an expeditious solution and the responsibility of world leaders to make the Palestinian question a priority, underscoring the centrality of a just solution to regional and global peace and stability.

51. As is customary, similar events were coordinated in observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People at the United Nations Offices at Geneva, Vienna and Nairobi. The messages of the Chair and the Secretary-General were delivered at those events, and the United Nations was represented at the highest levels. The commemorations were attended by representatives of members and observers of the Committee and other Member States, who expressed their solidarity with the Palestinian people and support for the two-State solution. A message from the Secretary-General was issued in all six official languages.

52. The 2020 exhibit organized for the observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People was entitled “The writing is on the wall: annexation – past and present”. The virtual exhibit displayed striking images of the separation wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and included murals, pieces of art and graffiti painted onto the Wall by, among others, international activists such as Banksy, Blu, several Palestinian artists and activists, as well as anonymous visitors expressing solidarity. The exhibit was launched virtually on 29 November 2020, and can be viewed on the United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine website.¹⁷ In addition, the Bureau decided to reproduce and print, with a funding contribution by the Organization for Islamic Cooperation (OIC), the four past exhibits (2017–2020) into individual booklets, to be distributed physically and digitally to enhance the Committee’s advocacy and reach a wider global audience. On XX August, the Bureau presented the Secretary-General with the 2017 and 2018 booklets, featuring prominent Palestinian personalities, which were distributed to all Member and Observer States of the United Nations.

53. On 12 November, the Committee held a virtual event, “International Parliamentarians and the Palestine Question”, which brought together members of parliament from the European Union, South Africa and the United States. The speakers and participants – among them, some from the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean – emphasized the need for unified actions to keep the protection of Palestinians and their rights on the international agenda, to strengthen multilateral approaches to solve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and to provide urgent support to UNRWA. Participants called for closer interaction between legislative bodies and international organizations, requesting the Committee to organize further such events in the future.

54. A virtual event on “Women, peace and security and Beijing+25: progress and challenges for women and girls in Palestine” was organized on 10 March in the margins of the sixty-fifth session of the Commission on the Status of Women. The women speakers – former and current Palestinian officials and civil society representatives from throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory – focused on the unique situation of Palestinian women under occupation and traditional norms, their roles and challenges since the first intifada to date, including in the upcoming Palestinian elections, as well as the shrinking space of civil society in the Occupied

¹⁷ www.un.org/unispal/event/2020-solidarity-day/.

Palestinian Territory. They also called for the number of women in leadership positions and in parliament to be increased.

55. On 7 April, the Committee organized a virtual event on “Delivering critical assistance for Palestine refugees: challenges and opportunities in a complex context”, featuring briefings by the UNRWA Commissioner-General, Mr. Lazzarini, and the Director of UNRWA Operations in the West Bank, Gwyn Lewis. The President of the General Assembly, Mr. Bozkır, delivered a keynote address. The aim of the event was to strengthen international support for the rights of Palestine refugees and mobilize political and financial support to UNRWA, ahead and in support of a planned international UNRWA conference. UNRWA representatives called to protect the Agency’s mandate and the rights of Palestine refugees against a campaign using misinformation to deter donors and supporters.

56. On 18 May, the Committee held its annual United Nations forum, under the theme “International parliamentary support to the question of Palestine” with a two-panel interactive discussion, moderated by a Member of Parliament of Portugal and the Vice-President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean, and included parliamentarians from Canada, Chile, France, South Africa and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. The forum focused on parliamentary support on the full implementation of Security Council resolution 2334 (2016), including through incorporation of its requirements into national legislation, and the revival of multilateral efforts for a peaceful resolution of the conflict. Recommendations included establishing an international commission to investigate crimes of “apartheid” of Israel, revising bilateral agreements with Israel to include the 1967 borders and prohibiting tax benefits for companies operating in the settlements and the importation of their goods and services.

57. On 1 July, the Committee held the annual International Conference on the Question of Jerusalem, with support from OIC, under the theme “Forced demographic change in Jerusalem – grave breaches and a threat to peace”. The discussion panel comprised Palestinian, Israeli and international experts and community activists from East Jerusalem and highlighted decades-long Israeli policies and actions to promote Jewish settlement into and Palestinian emigration from Jerusalem, enabled by an Israeli legal system ignoring international law and excluding the political context of a power imbalance between Jewish Israelis and Palestinians. The young Palestinian representatives shared their daily struggles against the indignities and coercion of the occupation and their means of peaceful resistance, highlighting the power of social media and international support.

58. The United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine, now in its twenty-seventh year of operation, remains a valuable resource on the question of Palestine for diplomats and researchers around the world, averaging 100,000 page views per month. Accessed through the Committee’s website, it consists of more than 40,000 documents and is the largest and most comprehensive online repository on the subject. The collection ranges from the latest United Nations documents to rare records dating back decades. On 7 June, the System completed a comprehensive four-year migration and technological upgrade and progressed to make the website information in all six official languages of the United Nations, with a special emphasis on Arabic. Efforts are under way to improve the accessibility of the Committee’s website for the visually impaired. The Division for Palestinian Rights has initiated a project to deploy a virtual chatbot on the System to enhance user experience on the Committee’s website.¹⁸

59. Further to its monitoring mandate, the Committee also produced several publications disseminated by the Division for Palestinian Rights. They include

¹⁸ <http://un.org/unispal>.

monthly bulletins, compiling all official documents of the United Nations and other intergovernmental organizations relating to the question of Palestine, assembled United Nations resolutions and decisions, widely disseminated quarterly newsletters on the activities of the Committee and an annual compilation of United Nations reports on the question of Palestine, as well as an annual compilation of all resolutions issued by United Nations bodies on the question of Palestine.

60. Through its weekly publication entitled “NGO Action News”, the Committee continued to raise awareness of the work of civil society and United Nations actors in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and around the globe towards the achievement of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.

61. The Committee commissioned a legal study for the Irish Centre for Human Rights at the National University of Ireland to examine the legality of the Israeli occupation. It is expected to be finalized in 2021.

62. The Committee’s publications were disseminated through a growing mailing list that includes more than 8,000 subscribers, including research libraries, universities and key stakeholders such as community leaders, political figures, members of the diplomatic community, students, university professors, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), intergovernmental organizations and journalists, as well as prominent personalities and opinion leaders. All the publications of the Committee are posted on the Committee’s website.

D. Cooperation with intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations and United Nations system entities

63. The Committee continued its cooperation with intergovernmental organizations and United Nations system entities and expressed its appreciation for the active participation of representatives of those bodies at various events held under its auspices. OIC continued to support the annual International Conference on the Question of Jerusalem, organized by the Committee. The African Union, LAS and OIC regularly attended the meetings of the Committee as observers and participated in its work.

64. During its activities, the Committee, through the Division for Palestinian Rights, continued its long-standing cooperation with the United Nations system, including the United Nations Development Programme, United Nations country teams, UNRWA, the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management, the Department of Global Communications (including the United Nations information centres and the United Nations Regional Information Centre for Western Europe, in Brussels), the Human Rights Council and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) and the United Nations System Staff College.

65. The Committee also continued its collaboration with NGOs promoting the rights of the Palestinian people. Representatives of civil society organizations, including from Israel, were invited to attend all public events of the Committee. Those meetings and interactions allowed the Committee to be informed about civil society concerns and actions and to share the Committee’s mandate and activities with them. These in-depth exchanges have informed the programme of work, statements and reports of the Committee. The Committee also continues to provide a space in which Israeli and Palestinian civil society organizations can interact, through the facilitation of their participation in Committee events, at a time when such interaction is increasingly restricted on the ground. As is customary, a civil society representative was invited to speak at the special meeting of the Committee held on 1 December to commemorate the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. The Committee

continued to send out a weekly NGO Action News. As part of its periodic interactions with civil society organizations, on 3 August, the Committee organized a virtual engagement with civil society organization representatives from Palestine, Israel and the international community to receive first-hand briefings on the situations in Jerusalem and Gaza and on advocacy in the United States.

E. Capacity-building

66. As requested in General Assembly resolution [75/21](#), the Committee continued to identify training opportunities to expand the capacity of officials of the State of Palestine. The Committee continued to assess the impact of its programmes. In response to the COVID-19 crisis, the Committee prioritized online training during the reporting period.

67. The Committee, in collaboration with the United Nations System Staff College supported the participation of three diplomats from the Palestinian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in a five-week online training course on effective writing skills that took place from 7 September to 9 October 2020. Furthermore, in collaboration with UNITAR, the Committee supported the participation of four diplomats from the Palestinian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates in a virtual immersion training course on the workings of the United Nations in Geneva from 9 to 20 August 2021.

Chapter VI

Action taken by the Department of Global Communications in accordance with General Assembly resolution 75/23

68. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 75/23 of 2 December 2020, the Department of Global Communications continued to implement its special information programme on the question of Palestine, organizing its activities and outreach in mostly online formats, owing to the COVID-19 pandemic.

69. The Department worked with the Al-Jazeera Media Institute to organize a special virtual training programme for Palestinian journalists, from 23 November to 3 December. The online course was focused on three themes: mobile journalism; data journalism; and news verification; and benefited 12 Palestinian journalists from Gaza, the West Bank, Jerusalem and the diaspora. The International Media Seminar on Peace in the Middle East, held virtually on 8 and 9 December 2020, was officially opened by the Committee Chair, with speakers from Israel, Palestine the United Kingdom and the United States, as well as United Nations representatives, to discuss two themes: “The Israel-Palestine conflict and challenges of the new decade”, and “A tale of two narratives: misinformation and disinformation”. The International Day of Solidarity website was updated in the six official languages. The Department continued to provide guidance and assistance for maintenance of the website, including in the six official languages. In collaboration with the Office of Information and Communications Technology, the Department assisted with modernizing the presentation and searchability of digital materials on multiple aspects of the question of Palestine.

70. The Department provided communications support for live and on-demand streaming coverage of the Committee’s meetings and events outlined in section V.C of the report, in all available languages on UN Web TV. The Department issued 75 press releases, in English and French, related to the question of Palestine and the Middle East peace process, including coverage of the Committee, the General Assembly and the Security Council, as well as statements and messages by the Secretary-General. UN News in the six official languages, as well as Hindi, Kiswahili and Portuguese, produced some 300 stories and multimedia products related to the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including stories about COVID-19 and interviews with representatives of United Nations agencies in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

71. The Department’s UNifeed service produced 42 packages for broadcasters related to the question of Palestine during the reporting period. UNifeed coverage of the escalation of the situation in Gaza and Israel was aired 20,298 times in May, breaking all previous monthly records for broadcast pick-up. UN Video also produced news and social media videos to highlight the voice of the United Nations and its leaders during the period of escalation. These videos were widely viewed and generated strong audience engagement. UNifeed videos received close to 60 hours of airtime during this period. Audience engagement was also strong, with two news videos produced by UN Video on the conflict, both rating among the top three produced for the month of May on YouTube and Twitter. On YouTube, the video featuring the Secretary-General and the President of the General Assembly speaking about the deadly violence generated more than 76,000 views, 2,400 reactions and 500 comments. On the Secretary-General’s Twitter account, the video on his stakeout reacting to the ceasefire received more than 53,000 views, some 700 retweets and 110 comments.

72. During the reporting period, the United Nations social media platforms continued to cover news and provide information about issues related to the question

of Palestine in the six official languages, as well as Hindi, Kiswahili and Portuguese. United Nations social media platforms continued to promote virtual events and activities organized by the Committee, including by drawing traffic to the United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine and the Committee's social media accounts, and by making the information available for use on public-facing platforms, such as Trello.¹⁹

73. Together with UNRWA, the Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth invited a young member of the first-ever "UNRWA Student Parliament" to speak at the ministerial round table of the Economic and Social Council youth forum),²⁰ which was held on 7 and 8 April. Following the event, the young Palestinian speaker was featured on the Office's blog series titled "Meet 23 young people leading on resilient recovery in the decade of action".²¹

74. On 15 July, the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth participated in the "Palestine refugee youth empowerment" virtual event, hosted by the UNRWA Representative Office in New York, which aimed to put the spotlight on Palestine refugee youth success stories.

75. The quest for a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine was highlighted in the UN75 commemorative book: "Achieving our common humanity: Celebrating global cooperation through the United Nations"²² under the "Self-determination of all peoples" section.

76. On the International Day of Solidarity, the Department facilitated a virtual exhibit, discussed in paragraph 52, to engage a wide range of audiences and collaborated with the United Nations Regional Information Centre for promotions of the event in Western Europe in Brussels, and Centres in Ankara, Beirut, Brussels, Cairo, Canberra, Nairobi and Pretoria.

¹⁹ <https://trello.com/b/772QZEh1/question-of-palestine>.

²⁰ www.un.org/ecosoc/en/content/ecosoc-youth-forum-2021.

²¹ www.un.org/youthenvoy/meet-23-young-people-leading-resilient-recovery-in-the-decade-of-action-aseel-2/.

²² https://cdn.un.org/unyearbook/yun/un75/achieving_our_common_humanity.pdf.

Chapter VII

Conclusions and recommendations of the Committee

77. In developing its recommendations set out below, the Committee has taken into account the deliberations at Committee and Bureau meetings, briefings received, outreach, international conferences and events involving Member States, civil society organizations and regional organizations.

A. Immediate action by the Committee in response to annexation and settlement activities

78. The Committee expresses concern about the failure of the Government of Israel to halt the creeping annexation of parts of the occupied West Bank, which would constitute a most serious violation of international law, including the Charter of the United Nations and the Geneva Conventions, and would undermine the contiguity of the Palestinian territory and the physical viability of the two-State solution based on pre-1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as the capital of the State of Palestine, in accordance with international law, relevant United Nations resolutions, internationally agreed parameters, the Madrid principles and the Arab Peace Initiative. The Committee calls on Israel, the occupying Power, to halt all such illegal measures and to act towards bringing an end to its illegal occupation, in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions, including Security Council resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#).

79. The Committee supports the Secretary-General's clear position on the question of Palestine, based on international law, countless United Nations resolutions and the search for a just solution and calls for Israel to uphold its obligations under international humanitarian and international human rights law, respect the status quo at the holy sites in Jerusalem, including for the historic and legal status quo at Aqsa Mosque compound and the right of Muslims to peacefully worship there free from threats, intimidation and violence. The Committee calls on the Secretary-General to continue to utilize his good offices and mediation capacities, as well as on all parties with influence, to act with urgency to de-escalate this volatile situation.

80. The Committee will continue to advocate the resolution of the question of Palestine on the basis of an international framework and against annexation and in support of the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and independence.

81. The Committee notes that any initiative aimed at a just solution to the question of Palestine must, first and foremost, consider the legitimate rights and aspirations of the Palestinian people, engage the Palestinian leadership, and be based on the two-State solution, according to international law, United Nations resolutions and agreements between the parties. In this context, the Committee notes the concerns expressed by the Palestinian leadership, and the response of the international community, that the bilateral agreements between Israel and some Arab countries did not commit Israel to halting plans to further extend its sovereignty over Palestinian territory and its people. To this end, the Committee reiterates that annexation of any part of the Occupied Palestinian Territory is illegal.

82. The Committee expresses concerns at the occupying Power's continued expansion of its illegal settlement network and related infrastructure, including the wall, in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including in and around East Jerusalem and deep inside the West Bank, in grave breach of the Fourth Geneva Convention and deemed illegal under international law, as reaffirmed, inter alia, in Security Council resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#). The Committee calls on Israel to immediately halt all

settlement construction and expansion and its ongoing transfer of its population to those settlements as they are unlawful and constitute an obstacle to peace and are destroying the viability of the two-State solution.

83. The Committee expresses its deep concern about the imminent evictions of Palestinian families from their homes in the Sheikh Jarrah and Silwan neighbourhoods of occupied East Jerusalem settlements and Bayta village and reiterates its calls for a halt to all illegal Israeli policies and practices, including all settlement activities, home demolitions, evictions, forced displacement and all other acts of collective punishment against the Palestinian civilian population.

B. Immediate action by the Committee in response to the conflict

84. The Committee expresses its deep alarm at the dramatic deterioration of the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, especially following the escalation of violence in May and continuous acts of provocation and incitement, in particular by Israeli extremists in occupied East Jerusalem. The Committee reminds Israel and Palestinian militants that indiscriminate and disproportionate attacks and failure to distinguish between military and civilian objects, and their use, thereby constitute clear violations of international humanitarian law and may constitute war crimes.

85. The Committee calls on all parties to the May conflict in Gaza and Israel to respect a ceasefire to allow for medical, humanitarian and reconstructions efforts, and for an investigation by the International Criminal Court into the attacks on civilian populations and other gross violations of human rights. It emphasizes the need to address the root causes of the violence to avoid the next round of violence with further pain and suffering for civilians on all sides and to advance the realization of a just solution.

C. Immediate action by the Committee in response to postponement of elections in Palestine

86. The Committee regrets the postponement of parliamentary and presidential elections in the State of Palestine and underlines that those democratic elections are a crucial factor for the full realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. To this end, the Committee urges the Palestinian leadership to announce new dates for holding the elections and urges the Security Council to ensure that Israel guarantees the holding of democratic Palestinian elections throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem.

D. Action taken with the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Human Rights Council

87. The Committee urges the Security Council and the General Assembly to ensure the implementation of the long-standing parameters for peace affirmed in relevant United Nations resolutions, including Council resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#) and Assembly resolution [74/11 \(2019\)](#). The Committee requests the Secretary-General to continue to submit his reports to the Council on the implementation of resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#) in written format and, pursuant to paragraph 5 of the resolution, to include references to implementation of the provision by Member States. Pursuant to paragraph 11 of the resolution, the Committee also calls upon the Council to examine practical ways and means to secure the full implementation of relevant Council resolutions, including the use of sanctions on States and private entities violating Council resolutions.

88. The Committee further urges the Security Council and the Middle East Quartet to revitalize the stalled peace process in view of resuming meaningful negotiations towards the achievement of a just and peaceful solution for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The international community has an abiding responsibility towards the question of Palestine until it is resolved in all aspects, in accordance with international law and the relevant United Nations resolutions and must act without delay.

89. The Committee deplores the use of excessive, disproportionate and indiscriminate force by Israeli occupying forces against Palestinian civilians, including during the protests in the Gaza Strip in 2018 and 2019 and during the 11-day conflict in May 2021 and reiterates its call for the implementation of the recommendations contained in the report of the independent international commission of inquiry on the protests in the Occupied Palestinian Territory ([A/HRC/40/74](#)). The Commission was mandated by the Human Rights Council to investigate violations committed in the proximity of the fence between Israel and the Gaza Strip during those protests. The Committee also calls for an end to all violations of human rights in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including arbitrary arrests and detentions, restrictions to freedom of movement, discrimination and collective punishment, as well as the denial of the rights to self-determination and independence.

90. The Committee is of the view that only full respect for the human and collective rights of the Palestinian people will ensure a lasting and just resolution to the question of Palestine. In support of justice and respect for the rule of law and human rights that are indispensable for peace, the Committee welcomes Human Rights Council resolution [S-30/1](#) for an independent, international commission of inquiry to investigate all violations and abuses of international humanitarian law and international human rights law since 1 April 2021.

91. The Committee urges Member States and the Organization to call upon Israel, as the occupying Power, to respect its obligations under international law to protect civilians. Further to the report of the Secretary-General pursuant to General Assembly resolution [ES-10/20](#), the Committee emphasizes the need for the implementation of an international protection mechanism that can credibly ensure the safety and welfare of Palestinian civilians. The Committee calls upon the international community to shift from a humanitarian to a human rights framework in addressing the plight of the Palestinian people, and demands also an end to the 14-year Israeli air, land and sea blockade of Gaza and the lifting of all closures under Security Council resolution [1860 \(2009\)](#).

E. Advocacy and outreach with the international community and civil society

92. The Committee will continue to mobilize the international community to stop Israel's annexation plan and will exert efforts to contribute to the achievement of the two-State solution on the pre-1967 borders and is encouraged by the numerous statements in support of international legality by members of the international community, including the Arab world and international civil society. Any comprehensive resolution of the conflict will require a regional approach, such as that offered by the Arab Peace Initiative. The Committee calls upon regional organizations, such as the European Union, LAS and OIC, to take on a more politically active role in mediating an end to the conflict.

93. The Committee calls upon the international donors to fulfil without delay all pledges to expedite the provision of humanitarian assistance, the reconstruction process and economic recovery, which are essential to alleviate the distress of Palestinians, including women and children, who face additional and gender-specific challenges that need to be addressed through targeted actions. It stresses the urgency

of sufficient and predictable funding to UNRWA to ensure its vital humanitarian and development assistance to the Palestine refugees.

F. Action by Member States and regional organizations

94. The Committee emphasizes the importance of the acknowledgement by Israel of the Nakba and its impact upon the Palestinian people as a necessary requirement for a viable and lasting peace. Palestine refugees should be treated as dispossessed nationals of a country – the State of Palestine – rather than as stateless refugees. It strongly advocates the right to return as well as just compensation for Palestine refugees, as provided for in paragraph 11 of General Assembly resolution 194 (III).

95. The Committee deems unilateral decisions by Member States to recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and the transfer of embassies in Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem as null and void, as they are in violation of Security Council resolutions, including resolutions 476 (1980) and 478 (1980). The Committee calls upon Member States to rescind those decisions and reiterates that the historic status quo of the holy sites in Jerusalem must be respected and that the international community shares the responsibility to preserve the legal, demographic and historical multicultural and multireligious character and status of the city.

96. The Committee underscores the responsibility of States, private entities and corporations not to contribute to grave Israeli violations of Palestinian human rights, including with respect to their activities in settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. It welcomes efforts by Governments, parliamentarians and civil society actors to sanction support, including economic, for illegal Israeli settlement activities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

97. The Committee calls upon Member States to implement the relevant obligations under international law, including as set out in paragraph 5 of Security Council resolution 2334 (2016), in which the Council called upon Member States to distinguish, in their relevant dealings, between the territory of the State of Israel and the territories occupied since 1967.

98. The Committee looks forward to the report of the United Nations High Commissioner of Human Rights on the effects of annexation, as requested by the Human Rights Council in paragraph 16 of its resolution 43/31 on 23 June 2020. The Committee expresses appreciation for the work of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967 and his reports submitted to the Human Rights Council.

99. As the international community embarks on renewed efforts to restart meaningful negotiations within a credible peace process on the basis of the longstanding international parameters for a just solution, the Committee commits to continue its outreach to key stakeholders with influence on the question of Palestine and to offer support for initiatives, including by the Middle East Quartet, with a view to holding an international peace conference leading to a two-State solution, as highlighted in the 23 March 2021 statement of the Middle East Quartet envoys. The Committee will continue to encourage all supporters of the two-State solution to assist the parties to resume negotiations towards the achievement of a peaceful settlement in line with international law and the relevant United Nations resolutions.

G. Support action in response to the coronavirus disease pandemic

100. The Committee expresses concern about the unprecedented spread of the COVID-19 pandemic throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory and commends

the stringent measures adopted by the Government of Palestine to contain its effects throughout the region.

101. The Committee draws the attention of the international community to the dire socioeconomic situation, the deteriorating living conditions of Palestinians in the occupied territory, in particular in the Gaza Strip, as well as to the predicament of the Palestinian Government, due to the twin combination of the adverse impact of COVID-19 and the ongoing Israeli occupation and creeping annexation policies.

102. The Committee echoes the concern of the international community about the way in which Israeli authorities are rolling out the COVID-19 vaccine, disregarding their obligations as the occupying Power to ensure public health in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. The Committee calls upon Israel to immediately comply with its duties under international humanitarian law by ensuring the provision of vaccines for the Palestinian population under its control in Gaza and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, as well as to Palestinian prisoners and detainees held in Israeli jails.

H. Action by the Secretariat and other United Nations entities

103. The Committee notes with appreciation the contribution of the Division for Palestinian Rights in support of its mandate and requests the Division to continue its substantive and secretariat support for all aspects of its mandate. The Committee also highlights the growing importance of cooperation among developing countries and regional and subregional organizations within the framework of South-South and triangular cooperation for sharing replicable experiences towards the achievement of self-determination and independence.

104. The Committee encourages the Division for Palestinian Rights to continue with efforts to disseminate information on the question of Palestine by continue broadening outreach and promoting multilingualism, with a special emphasis on Arabic, on its website and social media platforms. It also requests the Division to continue to implement projects, including capacity-building for officials of the State of Palestine, that are aimed at further promoting the Committee's mandate.

105. The Committee requests the continuation of the special information programme on the question of Palestine of the Department of Global Communications, which has made an important contribution to informing the media and the public.

106. The Committee intends to continue to work closely with other United Nations actors and entities, including the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and UNRWA, to synergize efforts in fields of common concern and uphold the permanent responsibility of the Organization towards the question of Palestine until it is justly resolved in all its aspects in a satisfactory manner and in accordance with international law. The Committee wishes to express its deep appreciation to OIC and other partners for the contribution of extrabudgetary resources and their active participation in its conferences and events.

107. The Committee will continue to promote inclusivity and gender balance in all its activities, including its capacity-building programme for the civil servants of the State of Palestine, and encourages a full utilization of online capacity-building opportunities, especially in the context of COVID-related travel restrictions.





United Nations

Report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

**General Assembly
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Seventy-seventh Session
Supplement No. 35**



**Report of the Committee on the Exercise
of the Inalienable Rights of the
Palestinian People**



Note

Symbols of United Nations documents are composed of letters combined with figures. Mention of such a symbol indicates a reference to a United Nations document.

Contents

<i>Chapter</i>	<i>Page</i>
Letter of transmittal	4
I. Introduction	5
II. Overview of the political context relating to the question of Palestine	6
III. Mandate of the Committee	11
IV. Organization of work	12
A. Membership and officers	12
B. Participation in the work of the Committee	12
V. Action taken by the Committee and the Division for Palestinian Rights in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 75/20 and 75/21	13
A. Introduction	13
B. Mobilization of the diplomatic community	13
C. Raising awareness of the question of Palestine	15
D. Cooperation with intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations and United Nations system entities	19
E. Capacity-building	20
VI. Action taken by the Department of Global Communications in accordance with General Assembly resolution 75/23	21
VII. Conclusions and recommendations of the Committee	23
A. Immediate action by the Committee in response to the conflict and human rights violations	23
B. Immediate action by the Committee in response to annexation and settlement activities	24
C. Action taken with the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Human Rights Council	24
D. Advocacy and outreach with the international community and civil society	25
E. Action by Member States and regional organizations	26
F. Action by the Secretariat and other United Nations entities	27

Letter of transmittal

[1 September 2022]

Mr. Secretary-General,

I have the honour to enclose herewith the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for submission to the General Assembly and circulation to all the competent bodies of the United Nations for necessary action, as appropriate, in accordance with paragraphs 2 and 10 of Assembly resolution [75/20](#) of 2 December 2020.

The report covers the period from 2 September 2021 to 31 August 2022.

(Signed) Cheikh **Niang**
Chair of the Committee on the Exercise of the
Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

Chapter I

Introduction

1. The present report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People has been submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution [75/20](#), adopted on 2 December 2020. It covers the implementation by the Committee of its programme of work ([A/AC.183/2022/1](#)), formulated to promote the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including their right to self-determination. Its objectives include maintaining international awareness of the plight of the Palestinian people, mobilizing efforts aimed at achieving a just and comprehensive solution to the question of Palestine and lasting Israeli-Palestinian peace, enhancing international solidarity with the Palestinian people and supporting the Government of the State of Palestine in its capacity-building efforts towards a future viable and sustainable independent State of Palestine.
2. Chapter II consists of an overview of the political context relating to the question of Palestine during the reporting period, from 2 September 2021 to 31 August 2022.
3. Chapters III and IV contain an outline of the mandate of the Committee as set out by the General Assembly and information on the membership of the Committee and the organization of its work.
4. Chapter V covers the action taken by the Committee, including its participation in meetings of the Security Council and its continuing dialogue with Member States, intergovernmental organizations and civil society. It also covers international conferences, including in virtual format, capacity-building activities organized by the Committee and other mandated activities carried out by the Division for Palestinian Rights on behalf of the Committee.
5. Chapter VI provides an overview of the special information programme on the question of Palestine implemented by the Department of Global Communications in accordance with General Assembly resolution [75/23](#).
6. The conclusions and recommendations of the Committee to the General Assembly are set out in chapter VII of the report.

Chapter II

Overview of the political context relating to the question of Palestine

7. Throughout the reporting period, the realization of the two-State solution, pursuant to the prevailing international consensus, failed to advance. The Middle East peace process did not resume, and the Middle East Quartet did not create opportunities for negotiations between Israel and the State of Palestine. Israeli leaders continued to publicly cast doubt on their commitment to a two-State solution, expanding illegal Israeli settlements throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory instead and openly declaring their intention to alter the demographic balance, character and status of East Jerusalem in favour of a Jewish majority. Although the United States of America resumed humanitarian aid to Palestinians, most notably to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), and restarted dialogue with the Palestinian Authority, it did not reverse all measures taken by the previous administration. The stalled peace process and the lack of new initiatives to benefit the Palestinian people's quest for self-determination have highlighted the need for enhanced global cooperation to reinvigorate negotiations and provide a political horizon leading to a just solution to the question of Palestine and lasting peace.

8. The peace process was also hampered by persistent negative trends, including ongoing and systematic violations by Israel of international law and United Nations resolutions. The unrelenting expansion of settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, further entrenched the Israeli occupation and threatened the viability of a future independent State of Palestine. Israel continued to transfer its population to settlements in the occupied territory, confiscate Palestinian land and property, evict Palestinians from their homes and land, forcibly displace Palestinians and destroy their homes and structures, as thoroughly documented by the United Nations and others. Settlement expansion in the Occupied Palestinian Territory was accompanied by a dramatic rise in Israeli settler violence, tolerated and in some cases assisted by Israeli occupation forces, and the Palestinian population continued to endure systematic human rights violations as a result. The Israeli blockade of the Gaza Strip, now in its fifteenth year, in conjunction with the Palestinian Government's poor financial situation, has contributed to the continued suffering of civilians under dire humanitarian and socioeconomic conditions and the slow reconstruction there.

9. High levels of violence in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, especially in East Jerusalem, resulted in numerous Palestinian casualties. On 28 May, the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Tor Wennesland, expressed concern at the high level of Palestinian and Israeli casualties, following months of violence. According to sources from the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the Office of the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, from 2 September 2021 to 26 June 2022, 80 Palestinian fatalities were recorded. Following another Israeli military aggression against the Gaza Strip from 5 to 7 August 2022, a further 49 Palestinians were killed, among them 17 children. On 11 August, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet, expressed alarm at the high number of Palestinians, including children, killed and injured in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.¹ This period was also marked by the most serious terrorist attacks inside Israel in years, in which 13 Israelis and 3 foreign nationals were killed. Indiscriminate rocket attacks fired from Gaza toward Israel continued

¹ See www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2022/08/bachelet-alarmed-number-palestinian-children-killed-latest-escalation-urges.

intermittently. Mounting violence was further exacerbated by provocative steps and inflammatory rhetoric.²

10. On 11 May, Shireen Abu Aqleh, a Palestinian-American journalist, was killed while covering clashes near the Jenin refugee camp. According to a United Nations investigation and other accounts, Israeli occupation forces were responsible for the killing, while the United States concluded that Israeli forces might have killed the journalist, albeit, according to their view, “unintentionally”. The incident drew strong criticism from human rights organizations and the international community. The Secretary-General and the Committee – among others – called for an independent and transparent investigation into the incident,³ which Israel has yet to undertake. Since 2000, over 40 Palestinian media workers have reportedly been killed, and hundreds have been maimed, in the Occupied Palestinian Territory according to United Nations experts on human rights.⁴

11. In his 2022 report on Children and armed conflict (A/76/871-S/2022/493), the Secretary-General expressed alarm at the rise in grave violations against Palestinian children, particularly the sharp increase in live ammunition killings, rocket attacks and maiming. The Secretary-General confirmed 2,934 grave violations committed against 1,208 Palestinian children and 9 Israeli children; the detention of 637 children by Israeli forces in the occupied West Bank and East Jerusalem; and the killing of 86 Palestinian children in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and Israel. In the report, the Secretary-General called for the listing of Israel among the systematic perpetrators of violations against children should it continue the same pattern of violations witnessed in May 2021.

12. Despite mounting criticism, Israel continued to expand its settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, in grave breach of international law and in direct violation of United Nations resolutions, including in particular Security Council resolution 2334 (2016). On 11 March, Israel announced the construction of 730 new housing units in Pisgat Ze’ev, a settlement in East Jerusalem, ending a halt in construction that followed the December 2021 appeal by the United States Secretary of State, Anthony Blinken, for Israel to refrain from implementing construction plans for some 9,000 housing units within Jerusalem’s municipal boundaries. On 12 May, the High Planning Council of the Israeli Ministry of Defence advanced plans to build over 4,000 housing units in Area C settlements of the occupied West Bank.⁵ These measures came after Israel issued tenders in October 2021 for more than 1,300 housing units, which later increased to more than 3,000 housing units, in the occupied West Bank. In December, the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967, Michael Lynk, highlighted that since 2016, when Security Council resolution 2334 (2016) was adopted, the number of Israeli settlers had increased by 12 per cent, from 400,000 in the West Bank and 218,000 in East Jerusalem to 475,000 and 230,000 respectively.⁶

13. Israel, the occupying Power, continued to confiscate land and demolish homes and structures belonging to Palestinians in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, seriously threatening the viability of the State of Palestine. After a de facto

² See <https://unsco.unmissions.org/security-council-briefing-situation-middle-east-including-palestinian-question-delivered-special>.

³ See www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/statement/2022-05-11/statement-attributable-the-spokesperson-for-the-secretary-general-%E2%80%93-the-killing-of-the-al-jazeera-journalist-shireen-abu-akleh.

⁴ See www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2022/05/un-experts-condemn-journalist-killing-amid-rising-west-bank-violence.

⁵ See www.un.org/press/en/2022/sc14909.doc.htm.

⁶ See www.un.org/unispal/document/five-years-after-unsco-resolution-2334-international-accountability-to-end-the-israeli-occupation-is-more-important-than-ever-un-special-rapporteur/.

moratorium during the Muslim month of Ramadan, Israel resumed the demolition of homes in early May in the East Jerusalem neighbourhood of Silwan and displaced Palestinians from the southern Hebron hamlet of Masafer Yatta (see [S/PV.9046](#)), which is slated to be expropriated by the Israeli military. Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, were the subject of a Human Rights Council resolution on 1 April (resolution [49/29](#)), in which the Council urged Israel to end without delay its occupation of the territories occupied since 1967 and to stop the establishment of new settlements and the expansion of existing settlements immediately. During the reporting period, Israel destroyed over 540 buildings (93 of which were supported by international donors) and uprooted and rendered homeless over 680 Palestinians, negatively impacting over 20,800 people, including many children.⁷ Despite the decision of the Israeli Supreme Court, on 1 March, to put off the potential eviction of four Palestinian families, the situation in the East Jerusalem neighbourhood of Sheikh Jarrah remained uncertain, and Palestinian residents there continued to live under the constant threat of forcible eviction. When clashes intensified in February, after right-wing groups attempted to set up a temporary office there and vowed not to dismantle it until Israeli police provided protection to Jewish settlers, many members of the Security Council called on Israel to refrain from provocative acts that increased tensions.⁸

14. Provocation of Palestinians by extremist Jewish groups persisted unabated. On 29 March, during the annual flag march for Jerusalem Day, in which 70,000 Israelis took part, marchers violently attacked Palestinians and chanted threats and racial slurs against them. During five consecutive events in May, Israeli settlers and Israeli occupation forces entered Palestinian communities, injuring 100 Palestinians.⁹ In December, Israeli settlers reportedly attacked several Palestinian villages – notably Burqa village and its surroundings – damaging Palestinian homes and injuring approximately 150 locals.¹⁰

15. During the Muslim month of Ramadan in April, nightly clashes took place between Israeli forces and Palestinians in Jerusalem, including near the Aqsa Mosque. During the Islamic festival of al-Israa wa al-Miraj on 28 February, Israeli occupation forces and Palestinians also clashed in Jerusalem. Israeli forces used stun grenades, rubber bullets and skunk water, resulting in the injury of 37 Palestinians, including an 11-year-old girl with special needs. In October, Israeli forces clashed with Palestinians over religious ceremonies at the holy sites, namely at the Haram al-Sharif (the Holy Esplanade) and the Yusufiya cemetery in Jerusalem's Old City and the Damascus Gate.

16. After 15 years of a land, air and sea blockade by Israel, resulting in harsh socioeconomic conditions and de-development, the situation in Gaza continued to deteriorate. In May 2021, the military escalation of Israel against Gaza resulted in the deaths of 261 Palestinians, including 41 women, 67 children and 3 people with disabilities, compounding the suffering of its residents, as highlighted in a statement by the Bureau of the Committee issued on 10 May.¹¹ In March, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet, noted the harmful impact on the civilian population of Gaza of the collective punishment by Israel for 15

⁷ See <https://app.powerbi.com/view?r=eyJrIjoiMmJkZGRhYWQ0ODk0MS00MWJkLWI2NTktMDg1NGJlMGNiY2Y3IiwidCI6IjBmOWUzNWRiLTU0NGYtNGY2MC1iZGNjLTVIYTQxNmU2ZGM3MCI6ImMiOjh9>.

⁸ See www.un.org/press/en/2022/sc14769.doc.htm.

⁹ See www.un.org/unispal/document/security-council-middle-east-press-release-sc-14909/.

¹⁰ See www.un.org/press/en/2022/sc14769.doc.htm.

¹¹ See www.un.org/unispal/document/statement-by-palestinian-rights-committee-on-escalation-of-violence-in-occupied-east-jerusalem/.

consecutive years, despite express prohibitions in international humanitarian law.¹² On 1 January, and against the backdrop of the death of the Palestinian prisoner, Hisham Abu Hawwash, mounting tensions between Palestinian militant groups in Gaza and Israel resulted in rocket fire from Gaza towards Israel and reprisal attacks by Israel. In a joint statement on 7 December, Palestinian militant factions accused Israel of deliberately delaying reconstruction efforts in Gaza and warned of renewed escalations should delays continue.

17. From 5 to 7 August, Israel carried out air and artillery strikes against Gaza,¹³ reportedly killing 49 Palestinians, including 17 children and 4 women,¹⁴ injuring hundreds, destroying hundreds of homes, displacing more than 1,000 people and aggravating an already fragile humanitarian situation. Militant groups responded by firing hundreds of rockets towards Israel, reportedly injuring 70 persons and causing limited material damage.¹⁵ On 7 August, the Secretary-General welcomed the ceasefire brokered by Egypt and expressed his deep sadness at the loss of life and injuries.¹⁶ On 8 August, the Security Council met to discuss the upsurge in violence, and the Bureau of the Committee welcomed the ceasefire, condemned the Israeli attack against Gaza and called for a lifting of the Gaza blockade and the immediate start of negotiations leading to the two-State solution.¹⁷

18. In its report (A/HRC/50/21), the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem and in Israel, established by the Human Rights Council in its resolution S-30/1, found that discrimination against Palestinians and the continued Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territory since 1967 were the main causes of the region's ongoing tensions, instability and conflict. The Commission added that recurrent cycles of violence were exacerbated by the culture of impunity that had resulted from the lack of accountability for violations, forced transfers, threats of forced displacement, demolitions, settlement construction and growth, settler violence and the siege of Gaza.

19. Six Palestinian civil society organizations were labelled as “terrorist organizations” by Israel in October, a decision strongly criticized by the international community. United Nations experts and activists condemned the designation¹⁸ and claimed that the actions by Israel were intended to prevent Palestinian civil society monitoring of the human rights situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and cooperation with the International Criminal Court. During a closed-door Committee event on 7 December, NGOs warned that such actions were “a blueprint, replicable elsewhere, to silence civil society”. The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights also criticized the designation at a Committee briefing and warned against Israel's overly broad definition of terrorism. Many Member States issued separate and joint statements announcing the resumption of funding and cooperation with the six civil society organizations, citing a lack of evidence to substantiate the Israeli claims. On 17 August, the Israeli occupation forces raided and closed the offices of seven Palestinian non-governmental organizations (NGOs), seizing documents and equipment. The Chair of the Committee joined the United Nations,

¹² See www.ohchr.org/en/statements/2022/03/occupied-palestinian-territory.

¹³ See www.ochaopt.org/poc/2-15-august-2022.

¹⁴ See www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2022/08/bachelet-alarmed-number-palestinian-children-killed-latest-escalation-urges.

¹⁵ See www.ochaopt.org/content/escalation-gaza-strip-and-israel-flash-update-2-august-2022.

¹⁶ See www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/statement/2022-08-07/statement-attributable-the-spokesperson-for-the-secretary-general-the-ceasefire-gaza-and-israel.

¹⁷ See www.un.org/unispal/document/ceirpp-bureau-welcomes-ceasefire-agreement-in-gaza-and-calls-for-the-immediate-implementation-of-the-two-state-solution-statement/.

¹⁸ See www.un.org/press/en/2021/gapal1443.doc.htm.

the European Union, Member States and dozens of other NGOs from Israel, Palestine and elsewhere in expressing alarm and calling on the Government of Israel to revoke the designations.

20. At its meetings in November 2021 and May 2022, the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee for the Coordination of the International Assistance to Palestinians acknowledged the dire financial situation of the Palestinian Authority, the ongoing humanitarian and development crisis facing Palestinians in Gaza and the historically low level of budget contributions from donors. In the World Bank economic monitoring report to the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee of May 2022, Gaza's economy is described as sluggish, marked by high unemployment and poor socioeconomic conditions.¹⁹ To put the Palestinian Authority on a sustainable fiscal path, enhance living standards and strengthen institutions, the members of the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee, at the meeting of the Committee in May 2022, committed to deepening their cooperation to address the socioeconomic challenges of the State of Palestine.

21. Despite its crucial role, UNRWA continued to experience a precarious financial situation. At the meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee of the General Assembly for the Announcement of Voluntary Contributions to UNRWA in June 2022, the Commissioner-General of UNRWA, Philippe Lazzarini, outlined the Agency's urgent need for \$817 million for critical services, including education, health and social protection for Palestine refugees during 2022. The Secretary-General appealed to Member States to bring the Agency's current shortfall down to zero.²⁰ Member States pledged a total of \$160 million at the event. The United States gave further economic assistance to Palestine during President Biden's visit in July, totalling \$316 million, including a new multi-year contribution of \$100 million for the East Jerusalem Hospital Network and an additional \$201 million for UNRWA.

¹⁹ See www.worldbank.org/en/country/westbankandgaza/publication/economic-monitoring-report-ahlc.

²⁰ See www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/statement/2022-06-23/secretary-generals-remarks-the-ad-hoc-committee-of-the-general-assembly-for-the-announcement-of-voluntary-contributions-unrwa.

Chapter III

Mandate of the Committee

22. The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People was established by the General Assembly in its resolution 3376 (XXX) of 10 November 1975 with the task of recommending a programme designed to enable the Palestinian people to exercise their inalienable rights to self-determination, national independence and sovereignty and return to the homes and property from which they had been displaced, as recognized by the Assembly in its resolution 3236 (XXIX) of 22 November 1974. The mandate of the Committee has evolved considerably over the years into greater advocacy for the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and the mobilization of assistance. Additional information about the Committee is available on the website maintained by the Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat.²¹

23. On 2 December 2020, the General Assembly renewed the mandate of the Committee (resolution 75/20) and requested the Secretary-General to continue to provide the Division for Palestinian Rights with the resources necessary for its programme of work (resolution 75/21) and to continue to implement the special information programme on the question of Palestine of the Department of Global Communications of the Secretariat (resolution 75/23). As of 2020, the mandates of the Committee and the Division are biennial, and the Committee's report is produced annually. The Assembly also adopted resolution 75/22, entitled "Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine", in which it reaffirmed the near-consensus international position regarding the components of a just, lasting and comprehensive solution.

24. The work of the Committee is fully aligned with the decisions of the main intergovernmental bodies of the United Nations, such as the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council and the International Court of Justice, as well as with the work of the Secretary-General and the programmes, funds and specialized agencies of the United Nations system, with which it collaborates extensively.

²¹ www.un.org/unispal.

Chapter IV

Organization of work

A. Membership and officers

25. The Committee is composed of 25 Member States, representing different regional groups and supporting the international consensus for a two-State solution: Afghanistan, Belarus, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Cuba, Cyprus, Ecuador, Guinea, Guyana, India, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mali, Malta, Namibia, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Pakistan, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Tunisia, Türkiye and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of).

26. The 24 observers of the Committee are Algeria, Bangladesh, Bulgaria, China, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, the Niger, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka, the Syrian Arab Republic, the United Arab Emirates, Viet Nam, Yemen, as well as the State of Palestine, the African Union, the League of Arab States (LAS) and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC).

27. The Bureau of the Committee is elected each year from among the permanent representatives of Committee members. At its 406th meeting, on 8 February 2022, chaired by the Secretary-General, the Committee elected, in their personal capacity, Cheikh Niang (Senegal) as Chair; Pedro Luis Pedroso Cuesta (Cuba), Arrmanatha Christiawan Nasir (Indonesia), Neville Melvin Gertze (Namibia) and Jaime Hermida Castillo (Nicaragua) as Vice-Chairs for the year. In accordance with established practice, the State of Palestine participates in the work of both the Committee and the Bureau as an observer.

28. The day-to-day tasks of the Committee are undertaken by its Bureau. Members of the Bureau represented the Committee at all international conferences organized by the Committee, including by chairing and moderating conference sessions, and on all delegation visits. On the margins of the conferences and during delegation visits, they held meetings with senior officials of the respective host countries.

29. The Committee members and observers have actively advocated the rights of the Palestinian people, including in the Security Council. Currently, one Committee member, India, and one observer, United Arab Emirates, serve on the Security Council as elected members.

B. Participation in the work of the Committee

30. As in previous years, the Committee reconfirmed that all States Members of the United Nations and observers wishing to participate in its work were welcome to do so. Committee activities regularly involve civil society organizations, including those from Israel.

Chapter V

Action taken by the Committee and the Division for Palestinian Rights in accordance with General Assembly resolutions [75/20](#) and [75/21](#)

A. Introduction

31. In the implementation of its programme of work, as a subsidiary body of the General Assembly, the Committee is guided by its mandate to promote the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and support the achievement, without delay, of an end to the Israeli occupation that began in 1967 and of the two-State solution on the basis of the pre-1967 lines. Its work and activities are also fully aligned with Security Council and Assembly resolutions on the Question of Palestine; the women and peace and security agenda; the programme of the United Nations country team; international law, including humanitarian law; human rights frameworks such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenants on Human Rights; the Convention on the Rights of the Child; and, more recently, the Sustainable Development Goals and their achievement by the State of Palestine. As authorized by the Assembly, the Committee has adjusted its approved programme of work in view of developments to include mobilization of the diplomatic community, raising awareness of the question of Palestine, cooperation with intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and United Nations system entities, and capacity-building.

32. Taking a rights-focused approach that emphasizes meeting obligations and encourages feedback and continuous improvement, the Committee has made every effort to support the universally recognized rights of an occupied people and the rights of all States and peoples to live in peace and security. To that end, the Committee engaged the diplomatic community on the question of Palestine through formal and informal intergovernmental processes; conducted Bureau delegation visits (see para. 45 below); organized a Bureau retreat; organized public awareness-raising activities that involved conferences, meetings, speakers' panels and the media, including social media with the support of the Department of Global Communications; promoted partnerships with Governments, relevant bodies of the United Nations system, intergovernmental organizations, regional bodies and civil society organizations; and built capacities for the future State of Palestine.

33. With the lingering impact of coronavirus disease (COVID-19) and with some restrictions remaining in place throughout the Secretariat, the Committee continued to hold some meetings and activities virtually, using a variety of platforms to ensure continuity in the delivery of its mandate, including the special meeting on the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People (see para. 51 below) and eight Bureau meetings. However, the Committee swiftly re-adapted to holding in-person meetings and Bureau delegation visits with 17 in-person meetings taking place during the reporting period.

B. Mobilization of the diplomatic community

34. The Committee continued to mobilize the international community, formally inviting all Member States to actively participate in its events in support of the realization of the two-State solution and a just, comprehensive and lasting solution to the question of Palestine in all its aspects on the basis of international law and relevant United Nations resolutions.

35. On 4 November, after a long hiatus due to COVID-19, the Bureau held its annual retreat in person to take stock and adapt the implementation of the programme of work in line with developments on the ground and to include follow-up actions from its exchange with the Secretary-General.

36. On 1 December, the General Assembly debated the annual report of the Committee (A/76/35), resulting in a broad call for the realization of the two-State solution on the basis of the pre-1967 borders. With three resolutions endorsed by the Committee now considered on a biennial basis, the Assembly adopted only the resolution on the peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine (resolution 76/10), with a voting pattern similar to 2020. Sponsored by the Committee and 30 co-sponsors, the resolution obtained 148 votes in favour, 9 against and 13 abstentions.

37. In a meeting officiated by the Secretary-General on 8 February 2022, the Committee elected its Bureau members for 2022 (see para. 27 above) and officially adopted its programme of work for the year (A/AC.183/2022/L.2).

38. On 28 February, the Committee, through the Division for Palestinian Rights and with the support of the Department of Global Communications, held its annual briefing session for new United Nations delegates, in person, to familiarize them with the Committee's mandate and programme of work.

39. On 22 and 23 March, the Chair delivered a statement to the forty-eighth session of the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers in Islamabad highlighting the strategic partnership between the Committee and OIC and calling for the latter's membership to step up their solidarity with the Palestinian people and mobilize the international support needed to make the two-State solution a reality.

40. On 30 March, during its annual consultation with the President of the General Assembly, Abdulla Shahid, the Committee appealed for efforts to sustain the focus and attention of Member States on the question of Palestine and to ensure that new global crises do not divert the international community's attention from the grave situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and emphasized the need for a horizon towards the achievement of a just, lasting and peaceful solution.

41. On 24 March, a Vice-Chair participated in a breakfast discussion held at the Permanent Mission of Ireland to the United Nations with the European Union Special Representative for Human Rights, Eamon Gilmore, in which he voiced concern about the stalled Middle East peace process and highlighted the urgency of addressing human rights violations and reviving global cooperation to resolve the question of Palestine.

42. On 20 April, a Bureau delegation participated in a special briefing on the situation in Palestine convened by Kenya as the coordinator of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries caucus of the Security Council. The Bureau urged the caucus to advocate for the rights of the Palestinian people, and most importantly the right to self-determination, within the Council and beyond Council debates.

43. The Bureau continued to meet with Member States to advocate for the long-overdue realization of the Palestinian people's rights and to reinvigorate the Middle East peace process. Bureau delegations met with representatives of the United States (3 September), Brazil (23 February), Gabon (22 April), Ghana (15 March) and Albania (4 August). Member States that met with the Bureau agreed on the need to resolve the question of Palestine on the basis of the two-State solution and in line with relevant United Nations resolutions.

44. On 11 May, the Bureau, on behalf of the Committee, issued a press statement condemning the killing of Palestinian journalist Shireen Abu Akleh, who was fatally

shot while reporting for Al-Jazeera News on an Israeli occupation force operation in Jenin, in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Recalling the crucial role played by journalists in conflict zones, the Bureau called for an immediate, independent and thorough international investigation into the killing and for bringing to justice those responsible.²²

45. On 5 May, a Bureau delegation visited Dublin to discuss ways to relaunch the Middle East peace process. The delegation called on Ireland to recognize the State of Palestine as a means of promoting the realization of the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination. The delegation met with Minister of Foreign Affairs and Defence, Simon Coveney, and parliamentary parties, stressing the significant role that parliamentarians can play in promoting a just and lasting solution to the question of Palestine.

46. On 22 June, a Bureau delegation met with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, Virginia Gamba, to share ideas on concrete actions to prevent rampant violations of the rights of Palestinian children by Israel, the occupying Power, and on ways to revive global attention with respect to the Convention on the Rights of Child, the implementation of which is key to protecting children in conflict.

47. On 25 July, the Chair met in Amman with the Director of the Negotiations Coordination Bureau at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates of Jordan, Mohammed Hindawi. Both parties agreed on the importance of the continued support of the international community for the Palestinian people and UNRWA and discussed possible joint capacity-building activities for Palestinian officials.

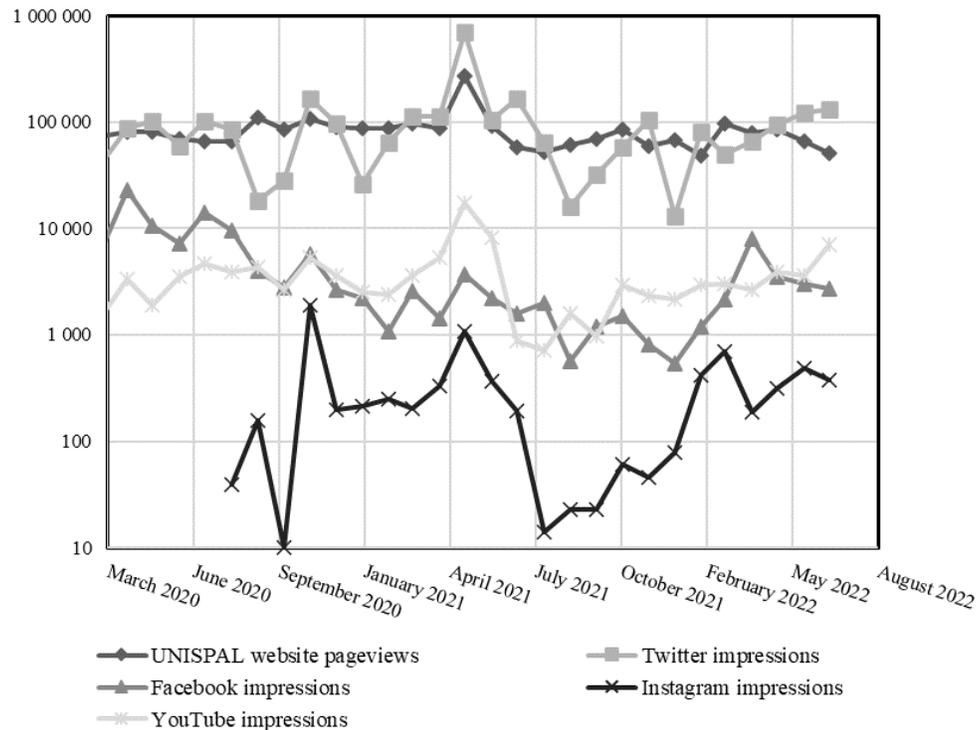
C. Raising awareness of the question of Palestine

48. The Committee continued to raise awareness about the political, human rights and humanitarian situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including the situation of Palestinian women, by facilitating up-to-date briefings by experts and exchanges of ideas on specific issues during virtual and in-person Committee meetings, side events and conferences, as well as through the dissemination of publications and information via several electronic platforms and the Committee's website. Details regarding each activity can be found on the website.

49. The Committee maintained an expanded and enhanced digital advocacy to disseminate information on the question of Palestine. During the reporting period, the Committee's Twitter, Facebook, YouTube and Instagram accounts recorded steady growth in the number of visitors and followers, as shown in the figure below. The Twitter account alone had gained 1,723 new followers by the end of August (total 21,785), while the Committee mailing list grew by 2,293 new subscribers (total 11,050). The website was visited 875,149 times during the reporting period. All Committee public events, including those held online, are regularly broadcast via United Nations Web TV and across its social media pages, garnering thousands of viewers per event. These efforts resulted in increased engagement with the public, including via expanded content in Arabic, extended outreach to new audiences and higher numbers of followers across Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and YouTube. In addition to English, the Committee is also increasingly disseminating its documents in Arabic, Chinese, French, Russian and Spanish on its website.

²² See www.un.org/unispal/document/ceirpp-bureau-condemns-the-senseless-killing-of-al-jazeera-journalist-shireen-abu-akleh/.

Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, social media statistics



Abbreviation: UNISPAL, United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine.

50. On 16 November 2021, the Chair participated in the International Media Seminar on Peace in the Middle East organized by the Department of Global Communications, stressing the importance of media for the Committee in delivering its General Assembly mandate, and urged accurate and reliable reporting on developments in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem (see para. 75 below).

51. As mandated by the General Assembly (resolution [75/21](#)), the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People was observed on 29 November. The special meeting of the Committee to commemorate the Day was attended by 73 Member States and 3 regional organizations. The event remains of importance, as it serves as a reminder of the Palestinian people's inalienable rights and their lack of national independence and sovereignty. As is customary, the President of the General Assembly, the President of the Security Council and the Chair delivered statements. The Chef de Cabinet conveyed the Secretary-General's message. The African Union, LAS, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and OIC also delivered remarks. The Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine read out a message from the President of the State of Palestine, Mahmoud Abbas. Five prominent women civil society representatives – the former President of Finland, Tarja Halonen; the Secretary-General of Amnesty International, Agnès Callamard; activist and Nobel Peace Prize laureate, Malala Yousafzai; and Palestinian teacher and Global Teacher Prize winner, Hanan Hroub – along with prominent Palestinian rights activist, Mohammed El-Kurd, who shared his personal experience about forced evictions of Palestinians in Sheikh Jarrah (East Jerusalem), stressed the need for accountability for Israeli actions in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and appealed for international efforts to realize justice for the Palestinian people and a life of freedom and dignity. The Chair acknowledged

solidarity messages from 40 Member States, the European Union and LAS. The observance of the Day was also marked in the United Nations Office at Geneva and at the United Nations Office at Vienna. The Division outreach efforts ensured live views on United Nations Web TV, Palestinian TV and social media platforms.

52. On 7 December, the Committee held a virtual event entitled “Supporting human rights defenders in the Occupied Palestinian Territory: reality, challenges and obligations” to discuss the shrinking space for human rights activism in the Occupied Palestinian Territory owing to repressive measures by the Israeli authorities. Highlighting designation by Israel of six Palestinian civil society organizations as terrorist entities, the event included a representative from one of those organizations (Al-Haq), as well as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, and a prominent Israeli human rights lawyer. Speakers called on Member States to confront the unlawful actions by Israel and urged the Committee to continue to offer its platform to the voices that Israel is trying to suppress.

53. Also on 7 December, the Committee received a briefing by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, who recounted the deteriorating situation of human rights in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, decried the use of excessive force by Israel against Palestinian civilians, condemned impunity and settler-related violence and raised alarm at the designation of six Palestinian civil society organizations as terrorist organizations.

54. On 23 March, on the margins of the sixty-sixth session of the Commission on the Status of Women, the Committee organized a virtual event on the impact of forced displacement on Palestinian women, focusing on the threat of eviction by Israeli authorities and related settlers violence, especially in the East Jerusalem neighbourhoods of Sheikh Jarrah and Silwan. The all-female panel included a representative from the Israeli NGO Ir Amim, two Palestinian residents of Sheikh Jarrah and Silwan, who shared their personal experiences, as well as representatives of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women). The event provided a platform for exchange and served to reaffirm the Committee’s support for the rights of Palestinian women through international mechanisms, such as Security Council resolution [1325 \(2000\)](#).

55. On 27 April, the Committee convened a virtual event entitled “Al-Khalil/Hebron: a case study for the impact of Israeli settlements on Palestinian rights under occupation” to highlight the critical situation caused by the ongoing illegal Israeli settlement campaign in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and its impact on the rights of the Palestinian people. Panellists from the Hebron Defence Committee, the Palestine Institute for Public Diplomacy and Combatants for Peace focused on the situation in Hebron as a case study illustrating discriminatory Israeli policies, while reiterating that all settlements are illegal under international law and constitute a substantial obstacle to peace.

56. On 16 June, the Committee, in line with increased concerns and ongoing awareness of the situation, facilitated a public virtual conversation on apartheid, international law and the Occupied Palestinian Territory with Zeid Ra’ad Al-Hussein, President of the International Peace Institute and former United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, and Agnès Callamard, Secretary-General of Amnesty International. They discussed the findings of Amnesty International’s 2022 report entitled “Israel’s apartheid against Palestinians: cruel system of domination and crime against humanity” and the way forward. In her video message, the Minister of International Relations and Cooperation of South Africa, Grace Naledi Mandisa Pandor, pointed to analogies between apartheid South Africa and the current situation

in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Speakers discussed the reestablishment of the Special Committee against Apartheid to consider the case of Palestine.

57. On 20 July, the Committee, with support from OIC, organized its annual International Conference on the Question of Jerusalem, in virtual format, on the theme of “Palestinian youth in East Jerusalem under occupation”. The President of the General Assembly (by video message) and an OIC representative from Jeddah addressed the Conference. Four speakers, including three women, one of which was from Israel, highlighted the challenges facing young Palestinians in East Jerusalem and discussed ways to support them as catalysts for change via empowerment and political engagement.

58. The United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine, now in its twenty-eighth year of operation, remains a valuable resource for diplomats, researchers and the general public around the world, averaging 100,000 page views per month. Accessed through the Committee’s website, it consists of more than 41,200 documents and is the largest and most comprehensive online repository on the subject. The collection ranges from the latest United Nations documents to rare records dating back decades. The collection saw a significant surge in access and in the volume of documents uploaded during the Gaza conflict in May 2021. Efforts are now under way to improve the accessibility of the Committee’s website for the visually impaired.

59. The Bureau, supported by the Division for Palestinian Rights, continued to prioritize multilingualism. While content in Arabic is expanding, an agreement was reached with the Department of Global Communications to maintain the United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine in Chinese. The Division continued to update the website with current documents and has identified historic documents from the early years of the United Nations involvement in the question of Palestine.

60. In collaboration with the Office of Information and Communications Technology, the Division for Palestinian Rights built an artificial-intelligence-based chatbot for the website of the United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine, which became the first such tool available on any United Nations website. A project implemented by the Bureau, with support from the Division for Palestinian Rights, to map the positions of Member States on the question of Palestine was nominated for the United Nations Secretary-General Awards and was featured as a best practice use case at the Secretariat for the key role it plays in advancing the resolution of the question of Palestine.

61. Further to its monitoring mandate, the Committee also produced several publications disseminated by the Division for Palestinian Rights. They include monthly bulletins, compiling all official documents of the United Nations and other intergovernmental organizations relating to the question of Palestine, quarterly newsletters on the activities of the Committee, an annual compilation of United Nations reports on the question of Palestine, as well as an annual compilation of all resolutions issued by United Nations bodies on the question of Palestine.

62. Through its weekly publication “NGO Action News”, the Committee continued to raise awareness of the work of civil society and United Nations actors in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and elsewhere towards the achievement of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.

63. The Committee’s publications were disseminated through a growing mailing list that includes 10,757 subscribers, including research libraries, universities and key stakeholders such as community leaders, political figures, members of the diplomatic community, students, university professors, NGOs, intergovernmental organizations

and journalists, as well as prominent personalities and opinion leaders. All the publications of the Committee are posted on the Committee's website.

64. In collaboration with and with funding from OIC, the Committee, with support from the Division of Palestinian Rights, reproduced four advocacy booklets from past United Nations exhibits of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People that convey critical messages on the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and the question of Palestine. The booklets complement the Committee's global advocacy activities; a total of 2,724 booklets have been distributed to Member States and United Nations offices throughout the world since the beginning of the project. The electronic format of the booklets has reached 9,362 subscribers and can be viewed on the United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine.²³

D. Cooperation with intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations and United Nations system entities

65. The Committee continued to cooperate with intergovernmental organizations. OIC continued to support the annual International Conference on the Question of Jerusalem, organized in cooperation with the Committee. The African Union, LAS and OIC regularly attended the meetings of the Committee as observers and participated in its work.

66. During its activities, the Committee, through the Division for Palestinian Rights, continued its long-standing cooperation with the United Nations system, including the United Nations Development Programme, United Nations country teams, UNRWA, the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management, the Department of Global Communications (including the United Nations information centres), the Human Rights Council and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, UN-Women, the United Nations Institute for Training and Research and the United Nations System Staff College.

67. The Committee also continued to collaborate with NGOs in promoting the rights of the Palestinian people. Representatives of civil society organizations, including from Israel, are invited to attend all public events of the Committee. Those meetings and interactions allowed the Committee to be actively informed about civil society concerns and actions and provided a space in which Israeli and Palestinian civil society organizations could interact, especially at a time of increasing restrictions on the ground.

68. As part of the Committee's periodic interactions with civil society organizations, on 22 November and 1 March, the Committee organized virtual closed consultations with representatives of civil society organization from Palestine, Israel and elsewhere to receive first-hand briefings on the situation in Jerusalem and Gaza and on advocacy throughout the world. As is customary, a civil society representative was invited to speak at the special meeting of the Committee held on 29 November to commemorate the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. The Committee continued to prepare and disseminate the weekly NGO Action News.

69. At its 407th meeting, the Committee approved the accreditation of three civil society organizations recommended by the Bureau who will partner with the Committee in implementing its mandate.

²³ www.un.org/unispal/exhibits-on-the-occasion-of-international-day-of-solidarity/.

E. Capacity-building

70. As requested in General Assembly resolution [75/21](#), the Committee continued to identify training opportunities to expand the capacity of officials of the State of Palestine. The Committee also continued to assess the impact of its programmes. Following the lifting of most COVID-19-related restrictions, the Committee continued to prioritize hybrid (online and in-person) training.

71. In collaboration with the Irish Centre for Human Rights of the National University of Ireland, the Committee organized a closed-door seminar on the legality of the Israeli occupation of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. The seminar was held in Dublin on 6 and 7 May and was attended by international legal experts, Palestinian diplomats and government officials, as well as members of the Bureau.

72. A two-day communication strategy workshop for 21 officials of the Government of Palestine was organized in Amman on 25 and 26 July. The workshop equipped participants with skills to develop a full suite of strategic communications tools to help the Government of Palestine communicate and engage with its audiences more effectively.

73. The Division for Palestinian Rights created a database containing capacity-building opportunities offered to Palestinian Government officials by the members and observers of the Committee. The purpose of the database, which will be updated on a regular basis, is to improve coordination among participating sponsors.

Chapter VI

Action taken by the Department of Global Communications in accordance with General Assembly resolution 75/23

74. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 75/23 of 2 December 2020, the Department of Global Communications continued to implement its special information programme on the question of Palestine.

75. The Department continued to engage with the media on the question of Palestine. It held its annual International Media Seminar on Peace in the Middle East virtually on 16 and 17 November 2021. At the seminar, the Chair of the Committee (see para. 50 above) joined a panel of six experts from Egypt, Israel, the United States and the State of Palestine to discuss two relevant themes: “The thirtieth anniversary of the Madrid Peace Conference: can hope prevail?” and “Solutions journalism in the coverage of the Israel-Palestine conflict”.

76. The Department held its annual training programme for Palestinian broadcasters and journalists virtually from 19 November to 22 December 2021. Nine Palestinian journalists from Gaza, the West Bank, Lebanon and the diaspora took part in the training. The online courses, which were provided by Al-Jazeera Media Institute, focused on five themes: writing humanitarian stories, storytelling for digital platforms, occupational safety for journalists, data journalism and television reporting skills.

77. On 31 May 2022, the Department announced that it had renamed the training programme to “Shireen Abu Akleh Training Programme for Palestinian Broadcasters and Journalists”, in honour of the Palestinian-American Al-Jazeera reporter who was killed in the Occupied Palestinian Territory on 11 May 2022.

78. The Department updated the website for the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People in the six official languages and distributed information about relevant events and seminars. The Department’s Digital Support Unit continued to support the United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine, including by facilitating the implementation of “Ask UNPal” (see para. 86 below).

79. The Department provided live and on-demand streaming coverage of relevant press conferences, open meetings and events, in all available languages, through its global UN Web TV (see paras. 50–57 above). The Department has also facilitated the first live broadcasts of Committee events on Palestinian TV.

80. The Department issued 80 press releases, in English and French, related to the question of Palestine and the Middle East peace process. The press releases covered events and meetings of the Committee, the General Assembly and the Security Council, as well as statements and messages by the Secretary-General.

81. UN News produced more than 200 stories and features on the topic during the reporting period, in the six official languages, plus Hindi, Kiswahili and Portuguese, including a special highlight on the contributions to humanity of the Palestinian diaspora, as shown in the UN News feature “First person: from Gaza to the red planet”²⁴ about Loay Elbasyouni, a Palestinian electrical engineer on the 2021 United States National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) Mars exploration mission team.

82. During the reporting period, UNifeed published 15 video packages on the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, which were aired by broadcasters a combined total of 1,231 times. These video packages covered a range of issues,

²⁴ <https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/03/1114222>.

including the Secretary-General's remarks at the opening of the 2022 session of the Committee, the International Ministerial Conference on UNRWA, meetings of the Security Council and the general debate of the General Assembly.

83. The Department's flagship United Nations social media accounts, in all six official languages, as well as Hindi, Kiswahili and Portuguese, continued to cover news and provide information related to the question of Palestine and to promote virtual events and activities organized by the Committee. The promotion of events and activities was accomplished by driving traffic to the United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine and the Committee's social media accounts. The information was also made available on key collaborative and project management platforms, such as Trello.²⁵

84. During the reporting period, the Dag Hammarskjöld Library digitized 165 historic documents (some 1,330 pages) of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Palestinian Question and the Special Committee on Palestine. Among those, 143 documents from the Ad Hoc Committee on the Palestinian Question have also been uploaded to the United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine website.

85. The Visitors' Service Section continued to conduct briefings on the subject matter, especially through the permanent exhibit "The United Nations and the question of Palestine", which is part of the United Nations guided tour route. Since the resumption of in-person guided tours at Headquarters on 7 April 2022, over 43,000 visitors have taken the tour and seen the exhibit.

86. The United Nations information centres in Lusaka, Moscow, Nairobi, Pretoria and Rabat, among others, disseminated information and organized commemorative events on and around the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People (29 November). During the reporting period, the information centres also promoted events of the Committee as well as of United Nations offices. For example, the information centre in Cairo hosted a virtual press conference on the launch of the 2021 report of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) on UNCTAD assistance to the Palestinian people. The regional information centre in Brussels provided communications support, including the dissemination of press releases and a media advisory related to the high-level conference to support UNRWA and the signing of a joint European Union-UNRWA declaration marking 50 years of strategic partnership. The Department also facilitated the dissemination of e-books of the United Nations exhibit to United Nations information centres across the globe (see para. 64 above).

²⁵ See <https://trello.com/b/772QZEh1/question-of-palestine>.

Chapter VII

Conclusions and recommendations of the Committee

87. In developing its recommendations set out below, the Committee has taken into account the deliberations at Committee and Bureau meetings, briefings received, outreach, international conferences and events involving Member States, civil society organizations and regional organizations.

A. Immediate action by the Committee in response to the conflict and human rights violations

88. The Committee is deeply concerned by consistent reports of the use by the Israeli occupation forces of excessive lethal force against Palestinian civilians, including children, which has resulted in an increasing number of killings and injuries and an entrenched climate of impunity, including during the annual flag march for Jerusalem Day. The Committee laments the lack of accountability for illegal Israeli actions, including during the escalation of hostilities in Gaza in May 2021. The Committee reiterates that the indiscriminate launching of rockets towards Israeli population centres is prohibited by international humanitarian law and must stop immediately.

89. The Committee expresses its deep concern about the deteriorating security situation in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, especially the daily violence that continues to claim the lives of both Palestinians and Israelis. The Committee is also disturbed by the significant increase in the use of force against Palestinians by Israeli settlers. The Committee calls on political, religious and community leaders to reject violence, speak up against those who try to inflame the situation and refrain from actions and provocations that fuel tensions, while exercising maximum restraint.

90. The Committee calls on the Government of Israel to conduct prompt, independent, and impartial investigations into all incidents involving excessive use of force and the loss of Palestinian life, including of children and including the killing of Palestinian Al-Jazeera journalist Shireen Abu Akleh and at her funeral, and ensure that perpetrators are held accountable and that victims are provided with appropriate remedies. The Committee welcomes calls for the protection of Palestinians in line with international humanitarian law, as well as the United Nations findings on the killing of Ms. Abu Akleh, and reiterates that it is urgent that a credible and transparent international investigation be conducted.

91. The Committee calls on Israel to uphold its obligations under international humanitarian and human rights law, respect the status quo at the holy sites in Jerusalem, including the historic and legal status quo at the Aqsa Mosque compound, and ensure that Muslims are able to peacefully worship and practice their religion without fear of violence or retaliation. Special measures must be put in place by the occupying Power to prevent future provocations by Israeli occupation forces in Jerusalem during Ramadan.

92. The Committee welcomes the findings in the report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict and calls for the parties to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to commit to protecting children. The Committee urges the Israeli occupation forces and Palestinian armed groups to abide by their obligations under international humanitarian and international human rights law and ensure that any military operations are conducted in line with the principles of distinction, proportionality and

precaution, and to immediately correct and reinforce existing measures to ensure the protection of children affected by armed conflict.

93. The Committee concurs with the stance of the Secretary-General on the question of Palestine, which is supported by international law, numerous United Nations resolutions and the pursuit of a just resolution, and urges the Secretary-General to continue to leverage his good offices to influence and mediate, with urgency, the diffusion of this volatile situation.

B. Immediate action by the Committee in response to annexation and settlement activities

94. The Committee is gravely concerned about the continued expropriation of and encroachment on Palestinian land and the continued construction and expansion of Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, despite the demands made by the Security Council, the Human Rights Council and the General Assembly for the cessation of all such illegal activities. The Committee further reiterates that annexation of any part of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, is illegal. The Committee calls on the Israeli authorities to cease the advancement of all settlement activity and refrain from such unilateral and provocative actions, which fuel instability and change the demographic composition, status and character of the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Such actions undermine the prospect of achieving a two-State solution by systematically eroding a contiguous, independent, viable and sovereign Palestinian State, based on pre-1967 borders, with East Jerusalem serving as the capital of Palestine, in accordance with international law, pertinent United Nations resolutions, including Security Council resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#), the Madrid principles and the Arab Peace Initiative.

95. The Committee urges the Government of Israel to refrain from seizing Palestinian land, stop implementing its demolition orders and terminate all forced evictions and forcible displacement of Palestinians, particularly in Area C of the West Bank and East Jerusalem. The recent announcement by the occupying Power of measures to expropriate Palestinian land and forcibly displace approximately 1,200 Palestinians from Masafer Yatta is particularly concerning and must be halted.

C. Action taken with the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Human Rights Council

96. The Committee urges the Security Council and the General Assembly to ensure the implementation of the long-standing parameters for peace affirmed in relevant United Nations resolutions, including Council resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#) and Assembly resolution [74/11 \(2019\)](#). The Committee requests the Secretary-General to continue to submit his reports to the Council on the implementation of resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#) in written format and, pursuant to paragraph 5 of the resolution, to include references to the implementation of the provision by Member States. Pursuant to paragraph 11 of the resolution, the Committee also calls upon the Council to examine practical ways and means to secure the full implementation of relevant Council resolutions, including the use of sanctions on States and private entities violating Council resolutions.

97. The Committee concurs with the findings of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel, that discrimination against Palestinians and the continued occupation of Palestinian territory are the leading causes of the region's ongoing tensions, instability and conflict. The Committee will continue to advocate for the

resolution of the Palestine question based on an international framework against occupation and in support of the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and independence. The Committee notes that any initiative aimed at a just solution to the question of Palestine must, first and foremost, consider the legitimate rights and aspirations of the Palestinian people, engage the Palestinian leadership and be based on the two-State solution, according to international law, United Nations resolutions and agreements between both parties.

98. The Committee urges Member States and the Organization to call upon Israel, as the occupying Power, to uphold its responsibilities to safeguard civilians under international law. The Committee underscores the requirement for the implementation of an international protection mechanism that legitimately guarantees the safety and welfare of Palestinian civilians in accordance with General Assembly resolution [ES-10/20](#). The Committee insists that the Israeli air, land and sea blockade of Gaza, as well as all restrictions imposed by the occupying Power, be lifted in accordance with Security Council resolution [1860 \(2009\)](#), and urges the international community to confront the plight of the Palestinian people with a human-rights-based approach rather than a humanitarian one.

99. The Committee urges the United Nations and the international community to remain focused on the question of Palestine despite other emerging global crises. It encourages the Security Council and the Middle East Quartet to continue the relentless pursuit of any opportunity to revitalize the peace process and to seek multilateral mechanisms to revive the much-needed dialogue between Palestine and Israel, as it remains the only path to a just and peaceful solution to the conflict. Until the Palestine question is fully resolved in line with international law and the pertinent United Nations resolutions, the international community has an ongoing obligation to take action.

D. Advocacy and outreach with the international community and civil society

100. The Committee will continue to mobilize the international community to stop Israel's annexation plans and to work concertedly to bring an end to the occupation and promote the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. It will exert efforts to contribute to the achievement of the two-State solution on the pre-1967 borders and is encouraged by the numerous statements in support of international legality by members of the international community, including the Arab world and global civil society. Any comprehensive resolution of the conflict will require a regional approach, such as that offered by the Arab Peace Initiative. The Committee calls upon regional organizations, such as the European Union, LAS, OIC and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, to take a more politically active role in stopping the annexation and mediating an end to the conflict.

101. The Committee unequivocally condemns Israel's designation of six Palestinian NGOs as terrorist organizations, a move that contributes to the shrinking of space for civil society in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory, has potentially wide-ranging legal implications and increases pressure on NGO operations and activities that are important for the monitoring of the human rights situation on the ground and the achievement of Palestinian rights and the two-State solution. It urges the Israeli authorities to rescind the decision immediately.

E. Action by the Member States and regional organizations

102. The Committee emphasizes the importance of the acknowledgement by Israel of the Nakba and its impact upon the Palestinian people as a requirement for a viable and lasting peace. Palestine refugees should be treated as dispossessed nationals of a country – the State of Palestine – rather than as stateless refugees. It strongly advocates the right to return and just compensation for Palestine refugees, as provided for in paragraph 11 of General Assembly resolution 194 (III).

103. The Committee deems unilateral decisions by the Member States to recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and the transfer of embassies in Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem as null and void, as they violate Security Council resolutions, including resolutions 476 (1980) and 478 (1980). The Committee calls upon the Member States to rescind those decisions. It reiterates that the historic status quo of the holy sites in Jerusalem must be respected and that the international community is responsible for preserving the legal, demographic and historical multicultural and multireligious character and status of the city.

104. The Committee underscores the responsibility of States, private entities and corporations not to contribute to grave Israeli violations of Palestinian human rights, including with respect to their activities in settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. It welcomes efforts by Governments, parliamentarians and civil society actors to sanction support, including economic support, for illegal Israeli settlement activities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

105. The Committee calls upon Member States to implement the relevant obligations under international law, including as set out in paragraph 5 of Security Council resolution 2334 (2016), in which the Council called upon Member States to distinguish, in their relevant dealings, between the territory of the State of Israel and the territories occupied since 1967.

106. The Committee reminds Member States that preserving UNRWA services to the Palestinian people is the international community's joint responsibility. It reiterates the call by the Secretary-General to provide UNRWA with predictable, sustained and sufficient funding to assist Palestine refugees in the five fields of operation and notes that any reduction or disruption of the Agency's services can have significant humanitarian, political and security consequences for the region and beyond. The Committee encourages Member States and donors to provide the necessary financial resources for UNRWA to meet growing demands and ensure that basic services meet critical humanitarian needs. The Committee also calls for the renewal of the mandate of UNRWA by the General Assembly at its seventy-seventh session.

107. The Committee calls on Member States to support the Palestinian Government's fiscal stability and strengthen Palestinian institutions to improve the economic and social conditions of the population in the State of Palestine. The Committee notes that efforts by the parties and the international community to stabilize and improve conditions on the ground should be linked to a credible political framework to justly and comprehensively resolve the conflict.

108. The Committee will continue to encourage all supporters of the two-State solution to assist the parties in resuming meaningful negotiations towards the achievement of a peaceful settlement on the basis of the long-standing international parameters for a just solution. The Committee commits to continuing its outreach to key stakeholders with influence on the question of Palestine and to offer support for initiatives, including by the Middle East Quartet, with a view to holding an international peace conference leading to a two-State solution.

F. Action by the Secretariat and other United Nations entities

109. The Committee conveys its deepest gratitude to the Division for Palestinian Rights of the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs for its commitment to the Committee's mandate. It requests the Division to continue to provide substantive and secretariat support for all aspects of its mandate. The Committee encourages the Division to continue with efforts to disseminate information on the question of Palestine by continuing to broaden its outreach and promoting multilingualism, with a special emphasis on Arabic, on the Committee's website and social media platforms. It also requests the Division to continue to implement projects, including capacity-building for officials of the State of Palestine, that promote inclusivity and gender balance and encourage South-South and triangular cooperation between countries and regional and subregional organizations.

110. The Committee requests the continuation of the special information programme on the question of Palestine of the Department of Global Communications, which has made an important contribution to informing the media and the public.

111. The Committee intends to continue to collaborate and work closely with other United Nations actors and entities, including the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, UNRWA, the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967 and others, to synergize efforts in fields of common concern and uphold the permanent responsibility of the Organization towards the question of Palestine until it is justly resolved in all its aspects in a satisfactory manner and in accordance with international law. The Committee wishes to express deep appreciation to OIC and other partners for contributing extrabudgetary resources to support Committee activities and projects, including thematic conferences and events.





United Nations

Report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

**General Assembly
Official Records
Seventy-eighth Session
Supplement No. 35**



Report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People



United Nations • New York, 2023

Note

Symbols of United Nations documents are composed of letters combined with figures. Mention of such a symbol indicates a reference to a United Nations document.

Contents

<i>Chapter</i>	<i>Page</i>
Letter of transmittal	4
I. Introduction	5
II. Overview of the political context relating to the question of Palestine	6
III. Mandate of the Committee	13
IV. Organization of work	14
A. Membership and officers	14
B. Participation in the work of the Committee	14
V. Action taken by the Committee and the Division for Palestinian Rights in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 77/22 and 77/23	15
A. Introduction	15
B. Mobilization of the diplomatic community	15
C. Raising awareness of the question of Palestine	16
D. Cooperation with intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations and United Nations system entities	20
E. Capacity-building	21
VI. Action taken by the Department of Global Communications in accordance with General Assembly resolution 77/24	22
VII. Conclusions and recommendations of the Committee	24
A. Action by the Committee in response to the conflict and human rights violations	24
B. Action by the Committee in response to annexation and settlement activities	25
C. Action with the Secretary-General, the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Human Rights Council	26
D. Advocacy and outreach with the international community and civil society	27
E. Action by Member States and regional organizations	27
F. Action by the Secretariat and other United Nations entities	28

Letter of transmittal

[1 September 2023]

Mr. Secretary-General,

I have the honour to enclose herewith the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for submission to the General Assembly and circulation to all the competent bodies of the United Nations for necessary action, as appropriate, in accordance with paragraphs 2 and 10 of Assembly resolution [77/22](#) of 30 November 2022.

The report covers the period from 2 September 2022 to 31 August 2023.

(*Signed*) Cheikh **Niang**
Chair of the Committee on the Exercise of the
Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

Chapter I

Introduction

1. The present report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People has been submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution [77/22](#), adopted on 30 November 2022. It covers the implementation by the Committee of its programme of work ([A/AC.183/2023/1](#)), focused on promoting the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including their right to self-determination. Its objectives include maintaining international awareness of the plight of the Palestinian people, mobilizing efforts aimed at achieving a just and comprehensive solution to the question of Palestine and lasting Israeli-Palestinian peace, enhancing international solidarity with the Palestinian people and supporting the Government of the State of Palestine in its capacity-building efforts towards a future viable and sustainable independent State of Palestine.
2. Chapter II consists of an overview of the political context relating to the question of Palestine during the reporting period, from 2 September 2022 to 31 August 2023.
3. Chapters III and IV contain an outline of the mandate of the Committee as set out by the General Assembly and information on the membership of the Committee and the organization of its work.
4. Chapter V covers the action taken by the Committee, including its participation in meetings of the Security Council and its continuing dialogue with Member States, intergovernmental organizations and civil society. It also covers international conferences, including in virtual format, capacity-building activities organized by the Committee and other mandated activities carried out by the Division for Palestinian Rights on behalf of the Committee.
5. Chapter VI provides an overview of the special information programme on the question of Palestine implemented by the Department of Global Communications in accordance with General Assembly resolution [75/23](#).
6. The conclusions and recommendations of the Committee to the General Assembly are set out in chapter VII of the report.

Chapter II

Overview of the political context relating to the question of Palestine

7. The Palestinian people continued to endure the belligerent occupation of their territory, which has continued for more than 56 years, compounded by recurrent and deepening political, humanitarian and economic crises. The situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, remained tense and was characterized by a surge in human rights violations committed by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian civilian population, including women and children, as well as a rise in settlement activities and creeping annexation. Israel has continued to implement measures that violate international law and United Nations resolutions, and also to prevent the Palestinian people from exercising their right to self-determination while impairing the exercise of all other inalienable rights. Despite continued engagement by the Security Council and growing calls by the international community for Israel to change course, no tangible actions were taken in the reporting period towards ending the occupation, advancing the two-State solution and ensuring accountability for the systematic human rights violations and grave breaches of international law being perpetrated in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem.

8. The new coalition government of Israel, considered to be the most extremist in the country's history, has increased anti-Palestinian rhetoric, discriminatory measures against the Palestinian people and hostility towards the Palestinian Authority (see para. 16). Members of the Israeli government advocated openly for the Occupied Palestinian Territory to be ethnically cleansed and encouraged revenge attacks against Palestinians, even calling for entire communities to be destroyed.

9. Israel intensified military raids and the use of lethal force against Palestinians in the occupied West Bank, in particular in Jenin and Nablus.¹ On 3 July, Israel launched the largest military operation since 2002 in the Jenin refugee camp, using weapons and methods “associated with the conduct of hostilities in armed conflict, rather than law enforcement”.² The Secretary-General called for respect for international humanitarian law during military operations, while the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights described the air strikes in the densely populated refugee camp as an act that “may amount to wilful killing”.³ This incursion was preceded by other interventions in the camp, including on 19 June and 26 January.⁴ According to data compiled by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, at least 26 Palestinians, including women and children, were killed and dozens were wounded in the Israeli military assault on Jenin in January.⁵ On 22 February, a similar Israeli military assault in Nablus killed 10 Palestinians, including children and elderly persons, and injured 100 others.

¹ United Nations, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, “Data on casualties”. Available at www.ochaopt.org/data/casualties.

² Volker Türk, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, comment on Israeli-Palestinian violence, 4 July 2023.

³ United Nations, UN News, “Jenin: UN concerned over ongoing Israeli military operation”, 4 July 2023.

⁴ Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), “Israel/Palestine: UN experts condemn renewed violence and Israeli killings of Palestinians in occupied West Bank”, press release, 27 January 2023.

⁵ United Nations, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, “Israeli forces operation in Jenin”, Flash Update #2, 4 July 2023.

10. The new Government of Israel pursued further annexation of Palestinian land⁶ through forced evictions, displacement of communities, confiscation of property and settlement expansion, as well as by transferring its civilian population to the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Israel continued to carry out settlement activity in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, in grave breach of international humanitarian law and Security Council resolutions, including resolution 2334 (2016). The discriminatory policies and actions of Israel were consistently described by the former Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967, Michael Link, as an apartheid system⁷ aimed at maintaining domination and the systematic oppression of the Palestinian people. In June, the Secretary-General called on Israel to reverse its decision to accelerate settlement activities.⁸ In the first quarter of 2023 alone, the Israeli authorities demolished, compelled individuals to demolish or confiscated 290 Palestinian-owned structures in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. About 93 per cent of these demolitions were predicated on the absence of building permits, which are extremely difficult for Palestinians to acquire from the Israeli authorities. According to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), a total of 43 structures were demolished, including schools funded by international donors in Masafer Yatta and Isfay al-Fawqa.

11. In 2022, the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, saw the highest number of Palestinian casualties recorded since 2006.⁹ The number of casualties was rising rapidly in the first half of 2023 (see table below). By 7 August, the number of casualties in the West Bank had exceeded the total recorded in 2022. In addition, the United Nations has verified increasing grave violations against Palestinian and Israeli children in West Bank, East Jerusalem, Gaza, and Israel.¹⁰ OHCHR identified two primary causes for this alarming trend: widespread Israeli settler violence and excessive use of force by Israeli forces against Palestinians.¹¹ Israeli settlers regularly targeted Palestinians, including children on their way to school, attacked and vandalized Palestinian homes and vehicles, resulting in property destruction, and engaged in burning of olive trees. Armed settlers receive active support from Israeli security forces, who permitted or took no action to stop the violence of the settlers and systematically resorted to lethal force against Palestinians as a first response. The Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967 cautioned that such acts could potentially constitute extrajudicial executions and wilful killings, which are explicitly prohibited by international law, including the Fourth Geneva Convention and the Rome Statute.

⁶ United Nations, UN News, “Greater protection needed for Palestinians amid rising violence, annexation threat”, 30 March 2023.

⁷ OHCHR, “Israel’s 55-year occupation of Palestinian Territory is apartheid – UN human rights expert”, press release, 25 March 2022. For the definition of apartheid, see the International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid.

⁸ Farhan Haq, Deputy Spokesperson for the Secretary-General, statement attributable to the Spokesperson for the Secretary-General on Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory, 19 June 2023.

⁹ United Nations, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, “Statement by Lucia Elmi, acting Humanitarian Coordinator for the occupied Palestinian territory, on the alarming increase in violence and movement restrictions in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem”, press release, 18 October 2022.

¹⁰ [A/77/895-S/2023/363](#).

¹¹ OHCHR, “Israel: UN experts condemn record year of Israeli violence in the occupied West Bank”, press release, 15 December 2022.

Table
Palestinian casualties since 2022

	2022	2023 ^a
West Bank	151	165
Gaza	30	31

Source: Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

^a From 1 January to 7 August.

12. Israeli settlement expansion was accompanied by a surge in settler violence against Palestinians, resulting in further displacement of their communities. Numerous incidents serve as evidence of this alarming trend. In 2022, there was a 41 per cent increase in Israeli settler attacks against Palestinians in the West Bank compared to 2021. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs reported 849 attacks by Israeli settlers, including 228 attacks that resulted in Palestinian casualties in 2022, compared with 496 settler attacks in 2021. At the time of writing, there have been more than 329 Israeli settler attacks, 112 of which resulted in casualties. On 25 May, the Palestinian community of Ayn Samiyah in Ramallah, which consists of 178 Palestinians, including 78 children, was forced to evacuate because of settler intimidation and violence.

13. On 20 June, following an Israeli military operation in the Jenin refugee camp in which four Palestinians were killed, Palestinians killed four Israelis in the settlement of Eli, in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Groups of armed settlers then carried out revenge attacks in several Palestinian villages, burning property and terrorizing residents in Luban, Sharqiyah and Sinjil among others. In Turmus'ayya, one Palestinian was killed. The Israeli army did not protect the Palestinians and even assisted the settlers.¹² Similarly, on 26 and 27 February, hundreds of Israeli settlers physically assaulted Palestinians in the town of Huwwarah and nearby villages and killed one Palestinian in the town of Za'tarah. The settlers set fire to tens of Palestinian residences, businesses and vehicles in retaliation for the killing of two Israelis in Huwwarah.¹³ Israeli forces were present but failed to stop the attack, which was described as a "pogrom" by a high-ranking Israeli military officer. An Israeli cabinet minister praised the settlers' attack and called for the town to be "wiped out". The Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Tor Wennesland, condemned the failure of Israel to protect Palestinian civilians and called for the perpetrators to be held accountable.¹⁴

14. The High Court of Justice of Israel rejected an appeal against the eviction of Palestinian communities, including 12 herding groups with more than 1,150 residents in Masafer Yatta.¹⁵ Settlement activity continues to threaten Palestinian neighbourhoods in the Hebron area and in occupied East Jerusalem. In the latter, Silwan was one of the most affected neighbourhoods, where at least 470 Palestinians were threatened with forced eviction from their homes, often by settler organizations filing eviction cases in Israeli courts. The number of approved settlement housing units on

¹² United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine, "Briefing by Special Coordinator Wennesland to the UN Security Council on Implementation of UNSCR 2334 (2016)", 27 June 2023.

¹³ United Nations, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, "Protection of Civilians Report 14–27 February 2023", 4 March 2023.

¹⁴ United Nations, UN News, "Israel-Palestine: UN envoy gravely concerned over killings and retaliatory attacks", 27 February 2023.

¹⁵ OHCHR, "UN experts alarmed by Israel High Court ruling on Masafer Yatta and risk of imminent forcible transfer of Palestinians", press release, 16 May 2022.

Palestinian-owned land in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, doubled in 2023 compared with previous years.¹⁶

15. The Security Council held 15 meetings on the question of Palestine, including five that were held outside its regular schedule. In his most recent report on Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and in the occupied Syrian Golan (A/HRC/52/76), the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights noted that there appears to be a correlation between the expansion of outposts and settler attacks against Palestinians, with just under 700,000 Israeli settlers now illegally residing in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem.¹⁷ On 20 February, for the first time in nine years, the Security Council issued a presidential statement on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question. In that statement, the Security Council reaffirmed its strong support for a two-State solution, expressed serious concern about Israeli settlement expansion and “legalization” of settlement outposts and called for the protection of civilians in accordance with international humanitarian law.¹⁸

16. Faced with continued inaction in the Security Council, on 30 December 2022, the General Assembly adopted resolution 77/247, in which it calls upon the International Court of Justice to provide an advisory opinion on the prolonged denial of the right of the self-determination to the Palestinian people, on the legality of the occupation of Palestinian territory by Israel and on the consequences for third parties. In response, Israel imposed punitive measures against the Palestinian Authority, sparking widespread international condemnation.

17. The situation at the holy sites in East Jerusalem worsened. On 26 July, the National Security Minister of Israel, Itamar Ben-Gavir, and 1,700 of his supporters visited the Haram al-Sharif compound in violation of the historic and legal status quo at the holy sites in Jerusalem. Many countries, including the United States of America, issued statements reaffirming the need to preserve the status quo at the holy sites, deeming actions that prevent this to be unacceptable. On 5 January, the Security Council convened an emergency meeting in the wake of another visit by that same minister, accompanied by security forces, to the Haram al-Sharif compound.¹⁹ In a statement delivered at that meeting, the Assistant Secretary-General for the Middle East, Asia and the Pacific expressed concern regarding the fragile situation at the holy sites and warned of the potential for violence throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory.²⁰ The Assistant Secretary-General urged all parties to respect the status quo and the special role of Jordan.²¹ Heightened violence and simmering tensions once again marred the coinciding religious holidays of Ramadan, Passover and Easter. On 4 April, Israeli forces used disproportionate force to evacuate the Qibli prayer hall of the Aqsa Mosque, launching stun grenades, resorting to violence and firing rubber-coated metal bullets to remove Palestinian worshipers who resisted. Israeli extremists’ provocative calls for Jews to conduct ritual animal sacrifices at the holy sites further inflamed the situation. In addition, increasing attacks against Christians and their holy sites in Jerusalem have been reported.²²

18. Despite international condemnation and recommendations for Israel to end the practice of administrative detention, the number of Palestinian detainees imprisoned without trial or charge reached its highest level since 2008. The United Nations called

¹⁶ See [S/PV.9328](#).

¹⁷ See paras. 5 and 13 of the report.

¹⁸ [S/PRST/2023/1](#).

¹⁹ See [S/PV.9236](#).

²⁰ See [S/PV.9387](#).

²¹ United Nations, UN News, “UN working to reduce tensions following Israel minister’s holy site visit”, 5 January 2023.

²² See [S/PV.9309](#).

on Israel to cease the arbitrary practice of administrative detention, with various special rapporteurs describing it as a war crime that deprives protected persons of fair trials. OHCHR reported that 5,000 Palestinians, including 160 children, were being held in Israeli prisons. Of that number, approximately 1,100 were being held without charge or trial.²³ Some Palestinian prisoners engaged in hunger strikes to protest the detention policies of Israel. One of those prisoners, Khader Adnan, who had been repeatedly detained by Israel without charge, ultimately died. The detention without due process and deportation of human rights lawyer Salah Hammouri drew international condemnation as a violation of international humanitarian law and the Fourth Geneva Convention.

19. Israel persisted in imposing restrictions on Palestinians' freedom of movement throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory, adversely affecting the livelihoods of thousands and impeding family reunification and access to health care, education and economic opportunities. Civil society organizations have emphasized that the policy of family separation and the restrictive permit regime of Israel have devastating consequences.²⁴ On 27 April, during Eid al-Fitr, movement restrictions in Jericho were further intensified, affecting approximately 50,000 residents and visitors. Palestinian Christian worshippers also encountered limitations when trying to enter the Church of the Holy Sepulchre for the Orthodox Christian Holy Fire ceremony. The World Health Organization has reported arbitrary delays and denials for Palestinians seeking health care as a consequence of the permit regime, separation barriers, checkpoints and restricted-access roads, as well as the blockade of the Gaza Strip.

20. The 16-year land, air and sea blockade imposed on the Gaza Strip by Israel continued to cause severe limitations on Palestinian access to essential services and materials, including for hospitals, and to undermine livelihoods and development. The economic and humanitarian situation continued to worsen against a backdrop of import and export restrictions, supply shortages, high unemployment²⁵ and contaminated water.²⁶ More than 2.1 million people across the Occupied Palestinian Territory, 58 per cent of whom are from the Gaza Strip, urgently required humanitarian aid according to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.²⁷

21. The situation between Israeli occupation forces and Palestinian armed groups remained highly volatile; several escalations occurred that resulted in casualties, injuries, damaged housing and displacement of families. On 9 May, Israel targeted and killed three members of Palestinian Islamic Jihad, as well as 10 family members, including children. In response, Palestinian armed groups launched rockets, leading to retaliation from Israel. Although a ceasefire was eventually reached, the ensuing closure of the Erez and Kerem Shalom crossings by Israel hindered humanitarian access.

22. Civil society organizations had their rights routinely violated and were attacked, harassed and silenced. The Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the

²³ OHCHR, "Special Rapporteur Says Israel's Unlawful Carceral Practices in the Occupied Palestinian Territory Are Tantamount to International Crimes and Have Turned it into an Open-Air Prison", 10 July 2023.

²⁴ United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine, "Palestinian Rights Committee-Convened Consultations with Civil Society Organizations: 'The Ongoing Nakba in Gaza: Blockade, Dispossession and Denial of Rights'", Chair's summary, 27 April 2023.

²⁵ Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, "Humanitarian situation in Gaza", Flash Update #5, 16 May 2023.

²⁶ United Nations Children's Fund, "175,000 additional parents and children are getting access to safe drinking water in the Gaza Strip", 5 June 2023.

²⁷ United Nations, Office for the Coordination of *Humanitarian Affairs, Humanitarian Response Plan OPT, Humanitarian Programme Cycle 2023* (New York, 2023).

Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel, in its latest report,²⁸ found that the Israeli government restricts civic space in order to delegitimize and silence civil society and those who advocate for Palestinian rights, including Israelis. Israeli authorities increasingly used electronic surveillance and social media monitoring, including through unauthorized spyware planted on mobile phones, to spy on Palestinian civilians, human rights defenders, journalists and students and to arrest and detain them for political statements posted on social media platforms.²⁹

23. The Middle East peace process has been stalled since 2014. On 19 March, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, the State of Palestine and the United States met in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, to discuss commitments for de-escalation of tensions and Palestinian economic conditions, as well as to establish mechanisms to counter violence and incitement. That meeting came on the heels of another meeting that was held on 26 February, in Aqaba, Jordan, at which the participants stressed similar commitments, including upholding the historic status quo at the holy sites in Jerusalem. On 11 May, the participants in a Munich-format ministerial meeting that was held in Germany called on parties to fulfil their commitments for peace as agreed in Aqaba and Sharm el-Sheikh and emphasized the need for a realistic political process. However, Israel immediately disavowed the agreements reached and violated its commitments.

24. On 13 October, 14 Palestinian factions, including Fatah and Hamas, signed the Algiers Declaration, in which they acknowledged the Palestine Liberation Organization as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people and outlined plans for Palestinian elections. The Secretary-General welcomed the reconciliation agreement, stressing that it could contribute to ending a 15-year rift.

25. According to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the extreme dependence of the Palestinian economy on Israel hindered growth, despite some signs of post-coronavirus disease (COVID-19) recovery.³⁰ Unemployment remained high at 26 per cent in the West Bank and half of the workforce in Gaza was unemployed. The closure of the Gaza-Israel border crossing has prevented 17,000 Palestinians from reaching their places of employment.

26. The fiscal crisis of the Palestinian Authority continued as international support declined, further undermining its ability to provide basic services and fulfil its obligations. Since November 2021, public sector employees have been receiving partial salaries.

27. The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) also continues to face a dire financial crisis, putting Palestine refugees' livelihoods and regional stability at high risk. According to the Commission-General of UNRWA, Philippe Lazzarini, a decade of chronic underfunding has led to a threat of collapse. The budget shortfall at the start of 2023 was \$75 million, and the Agency's global appeal for \$1.6 billion raised only \$828.3 million, including \$115.2 million in new contributions.³¹ The realization of the Secretary-General's call to ensure that UNRWA has sustainable and predictable funding remained elusive, as Palestine refugees' needs continued to grow. On 11 May, the World Food Programme (WFP) revealed significant funding shortages that may result in reduced aid to over

²⁸ OHCHR, "The rights of civil society members are being violated by all entities in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory, UN Commission of Inquiry says; Israeli Government restrictions intrinsically linked to occupation", press release, 8 June 2023.

²⁹ [A/HRC/53/22](#).

³⁰ [TD/B/EX\(72\)/2](#).

³¹ United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, "Pledges At Funding Conference Not Sufficient To Cover UNRWA Financial Requirements From September Onwards", news release, 2 June 2023.

200,000 Palestinians and a high risk that around 60 per cent of the residents of the Occupied Palestinian territory would face hunger.³²

28. On 30 November, the General Assembly, decided to commemorate, for the first time, the anniversary of the Nakbah. In its resolutions [77/23](#), the Assembly instructed the Division for Palestinian Rights to commemorate the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Nakbah on 15 May, including by organizing an event in the General Assembly Hall, which was well-attended. On that same day, the Committee held a high-level special meeting at which the President of the State of Palestine, Mahmoud Abbas, delivered a statement decrying efforts to deliberately obstruct implementation of United Nations resolutions and the increased suffering of Palestinians. In addition, he vowed to pursue legal and diplomatic measures for the realization of Palestinian rights and seek accountability for the crimes perpetrated by Israel against the Palestinian people.³³

³² World Food Programme, “WFP operations in Palestine risk suspension due to funding shortfall”, news release, 11 May 2023.

³³ United Nations, “Marking Anniversary of Nakba, President Tells Palestinian Rights Committee ‘Tragedy Constitutes a Scar on Humanity’”, press release, 15 May 2023.

Chapter III

Mandate of the Committee

29. The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People was established by the General Assembly in its resolution 3376 (XXX) of 10 November 1975 with the task of recommending a programme designed to enable the Palestinian people to exercise their inalienable rights to self-determination, national independence and sovereignty and return to the homes and property from which they had been displaced, as recognized by the Assembly in its resolution 3236 (XXIX) of 22 November 1974. The mandate of the Committee has evolved considerably over the years into greater advocacy for the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and the mobilization of assistance. Additional information about the Committee is available on the website maintained by the Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat.³⁴

30. On 30 November, the General Assembly renewed the mandate of the Committee (resolution 77/22) and requested the Secretary-General to continue to provide the Division for Palestinian Rights with the resources necessary for its programme of work (resolution 77/23) and to continue to implement the special information programme on the question of Palestine of the Department of Global Communications of the Secretariat (resolution 77/24). The mandates of the Committee, the Division and the Department will be reviewed only as necessary. The Committee's report will continue to be produced annually. The Assembly also adopted resolution 77/25, entitled "Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine", in which it reaffirmed the near-consensus international position regarding the components of a just, lasting and comprehensive solution.

31. The work of the Committee is fully aligned with the decisions of the main intergovernmental bodies of the United Nations, such as the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council and the International Court of Justice, as well as with the work of the Secretary-General and the programmes, funds and specialized agencies of the United Nations system, with which it collaborates extensively.

³⁴ www.un.org/unispal.

Chapter IV

Organization of work

A. Membership and officers

32. The Committee is composed of 25 members representing Member States from different regional groups: Afghanistan, Belarus, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Cuba, Cyprus, Ecuador, Guinea, Guyana, India, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mali, Malta, Namibia, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Pakistan, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Tunisia, Türkiye and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of).

33. The 24 observers of the Committee are Algeria, Bangladesh, Bulgaria, China, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, the Niger, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka, the Syrian Arab Republic, the United Arab Emirates, Viet Nam, Yemen, as well as the State of Palestine, the African Union, the League of Arab States (LAS) and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC).

34. The Bureau of the Committee is elected each year from among the permanent representatives of Committee members. At its 410th meeting, on 22 February, chaired by the Secretary-General, the Committee elected, in their personal capacity, Cheikh Niang (Senegal) as Chair and Pedro Luis Pedrosa Cuesta (Cuba), Arrmanatha Christiawan Nasir (Indonesia), Neville Melvin Gertze (Namibia) and Jaime Hermida Castillo (Nicaragua) as Vice-Chairs for the year. Ahmad Faisal Muhamad (Malaysia) was elected as Vice-Chair and Rapporteur on 3 May at the 411th meeting of the Committee. In accordance with established practice, the State of Palestine participates in the work of both the Committee and the Bureau as an observer.

35. The day-to-day tasks of the Committee are undertaken by its Bureau. Members of the Bureau represent the Committee at all international conferences organized by the Committee, including by chairing and moderating conference sessions, and on all delegation visits. On the margins of the conferences and during delegation visits, they hold meetings with senior officials of the respective host countries.

36. The Committee members and observers have actively advocated the rights of the Palestinian people, including in the Security Council. Currently, two Committee members, Ecuador and Malta, and one observer, the United Arab Emirates, serve on the Security Council as elected members.

B. Participation in the work of the Committee

37. As in previous years, the Committee invited all States Members of the United Nations and observers to participate in its work. Committee activities regularly involve civil society organizations, including those from Israel.

Chapter V

Action taken by the Committee and the Division for Palestinian Rights in accordance with General Assembly resolutions [77/22](#) and [77/23](#)

A. Introduction

38. The Committee implemented its programme of work to realize the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, bring about an end to the Israeli occupation that began in 1967 and support the achievement of the two-State solution on the basis of the pre-1967 lines. Its activities are aligned with Security Council and General Assembly resolutions on the question of Palestine; the women and peace and security agenda; the programme of the United Nations country team; international law, including humanitarian law; human rights frameworks, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenants on Human Rights; the Convention on the Rights of the Child; and the Sustainable Development Goals and their achievement by the State of Palestine. The Committee has continuously adjusted its approved programme of work in line with developments in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and developments relating to the Palestinian question, in general.

39. The Committee has made every effort to support the universally recognized rights of an occupied people and the right to self-determination. To that end, the Committee engaged the diplomatic community on the question of Palestine through formal and informal intergovernmental processes; conducted Bureau delegation visits and outreach meetings; organized a Bureau retreat; organized public awareness-raising activities that involved conferences, meetings, speakers' panels and the media, including social media, with the support of the Department of Global Communications; promoted partnerships with Governments, relevant bodies of the United Nations system, including UNRWA, intergovernmental organizations, regional bodies and civil society organizations; and built capacities for the future State of Palestine. It formally invited all Member States to actively participate in its events.

40. The activities of the Bureau included holding meetings in a variety of formats, including in-person, hybrid and virtual events, as well as visits by Bureau delegations to locations away from Headquarters.

B. Mobilization of the diplomatic community

41. From 5 to 7 December, the Bureau held its annual retreat in Dakar to reflect on the implementation of its 2022 programme of work and discuss 2023 activities. The Bureau also met with officials from the Government of Senegal, including the President of the Republic, the Chef de Cabinet, the Minister for Foreign Affairs and the presidents of the National Assembly and Foreign Affairs Committee. It also engaged with education centres and think tanks in the country.

42. On 22 February, in a meeting chaired by the Secretary-General, the Committee elected five of its Bureau members for 2023 and officially adopted its programme of work for 2023. On 3 May, the Permanent Representative of Malaysia was elected as Vice-Chair and Rapporteur.

43. On 28 February, the Committee, through the Division for Palestinian Rights and with the participation of the Department of Global Communications, held its annual briefing session for 20 new delegates of Member States.

44. The Chair led Bureau delegations in a series of advocacy visits. The Chair participated in the forty-ninth session of the OIC Council of Ministers for Foreign Affairs, which was held in Nouakchott on 16 and 17 March, and the high-level conference organized by LAS on the theme “Jerusalem: resilience and development”, which was held in Cairo on 12 February. The Chair visited France, Malta and Switzerland from 31 October to 4 November in order to engage with officials from the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of those countries. On 17 October, in Ottawa, the Bureau met with Ms. Salma Zahid, Member of the Parliament of Canada and of the Canada-Palestine Parliamentary Friendship Group. The Committee hosted Ms. Zahid in New York on 10 November.

45. The Bureau met with representatives of the non-permanent members of the Security Council on two occasions. On 20 February, it met with representatives of the five States that were elected to membership of the Council for 2023 and 2024, and on 9 May it met with representatives of all 10 of the non-permanent members of the Council. The participants exchanged ideas on how to implement Security Council resolutions and promote a political horizon to resolve the Palestinian plight, including through efforts aimed at resuming peace negotiations between Israel and the State of Palestine.

46. The Bureau used traditional and social media for global outreach and advocacy. On 30 September, the Bureau condemned the killing of Palestinian children and the trauma that they face. On 15 February, it expressed concern over the punitive measures taken by Israel against the Palestinian Authority in response to the request submitted by the General Assembly to the International Court of Justice for an advisory opinion on the legal consequences arising from the policies and practices of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and denounced the decision of Israel to advance settlements in the occupied West Bank. On 24 February, it condemned a raid that Israeli forces carried out in Nablus. On 5 April, the Committee condemned violence by Israel against Palestinian worshippers at the holy sites of Jerusalem. On 19 June, it condemned the raids that were carried out in refugee camps in Jenin and the decision to expand more than 4,000 Israeli settlements in the West Bank. On 20 June, the Chair condemned the acts of violence carried out by extremist settlers against Palestinian communities.

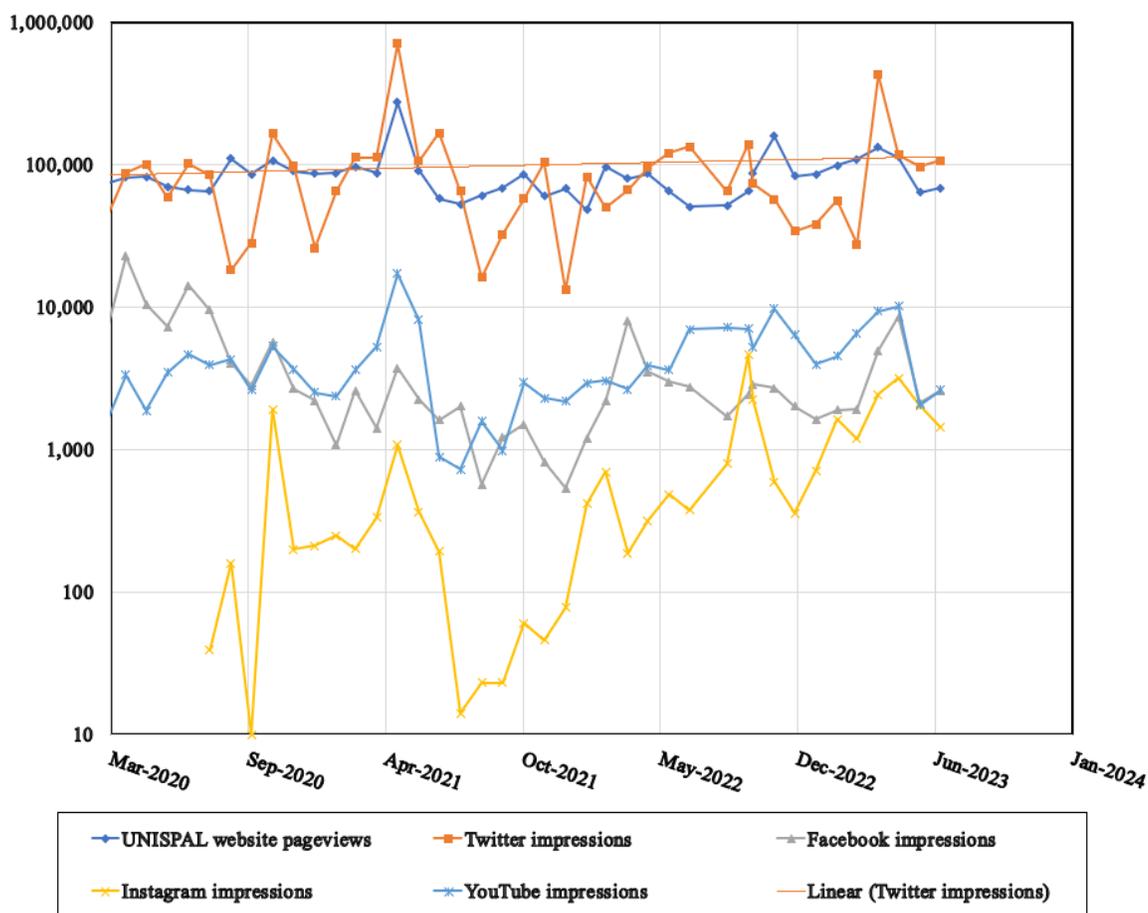
47. The Committee delivered statements at quarterly debates of the Security Council on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question, on 28 October, 18 January, 25 April and 27 July. In those statements, the Committee highlighted the deteriorating situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and called for collective action to achieve the two-State solution and realize the rights of the Palestinian people, including the rights to self-determination and independence, in accordance with international law and relevant United Nations resolutions.

C. Raising awareness on the question of Palestine

48. The Committee continued to raise awareness about the political, human rights and humanitarian situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including the situation of Palestinian women and youth, by facilitating up-to-date briefings by experts and exchange of ideas on specific issues during virtual and in-person Committee meetings, side events and conferences, as well as through the dissemination of publications and information through social media platforms and the Committee’s website. As requested by the General Assembly, the 2023 programme of work is focused on raising awareness of the Nakbah. Details regarding each activity can be found on the Committee’s website.

49. To better reach global audiences, the Committee expanded its digital advocacy efforts, with its Twitter, Facebook, YouTube and Instagram accounts recording steady growth in the number of visitors and followers, demonstrating growing public interest in the question of Palestine, as shown in the figure below. In addition, in May 2023, the Committee set up a TikTok account, which has accumulated 3,162 views in only a few months. The Twitter account alone had gained 1,215 new followers by the end of August (total 23,000), while the Committee mailing list reached a total of 13,000 subscribers. The website was visited 938,273 times during the reporting period. All Committee public events are broadcast on United Nations Web TV and social media, garnering thousands of viewers per event. The Committee also organized online advocacy campaigns ahead of the renewal of the mandate of UNRWA, the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People (see para. 52) and the commemoration of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Nakbah (see para. 57), which resulted in strong engagement and a large viewership online.

Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, social media statistics



Abbreviation: UNISPAL, United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine.

50. On 26 October, the Bureau met with the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel and with the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967. On 11 April, the Bureau met with the President of the seventy-seventh session of the General Assembly, and on 24 April the Bureau met

with the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Expatriates of the State of Palestine. On 22 August, the Bureau held its annual meeting with the Secretary-General.

51. On 3 November, the Chair participated in the International Media Seminar on Peace in the Middle East organized by the Department of Global Communications, stressing the importance of media for the Committee in upholding its General Assembly mandate. The Chair underlined the importance of press freedom and that journalists must be protected in order to be able to carry out their work in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. In addition, the Chair met with Palestinian journalists from Gaza, the West Bank and Lebanon who took part in the annual Shireen Abu Akleh Training Programme for Palestinian Broadcasters and Journalists organized by the Department of Global Communications (see para. 76).

52. As mandated by the General Assembly, the Committee commemorated the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People on 29 November at United Nations Headquarters in New York. The President of the General Assembly, the President of the Security Council and the Chef de Cabinet, the latter speaking on behalf of the Secretary-General, reaffirmed the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and the need for reinvigorated efforts to achieve a just and lasting solution to the question of Palestine. The Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine read a message from the President of the State of Palestine. In addition, speakers from the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories, the African Union, LAS, OIC and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries delivered statements, as did Shawan Jabarin, General Director of Al-Haq, on behalf of civil society organizations. The event was attended by 63 Member States and 10 non-governmental organizations (NGOs), while 44 Member States sent official messages of solidarity from Heads of State and Government. All statements and messages called for an end to the Israeli occupation and the achievement of the two-State solution. Similar commemorations were held at the United Nations Office at Geneva and the United Nations Office at Vienna.

53. A virtual exhibit entitled “Palestine through its people: portraits of Palestinians” dedicated to the memory of Palestinian journalist Shireen Abu Akleh was launched as part of the commemoration of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

54. On 8 November, the Committee held virtual closed consultations with civil society organizations on the theme “Advocating for accountability in the Occupied Palestinian Territory”. The participants, who included civil society organization representatives from the State of Palestine, Israel and the United States, as well as Committee members and observers, discussed accountability in the Occupied Palestinian Territory as being central to ending the Israeli occupation and to upholding international law.

55. On 15 March, the Committee organized a virtual event on the theme “Memories of the Nakbah and its impact on Palestinians” on the margins of the sixty-seventh session of the Commission on the Status of Women. At that event, Nadine Sayegh, author of the book *Oranges from Jaffa*, discussed the enduring impact of the Nakbah on the lives of millions of Palestinians since their displacement and dispossession in 1948. The event provided the Committee a platform to reaffirm its support for the rights of Palestinian women through international mechanisms, such as Security Council resolution [1325 \(2000\)](#).

56. On 27 April, the Committee held a virtual closed consultation, under the Chatham House Rule, with civil society organizations on the theme “The ongoing Nakbah in Gaza: blockade, dispossession and denial of rights”. The consultation was attended by civil society organization representatives from the State of Palestine,

Israel and the United States, as well as Committee members and observers. The participants focused on the Great March of Return and its legacy, the violation of Palestine refugees' right of return, the restrictions imposed by Israel on family reunification, and access to health care in Gaza.

57. On 15 May, for the first time in the history of the United Nations, the Committee, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 77/23, commemorated the anniversary of the Nakbah at United Nations Headquarters. The Chair, the President of the State of Palestine, the Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and a civil society organization representative delivered statements at a high-level Committee meeting to mark the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Nakbah. Representatives of regional groups read statements of support and the Commissioner-General of UNRWA, in a video message, highlighted the critical needs of Palestine refugees. Following the meeting, a special commemorative event, which was open to the public, was held in the General Assembly Hall, which was at full capacity. The event, which was broadcast live, served to disseminate worldwide the continued impact of the Nakbah for the Palestinian people and the enduring call for a just solution to the question of Palestine. A video message from the President of the General Assembly was followed by an immersive experience of the Nakbah through live music, photos, videos and personal testimonies.

58. On 22 May, members of the Bureau met with representatives of Palestinian civil society organizations and the Israel-Palestine NGO Working Group based in New York to discuss the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and recent reports in which it is concluded that Palestinians in the Occupied Palestinian Territory are victims of apartheid. The representatives of civil society organizations called for the restoration of the Special Committee against Apartheid. The Bureau continued to support the mandate of UNRWA through its regular statements and interactions with all Member States. On 13 October, the Chair met with Director of the UNRWA Representative Office in New York to discuss the renewal of the Agency's mandate, including an advocacy campaign by the Committee in that regard (see para. 49). On 30 May, the Bureau met with the Commissioner-General to discuss the Agency's financial crisis ahead of the 2023 pledging conference in support of UNRWA, which took place on 2 June. On 18 July, the Bureau met with the Chief of Staff of UNRWA to discuss the Agency's mandate and sustainability.

59. On 20 July, the Committee and OIC held a virtual conference on the theme "The impact of Israeli settlement policies on the Palestinian population in Jerusalem". The conference was attended by civil society representatives from the State of Palestine, Israel and the United States. Participants discussed a variety of concerns, including Israeli court processes and how to use the database of businesses facilitating Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory for economic activism. An evicted Palestinian illustrated the ongoing issues of illegal home evictions in East Jerusalem.³⁵

60. The United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine, now in its twenty-ninth year of operation, remains an indispensable resource for diplomats, researchers and the general public, averaging 100,000 page views per month. It contains more than 42,496 documents and is the largest and most comprehensive online repository on the subject. The collection ranges from the latest United Nations documents to rare records dating back decades. Moreover, documents are increasingly being disseminated in Arabic, Chinese, French, Russian and Spanish, in addition to English.

³⁵ United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine, "Impact of Israeli Settlement Policies on the Palestinian Population in Jerusalem", Chair's summary, 20 July 2023.

61. In collaboration with the Office of Information and Communications Technology, the Division for Palestinian Rights continued to improve the accessibility of UNPal, an artificial-intelligence-based chatbot for the website of the United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine.

62. Further to its monitoring mandate, the Committee produced several publications for dissemination by the Division for Palestinian Rights. They include a weekly publication on NGO action on the question of Palestine, monthly bulletins compiling all official documents of the United Nations and other intergovernmental organizations relating to the question of Palestine, quarterly newsletters on the activities of the Committee, an annual compilation of United Nations reports on the question of Palestine and an annual compilation of all resolutions issued by United Nations bodies on the question of Palestine.

63. At the request of the Office of Legal Affairs, the Division for Palestinian Rights helped the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs produce a dossier of over 9,000 United Nations parliamentary documents drawn from the United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine database for submission to the International Court of Justice in relation to the advisory opinion requested in General Assembly resolution [77/247](#).

64. The Committee's publications were disseminated to a growing mailing list of more than 13,000 subscribers, including research libraries, universities and such key stakeholders as political figures, members of the diplomatic community, students, university professors, NGOs, intergovernmental organizations and journalists, as well as prominent personalities and opinion leaders. All the publications of the Committee are posted on its website.

65. In support of the Committee's global advocacy and with extended support from OIC, the Bureau distributed 2,724 United Nations exhibit booklets globally, including to Member States and United Nations offices. The electronic versions of the booklets were viewed by 9,362 visitors. The booklets were reproduced in Arabic and English, and they are being translated into French and Spanish in order to further expand their reach.

D. Cooperation with intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations and United Nations system entities

66. The Committee continued to cooperate with intergovernmental organizations. OIC continued to support the annual International Conference on the Question of Jerusalem, organized in cooperation with the Committee. The African Union, LAS and OIC regularly attended Committee meetings as observers and participated in its work. The Chair participated in key events of LAS and OIC (see para. 44).

67. During its activities, the Committee, through the Division for Palestinian Rights, continued its long-standing cooperation with the United Nations system, including the United Nations Development Programme, United Nations country teams, UNRWA, the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management, the Department of Global Communications (including the United Nations information centres), the Human Rights Council and OHCHR, the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) and the United Nations System Staff College.

68. The Committee continued to collaborate with NGOs in promoting the rights of the Palestinian people. Representatives of civil society organizations, including from Israel, were invited to attend all public events of the Committee (see paras. 54 to 59).

Civil society representatives were invited to speak at the special meeting of the Committee held on 29 November to commemorate the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People and at the high-level meeting held by the Committee on 15 May to commemorate the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Nakbah.

69. NGOs continue to request accreditation with the Committee. At the time of writing, a total of two such organizations had been accredited in the reporting period to partner with the Committee in implementing its mandate.

E. Capacity-building

70. As requested in General Assembly resolution [77/23](#), the Committee continued to identify training opportunities to expand the capacity of officials of the State of Palestine and assess the impact of its programmes. Following the lifting of COVID-19-related restrictions, the Committee continued to prioritize hybrid (online and in-person) training.

71. In collaboration with UNITAR, the Committee supported the participation of four female diplomats from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates of the State of Palestine in a training course entitled “The art of speechwriting” from 17 October to 13 November. The course strengthened the individual capacity of diplomats working in roles requiring refined skills in speechwriting and public speaking.

72. From 24 October to 2 December, the Committee carried out its annual six-week capacity-building training programme on multilateral diplomacy for two female career diplomats. The programme, which was held in New York during the seventy-seventh session of the General Assembly, enabled trainees to enhance their understanding of multilateral diplomacy and peace, security and development issues, and recent regional and global developments that are at the centre of deliberations in the General Assembly and Security Council.

73. The Committee organized a closed-door seminar on the legality of the Israeli occupation of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. The seminar, which was held in Geneva from 7 to 9 February, brought together prominent practitioners in the fields of international law and human rights and Palestinian diplomats.

Chapter VI

Action taken by the Department of Global Communications in accordance with General Assembly resolution 77/24

74. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 77/24 of 30 November 2022, the Department of Global Communications continued to implement its special information programme on the question of Palestine.

75. The Department held its annual International Media Seminar on Peace in the Middle East on 3 and 4 November in Geneva. Journalists, media experts, think tanks, diplomats and members of academia from Israel, the State of Palestine, Switzerland and the United States attended the event to discuss three themes: “Honouring the legacy of Shireen Abu Akleh: protecting journalists covering the conflict”, “Forgotten stories in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict: how political news eclipses coverage of economic challenges” and “Young journalists: opportunities and challenges”.

76. From 8 November to 9 December, the Department organized its annual Shireen Abu Akleh Training Programme for Palestinian Broadcasters and Journalists in New York and Washington, D.C. Six Palestinian journalists received hands-on training on media-related topics. In addition, the journalists met with United Nations officials, representatives from Al Jazeera, the European Broadcasting Union and the Middle East Institute, the Chair of the Committee and the Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations.

77. The Department continued to update the web page of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People in the six official languages, and it provided technical support for the United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine.

78. The multimedia, multilingual news and social media teams of the Department provided coverage for related activities and events.³⁶

79. The Meetings Coverage Section issued 80 press releases, in English and French, related to the question of Palestine and the Middle East peace process, including press releases concerning statements and messages by the Secretary-General, the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Committee.

80. UN News generated almost 400 related stories and features in the six official languages, as well as in Hindi, Kiswahili and Portuguese. For example, the Arabic unit of UN News produced a feature entitled “Looking into the eyes of the occupation”³⁷ on the public hearings held by the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel.

81. UN Video coverage included 28 news video packages on the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, the remarks made by the President of the State of Palestine during the general debate of the General Assembly and stories about internally displaced persons and refugees. Videos were aired by broadcasters from over 50 countries, including the Arabic service of the British Broadcasting Corporation, i24 News and the Arabic and English services of France 24.

82. The Department’s flagship United Nations social media accounts, with 67.5 million followers, in all six official languages, as well as Hindi, Kiswahili and Portuguese, continued to provide updated information on the question of Palestine and promote events organized by the Committee. The promotional efforts drove traffic to the United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine and the

³⁶ United Nations, “The West-Eastern Divan Ensemble performs at UN headquarters”.

³⁷ See news.un.org/ar/story/2023/03/1119152.

Committee's social media accounts. The information and content were also made available publicly on the Trello board dedicated to the question of Palestine that is maintained by the Department.³⁸

83. The Visitors' Service Section continued to raise awareness through the permanent exhibit "The United Nations and the question of Palestine", which is part of the United Nations guided tour route. Over 150,000 visitors saw the exhibit during the reporting period. The Exhibits Unit, in connection with the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, facilitated the launch of the virtual exhibit "Palestine through its people: portraits of Palestinians", which has been viewed approximately 3,000 times (see para. 53).

84. The Office of the Envoy of the Secretary-General on Youth collaborated with UNRWA to ensure that a young Palestinian innovator, Yassir Al Ostath, was able to participate in the session entitled "Working with and for youth in accelerating COVID-19 recovery and achieving the 2030 Agenda" at the Economic and Social Council youth forum for 2023, which was held from 25 to 27 April.

85. United Nations information centres, including in Ankara, Canberra, Lusaka, Manama, Moscow, Nairobi and Rabat, marked the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People by organizing a wide range of commemorative events in collaboration with government officials and local embassies.

86. The United Nations information centre in Cairo provided media support for the launch of the UNCTAD report on Palestine, including by organizing a press conference at its premises in September 2022.

87. The United Nations Regional Information Centre for Western Europe provided media support to the UNRWA Representative Office in Europe during the visit of the Commissioner-General to the Holy See and Italy in May 2023.

88. The Department moderated the observance of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Nakbah that was held in the Hall of the General Assembly, with news and social media teams from the Department covering the commemoration and related events on its multimedia platforms. On 24 May, the United Nations information centre in Lusaka, with support from the Resident Coordinator Office in Mozambique, organized a watch party for the commemorative event. Attendees included, inter alia, government officials, members of the diplomatic corps and young persons from six universities. The event featured a virtual exhibit, highlights from the event held at Headquarters and a video entitled "Sands of sorrow". From 27 to 31 May, the United Nations information centre in Jakarta, in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the National Library of Indonesia, held an exhibit on the occasion of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Nakbah to educate visitors about the historical context of the question of Palestine and the Nakbah and its consequences.

³⁸ Available at trello.com/b/772QZEh1/question-of-palestine.

Chapter VII

Conclusions and recommendations of the Committee

89. In developing its recommendations set out below, the Committee has taken into account the deliberations at Committee and Bureau meetings, briefings received, outreach, international conferences and events involving Member States, civil society organizations and regional organizations.

A. Action by the Committee in response to the conflict and human rights violations

90. The Committee condemns the recurring human rights violations committed by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian civilian population in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, as amply documented by international organizations, including the United Nations and its human rights mechanisms, and human rights organizations, including from Israel. It calls for an immediate end to the excessive use of lethal force by Israeli forces and armed settlers against Palestinian civilians, including children, which has resulted in an unprecedented number of killings and injuries. The Committee reiterates that the indiscriminate launching of rockets towards Israeli population centres is prohibited by international humanitarian law and must stop immediately.

91. The Committee condemns the punitive measures imposed by the Government of Israel to perpetuate the occupation and weaken the Palestinian Authority and repress the Palestinian people. It deplores the significant increase in violence and terror against Palestinians by armed Israeli settlers. The Committee calls on Israel to immediately reverse the measures against the Palestinian Authority, disarm Israeli settlers in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and provide protection to Palestinian civilians as called for in Security Council resolution 904 (1994) and General Assembly resolution ES-10/20 and in line with its obligations under international humanitarian law.

92. The Committee calls on Israeli government officials to halt their provocations, rhetoric and incitement in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and to end acquiescence to or support for, including by the Israeli army, settlers attacks on Palestinians and destruction of Palestinian homes and livelihoods. It further appeals to political, religious and community leaders to reject hate speech and violence and to speak up against those who try to inflame the situation.

93. The Committee strongly recommends that the United Nations and the international community take additional measure to ensure accountability, including arrest warrants from the International Criminal Court, because Israel has ignored its responsibility to investigate and prosecute acts committed by its agents or third parties that involve grave breaches of international humanitarian law and gross violations of the human rights of Palestinians.

94. The Committee calls on Israel to uphold its obligations under international humanitarian and human rights law and calls for full respect for the status quo at the holy sites in Jerusalem, including the historic and legal status quo at the Aqsa Mosque compound, recognizing the special role of the Jordan. The Committee decries the harassment of Muslim worshippers and the increasing number of attacks against Christians and their religious symbols in Jerusalem, and it urges Israel to ensure that Muslims and Christians can peacefully practice their respective religions without fear of violence. The Committee also calls for special measures to prevent future provocations during Muslim and Christian religious observances.

95. The Committee underscores the seriousness of the findings in the report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict (A/76/871-S/2022/493) in relation to the situation of Palestinian children and calls for measures to protect children and prevent grave violation against them. The Committee urges the Israeli occupation forces and Palestinian armed groups to abide by their obligations under international humanitarian and human rights law and ensure that the principles of distinction, proportionality and precaution are upheld during any military operation.

96. In the light of the continuation and escalation by Israel of violence and disproportionate use of military force, including air strikes and ground operations targeting densely populated civilian areas, the Committee urges the Secretary-General and the relevant human rights mechanisms, including the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, to take action consistent with their mandates and findings and consider potential listings of parties involved in violations against civilians, including women and children, as a deterrent measure, in order to protect civilian lives.

B. Action by the Committee in response to annexation and settlement activities

97. The Committee is gravely concerned at the stated objective of the Government of Israel to dramatically increase the number of settlers in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, openly referring to these territories as the “land of Israel”, contrary to international law, countless United Nations resolutions and the international consensus on the two-State solution based on the pre-1967 borders. The Committee supports the demands made by the Security Council, the Human Rights Council and the General Assembly for the cessation of all such illegal activities, including expropriation of and encroachment on Palestinian land and demolition of Palestinian homes and properties.

98. The Committee reiterates that the annexation of any part of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, is illegal. It calls on the Israeli authorities to cease all actions aimed at changing the demographic composition, status and character of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, and to abide scrupulously by its international legal obligations. Such illegal colonization measures undermine the prospect of achieving a two-State solution by systematically eroding a contiguous, independent, viable and sovereign Palestinian State, based on the pre-1967 borders, with East Jerusalem serving as the capital of Palestine, in accordance with international law, the pertinent United Nations resolutions, including, inter alia, Security Council resolution 2334 (2016) and General Assembly resolution 77/26, as well as the Madrid principles and the Arab Peace Initiative.

99. The Committee urges the Government of Israel to refrain from seizing Palestinian land, stop carrying out demolitions, including of donor-funded structures, and end all forced evictions and forcible displacement of Palestinians, in particular in Area C of the West Bank and East Jerusalem. The recent announcement by the occupying Power of a dramatic increase in the construction of settlement units, its attempts to retroactively “legalize” illegal outposts and its decision to allow settlers into previously vacated settlements to resume settlement activities are particularly concerning and must be halted.

C. Action with the Secretary-General, the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Human Rights Council

100. The Committee concurs with the stance of the Secretary-General on the question of Palestine, which is based on international law and numerous United Nations resolutions, and it urges him to continue leveraging his good offices to pursue a just resolution to the question of Palestine.

101. The Committee urges the Security Council and the General Assembly to ensure implementation of the long-standing parameters for peace affirmed in relevant United Nations resolutions, including Council resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#) and Assembly resolution [77/25](#), including by ensuring that Member States and intergovernmental organizations take tangible measures to implement their obligations under these resolutions, the foremost of which is to distinguish between Israel and the territories that have remained under its occupation since 1967, as well as the obligation not to aid, assist or recognize as legitimate any illegal measures taken by the occupying Power in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem.

102. The Committee requests the Secretary-General to continue to submit his reports to the Council on the implementation of resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#) in written format and, pursuant to paragraph 5 of the resolution, to include references to the implementation of the provision by Member States. Pursuant to paragraph 11 of the resolution, the Committee also calls upon the Council to examine practical ways and means to secure the full implementation of relevant Council resolutions, including the use of sanctions on States and private entities violating Council resolutions.

103. The Committee encourages the Security Council and the Middle East Quartet to actively pursue opportunities to revitalize the peace process and to seek multilateral mechanisms to revive the much-needed dialogue between Palestine and Israel, as that is essential for promoting a just solution to the conflict.

104. The Committee concurs with the findings of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel that discrimination against Palestinians and the continued occupation of Palestinian territory are the leading causes of the region's ongoing tensions, instability and conflict. The Committee raises deep concern regarding the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including land seizures, unlawful killings, forced displacement, movement restrictions and denial of the human rights of Palestinians. Those actions, which are akin to apartheid under international law, demand urgent scrutiny and action to safeguard human rights.

105. The Committee notes that any initiative aimed at achieving a just solution to the question of Palestine must, first and foremost, take into account the legitimate rights and aspirations of the Palestinian people, engage the Palestinian leadership and be based on the two-State solution, in accordance with international law and the relevant United Nations resolutions.

106. The Committee appreciates the decision by the General Assembly to implement the recommendation made in the report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel ([A/77/328](#)) to urgently request an advisory opinion from the International Court of Justice on the legal consequences of, inter alia, the continued refusal on the part of Israel to end its occupation of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. In addition, the Committee calls on the Security Council to consider further action, as requested under paragraph 92 (b) of the report, to require Israel to bring its permanent occupation to an end.

107. The Committee insists that the Israeli air, land and sea blockade of Gaza, as well as all restrictions imposed by the occupying Power, be lifted in accordance with Security Council resolution 1860 (2009), and it urges the international community to address the plight of the Palestinian people with a human-rights-based approach, rather than a humanitarian one.

D. Advocacy and outreach with the international community and civil society

108. The Committee calls upon regional organizations, in particular LAS, the European Union, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and OIC to take a politically active role in stopping the annexation and facilitating an end to the occupation and a just solution to the question of Palestine. Any comprehensive resolution will require a regional approach, such as the approach set out in the Arab Peace Initiative.

109. The Committee fully supports the ongoing efforts by Algeria, Egypt and other Member States, as well as the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, to promote calm and a just and lasting peace to the question of Palestine. The Committee commends the Government of Algeria for its efforts in promoting Palestinian unity and welcomes the Algiers Declaration of 13 October 2022 as a crucial step towards intra-Palestinian reconciliation and the establishment of a unified Palestinian leadership. In addition, the Committee encourages the organization of elections to strengthen democracy and democratic institutions in the State of Palestine and the Palestinian administration.

110. The Committee further welcomes the recommendations made in the report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel, which was presented to the Human Rights Council on 8 June. The Committee urges Member States to carefully review the use by Israel of anti-terror legislation to designate Palestinian civil society organizations as terrorist organizations and restrict their funding, with a view to delegitimizing and isolating them, undermining their activities and ending international funding and support for them.

E. Action by Member States and regional organizations

111. The Committee calls on Member States and regional organizations to put pressure upon Israel, the occupying Power, to fulfil its responsibilities to safeguard Palestinian civilians under international law and to engage in a meaningful process of negotiations leading to the establishment of an independent and viable State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital, living in peace and security within internationally recognized borders.

112. The Committee deems unilateral decisions taken by Member States to recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and the transfer of embassies from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem as null and void, as those actions violate Security Council resolutions, including resolutions 476 (1980), 478 (1980) and 2334 (2016). The Committee welcomes decisions taken by Member States to rescind their recognition of West Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and rejoin the international consensus in that regard, and it calls on other Member States to rescind similar decisions.

113. The Committee welcomes the update issued on 30 June by OHCHR to the database of business enterprises involved in certain activities relating to settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

114. The Committee notes the alarming financial shortfall facing UNRWA and reiterates the call by the Secretary-General for Member States to provide the Agency with predictable, sustained and sufficient funding to assist Palestine refugees. The Committee notes that a further decline in the Agency's financial situation and interruption of its indispensable operations could have significant humanitarian, political and security consequences for the region and beyond.

115. The Committee urges Member States to officially recognize the State of Palestine in order to promote the two-State solution. The Committee calls on Member States to support the fiscal stability of the Palestinian Government and strengthen Palestinian institutions, in order to improve the economic and social conditions of the population in the State of Palestine. The Committee notes that efforts by the parties and the international community to stabilize and improve conditions on the ground should be linked to a credible political framework to resolve the conflict justly and comprehensively.

116. The Committee will continue to encourage all supporters of the two-State solution to assist with the resumption of meaningful multilateral negotiations towards the achievement of a peaceful settlement on the basis of the long-standing international parameters for a just solution. The Committee vows to continuing advocating for initiatives in support of that goal, including holding an international peace conference leading to a two-State solution.

F. Action by the Secretariat and other United Nations entities

117. The Committee conveys its gratitude to the Division for Palestinian Rights of the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs for its support for the Committee's work. It requests the Division to continue to provide substantive and secretariat support for all aspects of its mandate. The Committee encourages the Division to continue to disseminate information on the question of Palestine by broadening its outreach and promoting multilingualism on the Committee's website and social media platforms. It also requests the Division to continue to implement projects, including capacity-building for officials of the State of Palestine, that promote inclusivity and gender balance and encourage South-South and triangular cooperation between countries and regional and subregional organizations.

118. The Committee requests the continuation of the special information programme on the question of Palestine of the Department of Global Communications, which has made an important contribution to informing the media and the public.





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Question of Palestine

Economic costs of the Israeli occupation for the Palestinian people

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the General Assembly the report prepared by the secretariat of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development on the economic costs of the Israeli occupation for the Palestinian people, in accordance with Assembly resolution 69/20.

* [A/71/150](#).



**Report prepared by the secretariat of the United Nations
Conference on Trade and Development on the economic costs of
the Israeli occupation for the Palestinian people***

Summary

Throughout history, colonization and occupations have always had economic dimensions. This is also the case in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, where the occupation imposes heavy economic costs on the Palestinian people and their economy. The estimation of these costs is an essential first step for reversing the damage caused by the occupation, achieving the Sustainable Development Goals in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and forging a just and lasting peace in the Middle East. However, not all losses inflicted by the occupation can be evaluated in monetary terms, and no estimation of the cost of the occupation should be used for advocating monetary compensation as a substitute for ending the occupation. In the previous century, there were several international legal precedents where economic costs had been taken into account as key elements for negotiating durable solutions to intractable conflicts. Previous studies have suggested that the Palestinian economy could be twice its current size, had the occupation not occurred. There is a need to establish within the United Nations system a systematic, evidence-based, comprehensive and sustainable framework for estimating the economic costs of the occupation and to report on the results to the General Assembly, not only to fulfil the request contained in resolution 69/20, but also to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

* Any designations employed and the presentation of the material in the present document do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the Secretariat of the United Nations concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area, or of its authorities, or concerning the delineation of its frontiers or boundaries. In accordance with the relevant resolutions and decisions of the General Assembly and the Security Council, references to the Occupied Palestinian Territory or territories pertain to the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. Use of the term "Palestine" refers to the Palestine Liberation Organization, which established the Palestinian National Authority. References to the "State of Palestine" are consistent with the decision of the General Assembly, in its resolution 67/19.

Contents

	<i>Page</i>
I. Objective	4
II. From a thriving economy to a deformed economic structure	5
A. Some perspective on the economics of occupation	5
B. Deformed economic structure with low productivity	6
III. Conceptual basis for the economic costs of occupation	9
IV. Legal framework: historical precedents	10
V. Some earlier estimates of the economic costs of the occupation	11
VI. Typology of losses and methodology	16
A. Concept of losses and their typology	16
B. Methodology, periodicity and data	17
VII. Institutional set-up, implementation and outputs	18
A. Institutional set-up and implementation	18
B. Outputs and activities	18
VIII. Conclusion and recommendations	20

I. Objective

1. Almost half a century of Israeli occupation of the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem (Occupied Palestinian Territory), has established and continues to reinforce an asymmetrical power relationship between Israel and Palestine. On the one hand, the Palestinian people are denied access to their own land, water and natural resources, while their property and assets are being confiscated or destroyed. On the other hand, Israeli settlements continue to expand and new ones are built, the settler population continues to grow and the detrimental consequences of the occupation are now engrained in the daily lives of the Palestinian population under occupation. Forty-eight years of policies and measures, imposed by the occupying authority, have set the Palestinian economy on a debilitating path of dependence and inflicted on the Palestinian people enormous direct and indirect costs.

2. On 25 November 2014, the General Assembly adopted resolution 69/20. In paragraph 9 of the resolution, the Assembly requested the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) to report to the Assembly on the economic costs of the Israeli occupation for the Palestinian people. On 24 November 2015, the Assembly, in paragraph 9 of its resolution 70/12, noted with appreciation the efforts of UNCTAD to compile the report and called for the exertion of all efforts for the provision of necessary resources to expedite the completion of the report.

3. From the outset, it must be stated that any estimation of the economic costs of the occupation is not to be, and should not be, considered a substitute for ending it. Moreover, not all occupation-related damages can be measured in monetary terms. No monetary value can be attached to the agony of the loss and destruction of life, livelihood, liberty, community, shelter, culture and homeland. It must be made clear that the assessment of the economic costs of the occupation is, at best, a partial measure of the losses and costs incurred owing to the occupation and an essential first step towards reversing its damaging impact, achieving the Sustainable Development Goals in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and ultimately ending the occupation.

4. Determining the economic costs of the occupation is a dynamic process that changes and evolves with the intensity of actions taken by the occupying authority. No single document is capable of reporting comprehensively on the historical, ongoing and future economic costs of the occupation. Therefore, the objective of the present report is to make the case for establishing within the United Nations system a sustainable and comprehensive framework to systematically, rigorously and periodically report to the General Assembly on the economic costs of the occupation for the Palestinian people, until the cessation of the occupation. Accordingly, the report highlights historical precedents for similar situations, reviews some of the previous work done in this area, elaborates on the degree of complexity and scope of the proposed framework and reporting structure, reflects on how the assessment could be accomplished and evaluates the resources required for UNCTAD to establish the framework and report to the Assembly.

II. From a thriving economy to a deformed economic structure

5. The economy of the Occupied Palestinian Territory was a viable and thriving one before the occupation in June 1967. It generated significant production and income that sustained a growing population of 1 million people and generated a gross domestic product (GDP) per capita of about \$1,349 in 2004 prices,¹ which was sufficient for it to be considered a lower-middle-income economy at that time. Tragically, it has become a land on the verge of economic and humanitarian collapse.

6. In 2014, the GDP growth rate in the Occupied Palestinian Territory turned negative, for the first time since 2006. The Gaza Strip is becoming increasingly unliveable and could become totally unliveable by 2020 (see [TD/B/62/3](#)). According to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, the unemployment rate in Gaza was 45 per cent in 2014, with over 63 per cent of Gaza's young people unemployed, which is the highest rate in the world. Female unemployment in the Occupied Palestinian Territory was around 40 per cent and more than 60 per cent in Gaza. Nearly 40 per cent of Palestinians live below the poverty line. Clean water is a rarity, with at least 90 per cent of Gaza's water supply unfit for human consumption. Electricity in Gaza is also sporadic and unreliable, available only four to six hours a day, and a properly functioning sewage treatment system no longer exists.²

A. Some perspective on the economics of occupation

7. Throughout history, colonization and military occupations have consistently had economic objectives, which take various shapes and forms but have typically involved the exploitation and the impoverishment of the occupied (see [A/70/35](#), annex). In its less severe form, the occupier changes the economic balance in the occupied country in its favour and in favour of the settler population. In its most severe form, the economic dimension entails the appropriation of the resources of the occupied people, displacing, replacing, impoverishing and marginalizing them.

8. The economic dimension of occupation could be described as acts and measures taken by the occupier to appropriate to itself the assets, natural resources and economic benefits that rightfully belong to the colonized people and country and undermine the capacity of the occupied people to access and use their resources, move freely within their homeland and conduct normal trade, economic and social transactions with neighbours and traditional trading partners.

9. Such measures deprive the people under occupation of not only their freedom, land and resources, but also their internationally recognized human right to development and the ability to produce, which thus forces them to consume products mainly produced by the occupier. Denying the current generation of occupied people their right to development also denies future generations their rights to work, education, safe water and food security, as well as other basic economic and human rights.

¹ See L. Farsakh, "Palestinian employment in Israel 1967-1997: a review", Palestinian Economic Policy Research Institute (August 1998), tables 2 and 5.

² See S. Roy, "The Gaza Strip's last safety net is in danger", *The Nation*, 6 August 2015.

10. In the Palestinian case, since the onset of the occupation in June 1967, Israel assumed total control of the Occupied Palestinian Territory's economy until the establishment of the Palestinian National Authority in 1994. However, the Palestinian people have never enjoyed full, sovereign control over their economy and society, for many reasons. The principal factors are set out in the following paragraphs.

11. The decisive factor is that the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, remain under occupation, under the following conditions: tight restrictions on the movement of people and goods, the systematic erosion and destruction of the productive base, loss of land, water and other natural resources, a fragmented domestic market and separation from neighbouring and international markets, the tight blockade on Gaza since 2007, the expansion of Israeli settlements, the construction of the separation barrier and the establishment of the closure policy in the West Bank and the isolation of East Jerusalem from the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

12. The second factor is the Paris Protocol on Economic Relations, which was intended to define the Palestinian economic policy framework and space during the five-year interim period following the establishment of the Palestinian National Authority in 1994. Two decades on, and to date, the Protocol continues to restrict the policy space available to Palestinian policymakers and has practically reinforced a quasi-customs union that ensures Palestinian economic dependence on Israel.

B. Deformed economic structure with low productivity

13. The relationship between the Israeli economy and that of the Occupied Palestinian Territory remains that of two dissimilar and unequal economies, whereby the large, dominant economy practices policies that keep the small economy weak and dependent. The Palestinian labour market best epitomizes the dynamics of the relationship. Immediately following the 1967 occupation, low-skill employment of Palestinians in Israel became the most important factor in the relationship between the two economies. In addition, the income from the export of Palestinian labour to Israel, which could have been channelled into productive investment in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, became instead a major source of the financing of imports from Israel, deepening the dependence of the Occupied Palestinian Territory on Israel and solidifying the system of benefits to the occupier from the captive Palestinian economy.

14. The impact of the labour flows had two consequences. On the supply side, they induced higher wages in the domestic economy that did not arise from any increase in domestic productivity. That increased the cost of production, reduced the profitability of local production and precipitated a contraction in domestic agricultural and industrial production. On the demand side, the increase in income from the earnings of workers in Israel increased aggregate demand without an increase in production. That increase in demand for tradable goods was met by an increase in imports, and the increase in demand for non-tradable goods was met by an increase in prices.

15. This "Dutch disease" type of change in relative prices ultimately contributed to a contraction in the tradable goods sectors (agriculture and industry) and stimulated the non-tradable sectors (construction and services). It set in motion a

continuous process of de-agriculturalization and de-industrialization,³ thus depriving the Palestinian people of their ability to produce and, in the process, cultivating a dependence on the Israeli economy and donor aid. Figure 1 shows the structural deformation of the economy of the Occupied Palestinian Territory over the past four decades. During the period 1975-2014, the contribution of the tradable goods sector to GDP dropped by half, from 37 to 18 per cent, while its contribution to employment decreased from 47 to 23 per cent.

16. Another explanation for the ongoing de-agriculturalization and de-industrialization processes in the Occupied Palestinian Territory is those sectors' particular vulnerability to the confiscation of Palestinian land and natural resources and the excessive Israeli restrictions on the movement of Palestinian goods and labour. Since the onset of the occupation in 1967, the Palestinian people have lost access to more than 60 per cent of West Bank land and two thirds of its grazing land. In Gaza, half of the cultivable area and 85 per cent of fishery resources are inaccessible to Palestinian producers. Furthermore, Israel has been extracting water above the level determined by article 40 of appendix 1 to annex III to the Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip of 28 September 1995 by confiscating 82 per cent of Palestinian groundwater for use inside its borders or its settlements, while the Palestinians are left with no choice but to import from Israel over 50 per cent of the water needed for consumption.⁴ The World Bank has observed that only 35 per cent of irrigable Palestinian land is actually irrigated, which costs the economy 110,000 jobs and 10 per cent of GDP.⁵

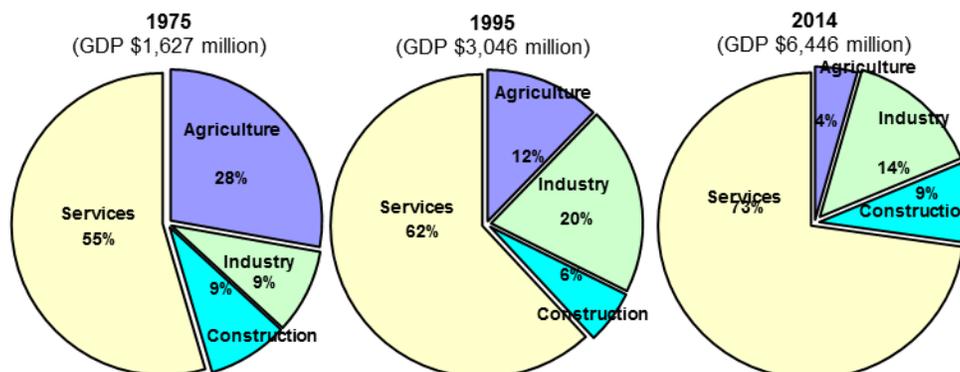
³ See W. M. Corden and J. P. Neary, "Booming sector and de-industrialization in a small open economy", *Economic Journal*, vol. 92, pp. 825-848, December 1982, and UNCTAD, "Rebuilding the Palestinian tradable goods sector: towards economic recovery and State formation", document UNCTAD/GDS/APP/2010/1.

⁴ UNCTAD, "The besieged Palestinian agriculture", document UNCTAD/GDS/APP/2015/1.

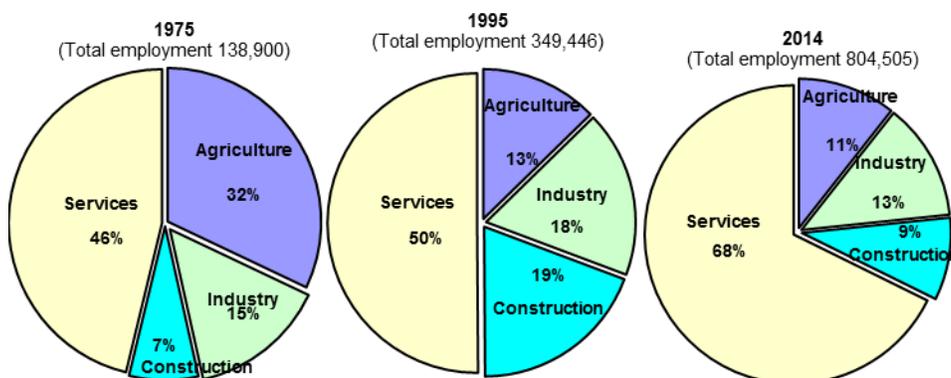
⁵ World Bank, "Assessment of restrictions on Palestinian water sector development" (Washington, D.C., April 2009).

Figure 1
Structural deformation of the economy of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, 1975-2014

Sectoral share of the economy by factor cost in real GDP (2004 base year)



Sectoral share of total employment



Source: UNCTAD database, compiled on the basis of data from the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics.

17. In the industrial sector, the occupation and the uncertainty it breeds stifles investment and condemns the Palestinian private sector to small-scale operations with low capital intensity and low efficiency. The World Bank indicated that micro and small enterprises dominate the Palestinian business scene, with 90 per cent of firms employing less than 20 workers.⁶ The small size of firms is correlated with low capital intensity and low labour productivity, with labour productivity in small firms at \$10,000, which is only one third of that of large firms. According to the International Monetary Fund, during the period 1994-2010, the economy of the Occupied Palestinian Territory experienced a technological regression, with a 0.5 per cent annual decline in total factor productivity. Had the trend of growth of the previous period continued, real GDP per capita in the Occupied Palestinian Territory would have been 88 per cent higher than its level in 2010. In the period 2013-2015,

⁶ World Bank, "West Bank and Gaza investment climate assessment: fragmentation and uncertainty" (Washington, D.C., September 2014).

the industrial sector witnessed further deterioration, as indicated by a 9 per cent drop in the industrial production index of the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics.⁷

18. According to data released by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, in the past two decades, most of the Palestinian economic indicators have deteriorated, with serious ramifications for the welfare of the Palestinian people. Table 1 shows that, during the period 1995-2014, the population grew by 3.6 per cent annually, while real GDP per capita grew by only 1 per cent. Average productivity failed to grow, and unemployment increased by 9 percentage points, to 27 per cent. The trade deficit, at 40 per cent of GDP, continued to be extremely high, while economic dependence on Israel increased, as reflected in Israel's greater share in the Palestinian trade deficit, which increased from 49 to 58 per cent during that period. Efforts by the Government of Palestine to reduce expenditure and undertake serious fiscal reforms notwithstanding, the budget deficit has not improved in the past 20 years. Reliance on donor support continues to be heavy, as reflected by the high level of current transfers, which today hover around 10 per cent of GDP.

Table 1
Long-term changes in the economy of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, 1995-2014

	<i>Real GDP per capita (2004 dollars)</i>	<i>Population^a (millions)</i>	<i>Real average productivity (dollars)</i>	<i>Unemployment rate (percentage)</i>	<i>Trade deficit (percentage of GDP)</i>	<i>Trade deficit with Israel (percentage in trade deficit)</i>	<i>Budget deficit (percentage of GDP)</i>	<i>Net current transfers (percentage of GDP)</i>
1995	1 435	2.34	7 914	18.2	-57.2	49.1	-12.1	12.2
2014	1 737	4.55	8 123	26.9	-39.6	58.0	-12.5	9.4
Average annual change (percentage)	1.0	3.6	0.1					
Period change (percentage)				8.7	17.6	8.9	-0.4	-2.8

^a Except for population, all figures exclude East Jerusalem, owing to the fact that the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics has no access to the city.

III. Conceptual basis for the economic costs of occupation

19. As early as the 1940s, contributions were made in the academic literature in the field of economics with regard to the valuation of the cost of societal and individual losses resulting from external injuries.⁸ Those contributions pivot around the compensation principle, which is based on the understanding that, if a change in a situation would result in some persons being better off and others worse off, those who gain could compensate those who lose in such a way that, on balance, everyone would be better off. This conception of economic loss of injuries (compensation) also assumes that societal welfare losses are the sum of individual losses owing to

⁷ Oussama Kanaan et al, "Macroeconomic and fiscal framework for the West Bank and Gaza", report prepared for the meeting of the International Monetary Fund Ad Hoc Liaison Committee, Brussels, April 2011.

⁸ See J. R. Hicks, *A Revision of Demand Theory* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1951) and D. W. Winch, *Analytical Welfare Economics* (Baltimore, Penguin, 1971).

the loss of private goods, in addition to the societal losses of public goods (those goods of which one individual's consumption does not diminish their availability to other members of society).

20. Economic loss owing to, or in compensation for, external injuries is synonymous with indemnification in the legal meaning of the undoing of damage done and losses suffered. Total indemnification means, in essence, a return to the situation that existed before the loss was incurred. If it is done by way of restitution, the prior situation is restored *in specie*. If it is done wholly or partially by way of compensation, the consequences of the damage are liquidated, although the prior situation is not restored in the true sense of the word.⁹

21. In economic theory, there are three approaches for ascertaining the cost for those who suffer damages and losses as a consequence of actions by other parties. The first approach, the income approach, is widely used, in particular by courts around the world, to measure the losses of injured parties solely on the basis of the income streams that would have prevailed in the absence of the injury as compared with the existing streams. The second, the asset approach, builds on the income approach by adding the missed opportunities to the income streams lost owing to the injury. The third, the utility approach, is more general because it allows for the inclusion of a wider range of losses and admits individual variations in responses to and consequences of injuries.

22. In general, a more comprehensive approach anchored in the asset and utility approaches would more aptly account for the range of losses than would the income approach. However, the exact approach and the degree to which the asset and utility approaches are combined should depend on the type and specific characteristics of loss and the economic sector in which the loss occurred.

IV. Legal framework: historical precedents

23. The United Nations Fact-Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict, which was established by the President of the Human Rights Council on 3 April 2009, concluded in its report to the General Assembly ([A/HRC/12/48](#)) that Israel's continuing occupation emerged as the fundamental factor underlying violations of international law and undermining prospects for development and peace.

24. In its note on the economic costs of the Israeli occupation for the Palestinian people, contained in the annex to the Report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People ([A/70/35](#)), UNCTAD detailed some relevant precedents where economic costs had been taken into account as key elements for negotiating durable solutions to complex and intractable conflicts. The precedents included:

(a) Decision by the Permanent Court of International Justice of 1928 in the landmark case concerning the factory at Chorzów;¹⁰

⁹ See N. Robinson, *Indemnification and Reparations: Jewish Aspects* (New York, International Press, 1944).

¹⁰ *Case concerning the Factory at Chorzów (Claim for Indemnity) (Merits) (Germany v. Poland)*, *Publications of the Permanent Court of International Justice, Collection of Judgments, Series A, No. 17*, case No. 13

(b) General Assembly resolution 194 (III) on the refugee question and compensation;

(c) Pinheiro Principles on the refugees and reparation payments in the post-Cold War era;¹¹

(d) Advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the legal consequences of the construction of a wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.¹²

V. Some earlier estimates of the economic costs of the occupation

25. It follows from the previous discussion that there are costs borne by the people under occupation and costs related to the damage caused by the actions of the occupying authority (see [A/AC.25/W.81/Rev.2](#), annexes I and II, and General Assembly resolution 194 (III)). The structural deformation of the economy, discussed in section II above, is just one element of those costs for the Palestinian people. A comprehensive assessment of the economic costs of the occupation requires the undertaking of a complicated, detailed and integrated process capable of estimating the direct and indirect economic costs in all economic sectors. To date, however, no systematic assessment or comprehensive records have been made of the economic costs and consequences of Israeli policies, actions and measures in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Thus far, all efforts made to quantify the economic costs of the occupation have been done on ad hoc basis, mostly by UNCTAD. The literature on the subject includes the case studies described in the following paragraphs.

26. In its report on UNCTAD assistance to the Palestinian people: developments in the economy of the Occupied Palestinian Territory ([TD/B/62/3](#)), UNCTAD indicated that, in 2014, 9,333 productive trees were destroyed or vandalized in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, whereas, in January 2015 alone, another 5,600 trees were vandalized. Furthermore, the direct damages of the three Israeli military operations in Gaza, in the period between 2008 and 2014, were at least 3 times the amount of Gaza's GDP. The total cost of destruction is much higher when taking into account the indirect costs that arise from the loss of human capital and the stream of future incomes from destroyed or damaged productive assets.

¹¹ See the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court of 17 July 1998 ([A/CONF.183/9](#)); the Principles on Housing and Property Restitution for Refugees and Displaced Persons, June 2005; and Basic Principles and Guidelines on the Right to a Remedy and Reparation for Victims of Gross Violations of International Human Rights Law and Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law, General Assembly resolution 60/147 of 16 December 2005.

¹² *Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Advisory Opinion, International Court of Justice Reports 2004*, p. 136.

27. In its study on Palestinian fiscal revenue leakage to Israel under the Paris Protocol on Economic Relations,¹³ UNCTAD estimated Palestinian revenue leakage from taxes on imports and the fiscal loss incurred by smuggling goods from Israel into the Occupied Palestinian Territory at \$305 million annually, about 3.2 per cent of GDP or 17 per cent of total Palestinian public revenue in 2010-2011. If captured, the leaked revenue could expand the Palestinian fiscal policy space and thereby increase annual GDP by about 4 per cent and generate about 10,000 additional jobs per year. Moreover, the study calls for further research to estimate fiscal losses from other sources, including:

(a) Leakage of revenue from taxes levied by Israel on the incomes of Palestinians working in Israel and settlements. Under the Paris Protocol on Economic Relations, Israel is required to transfer social security, and other, tax revenue to the Government of Palestine;

(b) Seigniorage revenue loss from using the Israeli currency in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, estimated to be between 0.3-4.2 per cent of gross national income;

(c) Revenue loss from under-pricing imported goods in invoices, owing to the lack of Palestinian control and oversight over borders and the lack of access to proper trade data;

(d) Revenue loss related to the lack of control over land and natural resources;

(e) Financial resources loss related to goods and services imported through the Palestinian public sector, such as petroleum, energy and water;

(f) Loss of customs revenue as a result of not applying the World Trade Organization rules of origin on goods with less than 40 per cent of Israeli content;

(g) Fiscal loss from the smaller tax base caused by the decimation of the productive base and the loss of natural resources to the occupation.

28. In its report to the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee, the World Bank¹⁴ followed the UNCTAD study and its account of losses by estimating other sources of Palestinian revenue losses. The World Bank suggested a loss of \$285 million (2.2 percent of GDP in 2014) from seven sources in a single year. The overlap between the World Bank and UNCTAD estimates, however, is about \$55 million.¹⁵ After excluding overlapping items, the sum of those estimates suggests an annual loss of 5 per cent of GDP (\$640 million in 2015). The World Bank report further indicated that Israel also retained a stock of \$668 million of un-transferred Palestinian revenues (5.3 per cent of GDP). This is a cumulative, nominal figure, however, which does not take into account the impact of inflation and interest earnings over time.

¹³ UNCTAD, "Palestinian fiscal revenue leakage to Israel under the Protocol on Economic Relations", document UNCTAD/GDS/APP/2013/1.

¹⁴ World Bank, "Economic monitoring report to the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee", 19 April 2016.

¹⁵ The \$55 million of overlapping losses is the sum of \$24.4 million estimated by UNCTAD from loss of value added tax on imports (see UNCTAD, "Palestinian fiscal revenue leakage to Israel under the Protocol on Economic Relations", document UNCTAD/GDS/APP/2013/1, table 7) and \$30.6 million described by the World Bank as losses from taxes on direct imports (see World Bank, "Economic monitoring report to the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee", 19 April 2016, table 2).

29. UNCTAD has been assessing different aspects of the economic and employment costs incurred by the Palestinians on account of the Israeli occupation. It is estimated that:

(a) From 2000-2005, cumulative GDP loss was \$8.4 billion (real 1994 dollars), twice the size of the Palestinian economy;

(b) By 2005, at least one third of the pre-2000 physical capital of the Occupied Palestinian Territory had been lost;

(c) Losses caused by the Israeli military campaign in Gaza from December 2008 to January 2009 were half the size of the economy of the Occupied Palestinian Territory (\$4 billion, real 2004 dollars);

(d) More than 2.5 million productive trees, including 800,000 olive trees, have been uprooted since 1967;

(e) Only 35 per cent of the potentially irrigable land in the Occupied Palestinian Territory is actually irrigated. This costs the economy 110,000 jobs per year and 10 per cent of GDP;

(f) At least 10 per cent of the most fertile land of the West Bank has been lost to the construction of the separation barrier;

(g) The Government of Palestine and Palestinian farmers are prohibited from maintaining, upgrading or constructing water wells;

(h) Fishing off the coast of Gaza is restricted to a range of 3 to 6 nautical miles, instead of the 20 miles stipulated in article XI of annex I to the Agreement on the Gaza Strip and the Jericho Area of 4 May 1994.

30. UNCTAD has assessed the cost of the shrunken economic policy space owing to the occupation and the Paris Protocol on Economic Relations.¹⁶ The study used the UNCTAD econometric model of the Palestinian economy to simulate the prospects of the economy under various policy options. It assessed the impact of an integrated policy alternative that includes features of expanded fiscal, exchange rate, trade and labour policies. The study showed that if a sovereign State of Palestine were empowered with the relevant policy instruments, annual GDP could increase by 24 per cent and unemployment could drop by 19 per cent (see figs. 2 and 3).

¹⁶ UNCTAD, "Policy alternatives for sustained Palestinian development and State formation", document UNCTAD/GDS/APP/2008/1.

Figure 2
**Impact of policy space on GDP
 per capita**

(in 1997 dollars)

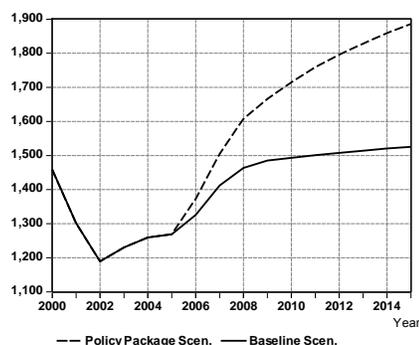
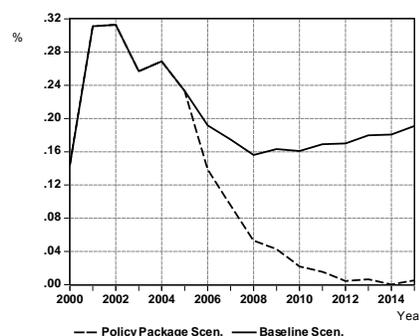


Figure 3
**Impact of policy space on
 unemployment rate**

(percentage)



31. In its study, the World Bank provided partial estimates of the costs of the occupation in Area C (61 per cent of the West Bank) in the following sectors: agriculture, Dead Sea minerals exploitation, stone mining and quarrying, construction, tourism, telecommunications and cosmetics.¹⁷ The study estimated the costs of the occupation in Area C at 23 per cent of GDP (\$2.9 billion in 2015) in direct costs, in addition to 12 per cent of GDP (\$1.5 billion in 2015) in indirect costs, for a total cost of 35 per cent of GDP. Furthermore, the fiscal cost of the occupation in Area C was estimated at \$800 million in lost revenue, equivalent to 50 per cent of the Palestinian fiscal deficit. The study also contended that Palestinian employment could rise by 35 per cent if the occupation of Area C were ended.

32. Another recent study by the World Bank, on the Palestinian telecommunications sector, concluded that the total revenue loss for the Palestinian mobile telephone sector during the period 2013-2015 was in the range of \$436 to \$1,150 million, including the Palestinian fiscal loss of \$70 to \$184 million.¹⁸ The direct cost was in the range of 1 per cent of annual GDP.

33. In its resolution ES-10/17 of 24 January 2007, the General Assembly established the United Nations Register of Damage Caused by the Construction of the Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. The main focus of the Register of Damage is on the damage emanating from the construction of the separation barrier in the West Bank, and it does not cover any other measure taken by the occupying Power. Its mandate is to serve only as a record of the damage caused to all natural and legal persons concerned as a result of the construction of the separation barrier by Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including in and around East Jerusalem. As at February 2016, the Register of Damage had completed the claim of damages in seven of nine affected Palestinian governorates. A total of 52,870 claim forms and over 300,000 supporting documents were collected in 233 Palestinian communities, with a population of 946,285. Of the total number of collected claims,

¹⁷ World Bank, "West Bank and Gaza: Area C and the future of the Palestinian economy" (Washington, D.C., October 2013).

¹⁸ World Bank, "Telecommunication sector note in the Palestinian territories: missed opportunity for economic development" (Washington, D.C., 2016).

20,459 have been processed and reviewed by the Board of the Office of the Register of Damage for inclusion in the Register of Damage. The vast majority of the claims were categorized as agricultural losses.

34. The Ministry of National Economy of the State of Palestine and the Applied Research Institute — Jerusalem have estimated the cost of the occupation in 2010 at \$6.9 billion or 85 per cent of GDP.¹⁹ This cost does not include the impact of the Israeli security measures but focuses mainly on the impact of the tight restrictions imposed on the Palestinian people and their lack of ownership and access to their own natural resources, most of which are exploited by Israel. The estimated cost took into account the impact of the following factors: the blockade on Gaza, restrictions on water and natural resources (including natural gas fields), mobility and other restrictions on domestic and international trade and people, loss of Dead Sea tourism, uprooted trees and public utility costs.

35. The Applied Research Institute — Jerusalem assessed the direct cost and forgone revenue from the restrictions imposed by Israel on the mobility of people and goods in the West Bank, as well as the restrictions on access to, and the development of, the natural gas fields, fishery, irrigation water and agricultural sectors.²⁰ The assessment also calculated the direct cost of the destruction of Palestinian infrastructure, house demolitions in the West Bank and the military operation in Gaza in 2014. The study estimated these specific direct costs at 74 per cent of GDP (\$9.95 billion). However, the study covered only the direct cost of some, not all, of the constraints imposed by the occupation and therefore significantly underestimated the total direct and indirect costs.

36. The study conducted by Walid Mustafa focused on the Israeli restrictions on Palestinian activities in order to take advantage of natural resources in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including building stone, sand in the Gaza Strip, phosphate and mineral resources in the Dead Sea, petroleum and natural gas.²¹ The Israeli expropriation of building stone in Area C was estimated at about \$900 million annually (0.7 per cent of 2015 GDP). The study maintained that Israel had seized Gaza's sea basin and had denied Palestinians the right to explore for and develop oil and gas resources in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

37. Following General Assembly resolution 194 (III), in which the Assembly stipulated refugees' right to return and compensation, Atif A. Kubursi conducted a study on Palestinian losses in 1948 and elaborated on the rights of refugees in terms of restitution of property and compensation for lost opportunity from property and human capital losses.²² The study indicated that, from 1948 to 2000, the cumulative material and human capital losses suffered by Palestinian refugees stood at \$173 billion and \$275 billion, respectively, in 2000 prices.

¹⁹ Ministry of National Economy of the State of Palestine and the Applied Research Institute — Jerusalem, "The economic costs of the Israeli occupation for the Occupied Palestinian Territory", September 2011. Available from www.un.org/depts/dpa/qpal/docs/2012Cairo/p2%20jad%20isaac%20e.pdf.

²⁰ Applied Research Institute — Jerusalem, "The economic cost of the Israeli occupation of the occupied Palestinian territories", 2015.

²¹ Walid Mustafa, *Palestine's Natural Resources: Potential and Limitations on Exploitation* (Jerusalem and Ramallah, Palestine Economic Policy Research Institute, 2016). Available from <http://mas.ps/files/server/20162404092052-1.pdf> (accessed 5 August 2016).

²² Atif A. Kubursi, "Palestinian losses in 1948: calculating refugee compensation", information brief prepared for the Center for Policy Analysis on Palestine, 3 August 2001.

VI. Typology of losses and methodology

A. Concept of losses and their typology

38. As indicated in section I above, not all of the occupation-related costs can be measured in monetary terms, and any assessment of the economic costs of the occupation for the Palestinian people is, at best, a partial measurement of the losses and costs incurred since the onset of the occupation. However, the first step towards evaluating the economic costs of the occupation that can be measured monetarily is to identify their type.

39. The typology of the costs incurred by the Palestinian people under the occupation that follow from the “de-development” policies and measures imposed by the occupying authority on the Palestinian economy calls for identifying, monitoring and measuring such losses in a systematic and periodic manner. This includes, but is not restricted to, the following types of losses:

- (a) Physical;
- (b) Water and other natural resources;
- (c) Human capital;
- (d) Opportunity and economic;
- (e) Microeconomic, macroeconomic and fiscal;
- (f) Community and neighbourhood;
- (g) Psychosocial.

40. The identification and quantification of each of those losses is the critical core of the methodology of metering the economic costs of the occupation. For each type of loss, the conceptual question is to determine: (a) the actions taken by the occupying Power that could be considered harmful to the Palestinian economy and people; and (b) the appropriate monetary value of the cost that could be assigned to each action taken by the occupying Power. Arriving at a tenable answer is necessarily complicated and multidimensional, requiring expertise in economics, law, history and politics.

41. Preliminary assessment suggests that the methodologies for evaluating the economic costs of the occupation should depend on the specificity of the type of loss under consideration and the economic sector in which it occurred. Therefore, to avoid double counting and link each type of loss to the economic base from which it arises, each type of loss would be assessed by sector and type of asset. Any additional costs arising from the utility approach could be added to the list without duplication. The best way to portray the essence of this approach is through the matrix format shown in table 2.

42. Upon determining the type of losses, questions arise with regard to: (a) how these losses can be measured and what is the appropriate methodology required to do so; (b) how these losses span across the different sectors of the economy; and (c) the extent to which the overlapping types of losses and classification of losses by sector influence the methodology of quantifying these costs of the occupation.

Table 2
Matrix of the economic costs of the occupation by type of loss and economic sector

<i>Sector</i>	<i>Type of loss</i>						
	<i>Physical</i>	<i>Water and natural resources</i>	<i>Human capital</i>	<i>Opportunity and economic</i>	<i>Micro- and macroeconomic and fiscal</i>	<i>Neighbourhood and community</i>	<i>Psychosocial</i>
Agriculture							
Mining							
Manufacturing							
Construction							
Trade and Services							

B. Methodology, periodicity and data

43. A comprehensive evaluation of the economic costs of the occupation requires detailed and interrelated methodologies capable of estimating the direct and indirect economic costs of all types of losses in all sectors of the economy. The overall methodology should ensure consistency of evaluation, on the basis of best practices and sound theories, and should be:

(a) Concise, so that it may be treated as a stand-alone document. It should be comprehensible, in particular to those involved in policymaking and negotiation;

(b) Flexible. The methodology must be kept under regular review and should be amended as and when necessary;

(c) Consistent, rather than subtle and arbitrary. The methodology should allow easy processing, consistency and accuracy of the valuation work by relying on generally accepted valuation principles and international valuation standards;

(d) Able to be audited and verified. The methodology should rely, as much as possible, on reliable historical evidence from past assessments in order to minimize areas of subjective judgment applied in the valuation and thus take into account the difficulty of obtaining new evidence and records.

44. Although there are a number of specific methodologies that could be applied to the estimation of the economic costs of the occupation, they could be grouped into two general approaches, a macro (or top-down) approach and an accounting (or bottom-up) approach. Each approach has its own positive and negative aspects, and its use should depend on the type of loss and the sector within which the loss occurs, as well as the availability of data and resources needed for the application of the chosen approach. With this in mind, it seems that a social accounting matrix (macro/top-down) approach is more appropriate for assessing the economic costs of the occupation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, given the multiplicity of sectors, types of losses and groups affected. Nevertheless, for a small number of losses, the accounting approach will have to be considered. Therefore, the methodology can be a mix of more than one approach, depending on the type of loss and the economic sector.

45. In general, there is no shortage of methodologies but there may be shortage of data. Prior to undertaking the full assessment exercise, exploration of the availability of data and the possibility of accessing and generating new data should take place. This will require additional resources and close cooperation with the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, which should be one of the main national partners in this exercise.

46. As for the periodicity and frequency of the evaluation exercise, it is envisaged that an annual report will be submitted to the General Assembly, on an ongoing basis. Any new costs emanating from the continuation of the occupation and the recent damaging measures will be included in the report under a separate heading. In addition to this annual report, 8 to 10 analytical studies should be conducted to build an inventory of the losses, which should be connected to earlier evaluations of the historical cost of the occupation since 1967. A summary of these analytical studies should be submitted to the Assembly in the context of the first three to four annual reports.

VII. Institutional set-up, implementation and outputs

A. Institutional set-up and implementation

47. In the light of UNCTAD's existing mandate, its proven expertise on the Palestinian economy and its capacity to convene and coordinate the work of several bodies within the United Nations system, the General Assembly, in its resolution 69/20, requested UNCTAD to report on the economic costs of the occupation for the Palestinian people.

48. With a view to facilitating future negotiations for a just, lasting, peaceful settlement of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, UNCTAD is in a technical position to establish within the United Nations system a framework to estimate the historical and recurrent economic costs of the occupation in a systematic, comprehensive, scientific and evidence-based way on regular basis, and will report, document, update and keep an inventory of historical and new actions taken by the occupying Power, specifically those which have a damaging economic impact on the Palestinian people, their livelihoods and their immediate and future ability to maintain a viable and efficient economy.

B. Outputs and activities

49. The establishment of the framework for estimating the economic costs of the occupation would involve substantial additional work, including defining the conceptual dimension of the economic costs of the occupation within the United Nations framework, proposing and identifying relevant methodologies, developing models and calibrating, evaluating and maintaining them, developing databases and compiling data annually, updating and assessing the ongoing and historical economic costs of the occupation and regularly reporting to the General Assembly on such matters. This will require a mix of both regular budget and extrabudgetary resources.

50. It is expected that the evaluation exercise and building an inventory of the ongoing and historical economic costs of the occupation may take about four years (two bienniums) of work. This would include producing three annual reports to the General Assembly, beginning with the second year of implementation. The quantification of the historical economic costs of the occupation would require two to four studies focusing on issues related to methodology, data, legal precedents and opinions and other pertinent issues. In addition, six to eight studies should be conducted, each of dedicated to a specific type of loss.

51. Table 3 lists the expected outputs and activities for the implementation of the exercise, for the first four years of the task of estimating and reporting the economic costs of the occupation.

Table 3
Four-year plan of outputs and activities for the evaluation of the economic costs of the occupation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory

	<i>Year 1</i>	<i>Year 2</i>	<i>Year 3</i>	<i>Year 4</i>
Outputs				
Annual report to the General Assembly		Report	Report	Report
Background studies on legal precedents, data and methodology	2-4 studies			
Studies on losses by type and sector for the period 1967-2016	1-2 studies	3-4 studies	3-2 studies	1-2 studies
Activities				
Identifying the concept of the economic costs of the occupation and methodologies	Yes			
Fieldwork and data and information collection	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Development of quantitative and econometric models	2-4 models			
Estimation and calibration of models	2-4 models	2-4 models	2-4 models	2-4 models
Estimation of the economic costs of the occupation by sector and type of loss	All sectors and types			
Expert group meeting	2 meetings	2 meetings	1-2 meetings	1 meeting

VIII. Conclusions and recommendations

52. The present report does not report on the qualitative or quantitative aspects of the economic costs of the occupation for the Palestinian people, rather it underscores to Member States the critical importance of this assignment and the need to equip the international community with an objective understanding and specific measurements of the effects of the occupation on the Palestinian people. An accurate assessment of these costs may also ensure accountability on the part of the occupying authority towards fulfilling its obligations under international law.

53. Furthermore, the examination of the economic costs of the occupation, as well as other obstacles to trade and development in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, is

essential for signifying the magnitude of the losses and the difficulties the Palestinian people have endured and continue to endure under the occupation, identifying policies for placing the Palestinian economy on the path of sustainable development and facilitating future negotiations for a just settlement of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and for a lasting peace in the Middle East.

54. To make an accurate assessment of the damages inflicted by the occupation, a calculation must first be made of the resources and policies required for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and placing the economy on a sustainable development track that safeguards the interests and capacities of the present generation while at the same time expanding the potential of future generations. This would serve as the basis for peace in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, which would be solidified by a thriving, free economy able to meet the present and future needs of its people and protect the fragile environment from further degradation exacerbated by poverty.

55. It should be stressed that the economic costs of the occupation, and any estimation of them, are not and should not be perceived as, nor used for, advocating monetary compensation as a substitute for ending the occupation. Furthermore, not all of the losses, damages and destruction inflicted by the occupation can be evaluated or measured in monetary terms.

56. All previous studies on the economic costs of the occupation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory were performed on ad hoc basis, and not within a single comprehensive framework that could add up the different types of losses and the direct and indirect costs in all economic sectors. They have just scratched the surface of the much larger economic costs of the Israeli occupation for the Palestinian people. Without the occupation, the Palestinian economy could easily produce twice the GDP it currently generates, while the chronic trade and budget deficits, as well as poverty and unemployment, could recede and the economic dependence on Israel could end.

57. There is therefore an urgent need to establish within the United Nations system a systematic, rigorous, evidence-based, comprehensive and sustainable framework:

(a) To take an inventory of, and regularly record and update, the actions taken by the occupying authority, in particular those which continue to inflict damage and economic costs for the Palestinian people and their lives and livelihoods;

(b) To estimate and update the recurrent and new economic costs of such actions in a systematic and evidence-based way and on regular basis;

(c) To report annually to the General Assembly on those costs;

(d) To identify the resources and policies required for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

58. The need for such a framework was recognized by the General Assembly, and, in paragraph 9 of its resolution 69/20, the Assembly requested UNCTAD to report to it on the economic costs of the Israeli occupation for the Palestinian people. The request is a testament to UNCTAD's proven expertise on the Palestinian economy and its constraints and development prospects, as well as to UNCTAD's technical and professional capacity to lead and coordinate the work of other United Nations entities in implementing this important task.

59. UNCTAD is technically well positioned within the United Nations system to assume the responsibilities of the evaluation of the economic costs of the occupation for the Palestinian people. The task cannot be implemented with the resources currently available, however. Additional resources are required for UNCTAD to fulfil the request of the General Assembly. Allocating those additional resources should be done through the appropriate United Nations mechanisms with support from the donor community to secure additional extrabudgetary resources.

60. Member States are invited to consider requesting UNCTAD to take an inventory of, and regularly record, update and estimate the economic costs of the Israeli occupation for the Palestinian people and to report thereon to the General Assembly on an annual basis.



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Question of Palestine

Economic costs of the Israeli occupation for the Palestinian people*

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the General Assembly the report prepared by the secretariat of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development.

* The late submission of the present note is due to a backlog of documents for clearance.



**Report prepared by the secretariat of the United Nations
Conference on Trade and Development on the economic
costs of the Israeli occupation for the Palestinian people**

Summary

This report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolutions [69/20](#), [70/12](#), [71/20](#) and [72/13](#), in which the Assembly requested the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development to assess and report on the economic costs of the Israeli occupation for the Palestinian people.

Contents

	<i>Page</i>
I. Objective, mandate and limitations	4
II. Some indicators of the cost of occupation	4
III. Acts and measures that impose occupation-related cost	5
A. Construction of settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory	5
B. Construction of the “barrier”	6
C. Failure to promote economic development under occupation	7
D. Military operations in the Occupied Palestinian Territory	7
E. Acts affecting economic sectors, natural resources, labour market and social sectors ...	8
IV. Conclusion and recommendations	10

I. Objective, mandate and limitations

1. The present report is submitted in response to General Assembly resolutions [69/20](#), [70/12](#), [71/20](#) and [72/13](#), in which the Assembly requested the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) to assess and report on the economic costs of the Israeli occupation for the Palestinian people.

2. The report follows the report transmitted by the Secretary-General to the General Assembly at its seventy-first session (see [A/71/174](#)), in which UNCTAD emphasized that occupation imposes heavy economic costs on the Palestinian people and stressed the need to evaluate those costs and understand their impact on the prospects for the welfare of the Palestinian people and the economic development in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. UNCTAD recommended the establishment within the United Nations system of a systematic, evidence-based, comprehensive and sustainable framework to estimate the economic costs of occupation and report the results to the General Assembly, not only to fulfil the aforementioned resolutions, but also to achieve a realistic pursuit of the Sustainable Development Goals in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and for forging a just and lasting peace in the Middle East.

3. The report builds on the previous report on this subject by drawing the framework and parameters for examining the economic cost of the Israeli occupation for the Palestinian people, as well as guiding the future work of economists in their implementation of the General Assembly resolutions. It has to be stressed, however, that the detailed work of assessing, estimating and reporting on the historical and recurrent costs of occupation needs to be based on solid objective and scientific grounds, and within the international framework set by the relevant United Nations resolutions. This requires more resources than are currently available, and therefore has not been addressed in this report.

II. Some indicators of the cost of occupation

4. Not all occupation-related costs can be assigned a monetary value. Losses that cannot be assigned a monetary value include, but are not limited to, loss of life, normal family and community life, human dignity and loss of neighbourhood, culture, shelter and homeland. Therefore, the most that any assessment of the costs of occupation can achieve is a partial tally of a much greater loss.

5. The severe security measures and restrictions imposed by Israeli authorities over the years have taken a heavy toll on the Palestinians. Those measures, along with recurring periods of violence and hostilities, unilateral steps and internal Palestinian divisions, have resulted in extensive and systemic damage to the Palestinian economy, including inter alia an erosion of the productive base; the confiscation of land, water and other natural resources; restrictions on the movement of people, labour and goods; obstacles to accessing international markets; more than a decade of closure of the Gaza Strip; and the costly fragmentation of the Palestinian economy into three disjointed, disintegrated regions, in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem.

6. There are significant restrictions on Palestinian development in Area C (more than 60 per cent of the West Bank area and some 10 per cent of its Palestinian population) and more than two thirds of grazing land, and more than 2.5 million productive trees have been destroyed under the occupation since 1967.¹ In 2013 the World Bank estimated that if businesses and farms were permitted to develop in

¹ [TD/B/63/3](#) and [TD/B/63/3/Corr.1](#), para. 42 (d).

Area C, this would add as much as 35 per cent to the Palestinian gross domestic product (GDP).²

7. In the Gaza Strip, the cost of three conflicts between Israel and militant groups in Gaza from 2008 to 2014 is estimated to be at least three times the potential annual GDP of Gaza.³ In addition, restrictions on fishing off the coast of Gaza render 85 per cent of fishery resources inaccessible to Palestinian fishermen, and half of the cultivable area remains unreachable for producers.

8. Partial estimates from 2014 revealed that the Palestinian revenues that leak to the Israeli treasury represent approximately 3.6 per cent of GDP. If captured, these revenues could expand Palestinian fiscal space and increase annual GDP by about 4 per cent and generate 10,000 additional jobs per year.⁴

9. By 2005, at least one third of pre-2000 Palestinian physical capital had been lost. Had the pre-Oslo Accords growth trend continued, Palestinian GDP per capita could have been at least double its current size.⁵ In its report of 2016 to the Trade and Development Board, UNCTAD stated that, without occupation, the economy of the Occupied Palestinian Territory could produce twice the GDP it currently generates.⁶

10. However, as indicated in the UNCTAD report of 2016 to the General Assembly (A/71/174, para. 56), all previous studies on the economic costs of the occupation were not conducted within a single comprehensive framework that could calculate the different types of losses and the direct and indirect costs in all economic sectors. UNCTAD concluded that the previous studies had merely scratched the surface of the much higher economic costs of occupation, and therefore recommended the establishment within the United Nations system of a systematic, evidence-based, comprehensive and sustainable framework for estimating, documenting and reporting the economic costs of the Israeli occupation for the Palestinian people.

III. Acts and measures that impose occupation-related cost

11. There are many acts and measures that could impede economic development in an occupied territory, and therefore could add to the economic cost of the occupation. In this regard, UNCTAD in its report of 2018 to the Trade and Development Board elaborated on how half a century of occupation and appropriation of land and resources has impoverished the Palestinian people.⁷

12. The following sections provide examples of impacts of the Israel occupation. Further studies and research are needed to compile a full list of similar acts and to assess the full negative impact of each act.

A. Construction of settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory

13. The settlements impose economic costs on the Palestinian population. Land is taken for the area of the settlements, thereby depriving Palestinians of the use of the land for productive purposes. Furthermore, large areas of land have been confiscated

² World Bank, "West Bank and Gaza: Area C and the Future of the Palestinian Economy" (Washington, D.C., 2013).

³ TD/B/62/3, para. 38.

⁴ Mahmoud Elkhafif, Misyef Misyef and Mutasim Elagraa, *Palestinian Fiscal Revenue Leakage to Israel under the Paris Protocol on Economic Relations* (New York and Geneva, UNCTAD, 2014).

⁵ UNCTAD, *Policy Alternatives for Sustained Palestinian Development and State Formation* (New York and Geneva, 2009).

⁶ TD/B/63/3 and TD/B/63/3/Corr.1, para. 51.

⁷ TD/B/65(2)/3, para. 8.

to connect the settlements with roads in the territory of Israel. The General Assembly, in its resolution [72/13](#) of 30 November 2017, on the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, drew attention to the alarming findings, as reflected in the recent report on UNCTAD assistance to the Palestinian people: developments in the economy of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, which, among other things, contained information concerning the economic costs of the settlements.⁸

14. According to a recent report of the Secretary-General, “Besides allocating land for the purposes of constructing settlement housing and infrastructure, Israel supports the maintenance and development of settlements through the delivery of public services and the encouragement of economic activities, including agriculture and industry. Population growth in Israeli settlements is stimulated by housing, education and tax benefits. Similar incentives are provided for settlement industries.”⁹ According to Security Council resolutions [446 \(1979\)](#) and [2334 \(2016\)](#), the establishment by Israel of settlements in the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem, has no legal validity and constitutes a flagrant violation under international law.

15. In Addition, goods produced in the settlements compete with Palestinian produced goods, as reflected by the fact that Palestinian imports from Israel were consistently more than 50 per cent of Palestinian total imports.¹⁰

B. Construction of the “barrier”

16. In its advisory opinion on the legal consequences of the construction of a wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, the International Court of Justice indicated that the wall inhibited economic activity in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.¹¹ The construction has caused major disruptions to economic activity and involved the taking of significant tracts of land. It has particularly affected economic activity in the “seam zone”, that is, areas on the western side of the “barrier” within the West Bank. At least 10 per cent of the most fertile land in the West Bank has been lost because of the construction of the “barrier”. Palestinians who live in the seam zone need special permits to access their lands. A special permit or “prior coordination” is required for Palestinian farmers to access farm land designated as “closed” in the seam zone. If they are granted approval, farmers must cross designated gates along the “barrier” or checkpoints in order to reach their land. During the olive harvest of 2017, 76 gates were designated for agricultural access, down from 84 gates the previous year. Limitations on access have therefore forced some permit holders to stop cultivation altogether or shift to rain-fed and low-value crops. The takeover of land by Israel for settlements, for the wall and for related purposes constitutes a cost of occupation for the Palestinian people.

17. The evident and extensive nature of the damage caused by the construction of the wall led the General Assembly in 2006, by its resolution [ES-10/17](#), to establish the United Nations Register of Damage Caused by the Construction of the Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. The only focus of the Register is on the damage emanating from the construction of the wall; it does not cover any other measure taken by the occupying Power. Its mandate is to serve only as a record, in documentary form, of the damage caused to all natural and legal persons concerned

⁸ [TD/B/63/3](#) and [TD/B/63/3/Corr.1](#).

⁹ [A/HRC/34/38](#), para. 17.

¹⁰ UNCTAD calculations based on the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics and Israel Central Bureau of Statistics. See also [TD/B/65\(2\)/3](#), table 1.

¹¹ See [A/ES-10/273](#) and [A/ES-10/273/Corr.1](#), paras. 133, 134, 136 and 152–153.

as a result of the construction of the wall, including in and around East Jerusalem. Damages are grouped into six categories, namely, agriculture (A); commercial (B); residential (C); employment (D); access to services (E); public resources and other (F). The vast majority of claims are categorized as agriculture losses.¹²

C. Failure to promote economic development under occupation

18. If an occupying Power fails to ensure the economic development in the occupied territory over a long period of time, the negative economic consequences can be serious.

19. UNCTAD explains, for example, how the collection of Palestinian trade taxes by Israel negatively affects economic development. In accordance with the Protocol on Economic Relations between the Government of the State of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (Paris Protocol), signed in Paris in 1994, Israel collects value added tax on Palestinian imports from Israel, clears Palestinian imports transiting through Israel's ports, collects customs and value added tax on those imports and transfers (clears) this tax revenue to the State of Palestine, which accounts for about three fourths of Palestinian public revenue; this enables it to exercise undue control over Palestinian fiscal affairs. UNCTAD reports and studies have highlighted the consequences of Israel's recurrent withholding of Palestinian clearance revenue as well as the annual leakage of hundreds of millions of dollars of Palestinian fiscal revenue to Israel because of this clearance mechanism.¹³ The UNCTAD report of 2013 estimates that preventing Palestinian revenue from leaking to Israel would increase total public revenue by 17 per cent, covering 18 per cent of the public wage bill.¹⁴

20. Subsection E below contains further discussion of the failure by the occupying Power to promote economic development in different economic and social sectors in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

D. Military operations in the Occupied Palestinian Territory

21. Between 2008 and 2014, Gaza witnessed three major conflicts with Israel. Early conservative estimates for the military operation between December 2008 and January 2009 indicate economic losses to be around \$2.5 billion.¹⁵ The impact on the productive base of the local economy of the Gaza Strip could be a complete economic paralysis. A more recent estimate by the International Monetary Fund suggests that the 2008–09 conflict damaged more than 60 per cent of Gaza's total capital stock, while the 2014 conflict destroyed 85 per cent of what was left of the capital stock.¹⁶ This indicates the destruction of 94 per cent of the capital stock in the Gaza Strip.

22. In its report of 2015 to the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee, the World Bank estimated that the direct cost for the last two military operations of 2012 and 2014 was \$3.2 billion. Therefore, the direct cost of the three wars could add up to \$5.7 billion. However, this is a minimal estimate that does not include the indirect costs that arise from lost or degraded human capital, the economic multiplier effect

¹² [TD/B/63/3](#) and [TD/B/63/3/Corr.1](#), para. 46.

¹³ *Ibid.*, paras. 16–17.

¹⁴ [TD/B/60/3](#), para. 43.

¹⁵ [TD/B/62/3](#), para. 38.

¹⁶ International Monetary Fund, "West Bank and Gaza: Report to the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee" (31 August 2017), annex III, para. 6.

and backward and forward linkages and future income streams from destroyed or damaged productive assets.¹⁷

E. Acts affecting economic sectors, natural resources, labour market and social sectors

23. As indicated above, previous studies had only scratched the surface of the total and cumulative cost of occupation, which suggests that the magnitude of the cost is huge. The cost emanates from Israeli practices in numerous sectors of the Palestinian society and economy. The following paragraphs list of some the sectors affected by those practices.

24. **Agriculture.** An UNCTAD study entitled *The Besieged Palestinian Agricultural Sector* indicates that Israel has taken control of large areas of Palestinian land for the construction of settlements, roads for settlers and the “barrier”. Consequently, since 1967, Palestinians have lost access to more than 60 per cent of West Bank land and more than two thirds of grazing land. In the Gaza Strip, half of the cultivable area is inaccessible to Palestinian producers.¹⁸

25. **Manufacturing.** A recent UNCTAD study indicated that “in the industrial sector, occupation and related uncertainty, and the restrictions on movement and access, have stifled investment and limited the Palestinian private sector to small-scale operations with low capital intensity and efficiency”. Effectively, the Israeli restrictions have stunted Palestinian industry through control of borders and by restraining Palestinian production and importation of input materials needed in manufacturing.¹⁹

26. **Fisheries** constitute part of the economic wealth of a country. However, fishing off the coast of the Gaza Strip, the only area in the Occupied Palestinian Territory with an access to the sea, was restricted at times to 3 nautical miles and sometimes extended to 6 or 9 nautical miles, instead of the 20 miles stipulated in the Oslo Accords. As a result, 85 per cent of fishery resources are inaccessible to Palestinian fishers.²⁰ The Palestinian fishing industry has collapsed almost completely, the reach of fishermen steadily declining since 2000. Moreover, the yield from allowed fishing areas has declined, because of overfishing and the contamination caused by the dumping of sewage water into the sea after the destruction of the sewage treatment facility during the Israeli military operation in December 2008 to January 2009.²¹ A fact-finding mission of the Human Rights Council, which examined the 2008–2009 military operation of Israel in Gaza, noted that Israel “controls the territorial sea adjacent to the Gaza Strip and has declared a virtual blockade and limits to the fishing zone, thereby regulating economic activity in that zone”.²²

27. **Communications.** Israel restricts Palestinian telephone providers with respect to the bands they can use. A study on the Palestinian telecommunications sector concluded that the loss for the Palestinian mobile telephone sector in 2013–2015 was in the range of \$436 million to \$1,150 million.²³

¹⁷ TD/B/62/3, para. 37.

¹⁸ TD/B/63/3 and TD/B/63/3/Corr.1, para. 34.

¹⁹ Ibid., para. 35.

²⁰ Ibid., paras. 34 and 42.

²¹ TD/B/59/2, para. 40.

²² Report of the United Nations Fact-Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict (A/HRC/12/48), para. 278.

²³ World Bank, “Telecommunication sector note in the Palestinian territories: missed opportunity for economic development” (2016), p. 8.

28. **Tourism.** The Occupied Palestinian Territory contains sites important to world history, potentially making tourism a major industry. However, the occupation has damaged the Palestinian capacity to take advantage of tourism, because valuable tourism assets, such as East Jerusalem, are under occupation. The Palestinian tourism industry is also hindered by other factors such as the restrictions imposed by Israel on movement, access and physical development.²⁴

29. **Mining and offshore minerals.** Israel has granted leases for drilling in gas fields off the coast of Gaza. As a result, Palestinians have not been able to develop the gas field known as Gaza Marine, which was discovered in the 1990s.²⁵ According to a report by UNCTAD, two high-quality gas fields have been discovered: one entirely within the waters of the Gaza Strip, the other on the border with Israel. The occupying Power has not allowed Palestinians to develop and use the offshore natural gas fields discovered off the Mediterranean coast, which could provide badly needed energy for the development of the entire Occupied Palestinian Territory.²⁶ A recent Palestinian study on restrictions placed by Israel on Palestinian activities relating to natural resources in the Occupied Palestinian Territory indicates that expropriation of building stone in Area C by Israel was estimated at about \$900 million annually (0.7 per cent of GDP in 2015), and stated that Israel had denied Palestinians the right to explore for oil and gas resources in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.²⁷

30. **Underground aquifers/water.** Underground water is part of the wealth and natural resources of a territory or a country. According to a World Bank assessment of 2009, only 35 per cent of irrigable Palestinian land is irrigated, costing the Palestinian economy up to 110,000 jobs per year and 10 per cent of GDP.²⁸ Agricultural activities have therefore become less viable and many farmers have been forced to abandon cultivation.

31. **Labour market.** Restrictions imposed by Israel limit employment opportunities in the domestic Palestinian economy.²⁹ Therefore, a significant number of Palestinian workers are resorting to jobs in Israel and its settlements. Palestinian workers can be subjected to wage discrimination and violence from settlers.³⁰

32. **Nutrition, housing and medical services.** Measures targeting Palestinian agriculture have hampered food production, and policies on labour and employment have limited the income available for the purchase of food.³¹ The housing situation is rendered worse by demolitions, which are carried out as a punitive measure or for inability to obtain construction permits, which are virtually impossible to obtain.³² Israeli measures and restrictions on mobility in the Occupied Palestinian Territory have had a negative impact on the medical sector and the quality of medical care

²⁴ Orhan Niksic, Nur Nasser Eddin and Massimiliano Cali, *Area C and the Future of the Palestinian Economy*, a World Bank study (Washington, D.C., World Bank, 2014), p. 32.

²⁵ See Susan Power, *Annexing Energy: Exploiting and Preventing the Development of Oil and Gas in the Occupied Palestinian Territory* (Ramallah, Al-Haq, 2015). See also Lydia de Leeuw, "Beneath troubled waters: Noble Energy's exploitation of natural gas in the Eastern Mediterranean Sea", Centre for Research on Multinational Corporations, 2017; available at www.somo.nl/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Beneath-troubled-waters.pdf (accessed 27 September 2017).

²⁶ TD/B/62/3, para. 49.

²⁷ Walid Mustafa, *Palestine's Natural Resources: Potential and Limitations on Exploitation* (Jerusalem and Ramallah, Palestine Economic Policy Research Institute, 2016). Available at <http://mas.ps/files/server/20162404092052-1.pdf> (accessed 10 September 2018).

²⁸ World Bank, *West Bank and Gaza: Assessment of Restrictions on Palestinian Water Sector Development*, Report No. 47657-GZ (Washington, D.C., 2009).

²⁹ TD/B/63/3 and TD/B/63/3/Corr.1, para. 6.

³⁰ TD/B/64/4, paras. 53–54.

³¹ TD/B/63/3 and TD/B/63/3/Corr.1, para. 7.

³² Ibid, para. 8.

available to the Palestinians. Prolonged closure and three conflicts in Gaza have impeded the importation of medical equipment.

33. The list above is an indicator of the magnitude, complication and multi-dimensionality of the assessment and documentation of all aspects of the cost of the Israeli occupation for the Palestinian people. It has to be stressed, however, that this list is not exhaustive, and almost all the costs associated with it have not been assessed. This will require securing new resources without which this task cannot be accomplished.

IV. Conclusion and recommendations

34. Economic development is a policy goal, a desideratum for all peoples. It becomes especially important for the entire international community to promote development, and the international community should ensure that the occupying Power promotes economic development.

35. There is an urgent need to establish within the United Nations system a systematic, evidence-based, comprehensive and sustainable framework to assess the costs of occupation and report the results to the General Assembly to fulfil the requests in the relevant resolutions towards achieving a just and lasting peace in the Middle East. The establishment of such a system will require securing additional resources.



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Question of Palestine

Economic costs of the Israeli occupation for the Palestinian people: fiscal aspects

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the General Assembly the report prepared by the secretariat of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development.

* [A/74/150](#).



**Report prepared by the secretariat of the United Nations
Conference on Trade and Development on the economic
costs of the Israeli occupation for the Palestinian people:
fiscal aspects**

Summary

The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolutions [69/20](#), [70/12](#), [71/20](#), [72/13](#) and [73/18](#), in which the Assembly requested the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development to assess and report on the economic costs of the Israeli occupation for the Palestinian people.

I. Introduction

1. Since 1967, the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip have been under Israeli military occupation and the Palestinian people have endured adverse policies that have affected their economy and all aspects of life. The signing of the Protocol on Economic Relations between the Government of the State of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization in Paris in 1994, was expected to improve the Palestinian economic situation. However, Palestinian economic development remains elusive and characterized by poor growth performance, chronic fiscal and trade deficits and high dependency on the economy of the occupying Power. Following decades of denying the Palestinian people the right to freely access their natural resources or to make optimal use of their financial resources, the issue of economic losses incurred due to the occupation has been drawing increased attention. Since 2014, various Palestinian and other studies have addressed Palestinian fiscal losses resulting from current trade and economic relations with the occupying Power. The first of those studies was published by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) in 2014 and addressed the leakage of Palestinian revenue under the Protocol.¹

2. In the present report, UNCTAD builds on findings made in previous studies and reports as well as on new quantitative analysis, and examines the fiscal costs of the occupation for the Palestinian people. Those costs severely constrain the capacity of the State of Palestine to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. The fiscal costs of the occupation are a part of the overall economic losses caused by the occupation and consist of two components: Palestinian fiscal leakage to Israel under the Protocol, and other fiscal losses resulting from policies and measures imposed under the prolonged occupation. In the present report, light is shed on both parts by estimating the value of the fiscal leakage through some significant channels and by taking a new look at other significant fiscal losses related to the occupation.

A. Objectives

3. Accordingly, the objectives pursued in the report are:

(a) To map channels of fiscal leakage that had not been not identified in previous studies, such as leakage from direct taxes; tax evasion through undervaluation of goods imported from Israel and the rest of the world in the declaration of their actual value; and losses resulting from withholding Palestinian clearance revenue;

(b) Based on a consistent estimation methodology, on reviews of studies by international organizations and on agreements concluded, to update the estimate of the fiscal leakage to Israel and of other fiscal losses incurred by the State of Palestine as a result of restrictions imposed by the occupying Power, and documenting the sources of that fiscal leakage and those fiscal losses;

(c) To estimate the fiscal leakage to Israel, which is part of the overall Palestinian fiscal losses caused by the Israeli military occupation. As indicated previously, those overall fiscal losses are a part of the overall economic costs of the occupation borne by the Palestinian people.

¹ United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) *Palestinian Fiscal Revenue Leakage to Israel under the Paris Protocol on Economic Relations* (Geneva, 2014).

B. Concepts and limitations of the analysis

4. The report focuses on one element of the economic costs of the occupation, namely the Palestinian fiscal losses, or what could be termed the fiscal costs of the occupation. One of the components of those fiscal costs is fiscal leakage to the Israeli treasury. That includes all Palestinian public revenues, as identified in the Protocol, that leak to the Israeli treasury because of the Protocol's inadequate implementation or because of measures imposed by Israel. Therefore, as stipulated in the Protocol, those leaked resources should be reimbursed to the Palestinian treasury. In 2016, the Palestinian Authority received two payments from Israel totalling \$300 million to compensate for previously leaked public revenues related to health stamps, equalization levies, border exit fees and value added tax.²

5. On the other hand, the fiscal costs of the occupation represent all Palestinian public revenues lost as a result of the protracted occupation, regardless of whether they leak to Israel. In other words, they represent the additional fiscal revenue that the Palestinian Authority could have raised if the occupation had not existed and the Palestinian people had had full control over their economic affairs.

6. Therefore, the fiscal costs of the occupation include both the fiscal resources leaked to the Israeli treasury and fiscal revenues foregone because they have been collected neither by Israel nor by the Palestinian Authority. However, there may well be other sources of Palestinian fiscal losses that are not covered in the present report and need further investigation. Those may include:

(a) Fiscal leakage resulting from the flow of Palestinian service imports from Israel;

(b) Fiscal losses resulting from the lack of control over natural resources and the inability of the Palestinian people to adopt economic, trade and industrial policies of their own;

(c) Fiscal losses resulting from the delay in transferring deductibles from the wages and compensations of Palestinians working in Israel and its settlements (such as health stamps and pensions);

(d) Updated estimates of fiscal losses resulting from severely restricted access to the parts of the West Bank designated by the Oslo Accords as Area C, which make up more than 60 per cent of the West Bank,³ and the untapped investment potential relating to natural resources such as oil, natural gas, minerals and resources in the Dead Sea;

(e) Other economic losses caused by occupation measures and policies such as military operations, siege, closure, demolition of buildings and uprooting of productive trees.

II. The Protocol on Economic Relations and estimates of Palestinian fiscal losses

7. As part of the Oslo Accords, the Palestinian economic, trade and taxation policy framework was incorporated in the Protocol on Economic Relations of 1994. Under the Protocol, the West Bank and Gaza Strip came under the jurisdiction of the

² See the report on UNCTAD assistance to the Palestinian people – developments in the economy of the Occupied Palestinian Territory (TD/B/64/4).

³ See Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, "Occupied Palestinian Territory: Area C", available at www.ochaopt.org.

Palestinian Authority for a five-year transitional period. As the overarching policy framework for the management by Palestinians of their economic affairs, the Protocol constituted a precedent that legitimized previously unacknowledged Palestinian economic rights, such as the right and power to levy direct taxes, to reconstitute direct trade relations with Arab countries, to formulate policies related to importing, banking, insurance, water, energy and other domains, and to establish the autonomous Palestinian Monetary Authority to assume, to a limited extent, the supervisory tasks of a central bank without issuing a national currency.

8. Originally the Protocol was intended to shape the Palestinian economic policy framework during a five-year interim period ending in 1999. However, it continues to shape the Palestinian economic policy framework to this day.⁴ According to some studies, a number of provisions of the Protocol have not been implemented by Israel.⁵

9. As has been argued in several reports and studies, the policy framework, along with measures imposed by Israel, are the main reason for the fiscal fragility of the State of Palestine, and fiscal losses, including leakages to Israel. In its pioneering 2014 study,⁶ UNCTAD showed that the annual fiscal leakage resulting from imports from Israel and customs evasion represented 3.6 per cent of the Palestinian gross domestic product (GDP) or 18 per cent of tax revenues. In another study, UNCTAD estimated that goods smuggled from Israel accounted for 26 per cent of Palestinian imports from Israel (\$890 million) in 2013. In other words, customs duties and value added tax on those goods leak to Israel.⁷

10. The World Bank has estimated the Palestinian fiscal losses resulting from the lack of access to Area C (over 60 per cent of the West Bank) at \$800 million in 2012.⁸ In its report to the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee in 2016,⁹ the World Bank estimated the fiscal leakage resulting from the following sources: undervaluation or misdeclaration of imported goods; compensation for Palestinian workers withheld by Israel; excessive administrative fees levied by Israeli customs to process Palestinian imports transiting through ports in Israel; and Palestinian indirect imports from Israel. In another study, the World Bank estimated that between 2013 and 2015 the Palestinian Authority lost value added tax in the range of \$70 million to \$184 million due to losses in the Palestinian wired and wireless telecommunications sector.¹⁰

11. In three reports to the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee, the State of Palestine pointed out that the implementation of certain articles of the Protocol on Economic Relations would increase Palestinian public revenue by about \$300 million per year (2 per cent

⁴ In its resolution 73/256, the General Assembly stressed the need for the continued implementation of the Paris Protocol on Economic Relations, including with regard to the full, prompt and regular transfer of Palestinian indirect tax revenues.

⁵ UNCTAD, *Palestinian Fiscal Revenue Leakage*, p. III and pp. 9–15; report on UNCTAD assistance to the Palestinian people – developments in the economy of the Occupied Palestinian Territory (TD/B/63/3), para.16; World Bank, “Economic monitoring report to the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee” (Washington, D.C., 19 April 2016), paras. 38–49; International Monetary Fund (IMF), “West Bank and Gaza: report to the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee” (Washington, D.C., 5 April 2016), p. 10, box 1. Available at www.imf.org/~media/Files/Countries/ResRep/WBG/WBG040516.ashx.

⁶ UNCTAD, *Palestinian Fiscal Revenue Leakage*.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Orhan Niksic, Nur Nassser Eddin and Missimiliano Cali, *Area C and the Future of the Palestinian Economy* (Washington, D.C., World Bank, 2014).

⁹ World Bank, “Economic monitoring report”.

¹⁰ World Bank, *Telecommunications Sector Note in the Palestinian Territories: Missed Opportunity for Economic Development – Note for the Palestinian Ministry of Telecommunications and Information Technology* (Washington, D.C., 2016).

of GDP in 2017).¹¹ The sources of fiscal leakage mentioned in these reports were: the outdated mechanism of clearance of Palestinian imports through Israel; the excessive administrative fees levied to clear those imports; the unfair distribution of revenue from exit fees paid by Palestinian passengers exiting the Occupied Palestinian Territory; the withholding, by Israel, of deductions from wages of Palestinians working in Israel and the settlements, in particular the equalization levy, the health stamp, social security and the pension funds; indirect imports, and public revenue from Area C.

12. In a recent study, the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia used a computable general equilibrium model to measure the cost and impact of the restrictive measures imposed on the Palestinian economy by the occupying Power. The study showed that those measures were the main reason for the weak economic performance and restricted access to scarce Palestinian resources. The study suggested that reducing the restrictions in Area C would increase Palestinian GDP by 12 per cent and reduce unemployment by 27 per cent.¹²

III. Estimating a part of the fiscal costs of the occupation for the Palestinian people

13. As discussed in subsection I.B above, the fiscal costs of the occupation arise from the current trade regime and current economic relations with Israel, from the constraints created by the Israeli military occupation and from the lack of Palestinian control in the economic sphere. The present section contains estimates of the fiscal leakage and other fiscal losses based on data from 2015 and on previous studies. It further includes an assessment of non-recurring sources of fiscal leakage and losses resulting from the withholding by Israel of Palestinian clearance revenue. Those three elements together result in an estimate for the fiscal costs of the Israeli occupation borne by the Palestinian people over the period 2000–2017.

A. Estimated cost of fiscal leakage

14. In the present subsection, only those sources of Palestinian fiscal leakage to Israel are examined for which data were currently available. However, it is important to keep in mind that there are other potential sources of fiscal leakage; those should be assessed once data become available.

1. Estimated fiscal leakage from indirect imports

15. Indirect imports are Palestinian imports that are registered as if they originate from Israel, but that actually originate from a third country. As stipulated in the Protocol on Economic Relations, Palestinian imports from Israel that satisfy rules of origin are exempt from Palestinian import tax. Therefore, revenues from taxes on indirect imports (i.e., imports originating in a third country) should be transferred to

¹¹ State of Palestine, “Government of the State of Palestine AHLC report” (n.p., May 2017); State of Palestine, “Government of Palestine’s report to the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee”, (Brussels, 20 March 2018); State of Palestine, “Stopping fiscal leakages: the Government of Palestine’s report to the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee Meeting” (Ramallah, 2018). Available at http://www.lacs.ps/documentsShow.aspx?ATT_ID=36702.

¹² Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, “Measuring the costs of Israeli restrictions on the Palestinian economy: A Computable General Equilibrium (CGE) approach” (Beirut, 2015).

the Palestinian Authority but are leaked to the treasury of Israel instead. The methodology used to estimate fiscal leakage from this source was the following:

(a) Palestinian imports from Israel were assessed at the eight-digit level of the Harmonized System Nomenclature and Classification of Goods of the World Customs Organization. Each commodity was grouped by type of effective import tax (customs duties and purchase tax);

(b) The calculations excluded all imported goods on which import taxes had already been paid, as well as goods that may be imported from Israel only (such as public sector purchases, fuel, gas, energy, vehicles, engines, fresh agricultural products made in Israel, cigarettes and tobacco), because the Palestinian Authority collects the majority of taxes on those commodities directly through the clearance system. Since no value added tax is levied on agricultural products, those were also excluded from the calculations;

(c) All goods imported from Israel but not subject to import taxes were excluded;

(d) The Bank of Israel indicates that 38.3 per cent of Palestinian imports from Israel are indirect imports.¹³ This percentage is used to calculate the tax revenues from indirect imports based on the current Israeli tariff schedule for goods, based on the following:

(i) The value of goods imported from Israel subject to customs duties multiplied by the applicable tariff rate;

(ii) The value of goods imported from Israel subject to purchase tax multiplied by the purchase tax rate;

(iii) Value added tax was calculated on import taxes, then the value added tax collected through the clearance system was deducted to obtain the net or value added tax difference;

(iv) Applying the 38.3 per cent indicated by the Bank of Israel on the values calculated for the above three items.

16. Based on this methodology and on data for 2015, fiscal leakage from all indirect import taxes, whether customs duties, purchase tax or value added tax, was estimated at \$129 million, representing 1 per cent of Palestinian GDP and around 4.9 per cent of total tax revenue.

2. Estimated fiscal leakage resulting from the evasion of customs duties and taxes

17. Although the evasion of customs duties and taxes is widespread, there are no precise estimates owing to a lack of hard data, which in turn results from a lack of control over borders and over Area C, which, as will be remembered, covers more than 60 per cent of the West Bank. Therefore, estimates are based on the opinion of experts and findings made in previous studies.

18. According to previous studies, it is estimated that 25 to 35 per cent of total Palestinian goods imported from Israel enter the Palestinian market without any documentation.¹⁴ However, in an interview with UNCTAD conducted on 15 July 2018, the Head of the Tobacco Department of the Palestinian Customs Authority estimated that, in addition to the officially registered imports from Israel, another 40 per cent of that volume was being smuggled to the Palestinian market. The methodology used for the present report is based on the conservative estimate that

¹³ Bank of Israel, "Recent economic developments", No. 128 (Jerusalem, 2010), table 2.2, p. 23.

¹⁴ UNCTAD, *Palestinian Fiscal Revenue Leakage*.

30 per cent on average of the goods that enter the Palestinian market do not have documentation. However, that estimate is not applied to electricity imports, which accounted for 16 per cent of Palestinian imports from Israel in 2015. To estimate fiscal leakage from tax and customs evasion, the following calculations were made:

- Palestinian imports from Israel in 2015 – excluding electricity – were valued at \$2,565 million. Applying the 30 per cent estimate results in a value of smuggled goods from Israel to the Palestinian market of some \$770 million
- Not all smuggled imports from Israel were subject to import taxes, thus some smuggled imports did not result in revenue losses. Records of actual imports show that 69 per cent of goods imported from Israel were subject to import taxes. Accordingly, the value of smuggled goods subject to import taxes amounts to approximately \$531 million
- The average rates of customs and purchase tax on all imports are 13 per cent and 6 per cent, respectively
- The average customs rate on a basket of Palestinian imports from Israel was 13 per cent, while the average customs rate on a basket of Israeli imports from the rest of the world was 6.5 per cent
- The rates of customs and purchase tax were calculated based on actual imports from Israel in 2015 by classifying each commodity separately at the eight-digit level of the Harmonized System and the Israeli tariff schedule in that year
- The customs rate of 13 per cent and the purchase tax rate of 6 per cent are applied to the estimated \$531 million of smuggled goods subject to customs and purchase taxes in 2015
- A value added tax rate of 16 per cent is applied to the estimated value of smuggled goods, as well as to the value of import taxes that were supposed to have been paid on those goods

19. Based on those calculations, the leakage of Palestinian public revenues to the Israeli treasury resulting from the evasion of customs duties and taxes is estimated to have been no less than \$202 million in 2015, equivalent to 1.6 per cent of Palestinian GDP and 7.6 per cent of total Palestinian tax revenues that year.

3. Estimated fiscal leakage from administrative fees on clearance revenue

20. According to the Protocol on Economic Relations, Israel charges a 3 per cent fee for collecting clearance revenue on behalf of the Palestinian Authority; this is referred to as handling fees or administrative fees. When the Protocol was being negotiated, in 1994, Palestinian clearance revenue amounted to only around \$624 million, resulting in handling fees of only \$18 million in that year. Since then, the revenues of the Palestinian Authority have tripled, leading to a significant increase in the administrative fees paid to Israel. In 2017, Israel collected over \$2.3 billion in import taxes and deducted handling fees of around \$70 million.¹⁵ The World Bank concludes that, based on the share of Palestinian imports within the total volume handled by the Israeli customs service (i.e., Palestinian and Israeli imports put together), the fee should be reduced from 3 per cent to 0.6 per cent, which would increase Palestinian revenues by \$40 million to \$50 million, money that is currently being deducted by Israeli customs.¹⁶

21. In addition, in 1996, Israel started collecting a 3 per cent handling fee on Palestinian imports of fuels and petroleum derivatives such as gasoline, diesel and

¹⁵ State of Palestine, "Stopping fiscal leakage".

¹⁶ World Bank, "Economic monitoring report".

kerosene. There are no administrative costs involved in direct imports from Israel, similar to products purchased according to arrangements between the private sectors in the two countries.¹⁷

22. According to data supplied by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, between 1996 and 2017, Palestinian purchases of petroleum and its derivatives amounted to about \$11.2 billion (subject to, on average, 65 per cent excise duty and other taxes). The central clearing data of the Palestinian Ministry of Finance show that, during the same period, excise levied on fuels contributed 32 per cent of total clearance revenue. The total value of clearance revenue collected during the same period was \$23 billion. The 3 per cent administrative fees on that amount equals about \$699 million, of which \$224 million was unilaterally deducted in the form of fees imposed on Palestinian tax revenues accruing from direct fuel imports from Israel.

23. According to the State of Palestine, administrative fees deducted by Israel in 2015 amounted to \$64 million. \$24 million was charged for handling Palestinian imports of petroleum products and fuel.¹⁸ As discussed above, that amount should not have been deducted as fees and therefore should be considered as part of the fiscal leakage. The remaining \$40 million should have been reduced to \$8 million by applying a rate for administrative fees reduced from 3 per cent to 0.6 per cent, as recommended by the World Bank, which implies a fiscal leakage of \$32 million. Hence, in 2015, Palestinian fiscal leakage to the Israeli treasury in administrative and handling fees relating to Palestinian clearance revenue are estimated at \$56 million, representing 0.44 per cent of GDP, or more: \$24 million relating to petroleum excise, and \$32 million to other import taxes.

4. Estimated fiscal leakage associated with the Palestinian telecommunications sector

24. The Palestinian telecommunications and information sector is of growing significance to the Palestinian economy. The World Bank, in a report published in 2016, was the first to address the sector's economic and financial losses owing to constraints imposed by the occupying Power, estimated between \$436 million and \$1,150 million during the period 2013–2015. This means that foregone value added tax accounted for \$70 to \$184 million during that period, or an annual loss between 1.2 and 3 per cent of GDP. Assuming that the loss, in 2015, as a ratio to GDP, was the midpoint of the upper and lower range percentages (i.e., 2.1 per cent), the losses in terms of potential output in that sector stand at \$266 million for that year, in addition to the associated fiscal losses in foregone value added tax, estimated at \$42.6 million, equivalent to 0.33 per cent of GDP or 1.6 per cent of total Palestinian tax revenues in 2015.

5. Estimated fiscal leakage from commercial and economic activities in Area C

25. Under the Protocol on Economic Relations, Israel is obliged to apply the Palestinian tax system to levy value added tax and income tax in Area C on behalf of the Palestinian Authority and transfer that revenue to the Palestinian treasury based on the principle of the place of final consumption and geographic location of income generation. Around 2,000 Israeli commercial enterprises or individuals work in Area C performing various activities; services, industry, agriculture, fuel, gas, and retail.¹⁹ Israel collected value added tax, income tax, property tax, and operational fees from those enterprises and transferred those to the Palestinian Authority until 2000. Israel

¹⁷ Government of the State of Palestine (2017). Report to the AHLC meeting, May, 2017.

¹⁸ Government of Palestine's Report to the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee. September, 2018.

¹⁹ Ibid.

has since stopped doing so or has stopped providing any information about the activities of the enterprises.

26. The Palestinian Government estimates that, during the period 2001–2017, Israel collected \$320 million in value added tax, income tax, property tax and other fees in Area C that was not transferred to the Palestinian treasury.²⁰ This figure represents 0.25 per cent of the Palestinian GDP during that period. Hence, Palestinian fiscal leakage resulting from commercial and economic activities in Area C in 2015 may be estimated at \$32 million, or 1.2 per cent of total tax revenues in that year.

6. Estimated fiscal leakage from the passenger exit fees at the Karamah/Allenby bridge

27. In the Protocol concerning Redeployment and Security Arrangements, the two sides agreed that Israel should collect a \$26 fee from each passenger exiting across the Karamah/Allenby bridge, and transfer to the Palestinian Authority its share, calculated as follows:

- Fee revenues from the first 750,000 passengers will be equally divided between the two sides. The Palestinian Authority will pay Israel \$1 per passenger for services. This means that 46.2 per cent of the revenue goes to the Palestinian treasury and 53.8 per cent goes to the Israeli treasury.
- For fee revenues from all passengers thereafter, \$16 per passenger is destined for the Palestinian Authority and \$10 per passenger for Israel, i.e., 61.5 per cent goes to the Palestinian treasury and 38.5 per cent goes to the Israeli treasury.

28. Since 1994, transfers to the Palestinian Authority have been irregular and partial. From time to time, Israel unilaterally raised the exit fees without consultation with the Palestinian side. Based on estimates by the World Bank, in 2015, fiscal leakage from this source amounted to \$12.2 million (0.1 per cent of GDP).²¹ Based on calculations by the Palestinian Authority, accumulated exit fees due to the Palestinian treasury but withheld by Israel are estimated at around \$145 million.²²

B. Estimated annual fiscal leakage from the sources surveyed

29. The total value of fiscal leakage resulting from the six main sources discussed above are estimated at \$473.4 million in 2015, which represents about 3.7 per cent of the Palestinian GDP or 17.8 per cent of total Palestinian tax revenues that year. In other words, had fiscal leakage to Israel been stopped, the budget deficit of the Palestinian Authority in 2015 (on a commitment basis) could have been reduced by 33 per cent, from \$1,431 million to \$ 950 million (from 11.3 per cent to 7.6 per cent of GDP). It is difficult to quantify the impact of the fiscal losses on the achievement, or lack thereof, of the Sustainable Development Goals in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. However, it is clear that severe shortages of public revenue do prevent the Palestinian Authority from making tangible progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular Goal 1 (End poverty in all its forms everywhere), Goal 3 (Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages), Goal 4 (Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all), Goal 6 (Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all), Goal 8 (Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all), and Goal 16 (Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ World Bank, "Economic monitoring report".

²² State of Palestine, "Stopping fiscal leakage".

development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels).

30. On 17 February, the Israeli Government began to implement the law adopted by the Knesset in July 2018 that required the Israeli Government to freeze, from the clearance revenue it collects on behalf of and transfers to the Palestinian Authority, an amount equal to the sums paid by the Palestinian Authority “directly or indirectly” to Palestinians, or to the families of Palestinians convicted by Israeli courts of involvement in alleged “terrorist activities” or other security-related offences, as defined by Israeli law, or who were killed while carrying out such activities. The legal view of Israel is that such payments violate the obligation of the parties to the Oslo Accords to take all measures necessary to prevent acts of terrorism, crime and hostilities directed against each other and to prevent incitement. Accordingly, on 17 February, Israel announced that it would freeze approximately \$139 million of the Palestinian Authority’s clearance revenue over the course of 2019, amounting to a little over 6 per cent of the total amount of revenue transfers in 2018.

31. On 21 February, the Palestinian Authority informed the Israeli Government of its rejection of this unilateral decision, stating that, under the Protocol on Economic Relations, no amount may be deducted without the consent of both parties, and that it would not cease its social welfare payments to the families of prisoners. The Palestinian Authority has since refused to accept any clearance revenue transfers from Israel, noting that it will accept the revenue only if the full amount payable is transferred. Clearance revenue from Israel constitutes up to 65 per cent of the total revenue of the Palestinian Government. The decision has prompted the Palestinian Government to take severe austerity measures, including reduced salary payments to Government employees, the cessation of all promotions, appointments, bonus payments, purchases of property and cars and, and a reduction of expenses paid for travel, hospitality and fuel. In addition, the Palestinian Authority has delayed the transfer of welfare payments to some of the poorest families. The Palestinian Authority has not published a budget for 2019. The impact should be addressed in a future analysis.

C. Other fiscal losses related to the occupation

32. Palestinian losses of public resources caused by the protracted occupation represent all public revenue that could have been collected by the Palestinian treasury in the absence of the occupation. There are direct and indirect fiscal losses resulting from the occupation, which includes but is not limited to military operations and actions, the closure imposed on the Gaza Strip, movement and access restrictions in force on the West Bank, the demolition of buildings and the uprooting of trees.

1. Estimated fiscal losses resulting from Israeli control over Area C

33. In a study, the World Bank discussed the huge output, labour and tax revenues that Area C has the potential to contribute to the Palestinian economy.²³ Area C represents 60 per cent of the land area of the West Bank. Since Area C is still under Israeli control, the right of the State of Palestine to benefit from the Area’s economic potential is limited. According to the World Bank, the likely potential benefit from alleviating the restrictions imposed by Israel in Area C is equal to 35 percent of Palestinian GDP, a potential increase in tax revenue of 7.6 per cent of GDP (\$960 million in 2015).²⁴ In its more recent report, the World Bank again emphasized that

²³ Niksic, Nasser Eddin and Cali, *Area C and the Future of the Palestinian Economy*.

²⁴ The \$960 million represents 7.6 per cent of 2015 GDP. The source of the 7.6 per cent estimate is Niksic, Nasser Eddin and Cali, *Area C and the Future of the Palestinian Economy*.

losses resulting from not tapping the economic potential of Area C were estimated at \$3.4 billion per year.²⁵ This situation has weakened the Palestinian economy, stripping it of the ability to benefit from those economic resources in agriculture, tourism, trade and natural resources. The economic resources could have reduced the Palestinian budget deficit.

2. Estimated fiscal losses from undervaluation of imports

34. Manipulation of actual values of imports is common across many countries. Often merchants opt to forge bills to reduce their tax liabilities. However, the prevalence of undervaluation differs from one country to another, depending on how strict or weak law enforcement is. In the Palestinian case, the World Bank indicates that undervaluation is higher for imports from third countries than for imports from Israeli sources.²⁶ This is ascribed to the higher costs entailed and the Israeli restrictions affecting Palestinian direct importation from third countries, which may explain why Palestinian merchants depend heavily on imports from Israel. The following methodology was used to estimate losses from undervaluation of imports from Israel:

- All goods that cannot be undervalued were excluded: public sector purchases of electricity, fuel, gas and some other commodities that are imported into the Palestinian market under agreements with large companies
- The World Bank estimate for undervaluation of imports from Israel of 23 per cent was adopted.²⁷ Thus, the real value of the imports in question is estimated at the declared value divided by 77 per cent
- The value added tax rate of 16 per cent was applied on the difference between the real and declared values in the customs declaration

35. The estimated undervaluation, i.e., the difference between the real and declared values of imports from Israel, was \$210 million in 2015, which implies that the loss in Palestinian value added tax revenues amounted to \$33.7 million.

36. Losses from undervaluation of imports from the rest of the world were estimated using the same methodology, with two facts being taken into consideration: first, the level of undervaluation of third-country imports was estimated at 32 per cent;²⁸ second, those imports were subject to all import taxes (including customs duties and purchase tax). Unlike the World Bank approach, in which the Israeli average tariff rate for the Palestinian import basket was used, the methodology followed in the present report was based on detailed records of imports, at the eight-digit level of the Harmonized System, to estimate the fiscal losses from undervaluation of imports from third countries, specifically:

- All goods that cannot be undervalued, such as cars and cigarettes, were excluded
- Imports exempt from import taxes were excluded on the assumption that they were not being undervalued
- The World Bank estimate of 32 per cent for undervaluation of imports from third countries was adopted.²⁹ Thus, the real value of those imports is estimated at the declared value divided by 68 per cent

²⁵ Niksic, Nasser Eddin and Cali, *Area C and the Future of the Palestinian Economy*.

²⁶ World Bank, "Economic monitoring report".

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

- All Palestinian imports from third countries were identified at the eight-digit level of the Harmonized System. Based on the World Bank estimate of 32 per cent (in the previous step), the real value – not the declared value – was used and the relevant customs and purchase tax rates were applied to calculate the import taxes that should have been collected
- The World Bank estimate of 32 per cent was applied to calculate tax revenues based on the actual value of that imports, assuming that the collected taxes (for undervalued imports) equalled 68 per cent of the total tax revenue that should have been collected had the actual value of the goods been declared. In other words, total tax revenue that should have been collected based on the estimated real value of imports equalled actual collected taxes divided by 68 per cent
- The difference was calculated between the estimated value of import taxes and the actual amounts collected (for undervalued imports).

37. Using this methodology, the total losses resulting from the undervaluation of imports from third countries are estimated at \$138.6 million. That is more than the losses caused by the undervaluation of imports from Israel because imports from third countries are subject to customs duties, purchase tax and value added tax. In the case of imports from Israel only the value added tax revenues are lost owing to undervaluation.

38. Hence, total tax revenue lost owing to undervaluation of Palestinian imports in 2015 are estimated at \$172.3 million (1.36 per cent of GDP): \$33.7 million relating to imports from Israel plus \$138.6 million relating to imports from third countries. It should be noted that the Israeli treasury could also incur losses in tax revenue if the Israeli exporter undervalued the same goods.

3. Estimated fiscal losses from shuttle trading at the Karamah/Allenby crossing with Jordan

39. In addition to losses associated with smuggling goods from Israel, there are fiscal losses resulting from the smuggling of goods from the local market and the Jordanian market as well, in particular of cigarettes and tobacco. The smuggling of cigarettes and tobacco is driven by the high taxes imposed on cigarettes of up to 85 per cent of the value. Revenue from the tobacco tax constitute 25 per cent of domestic revenues.

40. The household survey of the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics indicates that tobacco imports make up 71 per cent of cigarettes and tobacco consumed.³⁰ Their value is \$450 million. On the other hand, the Head of the Tobacco Department of the Customs Authority of the Palestinian Ministry of Finance stated on 15 July 2018 that tobacco consumption was estimated at \$550 million. The \$100 million difference between the two figures is an indication of the magnitude of the tobacco smuggling.

41. According to the same source, in 2017, tax revenues from tobacco amounted to \$420 million. The illicit trade in tobacco, in which tax and customs duties are evaded, constituted 30 per cent of the Palestinian tobacco market, which resulted in \$110 million in lost revenues per year. Half of the smuggled cigarettes likely came from Jordan across the Karamah/Allenby bridge.

42. Accordingly, if only the tax evasion from the smuggled tobacco from Jordan is considered, and local products are excluded, the estimated fiscal loss is at least at \$55 million in 2015 (0.43 per cent of GDP). These losses are also the result of the fact that Israel prevents Palestinian customs personnel from being present to fulfil their duties at border crossings and at the Karamah/Allenby bridge.

³⁰ Palestinian Bureau of Statistics, "Palestinian Expenditure and Consumption Survey (October 2016–September 2017): Press report on the levels of living in Palestine – expenditure, consumption and poverty" (Ramallah, 15 April 2018).

D. Recurrent fiscal leakage and losses: the fiscal cost of the occupation

43. In sections B and C, estimates were given of the leakage of Palestinian fiscal revenue to Israel and of Palestinian fiscal losses due to the occupation that are not the result of leakage. The sum of these two components represents the fiscal costs of the Israeli occupation to the Palestinian people. However, the assessments and estimates in the present report do not exhaust all sources of probable fiscal leakage or fiscal losses. They cover only those sources about which data are currently available. In other words, the estimates presented in the report could be revised as more data and evidence become available.

44. As concluded above, and summarized in table 1, the estimated total annual recurrent Palestinian fiscal leakage and losses, i.e., fiscal costs, resulting from the occupation that can be quantitatively substantiated are enormous. They are estimated at \$1.66 billion, which is equivalent to 13.1 per cent of GDP or 62.6 per cent of total tax revenue in 2015.

Table 1
Estimates of Palestinian fiscal costs of the occupation: leakage and other losses, 2015

<i>Source or type of leakage or loss</i>	<i>Amount (millions of United States dollars)</i>	<i>Percentage of GDP</i>	<i>Percentage of tax revenues</i>
Fiscal leakage			
Indirect imports	129	1.02	4.86
Smuggling and tax evasion	202	1.59	7.60
Administrative (handling) fees	56	0.44	2.11
Telecommunications sector	43	0.34	1.61
Israeli economic activities in Area C	32	0.25	1.21
Passenger exit fees at the Karamah/Allenby crossing	12	0.10	0.46
Subtotal	474	3.74	17.84
Other fiscal losses			
Fiscal losses from Area C	960	7.58	36.17
Fiscal losses from underinvoicing of imports	172	1.36	6.49
Fiscal losses from smuggling from Jordan	55	0.43	2.07
Subtotal	1 187	9.37	44.37
Total	1 661	13.11	62.57

E. Estimated non-recurring fiscal leakage and losses from withholding clearance revenue by Israel

45. Another measure is the repeated suspensions and delays by Israel in transferring clearance revenue to the Palestinian Ministry of Finance without any prior arrangement or warning. Israel collects Palestinian tax revenues on behalf of the Palestinian Authority that it should transfer to the Palestinian Ministry of Finance on a monthly basis through the clearing system. From 1997 to 2015, Israel froze

Palestinian clearance revenue from time to time for varying periods, sometimes for more than 24 months. The total of the dues withheld during that period amounted to \$2.4 billion.³¹

46. Vulnerability to the withholding of Palestinian clearance revenue not only undermines the ability of the Palestinian Authority to plan and administer its finances and development projects, it also poses a challenge to the Authority's ability to meet its financial obligations, in particular the wage bill and current expenditures from the public budget. To cope with the ensuing crises, the Authority is forced to resort to borrowing from domestic banks, thereby incurring the costs of extremely high interest rates accruing on credit denominated in new Israeli shekels. In addition, the Israeli treasury profits from the interest paid on the dues withheld at interest rates paid on bank deposits in Israel. Interests on withheld revenue is another channel of costs incurred by the Palestinian treasury and a source of leakage to the Israeli treasury. The fiscal costs have been estimated using the interest rates the Palestinian Government pays on the loans it receives from domestic banks, while fiscal leakage to Israel has been estimated using the interest rate on bank deposits in Israel.

47. As shown in table 2, the cumulative Palestinian fiscal leakage and losses arising from this source is estimated at \$150.9 million (for leakage) and \$336 million (for losses).

Table 2
Estimated non-recurring fiscal leakage and losses from the withholding of Palestinian clearance revenue

		<i>Clearance revenue withheld</i>		<i>Fiscal leakage</i>		<i>Fiscal loss/costs</i>	
<i>From</i>	<i>To</i>	<i>Duration (months)</i>	<i>Amount^a (millions of US dollars)</i>	<i>Interest rate^a (per cent)</i>	<i>(millions of US dollars)</i>	<i>Interest rate^b (per cent)</i>	<i>Amount (millions of US dollars)</i>
July 1997	August 1997	1	87	14.5	1.0	18.7	1.36
December 2000	December 2002	24	500	7.3	72.5	12.9	129.0
March 2006	July 2007	16	1 100	5.2	76.41	13.2	193.6
May 2011	May 2011	0.5	100	3.0	0.13	11.7	0.49
November 2011	November 2011	0.5	100	3.0	0.311	11.7	0.49
November 2012	January 2013	3	100	1.9	0.49	9.2	2.30
January 2015	April 2015	3	450	0.2	0.20	7.8	8.78
Total			2 437		150.9		336.0

Source: International Monetary Fund (IMF), "West Bank and Gaza: report to the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee" (Washington, D.C., 5 April 2016). Available at www.imf.org/~media/Files/Countries/ResRep/WBG/WBG040516.ashx.

^a Interest rates on bank deposits based on the rates of the Bank of Israel.

^b Interest rates on lending in new Israeli shekels based on the PMA rates.

³¹ IMF, "West Bank and Gaza: report to the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee".

IV. Estimated cumulative fiscal leakage and fiscal costs of the occupation during the period 2000–2017

48. The estimates of the fiscal costs of the occupation given above are based on the data and information available at the time of the analysis. That also applies to the amount of Palestinian clearance revenue withheld by Israel. In the present section an estimated monetary valuation is presented of the fiscal leakage and the fiscal costs of the occupation as they accumulated over the period 2000–2017. The year 2000 has been selected as the start because it was the first year after the Palestinian Interim Self-Government Authority was to end its transitional mandate.

49. Fiscal leakage is an ongoing problem; resources had been leaking even before 2000. As shown in table 1, the annual fiscal leakage from the Palestinian treasury to the Israeli treasury is estimated at 3.74 per cent of the Palestinian GDP. The annual leakage for the period 2000–2017 has been estimated on the basis of that rate; the total represents the accumulated leakage of funds that should have gone to the Palestinian treasury during the 18-year period under consideration (see table 3).

50. Since the Israeli treasury retained the funds instead of transferring them to the Palestinian Authority, it is assumed that they were kept as deposits in Israeli banks, collecting interest at the rates applicable at the time. As shown in table 3, the cumulative fiscal leakage that could be substantiated for the period 2000–2017 stands at \$5.6 billion without interest. The accumulated interest has been calculated at \$1 billion for the same period. Adding that amount results in an estimated total fiscal leakage of \$6.6 billion, or about 4.4 per cent of GDP over that period, equivalent to 21 per cent of total Palestinian public revenue.

Table 3
Estimated cumulative fiscal leakages and fiscal costs of the occupation, 2000–2017

Year	Fiscal leakage					Fiscal costs of the occupation				
	Amount ^a (millions of US dollars)	Cumulative amount (millions of US dollars)	Interest rate ^b (per cent)	Cumulative interest (millions of US dollars)	Cumulative amount with interest (millions of US dollars)	Amount ^a (millions of US dollars)	Cumulative amount (millions of US dollars)	Interest rate ^c (per cent)	Cumulative interest (millions of US dollars)	Cumulative amount with interest (millions of US dollars)
2000	161.3	161.3	9.8	15.8	177.1	565.5	565.5	12.9	72.9	638.4
2001	149.7	311.1	7.1	38.9	349.9	524.9	1 090.4	16.4	263.3	1 353.7
2002	205.5	516.6	7.1	78.3	594.9	595.2	1 685.6	15.5	415.9	2 101.4
2003	148.4	665.0	7.8	136.1	801.1	520.2	2 205.8	13.7	774.0	2 979.7
2004	161.9	826.9	4.3	177.7	1 004.6	567.6	2 773.3	13.5	1 251.4	4 024.8
2005	180.7	1 007.6	3.7	221.9	1 229.5	633.4	3 406.8	13.5	1 880.2	5 287.0
2006	183.6	1 191.2	5.3	296.2	1 487.4	643.7	4 050.5	13.2	2 664.7	6 715.2
2007	282.3	1 473.5	4.0	367.4	1 840.9	915.4	4 965.9	12.7	3 416.9	8 382.8
2008	249.6	1 723.1	3.7	445.6	2 168.7	874.9	5 840.8	12.0	4 531.7	10 372.5
2009	271.8	1 995.0	7.7	633.5	2 628.4	952.9	6 793.7	11.0	5 775.9	12 569.6
2010	333.4	2 328.3	1.6	681.5	3 009.8	1 168.5	7 962.2	10.9	7 277.0	15 239.2
2011	391.7	2 720.0	2.9	780.80	3 500.8	1 373.0	9 335.2	11.7	9 222.0	18 557.2
2012	421.9	3 141.8	2.4	874.2	4 016.0	1 478.7	10 813.9	11.3	11 485.0	22 298.9

Year	Fiscal leakage					Fiscal costs of the occupation				
	Amount ^a (millions of US dollars)	Cumulative amount (millions of US dollars)	Interest rate ^b (per cent)	Cumulative interest (millions of US dollars)	Cumulative amount with interest (millions of US dollars)	Amount ^a (millions of US dollars)	Cumulative amount (millions of US dollars)	Interest rate ^c (per cent)	Cumulative interest (millions of US dollars)	Cumulative amount with interest (millions of US dollars)
2013	466.7	3 608.5	1.4	936.9	4 545.4	1 637.9	12 451.8	11.6	14 254.1	26 705.9
2014	475.6	4 048.0	0.6	967.5	5 051.6	1 667.0	14 118.8	11.0	17 362.8	31 481.7
2015	474.2	4 558.2	0.1	974.7	5 532.9	1 670.2	15 789.0	10.2	20 729.2	36 518.2
2016	502.1	5 060.3	0.1	980.8	6 041.1	1 760.1	17 549.1	9.1	24 199.0	41 748.1
2017	542.2	5 602.3	0.1	987.3	6 589.9	1 900.7	19 449.8	9.3	28 241.6	47 691.4

Source: UNCTAD secretariat calculation.

^a The annual fiscal leakage and the fiscal costs of the occupation have been calculated by multiplying the estimated rates of 3.74 per cent and 13.11 per cent shown in table 1 with the annual Palestinian GDP. The annual figures also include the interest accumulated on the Palestinian clearance revenue withheld, as shown in table 2.

^b Interest rates on bank deposits based on Bank of Israel rates

^c Interest rates on lending in new Israeli shekels based on the rates of the Palestine Monetary Authority.

51. The fiscal costs of the occupation, on the other hand, are a graver problem, as those include both the fiscal leakage and the loss of other public revenue that could have been realized by the Palestinian treasury if the Palestinian Authority had full control over its fiscal affairs and there were no occupation. As indicated in table 1, the annual fiscal costs of the occupation are estimated at 13.1 per cent of GDP. The costs resulting from lost public revenue is exacerbated by the fact that the Authority is forced to bear additional costs because it has to borrow money from local banks at high interest rates to cope with the loss of resources and to meet its financial obligations. Table 3 shows the estimated cumulative monetary value of the fiscal costs of the occupation, including the cost of borrowing. The cumulative fiscal costs during the 18 years under consideration, without interest, are estimated at \$19.5 billion. Adding the interest increases the losses by \$28.2 billion, bringing the total valuation to \$47.7 billion. That amount is more than three times the output of the Palestinian economy in 2017, and some 32 per cent of cumulative GDP during those 18 years.

V. Summary of results

52. Estimates of the fiscal costs of the occupation in 2015, based on those that could be mapped in the present analysis, came to \$1.7 billion, or 13.1 per cent of GDP for that year. Of that amount, fiscal leakage to the Israeli treasury accounted for \$473 million (3.7 per cent of GDP). Other fiscal losses – not leaked to Israel – accounted for the remaining \$1.2 billion (9.4 per cent of GDP).

53. An extrapolation of the analysis to cover the period 2000–2017 results in an estimated cumulative fiscal leakage of more than \$5.6 billion during those 18 years, equivalent to 39 per cent of the 2017 GDP. This amount could have increased the overall Palestinian tax revenues by 17.6 per cent and reduced the current public deficit on a cash basis by 42 per cent. Interest accrued on fiscal revenue captured by the Israeli treasury during the same period adds \$1 billion, increasing the estimated cumulative fiscal loss to the Palestinian Authority from leakage alone to \$6.6 billion, or an annual loss equivalent to 4.4 per cent of GDP.

54. In addition to the leakages to Israel, the cumulative fiscal cost of the occupation for the Palestinian people for the period 2000–2017 is estimated at \$19.4 billion,

equivalent to 134 percent of the GDP in 2017, i.e., the output of the Palestinian economy over one year and four months. When the compound interest of about \$28.2 billion is added, the estimated fiscal costs of the occupation resulting only from the sources surveyed in the present report amounts to \$47.7 billion during the period 2000–2017. That equals more than three times of what the Palestinians produced in 2017.

VI. Conclusions and recommendations

55. The analysis and figures provided in the present report highlight a number of enduring problems that have worsened over the years, namely: the smuggling of goods from Israel and from illegal settlements to the Palestinian market; increased fiscal leakage resulting from indirect imports via Israel; the inability of the Palestinian Authority to enforce the proper invoicing of imports and the transport of imports from Israel or any third country; control by Israel of Area C (more than 60 per cent of the West Bank) and lack of access enabling the Palestinians to operate there. All of these and other measures imposed by the occupying Power have compounded the challenges facing the Palestinian Government in collecting revenue and have resulted in a loss of large parts of that revenue, which has led to a chronic budget deficit and has further shrunk the fiscal and policy space available to Palestinian policymakers.

56. To cover these fiscal costs caused by the occupation and the ensuing financing gaps, the Palestinian Government has increasingly relied on international aid, borrowed from local banks, accumulated arrears with the domestic private sector and rationalized its expenditures. Those measures have slowed down the drivers of economic growth by reducing developmental expenditure to less than 3 per cent of total public expenditure in recent years. These conditions have resulted in an increasingly weak and fragile Palestinian economy characterized by inadequate and deteriorating public services and weak aggregate expenditure, in particular expenditure for investment and development purposes.

57. In conclusion, the fiscal losses, the narrow policy space available to Palestinian decision makers and the lack of control over economic affairs have undermined the capacity of the Palestinian Government to adopt effective financial, tax and development policies. The economic policy framework and its implementation should be consistent with Palestinian development needs and priorities, and should facilitate the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and the economic security of the State of Palestine as called for in several resolutions adopted by the Security Council and the General Assembly, such as Council resolutions [1850 \(2008\)](#) and [1860 \(2009\)](#), and Assembly resolution [72/13](#).

58. To achieve that, a fundamental change is needed in many working arrangements, including those relating to: border crossing points and access by Palestinian officials to those points, as well as to Area C; import policies and import surveillance mechanisms; and the exchange of information, data and records concerning imports. Furthermore, as was done in 2016, Israel and the Palestinian Authority may consider negotiating some of the topics raised in the present report to address and rectify all outstanding issues, resolve accumulated dues to the Palestinian people and establish a mechanism by means of which the Government of Israel may share with the Palestinians all the information related to Palestinian trade and fiscal resources.

59. Given the heavy fiscal costs of the occupation, the Palestinian people are much farther away from reaching the Sustainable Development Goals, if it can reach them at all, than it would be without the occupation. There is a need to secure additional resources for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals in the Occupied

Palestinian Territory and to strengthen the capacity of UNCTAD to support the Palestinian people in those efforts.

60. Humanitarian and economic support are crucial to creating an environment that favours negotiations to resolve the conflict. However, no amount of humanitarian or economic support will resolve the conflict itself. Humanitarian or economic support can only be complementary to a legitimate political process but will not replace political rights or statehood. The United Nations maintains its long-standing position that lasting and comprehensive peace can only be achieved through a negotiated two-State solution. The Secretary-General will continue to ensure that the United Nations works towards the establishment of an independent, democratic, contiguous and viable Palestinian State, living side by side in peace with a secure Israel, with Jerusalem as the capital of both States consistent with relevant Security Council resolutions and international law.



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Question of Palestine

Economic costs of the Israeli occupation for the Palestinian people: the Gaza Strip under closure and restrictions

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the General Assembly the report prepared by the secretariat of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development.

* [A/75/150](#).



Report prepared by the secretariat of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development on the economic costs of the Israeli occupation for the Palestinian people: the Gaza Strip under closure and restrictions

Summary

The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution [74/10](#), in which the Assembly requested the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development to continue to report to it on the economic costs of the Israeli occupation for the Palestinian people.

Since Hamas took control of Gaza, 2 million Palestinians have been subject to an prolonged Israeli closure and severe economic and movement restrictions that in effect amount to a blockade in the 365 km² Gaza Strip. Moreover, the Gaza Strip has been the subject of three major rounds of military hostilities since 2008. The result is the near collapse of the regional Gaza economy while trade is severely restricted from the rest of the Palestinian economy and the world. Between 2007 and 2017, the poverty rate in Gaza increased from 40 to 56 per cent; the poverty gap increased from 14 to 20 per cent; and the annual minimum cost of eliminating poverty quadrupled from \$209 million to \$838 million (constant 2015 USD).

The endogeneity, overlapping of different causal factors and measurement problems limit the methodologies that could be used to estimate the cost borne by the Palestinian people due to the ongoing prolonged closure and severe economic and movement restrictions on Gaza and the three major military operations that took place during the period 2007–2018. Furthermore, the cost of the closure and restrictions blockade cannot be estimated separately from that of military operations. Nonetheless, an estimation of counterfactual growth paths (scenarios) for Gaza – that is, assuming that the closure, restrictions and military operations did not occur – from 2007 onwards, gives some indication of the economic losses (in terms of Gross Domestic Product (GDP)) by measuring the deviation of the counterfactual scenarios from the historical GDP values.

Focusing on the period 2007–2018, and using econometric analysis of household survey data, the estimated cumulative economic cost of the Israeli occupation in Gaza under the prolonged closure and severe economic and movement restrictions and military operations would amount to \$16.7 billion (constant 2015 USD): equivalent to six times the value of the GDP of Gaza, or 107 per cent of the Palestinian GDP, in 2018. Scenario analysis suggests that, had the pre-2007 trends continued, the poverty rate in Gaza could have been 15 per cent in 2017 instead of 56 per cent, while the poverty gap could have been 4.2 per cent instead of 20 per cent.

Lifting what amounts to the blockade of Gaza is essential for it to trade freely with the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory and the world and restore the right to free movement for business, medical care, education, recreation and family bonds. Only by fully lifting the debilitating closure, in line with Security Council resolution [1860 \(2009\)](#), can we hope to sustainably resolve the humanitarian crisis.

I. Introduction, objective and scope

1. For 13 years, following the take-over of the Gaza Strip by Hamas in June 2007, the Palestinian people living there have been under a prolonged Israeli closure and severe economic and movement restrictions that in effect amount to a blockade. Effectively, nearly 2 million people are mostly confined to a 365 km² enclave with one of the highest population densities in the world. The entry of goods into the Gaza Strip has been reduced to only basic humanitarian products.¹ In addition to the prolonged closure and severe economic and movements restrictions, Gaza was the subject of three major rounds of hostilities during a six-year timespan (starting December 2008) that have resulted in the destruction of the productive base, while the ensuing severe crisis has transformed the Gaza Strip into a humanitarian case and condemned it to profound aid-dependency. Moreover, the intra-Palestinian division poses significant challenges to the development of Gaza.

2. Focusing on the period prior to 2012, the United Nations warned that the ongoing trends should be reversed, for Gaza to be “a liveable place” in 2020.² Now, in 2020, according to the analysis in the present report, Gaza has witnessed one of the worst economic performances globally and the world’s highest unemployment rate,³ and more than half of its population lives below the poverty line. The vast majority of the population has no access to clean water, electricity or a proper sewage system, and the Gaza Strip experiences major environmental deterioration. Since the beginning of the closure and severe economic and movement restrictions in 2007, the Palestinian people in Gaza have experienced 13 years of continued deterioration in the conditions surrounding them. Efforts at revival have been made, with interventions focused on humanitarian relief and large infrastructure and other development projects.

3. The objective of the report is to elaborate on the situation and to estimate the economic cost of the Israeli closure and restrictions and recurrent hostilities for the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip, with a focus on the socioeconomic conditions of households during the period 2007–2018.⁴ First, the report uses the household expenditure and consumption survey and census data to estimate the impact of the Israeli closure, restrictions and military operations on (a) the rate and gap of poverty at the household level; and (b) the minimum cost of eliminating poverty. Second, the report estimates the economic cost in terms of the potential economic growth that could have been realized if the closure, restrictions and military operations had not occurred. Third, the report proposes a set of recommendations to mitigate the impact of the ongoing closure and restrictions on Gaza.

4. It should be emphasized that the scope of estimates in the report is limited to the economic cost of the Israeli occupation that resulted from the prolonged closure, severe economic and movement restrictions and recurrent military operations during the period 2007–2018. The estimates do not assume an end to the occupation and all the restrictive measures it imposes on the Occupied Palestinian Territory. In other words, the estimates account only for a part of the total cost of the Israeli occupation for the Palestinian people in Gaza.

¹ United Nations, “Gaza ten years later”, July 2017.

² United Nations, “Gaza in 2020: A liveable place?”, August 2012.

³ International Labour Office (ILO), *The Situation of Workers of the Occupied Arab Territories*, ILC.107/DG/APP (Geneva, 2018).

⁴ The present report covers that period because it comprises the two most recent censuses, produced by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, as well as the most up-to-date macro data available at the time of writing.

II. Gaza: the cost of closure, restrictions and recurrent hostilities

5. Many restrictions were imposed on the Gaza Strip in the early 1990s. Following its takeover by Hamas in June 2007, Israeli restrictions were intensified to what in effect amounted to a blockade, when the occupying power severely tightened the restrictions on the movement of goods and people in and out of Gaza. Despite some fluctuations over the years, restrictions on movement remain tight.⁵

A. Closure: land, sea and airspace

6. Prior to 2007, Gaza had five border crossing points with Israel for pedestrians and goods: Karam Abu Salem (Kerem Shalom) for goods; Beit Hanoun (Erez) for pedestrians; the Ash Shuja'iah (Nahal Oz) fuel pipeline, closed since 2010; Al Montar (Karni), closed since 2007; and the Sufa crossing point, closed since 2008. Only the first two crossing points remain open, partially and for special cases. From June 2007, Gaza crossing points were closed for nearly the entirety of the working day; in 1999, they had been fully open. Effectively, the prolonged closure and severe movement restrictions tightly confine 2 million people in an area of 365 km². The economic significance is that trade and factors of production (labour or production inputs) are allowed to move in or out of the Gaza Strip in a severely restricted manner.

7. In addition to its control over the commercial and pedestrian land crossings of the Gaza Strip, Israel controls its sea and airspace. According to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Israel has defined a risk zone that ranges from 100 to 500 metres into Gaza near the border and has instituted an access-restricted area or "buffer zone" that ranges from 100 to 300 metres into Gaza, in which farmers' access is permitted only on foot, with a 100-metre no-go zone along the border with Israel.⁶ Moreover, agricultural land near the fence has been subject to destruction.⁷ At sea, the area agreed upon in the Oslo Accords to be open to fishing extends to 20 nautical miles (NM) from the coast, but has rarely exceeded 12 NM in practice. The area in which fishing has been permitted by Israel has ranged between 3 and 6 NM since 2006, with occasional extensions to 9 NM for a few weeks at a time and more recently to 12 to 15 NM. People working in the fishing industry are subjected to frequent violence, and those deemed by the Israeli navy to have exceeded the boundaries are arrested, have their boats confiscated and are sometimes shot at, killed or injured.⁸

B. Restrictions on the mobility of people and goods

8. Only two crossings are currently used for pedestrian travel in and out of Gaza: Beit Hanoun (Erez) to Israel and Rafah to Egypt. The Erez crossing is controlled by Israel and mainly limited to humanitarian cases or people with special permits, in addition to traders and businessmen. It is the only gateway to the West Bank and East

⁵ United Nations, "Gaza ten years later".

⁶ See United Nations, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, "Gaza Strip: access and movement map", December 2018. Available at www.ochaopt.org/content/gaza-strip-access-and-movement-december-2018-0.

⁷ Gisha, "Gaza up close", 2019.

⁸ United Nations, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, "Gaza's fisheries: record expansion of fishing limit and relative increase in fish catch; shooting and detention incidents at sea continue", Humanitarian Bulletin: Occupied Palestinian Territory, October 2019. See also, Gisha, "Gaza up close".

Jerusalem. Between 2007 and 2018, the Rafah crossing was open for 2,126 days and closed for 2,257 days, with the closure mainly occurring from 2014 to 2017.⁹

9. By 2010, three of the four crossings for goods between Gaza and Israel had been shut down. From 2007 to 2010, Israel imposed additional restrictions, allowing into Gaza only basic humanitarian products “vital for the survival of the civilian population”. From June 2007 until June 2010, an average of 2,400 trucks per month entered Gaza from Israel, compared with 10,400 in 2005.¹⁰ In 2018, that average increased to 8,970, but it is still below the 2005 figure, when the population of Gaza was 33 per cent smaller than its level in 2018.

10. According to the Israeli human rights organization Gisha, according to documents from the Israeli Ministry of Defense, between 2007 and 2010, Israel employed mathematical formulas to determine the minimum amount of goods that could be allowed into Gaza. Those formulas were based on an estimate of the inventory of basic goods and products, the daily per capita consumption for each good and the number of inhabitants of Gaza. When a low warning limit was reached for some products, the Israeli authorities increased the inflow of those products, unless there was an intentional reduction policy.¹¹

11. Another constraint on productive activities is the list of “dual-use” civilian goods that Israel does not allow Palestinians to import because they might have potential military applications. The list contains 56 items requiring “special approval” to be brought into Gaza and the West Bank, including civilian machinery, spare parts, fertilizers, medical equipment, appliances, telecommunication equipment, metals, chemicals, steel pipes, milling machines, optical equipment and navigation aids. For Gaza the list contains an additional 61 items, including construction materials; raw material for the productive sectors, for example wood and pesticides; medical equipment; and water pumps, which are used during seasonal flooding. Despite some easing of restrictions, in particular for construction materials, since the 2014 military operation, applications for the import of other items on the dual-use list have been subject to frequent rejections or significant delays.¹² In recent months, Israel has granted one-off permits for certain items, particularly in Gaza.¹³

C. Impact of recurrent hostilities

12. In addition to the prolonged closure and severe economic and movement restrictions, the Gaza Strip was the subject of three consecutive major hostilities over six years that claimed the lives of 3,804 Palestinians and 95 Israelis.¹⁴ In October 2014, the Secretary-General said that the destruction following the operation between 8 July and 26 August had been “beyond description”.¹⁵

⁹ For more information on movement through the Rafah and Erez crossing points, see United Nations, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Gaza Crossings: Movement of People and Goods database, available at www.ochaopt.org/data/crossings.

¹⁰ Gisha, “Gaza up close”.

¹¹ After prolonged legal proceedings, Gisha received official documents from the Israeli Ministry of Defense (in Hebrew) containing the criteria according to which the Gaza closure was implemented until mid-2010, see www.gisha.org/UserFiles/File/MatpashDoc.pdf.

¹² World Bank, “Economic monitoring report to the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee”, 19 March 2018.

¹³ World Bank, “Economic monitoring report to the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee”, 26 September 2019.

¹⁴ For more information on casualties during the three military operations, please refer to United Nations, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Data on Casualties database, available at www.ochaopt.org/data/casualties; and B’Tselem, Fatalities since Operation Cast Lead database, available at www.btselem.org/statistics/fatalities/after-cast-lead/by-date-of-event.

¹⁵ See United Nations News, “In war-ravaged Gaza, Ban urges ministers of new government to unite on ‘building one Palestine’”, 14 October 2014.

13. In its report, the United Nations country team said that the three military operations had had the following impacts:¹⁶

(a) During the hostilities that lasted from 27 December 2008 to 18 January 2009, nearly 1,400 Palestinians and 13 Israelis were killed. In addition, 5,380 people were wounded,¹⁷ and some 60,000 homes were damaged or destroyed, leaving some 20,000 people homeless;

(b) During the eight-day hostilities in November 2012, 174 Palestinians, including 107 civilians, and 6 Israelis, including 3 civilians, were killed, and some 10,000 homes damaged;

(c) During the hostilities from 8 July to 26 August 2014, 2,251 Palestinians, including at least 146 civilians, and 71 Israelis, of whom 5 were civilians, were killed, and 171,000 homes were damaged, 17,800 of which were rendered completely uninhabitable, thereby displacing their 100,000 inhabitants.

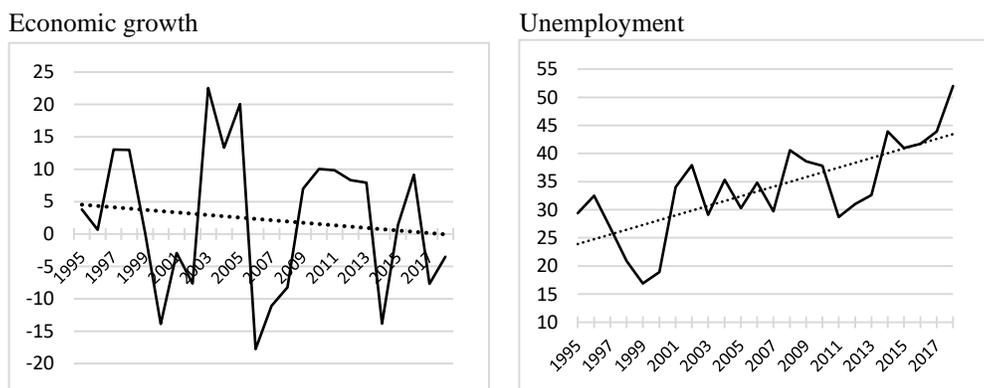
III. Gaza: closure, restrictions, recurrent hostilities and the economy

14. In the 24-year period from 1994 to 2018, the real GDP of Gaza grew by 48 per cent (see figure 1 below), while its population grew by 137 per cent, resulting in a 37 per cent drop in real GDP per capita. The latter plummeted from the equivalent of 96 per cent of the West Bank GDP per capita in 1994 to 30 per cent in 2018. Meanwhile, unemployment in Gaza jumped by 22 percentage points, reaching 52 per cent, among the highest rates in the world (see figure 1).¹⁸

Figure 1

Gaza Strip: real GDP growth and unemployment rates, 1995 to 2018

(Percentage)



Source: Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, national accounts and labour market data.

A. Palestinian economy in the Gaza Strip, 1994 to 2018

15. The Palestinian economy in Gaza has gone through three structural phases. During the period 1994–1999, following the signing of the Oslo Accords, optimism prevailed for a final status solution; the regional Gaza economy grew on average by 6.1 per cent

¹⁶ United Nations, “Gaza ten years later”.

¹⁷ State of Palestine, Ministerial Committee for the Reconstruction of Gaza, *Detailed Needs Assessment (DNA) and Recovery Framework for Gaza Reconstruction* (2015).

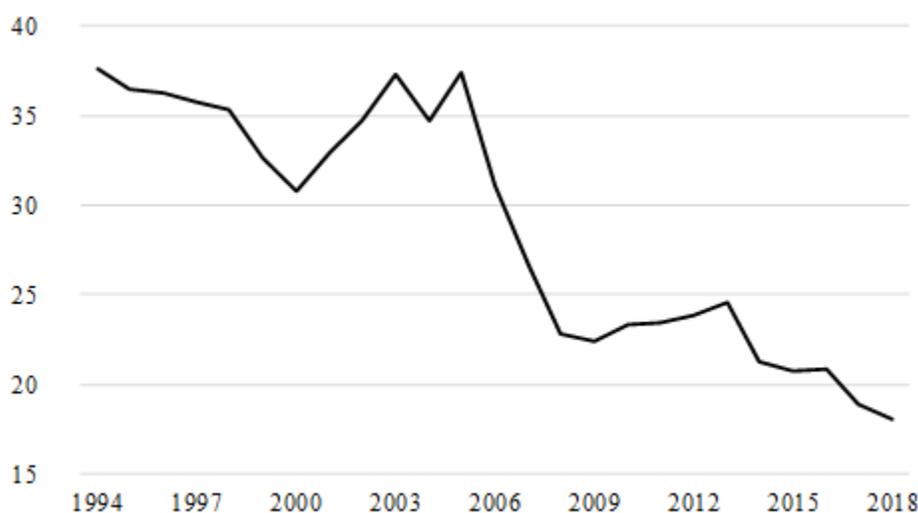
¹⁸ ILO, *The Situation of Workers of the Occupied Arab Territories*.

annually, while the West Bank grew by 10.7 per cent. In 2000, following the outbreak of the second intifada, Israel prohibited Palestinian workers from Gaza from working in Israel. Between 2000 and 2006, much of the Palestinian public and private infrastructure and institutions was destroyed, and the movement of Palestinian workers and goods was severely restricted. The Gaza economy grew by just 2 per cent annually between 2000 and 2006. Gaza continues to suffer from severe restrictions on land, air and maritime movement, coupled with recurrent hostilities since July 2007. From the onset of the imposition of the closure and severe economic and movement restrictions from 2007 to 2018, the economic growth of Gaza fluctuated sharply and grew on average by just 0.8 per cent annually, while the West Bank – also under occupation and facing restrictions, measures and control – grew by 6.6 per cent annually.

16. The share of Gaza in the Palestinian economy halved from 37 per cent in 1995 to 18 per cent in 2018 (see figure 2). Prior to 2007, its share in the Palestinian economy had never dropped below 31 per cent and averaged around 35 per cent. Moreover, investment in Gaza virtually disappeared, falling from 11 per cent of GDP in 1994 to just 2.7 per cent in 2018.¹⁹ Non-building investment remained minimal, at 0.2 per cent of GDP.

Figure 2
Share of the Gaza Strip in the Palestinian economy

(Percentage of GDP)



Source: Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, national account data.

17. The performance of the regional Gaza economy has always been far below its potential owing to the occupation and its accompanying restrictive measures. The closure and severe economic and movement restrictions imposed on the Gaza Strip since 2007 and the subsequent recurrent hostilities continue to impede the realization of its full economic potential and have cultivated a profound economic and humanitarian crisis. Table 1 presents some economic indicators for 2006 (before) and 2018 (after).

18. In the 11-year period from 2007 to 2018, the economy of Gaza grew by just 4.8 per cent. Its share in the Palestinian economy contracted by 13 percentage points, from 31 per cent in 2006 to 18 per cent in 2018; GDP per capita shrank by 27 per cent, unemployment increased by 49 per cent and poverty increased by 42 per cent. Almost all GDP components remain below their 2006 levels.

¹⁹ In late 2019, the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics revised its national accounts data back to 2004, see www.pcbs.gov.ps/Portals/_Rainbow/Documents/E_Na_accounts_2014_2015_constant.html.

Table 1
**Economy of Gaza before and after the imposition of the closure
(selected indicators)**

<i>Indicator</i>	<i>2006</i>	<i>2018</i>	<i>Percentage change</i>
Population (thousands)	1 349	1 933	43
Population density (people/km ²)	3 696	5 296	43
Real GDP (millions of 2015 USD)	2 691	2 819	4.8
Share of Gaza in Occupied Palestinian Territory GDP (%)	31.1	18.1	-42
Real GDP per capita (millions of 2015 USD)	1994	1 458	-26.9
Investment share in Occupied Palestinian Territory GDP (%)	9.5	2.7	-71.6
Unemployment rate (%)	34.8	52	49.4
Poverty (%)	39 (2007)	55.4 (2017)	42.1

Source: Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics.

B. Negatively affected productive sectors

19. In addition to the above-mentioned severe restrictions imposed on the agricultural and fishing sectors, the agriculture and manufacturing (tradable goods) sectors have also been hindered by restrictions on imports of technology and raw materials, which have limited their ability to expand, maintain competitiveness and create jobs. Certain fertilizers and a range of common pesticides feature on the Israeli “dual-use” list. Similarly, the inputs necessary for even basic manufacturing have been severely restricted, as they also feature on the list.

20. The destruction of infrastructure in Gaza by prolonged closure, severe economic and movement restrictions and recurrent rounds of hostilities have had a grave impact on access to electricity and clean water, as well as on the environment. Electricity shortages have severely suppressed key productive activities. In 2017 and 2018, electricity supply was restricted to 4 to 6 hours a day, and shortages continued to disrupt everyday life and hinder the delivery of basic services.²⁰ The availability of electricity in the whole Gaza Strip increased from about 6 hours per day in January 2018 to about 11 hours in January 2020.²¹ However, that does not mean that an average household in Gaza has access to electricity for 11 hours per day, as the electricity supply is insufficient to power all households at the same time.

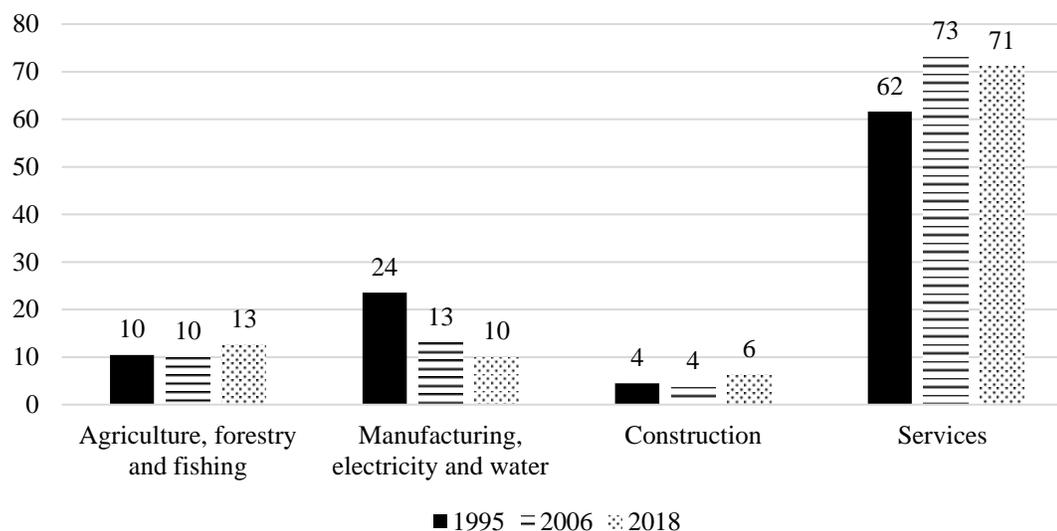
21. Consequently, the Gaza economy has undergone a reversal in industrialization and agriculturalization. The share of agriculture and manufacturing in the regional Gaza economy declined from 34 per cent in 1995 to 23 per cent in 2018 (see figure 3 below), while their contribution to employment fell from 26 to 12 per cent. This raises a serious concern related to the future development of the economy of the Gaza Strip and its capacity to realize economies of scale and expand employment.

22. Section IV below further elaborates on the impact of the closure, restrictions and recurrent hostilities in Gaza, with a focus on how poverty has spread and deepened between 2007 and 2017.

²⁰ United Nations, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, “Occupied Palestinian Territory: 2019 humanitarian needs overview”, December 2018.

²¹ United Nations, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Gaza Strip Electricity Supply database, available at www.ochaopt.org/page/gaza-strip-electricity-supply.

Figure 3
Sectoral structure of the regional Gaza economy (1995, 2006 and 2018)
 (Percentage of regional Gaza economy)



IV. Impact of the closure, restrictions and recurrent hostilities on poverty in Gaza

23. Using the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics surveys and census data,²² the present section traces the deterioration of household living conditions and welfare in Gaza between 2007 and 2017. The impact that the prolonged closure, severe economic and movement restrictions and military operations have had in terms of the cost for the Palestinian people will be assessed with respect to the poverty headcount and the poverty gap.²³ This makes it possible to estimate the increase in the minimal cost required to lift all households out of poverty, between 2007 and 2017.²⁴

A. Poverty in Gaza between 2007 and 2017²⁵

24. The sections below contain an analysis of the evolution of the level and depth of poverty in Gaza over the period 2007–2017 by applying two analytical methods:

²² See www.pcbs.gov.ps/default.aspx.

²³ “Headcount” refers to the proportion of households below the poverty line. Headcounts are an inaccurate measure of poverty in that they do not reflect its depth, and confound all households below the poverty line, without considering the fact that the degree to which different poor households fall below the poverty line may differ greatly. For example, the headcount poverty index would count a household as being below the poverty line whether it was \$0.01 below or \$100 below. The “poverty gap” addresses that inaccuracy by summing up the “distance” (in monetary terms) separating each household from the poverty line, ascribing a weight of 1 to all households below the poverty line and zero to those above. Intuitively, it represents the average percentage shortfall of households with respect to the poverty line. For the previous two hypothetical configurations, for a poverty line of \$200, the poverty gap would be equal to $0.01 \div 200 = 0.00005$ in the first case (a very small number), and equal to $100 \div 200 = 0.5$ in the second.

²⁴ Poverty measures include all government and non-government assistance to households, cash and in-kind.

²⁵ A more detailed analysis of poverty in Gaza is discussed in a forthcoming United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) technical paper entitled, “The economic costs of the Israeli occupation for the Palestinian People: the impoverishment of Gaza under blockade” (We would advise against the use of the word “blockade”).

first using a sample from survey data; and second covering the population from the census.²⁶ The analysis covers poverty in Gaza, both over time and in comparison with the West Bank.

1. Survey-based method

25. The survey-based method directly uses the sample data in the Palestinian expenditures and consumption survey of 2007 and 2017 to calculate the relationship between total expenditure per adult equivalent and individual, household and location characteristics in the survey.²⁷ Taking the Eurostat and European Union definition of the poverty line as being 60 per cent of the national median total household expenditures per adult equivalent,²⁸ the real poverty lines for the Occupied Palestinian Territory in 2007 and 2017 are \$123 and \$255 (constant 2015 USD), respectively, per month.

26. The sample data in the two Palestinian expenditures and consumption surveys indicate severe deterioration in the welfare of households in Gaza between 2007 and 2017, as the proportion of households below the poverty line increased from 46.1 to 64.4 per cent and the poverty gap widened from 15.9 to 25.7 per cent.

2. Empirical best prediction method

27. One limitation of the above survey-based results is that they are based on relatively small samples. Recent developments in poverty mapping and small area estimation make it possible to improve the survey-based methods by combining survey and census data.²⁹ The Occupied Palestinian Territory is similar to most countries in that census data do not include information on household or individual consumption, expenditures or income. However, the Palestinian expenditures and consumption surveys and the decadal censuses (2007 and 2017) do collect data on a relatively broad set of common variables, including: location (urban, rural, refugee camp); characteristics of the household head (e.g., educational attainment); household demographic characteristics; employment status and sector of employment; access to basic services, such as water, through public networks; and the household's dwelling and physical assets.

28. To obtain the headcount and depth of poverty, the empirical best prediction method uses a three-step approach: first, the Palestinian expenditures and consumption survey data are used to estimate statistical regression equations of household expenditures per adult equivalent, as well as the household's characteristics (the estimation of the empirical best prediction is presented in the

²⁶ The detailed data used in the analysis in the present section was received from the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics in response to a request by UNCTAD. Data are obtained from the 2007 and 2017 Palestinian expenditures and consumption survey, and from the 2017 Palestinian census, conducted by the Bureau. The reports on the main findings of living standards in Palestine (expenditure, consumption and poverty) for 2007 and 2017 are available at www.pcbs.gov.ps/Downloads/book1474.pdf and www.pcbs.gov.ps/Downloads/book2368.pdf?date=7_5_2018. See also the Bureau's report entitled, *Preliminary Results of the Population, Housing and Establishments Census 2017* (Ramallah, 2018).

²⁷ Following the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development and the World Bank, "adult equivalent" is defined as $(1 + (\text{number of adults} - 1) \times 0.8 + (\text{number of children} \times 0.5))$. It is worth noting that the adult equivalent method is better than per capita for accounting for sources of inter-household heterogeneity, and therefore provides a more accurate picture of poverty in Gaza. This is because household structure in Gaza, like most developing countries, is highly heterogeneous, with a large number of children. Consumption requirements in a household with six adults, for example, will be different from those of a household made up of two adults and four children.

²⁸ See https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Glossary:At-risk-of-poverty_rate.

²⁹ See Chris Elbers, Jean O. Lanjouw and Peter Lanjouw, "Micro-level estimation of poverty and inequality", *Econometrica*, vol. 71, No. 1 (January 2003); and Isabel Molina, J.N.K. Rao and Gauri Sankar Datta, "Small area estimation under a Fay-Herriot model with preliminary testing for the presence of random area effects", *Survey Methodology*, vol. 41, No. 1 (June 2015).

annex to the present report); second, the estimated coefficients obtained from the regressions are combined with the census data (for a much larger number of households) to impute the household's level of expenditures per adult equivalent; and third, the imputed measures of household expenditures are used to recalculate the headcount and poverty gap measures for each year.

29. Following those three steps, the empirical best prediction poverty indicators for 2007 and 2017 are presented in table 2 below, along with those of the survey-based method. The poverty headcount (rate) in 2007 is equal to 40.1 per cent, lower than the 46 per cent estimate of the survey-based method. This rises to 56 per cent in 2017, which is lower than the 64.5 per cent estimate of survey-based method, yet still demonstrates a very large increase over the 10-year period. Concomitantly, the empirical best prediction measure of the poverty gap in Gaza increases from 13.9 to 19.9 per cent between 2007 and 2017. While the magnitudes are lower than those of the survey-based method, they are still extremely large.

Table 2
Gaza 2007 and 2017: poverty gap and headcount (survey-based and empirical best prediction methods)

Year	Poverty headcount		Poverty gap	
	Survey-based	Empirical best prediction	Survey-based	Empirical best prediction
2007	0.4617	0.4007	0.1588	0.1395
2017	0.6447	0.5619	0.2574	0.1987

Source: UNCTAD calculations.

B. Estimated poverty cost of the closure, restrictions and recurrent hostilities in Gaza

30. Building on the previous analysis, it is possible to calculate the smallest aggregate annual lump-sum transfer that will suffice to lift all households out of poverty (i.e., the minimum cost of eliminating poverty). A comparison between that cost in the two years of the most recent census – 2007 and 2017 – captures the poverty cost of the prolonged closure and severe economic and movement restrictions imposed and the military operations conducted by the occupying power. This is calculated as follows:

$$\text{Minimum cost of eliminating poverty} = \text{poverty gap} \times \text{poverty line} \times 12 \text{ months} \times \text{number of adult equivalents per household} \times \text{number of households.}$$

Using the poverty gap estimated by the empirical best prediction method (see table 2 above), the minimum real cost of eliminating poverty in constant 2015 USD in Gaza are:

$$2007 \text{ cost} = 0.1395 \times 123.7 \times 12 \times 4.49 \times 224848 = \text{real } \$209 \text{ million;}$$

$$2017 \text{ cost} = 0.1987 \times 255.2 \times 12 \times 3.97 \times 347035 = \text{real } \$838 \text{ million.}$$

31. The minimum yearly real cost of eliminating poverty has quadrupled between 2007 and 2017. The difference of \$629 million (constant 2015 USD) between those years measures the cost of the prolonged closure and severe economic, movement restrictions and recurrent hostilities in terms of poverty. The difference represents 22.3 per cent of the Gaza GDP, or 4 per cent of the Occupied Palestinian Territory GDP, in 2017. This points to the degree of the cost of reversing the impact of the Israeli closure, restrictions and recurrent hostilities on the welfare of households in Gaza.

32. The above analysis indicates that Gaza has suffered heavy blows to its economy and environment, as well as to the well-being of its population. However, the question

remains as to what would have happened had Gaza not experienced closure, movement and economic restrictions and military operations. Section V below focuses on that question by estimating the loss of potential output during the period 2007–2018.

V. Estimated economic and poverty cost of the closure, restrictions and recurrent hostilities: 2007–2018

A. Assessments of the impact of the closure, restrictions and recurrent hostilities

33. Some attempts have been made to assess the impact of one or two of the military operations that Gaza endured over the 10 years in question. However, no attempt has been made to estimate the cumulative economic cost of the prolonged Israeli closure, the severe economic and movement restrictions and the military operations in Gaza. The present section contains a brief summary of previous assessments and estimates of the cumulative cost between 2007 and 2018.

34. The International Monetary Fund estimates that the damage of the Israeli military strike in 2008 and 2009 is equivalent to over 60 per cent of the total capital stock of Gaza, while the damage of the 2014 strike is equivalent to 85 per cent of its capital stock that existed after the 2008–2009 strike,³⁰ and that growth rates could have been three times the actual rates if Gaza had had the same access to production inputs as the West Bank.³¹

35. The World Bank indicates that, in 2014, in the 50 days that the hostilities took place, \$460 million was shaved off the Gaza economy,³² and that lifting the closure could generate additional cumulative growth in the range of 32 per cent by 2025, while relaxing the dual-use list could generate an additional 11 per cent growth by 2025.³³

36. UNCTAD indicates that the direct economic losses of the 50-day military operation that started in December 2008 was about \$2.5 billion (see [TD/B/56/3](#)). It also estimates that the value of assets damaged in Gaza as a result of the 2012 and 2014 military operations was more than \$2.7 billion, and that, during the two operations, over 64,000 residential units and at least 1,000 industrial and commercial establishments were totally or partially damaged (see [TD/B/62/3](#)).

37. Following the 2014 military operation, the Palestinian National Authority estimated the cost of the reconstruction and recovery of Gaza at \$3.9 billion.³⁴

B. Estimation of the economic cost of the closure, restrictions and recurrent hostilities (2007–2018)

38. The endogeneity, overlapping of different causal factors and measurement problems limit the methodologies that could be used to estimate the cost borne by the Palestinian people due to the ongoing prolonged closure and severe economic and movement restrictions on Gaza and the three major military operations that took place

³⁰ International Monetary Fund (IMF), “West Bank and Gaza: report to the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee”, 31 August.

³¹ IMF, “West Bank and Gaza: report to the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee”, 6 September.

³² World Bank, “Economic monitoring report to the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee”, 27 May 2015.

³³ World Bank, *Unlocking the Trade Potential of the Palestinian Economy: Immediate Measures and a Long-Term Vision to Improve Palestinian Trade and Economic Outcomes*, report No. ACS22471 (Washington, D.C., 2017).

³⁴ State of Palestine, Ministerial Committee for the Reconstruction of Gaza, *Detailed Needs Assessment (DNA) and Recovery Framework for Gaza Reconstruction* (2015).

during the period 2007–2018. Furthermore, the cost of this closure and restrictions cannot be estimated separately from that of those military operations. Nonetheless, an estimation of counterfactual growth paths (scenarios) for Gaza – that is, assuming that the closure, restrictions and military operations did not occur – from 2007 onwards, gives some indication of the economic losses (in terms of GDP) by measuring the deviation of the counterfactual scenarios from the historical GDP values.

39. Based on Gaza growth trends prior to 2007 and the relation between the regional economies in Gaza and the West Bank, two counterfactual growth paths (scenarios) were assessed. The actual historical economic performance in Gaza during the period 2007–2018 is used as a baseline scenario for estimating the potential economic losses. Scenario 1 assumes that the Gaza economy follows its own average historical growth for the period 1995–2006 and would continue to grow by 3.7 per cent annually from 2007 onwards. Scenario 2 assumes that, after 2007, the share of Gaza in the Occupied Palestinian Territory’s economy remains the same as in 2006. That assumes that Gaza grew at the same rate as the West Bank, i.e. 6.6 per cent annually, during the assessment period 2007–2018.

40. As shown in table 3 below, scenario 1 suggests that the annual real GDP of Gaza would have been, on average, 23.3 per cent higher than the baseline scenario, and that the cumulative economic (GDP) loss for the period 2007–2018 could reach \$7.8 billion (constant 2015 USD), or 50 per cent of the Palestinian GDP in 2018. Scenario 2 indicates that the GDP of Gaza could have been, on average, 50 per cent higher than the baseline, and the cumulative economic (GDP) loss for the period could be \$16.7 billion (constant 2015 USD); or 107 per cent of the Palestinian GDP in 2018.

41. As for the real per capita GDP (see figure 4 below), scenario 1 estimates that it could have reached \$2,153 (constant 2015 USD) in 2018, or 46.7 per cent (\$695) higher than the baseline level. Scenario 2, estimates that real GDP per capita could have reached \$2,997 in 2018, which is \$1,539 or 105.5 per cent higher than the actual level recorded in that year.

Table 3
Gaza Strip: estimated real GDP losses under two scenarios

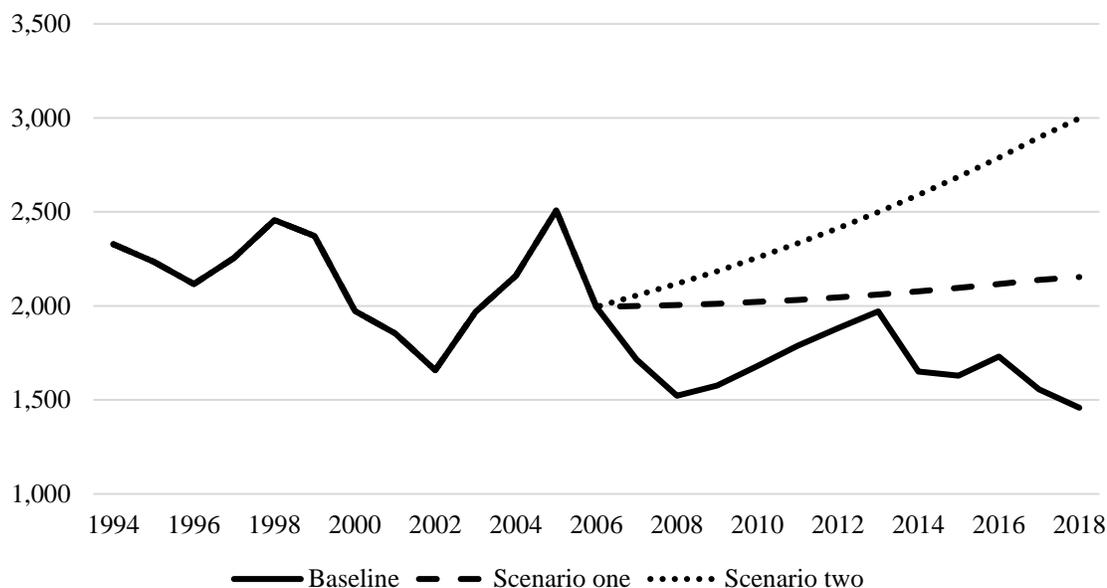
(Millions of constant 2015 USD)

<i>Year</i>	<i>Baseline scenario</i>	<i>Scenario 1</i>	<i>Difference</i>	<i>Percentage difference</i>	<i>Scenario 2</i>	<i>Difference</i>	<i>Percentage difference</i>
2007	2 393	2 790	397	16.6	2 868	475	19.9
2008	2 197	2 894	697	31.7	3 058	861	39.2
2009	2 351	3 001	650	27.6	3 260	909	38.7
2010	2 586	3 112	526	20.3	3 475	888	34.4
2011	2 841	3 227	386	13.6	3 704	864	30.4
2012	3 077	3 346	270	8.8	3 949	872	28.3
2013	3 321	3 470	150	4.5	4 209	889	26.8
2014	2 861	3 599	738	25.8	4 487	1 626	56.8
2015	2 900	3 732	832	28.7	4 783	1 883	64.9
2016	3 165	3 870	705	22.3	5 099	1 934	61.1
2017	2 921	4 013	1 092	37.4	5 435	2 514	86.1
2018	2 819	4 161	1 343	47.6	5 794	2 975	105.5
Total	33 431	41 215	7 784	23.3	50 121	16 690	49.9

Source: UNCTAD calculations.

Figure 4
Gaza Strip: estimated real GDP per capita under two scenarios

(Constant 2015 USD)



42. The loss in potential GDP in the two counterfactual scenarios is significant, as it indicates that GDP per capita could have been considerably higher than it is today. However, it should be stressed that in both scenarios assume growth rates under occupation. In other words, they assume the persistence of all the restrictive measures imposed by the occupation in Gaza and the West Bank, with the only difference being the prolonged closure and severe economic and movement restrictions and the three major military operations. Furthermore, scenario 2 is more relevant as it shows that, if the closure and restrictions had not existed and those military operations had not happened, there would have been no rational reason to prevent the regional Gaza economy from maintaining its share in the Palestinian economy. Therefore, the estimates presented here are conservative and partial and do not include the total cost of the Israeli occupation for the Palestinian people in Gaza. Rather, they only capture the economic cost that resulted from the prolonged closure, the severe economic and movement restrictions and the military operations in Gaza during the period 2007–2018.

43. It is also important to emphasize that the above estimates do not include other costs that occurred during the Israeli military operations, such as the destruction of infrastructure, residential units and commercial structures. Evidently, the reconstruction that followed cost the Palestinian people and the international community billions of dollars.

44. Unlocking the economic potential of Gaza – by measures such as the construction of air and seaports, lifting all restrictions on access and movement, allowing full access to water and electricity, and utilizing the oil and natural gas off the shore of Gaza – would have a far greater impact than the estimates reported above.³⁵

³⁵ *The Economic Costs of the Israeli Occupation for the Palestinian People: The Unrealized Oil and Natural Gas Potential* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.19.II.D.10), indicates that the loss for the Palestinian people from being denied the right to exploit their natural resources from oil and gas could be billions of dollars.

C. Impact of the economic cost of the closure, restrictions and recurrent hostilities on poverty in Gaza

45. The present section extends the above analysis of the two counterfactual scenarios to the household level data to ascertain their implications on poverty. The tool for doing so is the growth incidence curve.³⁶

46. Growth incidence curves offer a transparent way to understand changes in the distribution of household expenditures over time. While the mean growth rate of household expenditures over a period of time is a useful datum, it says nothing about how different categories of households have benefitted (or not) from increases in average expenditures. For example, we can consider two categories of households: those below and those above the poverty line. If growth is pro-poor, a given mean increase in household expenditures per adult equivalent should benefit poor households more than non-poor households; the opposite is true if growth is not pro-poor. The curve plots out that relationship for each quantile of the population distribution: the horizontal axis represents each quantile of the distribution; and the vertical axis measures the percentage change in each quantile's total household expenditures over the period under consideration.

47. The growth incidence curve estimated for the Occupied Palestinian Territory, for the period 2007–2017 is presented in figure 5 below. The solid horizontal line in the figure represents the mean growth rate of household expenditures per adult equivalent. Any quantile of the population that benefitted more than the mean will be on a portion of the curve above that horizontal line; any quantile of the population that benefitted less than the mean will be below the line in the curve. Pro-poor growth corresponds, graphically, to a curve that is above the mean level of growth for lower quantiles of the expenditure distribution and below it for higher quantiles, leading to a downward-sloping curve. As indicated by the slope of the curve in figure 5, economic growth in the Occupied Palestinian Territory has been largely pro-poor. The poorest of the poor – those in the extreme left-hand portion of the curve – appear to have benefited more than the rest of the population.

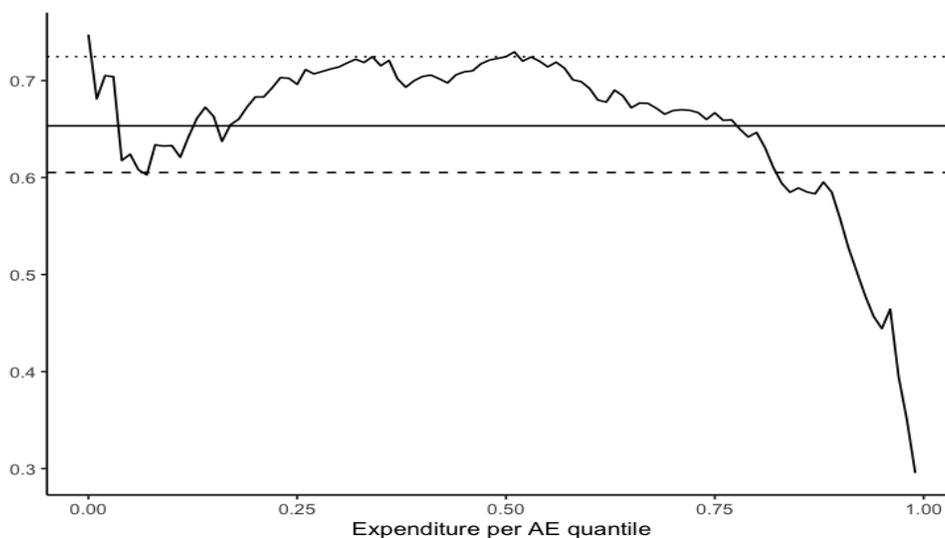
48. The economic growth rates estimated for scenarios 1 and 2 in the previous section imply different levels of real GDP per capita over the period under consideration. Real GDP per capita in 2017 for scenarios 1 and 2 would have been 37.4 and 86.1 per cent higher than the actual, respectively. The analysis here assumes that the average level of expenditures per adult equivalent would have followed the increases in GDP per capita of the two scenarios, but that those increases would have been distributed to different households proportional to their relative position along the growth incidence curve in figure 5.³⁷ Once the counterfactual values of household expenditures per adult equivalent are constructed, the direct (survey-based) and empirical best prediction methods described above are applied, while maintaining the poverty line at its actual monthly 2017 level of \$255 (constant 2015 USD) per adult equivalent.

³⁶ The growth incidence curve was first introduced in Martin Ravallion and Shaohua Chen, "Measuring pro-poor growth", *Economics Letters*, vol. 78, No. 1 (January 2003).

³⁷ For example, according to the Occupied Palestinian Territory growth incidence curve, a household in the twenty-fourth percentile of the distribution would have experienced a 70.2 per cent increase in its expenditures per adult equivalent between 2007 and 2017. Since the mean increase of household expenditures per adult equivalent was equal to 65.33 per cent, that household would then be assigned an increase in expenditures per adult equivalent of $(70.24 \div 65.33) \times 37.4$ per cent in scenario 1 and $(70.24 \div 65.33) \times 86.1$ per cent in scenario 2.

Figure 5
Occupied Palestinian Territory: growth incidence curve (2007–2017)

(Percentage change in total household expenditures)



Note: The solid horizontal line in the upper part of the figure is the mean growth rate, dotted line is the growth at the mean and the dashed line is growth at the median.

Abbreviation: AE, adult equivalent.

Table 4
Estimated poverty in Gaza under two scenarios in 2017

Year	Poverty headcount		Poverty gap	
	Survey-based	Empirical best prediction	Survey-based	Empirical best prediction
2017 – actual*	0.6447	0.5619	0.2574	0.1987
Scenario 1	0.4021	0.3512	0.1391	0.1188
Scenario 2	0.1680	0.1499	0.0365	0.0426

* From row 2 in table 2, above.

49. The results in table 4 represent another way of capturing the cost of the prolonged closure and recurrent hostilities, which are part of the larger cost of occupation, from a microeconomic perspective. Scenario 1, measured using the empirical best prediction method, shows a reduction in the poverty rate from 56.2 per cent to 35.1 per cent, while scenario 2 shows an even greater reduction, to 15 per cent. Concomitantly, scenario 1 shows a reduction in the poverty gap from 19.9 per cent to 11.9, and to 4.3 per cent using scenario 2. Given that the minimum total annual cost of eliminating poverty is directly proportional to the poverty gap, the results indicate that under scenario 1 those costs would have been halved, whereas in scenario 2 they would have been one-fifth only.

VI. Conclusion and recommendations

50. The increasing burden of poverty in Gaza calls for an immediate response. Economic growth should be restored, and the economic trajectory should be freed of the prolonged closure, the severe economic and movement restrictions and the attendant destruction. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

recommends that the international community, Israel and the State of Palestine consider the following:

(a) Only by fully lifting the debilitating Israeli closure, in line with Security Council resolution 1860 (2009), can we hope to resolve sustainably the humanitarian crisis. Furthermore, the indiscriminate launching of rockets and mortars towards Israeli civilian population centres is prohibited by international humanitarian law, and Palestinian militants must cease that practice immediately. Gaza should be allowed to trade freely with the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, as well as with neighbouring Arab and global markets, and free movement should be restored for businesses, medical care, education, recreation and family unification.

(b) Priority should be given to the reconstruction of infrastructure, private and public structures and the productive base of Gaza, as well as the construction and operation of air and seaports;

(c) The electricity crisis should be addressed by rehabilitating, upgrading and securing fuel for the operation of the Gaza power plant at full capacity and constructing a water desalination plant to secure clean water supply for the population;

(d) The State of Palestine should be enabled to develop the offshore natural gas fields discovered in the 1990s in the sea area off the coast of Gaza. As elaborated by UNCTAD,³⁸ this would secure the required resources for the rehabilitation, reconstruction and recovery of the local Gaza economy.

51. Furthermore, given the widening gap in the living conditions between Gaza and the West Bank, it is critical that the important Egyptian-led intra-Palestinian reconciliation efforts continue. The United Nations stands firm in its support of the efforts by Egypt in that regard, and the Secretary-General calls upon all Palestinian factions to make serious efforts to ensure the reunification of Gaza and the occupied West Bank under a single, democratic, national government. Gaza is and must remain an integral part of a future Palestinian State as part of a two-State solution. It is high time to reintegrate it politically, administratively, fiscally, economically and socially, including East Jerusalem. The international community can play a key role in that regard.

52. Humanitarian and economic support will not replace political rights or statehood. The United Nations maintains its long-standing position that a lasting and comprehensive peace can only be achieved through a negotiated two-State solution. The Secretary-General will continue to ensure that the United Nations works towards the establishment of an independent, democratic, contiguous, sovereign and viable Palestinian State, living side-by-side in peace and security with Israel, with Jerusalem as the capital of both States.

³⁸ *The Economic Costs of the Israeli Occupation for the Palestinian People: The Unrealized Oil and Natural Gas Potential* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.19.II.D.10).

Annex

Estimation of the empirical best prediction method

1. The first step of the empirical best prediction method is to estimate the statistical relationship that links household expenditures per adult equivalent to the household's observable characteristics, where these must be available in both the census and the household survey data. The table below shows the results of regressing log expenditures per adult equivalent (in constant 2015 USD) on the set of standard covariates, at the national level. To maximize comparability between the synthetic income measures that will be constructed using census data and the estimated coefficients, a common set of covariates over the two sample surveys were maintained in the two regression for 2007 and 2017.

2. There are two differences in the set of covariates for 2007 and 2017 regressions: (a) possession of a mobile telephone, which did not appear in the 2007 questionnaire; and (b) access to electricity, which was an issue in 2007 but no longer in 2017 (note that access to electricity does not take into account whether electricity is actually available, which, more often than not, is not the case in Gaza).

3. The regression results in the table reveal several interesting features. First, the divergence between households in Gaza and the West Bank is substantial: the expenditures per adult equivalent for a household in Gaza, is lower than a household in the West Bank by 44.1 and 43.2 per cent, in 2007 and 2017, respectively. Second, the household head's level of educational attainment remains an important determinant of expenditures. Third, the household employment status is paramount in terms of its expenditures. Employment in Israel, for instance, is associated with 21.3 and 16.3 per cent higher expenditures per adult equivalent, in 2007 and 2017, respectively. However, employment in Israel is not available to the Gaza workforce, which deepens the welfare divergence between Gaza and the West Bank. Fourth, characteristics of the household's dwelling, and its assets, are significantly associated with its expenditures per adult equivalent.

Regression results: determinants of monthly real expenditures per adult equivalent

	<i>2007 Palestinian expenditures and consumption survey</i>	<i>2017 Palestinian expenditures and consumption survey</i>
Intercept	5.254 (0.276) ***	5.722 (0.097) ***
Location (West Bank and urban are base categories)		
Gaza Strip	-0.441 (0.043) ***	-0.432 (0.026) ***
Rural	-0.059 (0.043)	-0.051 (0.019) **
Camp	-0.043 (0.051)	-0.015 (0.029)
Characteristics of household head		
Female head	-0.041 (0.063)	-0.015 (0.031)
Marital status of head	0.098 (0.131)	0.041 (0.058)
Educational level of head	0.099 (0.038) **	0.066 (0.019) ***
Refugee status	-0.067 (0.039)	-0.033 (0.019)
Insurance	0.039 (0.046)	0.013 (0.023)
Demographic characteristics of household		
Number of females	-0.070 (0.012) ***	-0.092 (0.008) ***
Number of males	-0.041 (0.014) **	-0.068 (0.008) ***
Number of adult males	-0.003 (0.015)	0.014 (0.009)

	2007 Palestinian expenditures and consumption survey	2017 Palestinian expenditures and consumption survey
Number of adult females	0.016 (0.021)	-0.001 (0.012)
Sector of employment (services are base category)		
Agriculture	-0.095 (0.058)	-0.069 (0.036)
Construction	-0.037 (0.053)	-0.025 (0.027)
Industry	-0.108 (0.056)	-0.027 (0.030)
Employment status		
Number of employed household members	0.081 (0.019) ***	0.052 (0.011) ***
Employment in Israel	0.213 (0.058) ***	0.163 (0.027) ***
Employment in national Government	-0.006 (0.048)	0.106 (0.025) ***
Access to basic services		
Access to public water	-0.169 (0.058) **	-0.160 (0.027) ***
Access to electricity	-0.027 (0.161)	
Connection to sewage network	0.129 (0.041) **	-0.028 (0.021)
Characteristics of dwelling		
House ownership	-0.264 (0.049) ***	-0.052 (0.022) *
House is a villa	0.138 (0.160)	0.221 (0.104) *
Number of rooms	-0.030 (0.018)	-0.008 (0.009)
Number of rooms per adult	0.236 (0.047) ***	0.120 (0.019) ***
Main source of heating is diesel	-0.115 (0.095)	0.241 (0.179)
Household assets		
Car	0.246 (0.040) ***	0.380 (0.020) ***
Refrigerator	0.133 (0.083)	0.080 (0.052)
Boiler	0.093 (0.038) *	0.091 (0.017) ***
Central heating	0.300 (0.127) *	0.028 (0.081)
Vacuum	0.103 (0.043) *	0.080 (0.020) ***
Cooking stove	-0.061 (0.191)	0.026 (0.030)
Washing machine	0.034 (0.067)	-0.054 (0.017) **
Home library	0.171 (0.041) ***	0.087 (0.026) ***
Television	-0.001 (0.085)	0.168 (0.019) ***
Telephone line	0.173 (0.038) ***	0.066 (0.019) ***
Satellite	0.208 (0.044) ***	0.067 (0.026) *
Computer	0.164 (0.038) ***	0.073 (0.019) ***
Mobile telephone		0.220 (0.025) ***
R ²	0.522	0.552
Number of observations	1,223	3,720
Root mean square error	0.541	0.485

Note: Standard errors are in parentheses. *** p < 0.001, ** p < 0.01, * p < 0.05.

Abbreviation: R², proportion of the variance for a dependent variable that is explained by an independent variable.



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Question of Palestine

Economic costs of the Israeli occupation for the Palestinian people: poverty in the West Bank between 2000 and 2019

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the General Assembly the report prepared by the secretariat of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development.

* [A/76/150](#).



Report prepared by the secretariat of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development on the economic costs of the Israeli occupation for the Palestinian people: poverty in the West Bank between 2000 and 2019

Summary

The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution [75/20](#), in which the Assembly requested the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development to report to it on the economic costs of the Israeli occupation for the Palestinian people. The report builds on, and complements, the findings of the previous report, issued in 2020 ([A/75/310](#)).

Following the outbreak of the second intifada in the occupied Palestinian territory, on 28 September 2000, Israel tightened its closure policy and implemented more stringent measures in the territory. The impact of those actions on the fragile regional economy of the West Bank was not only a contraction by one third of its size between 2000 and 2002. More importantly, they have had a long-lasting negative impact that has affected all economic sectors for 20 years.

Even with high dependence on employment in Israel and its settlements, the West Bank regional economy experienced two decades of jobless growth, fostering an average of 18 per cent unemployment between 1995 and 2019. Without employment in Israel and in the settlements, the unemployment rate could have been 16 percentage points higher, at par with the extremely high rate in Gaza. The cumulative economic cost of the stricter Israeli measures during the period 2000–2019 is estimated at four and a half times the size of the West Bank regional economy in 2019.

The cost of occupation, in poverty terms, is also substantial, with the poorer segments of the population disproportionately affected. Had the tighter Israeli restrictions, imposed after the second intifada, not occurred, the 2004 poverty rate in the West Bank could have been 11.7 per cent, or only one third of the observed 35.4 per cent. The analysis conducted indicates that the real minimum cost of eliminating poverty in the West Bank jumped from \$73 million (constant 2015 United States dollars) in 1998 (before the second intifada) to \$356 million in 2004, and to \$428 million in 2007.

The evolving and cumulative cost of occupation cannot be reversed without ending the occupation, in line with relevant United Nations resolutions. All mobility restrictions in the occupied Palestinian territory need to be lifted, and the contiguity of its constituent parts, including East Jerusalem, needs to be re-established. Palestinian public and private operators should be allowed to function in Area C, which represents at least 60 per cent of the West Bank. The United Nations maintains its position that a lasting and comprehensive peace can only be achieved through a negotiated two-State solution.

I. Introduction, objective and limitation

1. The present report follows four previous reports prepared by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), and submitted to the General Assembly, on the economic cost of the Israeli occupation for the Palestinian people ([A/71/174](#), [A/73/201](#), [A/74/272](#) and [A/75/310](#)). The topic of the present report builds on, and complements, the findings of the previous report, which was focused on poverty and the cost of occupation in the Gaza Strip. The same indicators are used, and the same approach deployed, to evaluate the corresponding costs in the West Bank during the period 2000–2019. The year 2000 was selected as a starting date for the assessment because it was the first year that followed the imposition of additional detrimental measures and a stricter closure policy by the occupying Power after the outbreak of the second intifada, in September 2000.

2. As set out below, after the outbreak of the second intifada in the occupied Palestinian territory, Israel imposed a complex system of mobility restrictions,¹ which has effectively turned the West Bank into isolated islands. Those measures paralysed economic activity, inflicted serious dislocations and significant income losses and thus aggravated pre-existing and deep-seated structural weaknesses and vulnerabilities. They have entailed long-lasting effects, including volatile economic growth, persistently high unemployment and poverty rates and chronic internal and external deficits. Until the occupation is ended, those ramifications will continue to restrict Palestinian economic development and add to the cumulative cost of occupation for the Palestinian people.

3. The report provides details on and estimates of the economic cost of the Israeli closures and restrictions for the Palestinian people, with a focus on the socioeconomic conditions of households in the West Bank. The economic cost is estimated in terms of the potential economic growth that could have been realized if the additional harmful measures and stricter closure policy, imposed following the outbreak of the second intifada, had not occurred. It uses data from household expenditures and consumption surveys and census data to estimate the impact of Israeli policies on the poverty rate and poverty gap at the household level, leading to estimates of the minimum cost of eliminating poverty in the West Bank. The final section of the report contains some conclusions and recommendations.

4. It should be stressed that the estimates in the report are limited to the economic cost of occupation that resulted from the direct and long-lasting impact of the additional restrictive measures imposed by Israel on the West Bank following the outbreak of the second intifada, during the 2000–2019 period. The estimates presented therefore account only for a small part of the total cost of the Israeli occupation of the West Bank.

5. Those estimates do not include the impact of the restrictions in 2020 and 2021 associated with the coronavirus disease (COVID-19), nor the potentially substantial economic cost of events triggered by the threat of eviction of Palestinian families and confiscation of their properties in the Shaykh Jarrah neighbourhood of East Jerusalem in May 2021. The ensuing confrontations spread to the rest of the West Bank. According to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 31 Palestinians were killed, 7,516 injured and 798 arrested.² Most of the fatalities resulted from the use by Israeli security forces of live ammunition in the context of demonstrations or clashes or in response to attacks or attempted attacks. On the Israeli side, 1 person was killed and 137 were injured, including 90 members of Israeli security forces (see [S/2021/584](#)).

¹ United Nations, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, “West Bank closure and access”, April 2005.

² United Nations, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, “West Bank: escalation of violence, 13 April–21 May 2021”, June 2021.

6. The economic cost of the recent tensions in the occupied Palestinian territory is likely to be enormous. Upon request by the General Assembly, that cost could be assessed and accounted for, then reported to the Assembly.

II. The lasting impact of restrictions in the West Bank

7. Subsequent to the failure of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization to reach an agreement at the conference held in July 2000 at Camp David, Maryland, in the United States of America, the second Palestinian uprising (intifada) broke out on 28 September 2000. In response, Israel immediately tightened its existing restrictions and imposed a total closure on the occupied Palestinian territory. According to the Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories (B'Tselem), the number of closure days increased dramatically in October 2000, reaching 244 days in 2001, then declined to 122 in 2006 before dropping to 34 days in 2007.³

8. On 29 March 2002, Israel launched its Operation Defensive Shield in the West Bank, which started with the reoccupation of Ramallah, followed by the other Palestinian cities. The Israel Defense Forces announced the official end of the operation on 21 April 2002. However, the incursions and re-incursions into Palestinian towns and cities from which the Israeli forces had withdrawn continued even beyond 2002 (see [A/ES-10/186](#)).

9. The term “closure” refers to the restrictions that Israel imposed on the free movement of Palestinian goods and labour across borders and within the West Bank and Gaza. Israel claims that such restrictions are required for security reasons. They take three forms: (a) internal closure within the West Bank and between the West Bank and Gaza, reinforced periodically by curfews; (b) the external closure of crossings between Israel and the West Bank and between Israel and Gaza; and (c) the external closure of international crossings between the West Bank and Jordan and between Gaza and Egypt.⁴

10. Under external border closure, Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza are not allowed to enter Israel or East Jerusalem or travel to Jordan. This contributes to disconnecting them from the rest of the world. Under internal closure, Palestinians are not allowed to move between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip or between urban centres within the West Bank and surrounding villages.⁵ Furthermore, Israel imposed full curfews on Palestinian cities and villages, which sometimes lasted for several months. That paralysed economic activity and deprived large segments of the population of their income and heightened their vulnerability to various types of shocks. Palestinians who worked in Israel could not make it to their workplace under curfew conditions, and the demand for non-regular wage workers throughout the West Bank diminished. Self-employed Palestinians in urban areas and refugee camps could not open shops.

11. In addition to the closures, curfews and destruction of private and public infrastructure, Israel withheld, and did not transfer to the Palestinian National Authority, public revenues from taxes on Palestinian imports (clearance revenues) from December 2000 to December 2002. This not only undermined the ability of the Authority to plan and manage its finances and fund development projects, but also posed a significant challenge to its ability to meet its financial obligations, in particular footing civil service wages and covering current expenditures.⁶

³ B'Tselem – Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories, “Figures on comprehensive closure days”, 31 May 2021.

⁴ World Bank, *Four Years – Intifada, Closures and Palestinian Economic Crisis: An Assessment* (2004).

⁵ World Bank, *Fifteen Months – Intifada, Closures and Palestinian Economic Crisis: An Assessment* (2002); and World Bank, *Twenty-Seven Months – Intifada, Closures and Palestinian Economic Crisis: An Assessment* (2003).

⁶ *The Economic Costs of the Israeli Occupation for the Palestinian People: Cumulative Fiscal Costs* (United Nations publication, 2019).

12. The complex system of mobility restrictions, which Israel tightened after October 2000, has effectively turned the West Bank into an archipelago of islands fragmented by physical barriers in the form of permanent and flying checkpoints, metal gates, earth mounds, earth walls, roadblocks and trenches, in addition to curfews. Palestinians were either restricted or entirely prohibited from using 41 roads covering more than 700 km of roadway. By 2005, 300 of those barriers were still in place, and the barrier wall constructed by Israel in the West Bank had created new physical and economic constraints.⁷ In 2020, there were 593 movement obstacles in the West Bank, and construction of the 710 km barrier wall, which is more than twice the length of the Green Line (corresponding to the June 1967 border), had reached 64 per cent.⁸

A. The direct impact of measures imposed by Israel following the outbreak of the second intifada

13. The direct impact and costs of the additional restrictive measures and stricter closure policy imposed by Israel on the West Bank after the outbreak of the second intifada include the following:

(a) The cumulative economic cost in terms of lost potential income over the 2000–2004 period is estimated at \$6.4 billion, or 82 per cent of the Palestinian gross domestic product (GDP) in 1999 (see [TD/B/52/2](#));

(b) The loss of physical capital is estimated at \$3.5 billion, as a result of the destruction of private and public infrastructure and capital stock and the overuse of surviving physical capital, which represents 30 per cent of pre-2000 Palestinian capital stock (*ibid.*);

(c) In 2004 alone, 1,399 houses in the West Bank and Gaza were destroyed, rendering 10,683 people homeless. In the four years ending August 2004, 2,370 housing units were destroyed in the Gaza Strip, with approximately 22,800 people left homeless (*ibid.*);

(d) Palestinians are restricted from conducting business in Area C, which represents more than 60 per cent of the area in the West Bank. In 2013 the World Bank estimated that the lifting of restrictions on Palestinian economic activities in Area C would add 35 per cent to the Palestinian GDP;⁹

(e) The overall damage to the economy during the first 15 months following the outbreak of the second intifada was estimated at \$2.4 billion, raw physical damage was estimated at \$305 million, and lost investment opportunities were estimated at \$1.2 billion;¹⁰

(f) About half of Palestinian households lost more than 50 per cent of their usual income, and about 16 per cent of them suffered from precarious living conditions. It is reported that the median monthly income in the occupied Palestinian territory decreased from NIS 2,500 (\$750) before September 2000 to NIS 1,500 (\$450) at the end of 2004.¹¹

⁷ United Nations, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, “West Bank closure and access”.

⁸ United Nations, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, “West Bank access restrictions”, June 2020.

⁹ World Bank, *West Bank and Gaza: Area C and the Future of the Palestinian Economy*, Report No. AUS2922 (Washington, D.C., 2013).

¹⁰ World Bank, *Fifteen Months – Intifada, Closures and Palestinian Economic Crisis*.

¹¹ Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, *Levels of Living in the Palestinian Territory: the Final Report (January 2004–January 2005)* (2005). Available at www.pcbs.gov.ps/Downloads/book1188.pdf.

B. The long-lasting impact of restrictions and closures

14. The additional restrictive measures and stricter closure policy imposed by Israel on the West Bank after the second intifada have aggravated the Palestinian economy's pre-existing and deep-seated structural weaknesses and vulnerabilities to external shocks arising from the prolonged occupation, as manifested by volatile economic growth, persistently high unemployment rates and chronic internal and external deficits.¹²

15. Two decades after the second intifada, the complex matrix of restrictions and controls over the Palestinian economy is still in place (see [TD/B/65\(2\)/3](#)). The only contiguous part is Area C, which is inaccessible to Palestinian producers, even though it has the most valuable natural resources, such as fertile land, minerals and stones, as well as tourist attractions (see [TD/B/67/5](#)).

16. Daily life in the West Bank is constrained by measures taken by the occupying Power that result in casualties among civilians and the demolition of homes and productive assets. Moreover, the construction of the barrier wall and the installation of hundreds of checkpoints by the occupying Power disrupt the movement of Palestinian people and goods and hinder production and trade.¹³ Furthermore, the uncertainty of the permit system for the employment of Palestinian labour in the Israeli economy and Israeli settlements has a negative impact on household consumption and the entire economy. Those factors have been mutually reinforcing, thereby deepening the structural distortions of the Palestinian economy.¹⁴

C. Distorted, unsustainable and jobless growth

17. Since the Oslo Accords and the establishment of the Palestinian National Authority in 1994, the Palestinian economy has gone through three phases. In the first phase, corresponding to the period 1995–2000, hopes for a final status agreement were high, Israeli restrictions were less severe, donor support was dedicated mainly to finance development, and the Palestinian government was able to more or less balance its recurrent budget. During that period, the West Bank regional economy registered 10.7 per cent annual growth, with the unemployment rate reaching an all-time low, at 9.5 per cent in 1999, as illustrated in figures I and II.

18. During the second phase, corresponding to the period 2000–2006, Israel tightened its closure policy and imposed further restrictive measures in the West Bank, in addition to its military operations. Meanwhile, GDP per capita fell by 35 per cent in three years, from \$3,146 (2015 constant United States dollars) in 1999 to \$2,040 in 2002, while the unemployment rate tripled, from 9.5 per cent to 28.5 per cent (see figure II). The poverty rate rose from 11.6 per cent in 1998 to 40.7 per cent in the West Bank in 2004.

19. In the phase corresponding to the period 2007–2019, the annual growth rate of real GDP and real GDP per capita in the West Bank were 6.2 per cent and 4.0 per cent, respectively. After 2007, Israeli restrictions were eased, but they remained significant obstacles to economic growth and development. During that period, growth was volatile, ranging from 13.1 per cent in 2008 to 1.6 per cent in 2019. Such volatility is

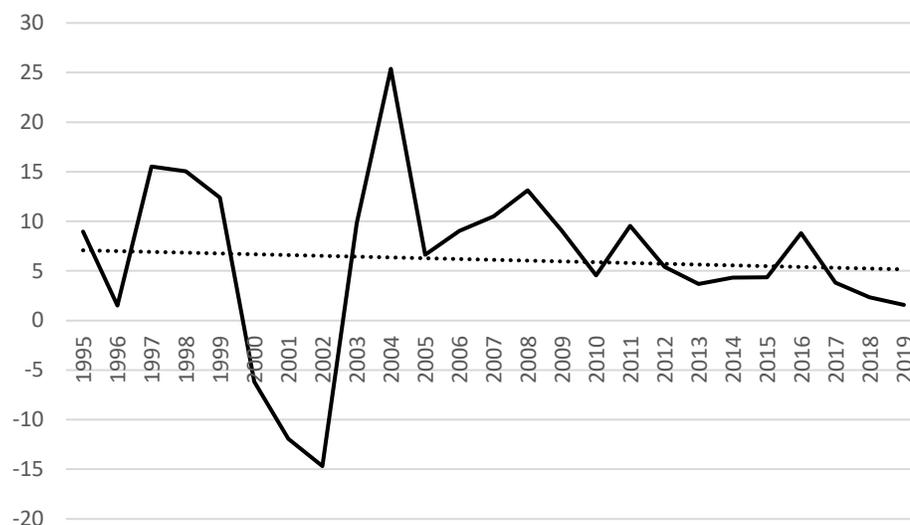
¹² *The Palestinian War-Torn Economy: Aid, Development and State Formation* (United Nations publication, 2006).

¹³ United Nations, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, "West Bank access restrictions".

¹⁴ *The Occupied Palestinian Territory: Twin Deficits or an Imposed Resource Gap?* (United Nations publication, 2017).

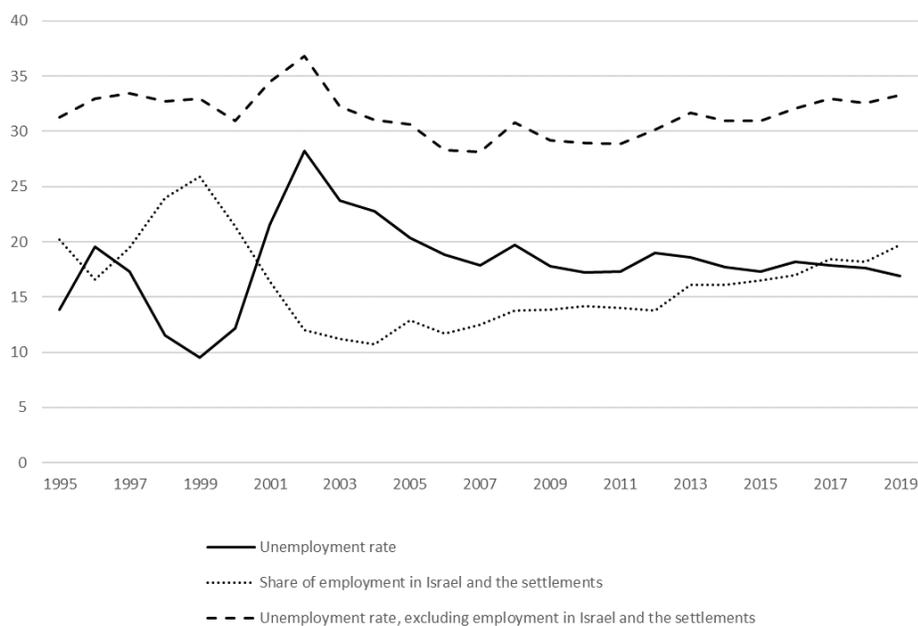
usually associated with a weak capacity for employment generation. During this third phase, the unemployment rate in the West Bank was high, hovering around 18 per cent.

Figure I
West Bank: real economic growth
(Percentage)



Source: Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, national accounts data; UNCTAD calculations.

Figure II
West Bank: unemployment rates and share of employment in Israel and the settlements
(Percentage)



Source: Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, labour survey, various issues; UNCTAD calculations.

20. The incapacity of the constrained West Bank regional economy to generate jobs forces many Palestinians to seek employment in Israel and its settlements.¹⁵ Figure II shows a strong negative correlation between the share, in total West Bank employment, of Palestinians working in Israel and the settlements and the overall unemployment rate. This reflects the dependence of the West Bank regional economy on Israel and its settlements for employment.

21. Without employment in Israel and its settlements, unemployment in the West Bank would have been much higher, at levels not far from the extremely high rates in Gaza, blockaded since 2007.¹⁶ On average, West Bank unemployment would have been 16 percentage points higher during the period 1995–2019 (see figure II). In 2019, without employment in Israel and its settlements, unemployment could have been as high as 37 per cent, instead of the recorded 17 per cent. But even with employment in Israel, the West Bank regional economy has not been able to reduce, or even stabilize, its unemployment rate since 1999. In other words, the West Bank went through two decades of jobless growth and arrested development.

III. Economic costs of the Israeli occupation of the West Bank, 2000–2019

22. In 2018, the World Bank estimated that a 10 per cent easing of road obstacles to improve market access would increase local output by 0.6 per cent and that GDP per capita would be much higher than its observed level. Furthermore, some relaxation of other restrictions by Israel could, by 2025, enlarge the Palestinian economy by 33 per cent.¹⁷

23. According to a 2013 World Bank study, the closures reduce firm profitability and labour demand and, consequently, decrease the probability of being employed. They also reduce hourly wages and the number of days worked, while increasing the number of working hours per day. The study estimated that checkpoints alone cost the West Bank regional economy at least 6.0 per cent of its GDP, and that placing one checkpoint one minute away from a locality reduces the probability of being employed by 0.41 per cent, the hourly wage by 6.3 per cent and working days by 2.6 per cent.¹⁸ According to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, the economy loses 60 million work-hours yearly (equivalent to \$274 million) as a result of mobility restrictions.¹⁹

24. Estimates of the economic costs incurred by the Palestinian people as a result of the significant tightening of Israeli closures and restrictions in the West Bank, in addition to its military operations, following the outbreak of the second intifada are provided below. As explained above, the direct result was the shrinking of the regional economy of the West Bank by one third during the period 2000–2003. It should be noted, however, that the reduction in the size of the economy has triggered a long-

¹⁵ *The Economic Costs of the Israeli Occupation for the Palestinian People.*

¹⁶ According to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, after the imposition of the blockade on Gaza in 2007, and during the period 2007–2019, the average unemployment rate in Gaza was 39.8 per cent – only 6 percentage points higher than the average rate in the West Bank after excluding employment in Israel and its settlements.

¹⁷ Roy van der Weide and others, “Obstacles on the road to Palestinian economic growth”, Policy Research Working Paper, No. 8385 (Washington, D.C., World Bank, 2018).

¹⁸ Massimiliano Cali and Sami H. Miaari, “The labour market impact of mobility restrictions: evidence from the West Bank”, Policy Research Working Paper, No. 6457 (Washington, D.C., World Bank, 2013).

¹⁹ Applied Research Institute – Jerusalem, “Assessing the impacts of Israeli movement restrictions on the mobility of people and goods in the West Bank”, 2019.

lasting cost that will continue to accumulate as long as those restrictions continue and as long as the occupying Power prevents the rebuilding of the eroded economic base.

25. On 28 September 2000, immediately after the outbreak of the second intifada, the occupying Power significantly tightened mobility and other restrictions imposed on the West Bank. It is difficult to determine the date on which those restrictions were relaxed to their pre-intifada levels. The estimation of the direct, long-lasting cost of the Israeli restrictions imposed after the second intifada is therefore based on a counterfactual growth path (scenario) of the West Bank regional economy that assumes that the significantly tighter Israeli restrictions, stricter closure policy and military operations were absent during the period 2000–2006.

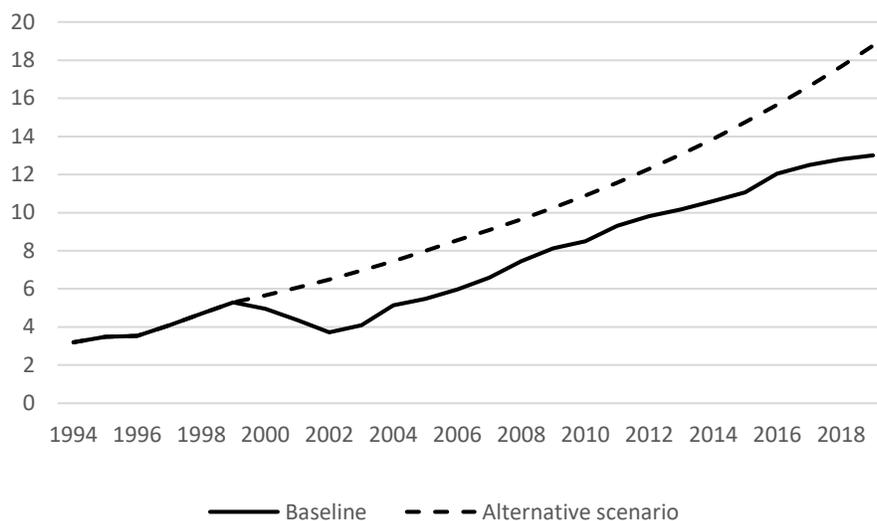
26. It should be stressed that this exercise is not aimed at answering the question, “What if there was no occupation?” Rather, it is designed to explore the implications and economic cost of the Israeli closures, restrictions and military operations that followed the outbreak of the second intifada by exploring what the situation could have been, had those events not occurred.

27. A counterfactual growth scenario was constructed, on the basis of the growth rate in the West Bank in the period prior to the second intifada (1995–1999) and the period that followed (2007–2019), for the period 2000–2006. That alternative scenario presumes that, between 2000 and 2003, the 29.5 per cent contraction of the West Bank regional economy did not occur, nor did the economic rebound of the three years that followed. Instead, it is assumed that, in the period 2000–2006, the economy grew at the compounded annual rate of 7.1 per cent, which was the average annual growth rate for the periods 1995–1999 and 2007–2019.

Figure III

West Bank: real gross domestic product, under baseline and alternative scenario

(Billions of constant 2015 United States dollars)



Source: Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, national accounts data; UNCTAD calculations.

Table 1
West Bank: estimated GDP and GDP per capita losses under baseline and alternative scenario

Year	<i>Real GDP</i> (millions of constant 2015 United States dollars)			<i>Percentage difference</i>	<i>Real GDP per capita</i> (constant 2015 United States dollars)		
	<i>Baseline</i>	<i>Alternative scenario</i>	<i>Difference</i>		<i>Baseline</i>	<i>Alternative scenario</i>	<i>Difference</i>
2000	4 958	5 661	703	14.2	2 866	3 272	406
2001	4 366	6 064	1 698	38.9	2 456	3 411	955
2002	3 725	6 496	2 771	74.4	2 040	3 558	1 518
2003	4 091	6 958	2 868	70.1	2 181	3 710	1 529
2004	5 129	7 454	2 325	45.3	2 662	3 868	1 207
2005	5 469	7 985	2 516	46.0	2 759	4 028	1 269
2006	5 962	8 553	2 591	43.5	2 923	4 193	1 270
2007	6 588	9 086	2 499	37.9	3 139	4 329	1 191
2008	7 451	9 653	2 201	29.5	3 471	4 496	1 025
2009	8 126	10 254	2 128	26.2	3 703	4 672	970
2010	8 496	10 894	2 398	28.2	3 788	4 857	1 069
2011	9 306	11 573	2 267	24.4	4 063	5 052	990
2012	9 810	12 294	2 484	25.3	4 195	5 257	1 062
2013	10 172	13 060	2 888	28.4	4 262	5 473	1 210
2014	10 610	13 874	3 264	30.8	4 359	5 699	1 341
2015	11 072	14 739	3 667	33.1	4 461	5 938	1 477
2016	12 046	15 658	3 612	30.0	4 761	6 189	1 427
2017	12 506	16 634	4 128	33.0	4 851	6 452	1 601
2018	12 797	17 671	4 873	38.1	4 854	6 703	1 849
2019	12 999	18 772	5 773	44.4	4 823	6 964	2 142
Cumulative	165 679	223 333	57 654	34.8			

Source: Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, national accounts data; UNCTAD calculations.

28. The results shown in figure III and table 1 suggest that the loss of potential GDP reflected by the counterfactual scenario is significant, in the sense that per capita output would have been significantly higher than it actually was. Under the alternative scenario, during the period 2000–2019, annual West Bank GDP would have been, on average, 35 per cent higher as compared with the observed (baseline) scenario, leading to a cumulative loss in potential real GDP of \$57.7 billion (constant 2015 United States dollars), which is equivalent to four and a half times the 2019 GDP of the West Bank and three and a half times the 2019 GDP of the occupied Palestinian territory.

29. Without the tighter Israeli restrictions, stricter closure policy and military operations following the outbreak of the second intifada, it is estimated that the West Bank GDP per capita would have been \$2,142, or 44 per cent, higher than it was in the baseline scenario in 2019 (see table 1). It is important to stress that the above results are only estimates of lost potential GDP, they do not include the cost of damage and destruction of assets by the Israeli military operations and other measures.

IV. Estimated poverty cost of occupation

30. This section provides an assessment of the deterioration in the welfare and living conditions of Palestinians in the West Bank as a result of the tighter restrictions that Israel imposed on the West Bank after the second intifada. Using the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics household survey data and census data, the poverty headcount, poverty gap and minimal cost of eliminating poverty were estimated for the period 1998–2017.²⁰

31. To evaluate the impact of the Israeli restrictions, poverty indicators are also estimated under the assumption that those restrictive measures had not been imposed, as in the counterfactual growth scenario described above. For the following analysis, the same terminologies and methodologies were applied as for the estimation presented by UNCTAD in its 2020 report to the General Assembly (A/75/310).

32. The poverty headcount is defined as the proportion of households living below the poverty line.²¹ Headcounts do not take into account the severity or depth of poverty, which is reflected by how far a given household falls below the poverty line. The poverty gap addresses that issue by adding the distance, in monetary terms, separating each household from the poverty line. The poverty gap therefore represents the average percentage shortfall of households relative to the poverty line.

33. The two poverty indicators were measured for selected years to assess the impact of the Israeli restrictive measures: (a) 1998, before the second intifada; (b) 2004, during the second intifada; (c) 2007, soon after the second intifada; and (d) 2017, more than a decade after the second intifada. As explained in the previous report (A/75/310), poverty indicators are estimated using two methods: the survey-based method and the empirical best prediction method. The latter improves the accuracy of poverty measures by combining information from expenditure and consumption surveys with the large sample available from census data.

A. Poverty in the West Bank²²

34. Using the relatively smaller household survey data set, the mean expenditure per adult equivalent²³ and the poverty line of 60 per cent of the national median total household expenditures per adult equivalent²⁴ are calculated for 1998, 2004, 2007 and 2017. The problem with that poverty line, when assessing the evolution of poverty in the West Bank over time, is that the median level of income (and thus 60 per cent of that median level) fell systematically in the wake of the second intifada, as can be seen in table 2.

²⁰ A more detailed analysis of poverty in the West Bank is discussed in a forthcoming United Nations Conference on Trade and Development technical paper entitled, “The economic costs of the Israeli occupation for the Palestinian people: arrested development and poverty in the West Bank”.

²¹ Including all cash and in-kind assistance provided to households by the government and non-governmental agencies.

²² The methodology and definitions used are discussed in detail in *The Economic Costs of the Israeli Occupation for the Palestinian People: the Impoverishment of Gaza under Blockade* (United Nations publication, 2020).

²³ According to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the World Bank, “adult equivalent” is defined as follows: $(1 + (\text{number of adults} - 1) \times 0.8 + (\text{number of children} \times 0.5))$. The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics uses a slightly different definition, namely: $((\text{number of adults} + 0.46 \times \text{number of children})^{0.89})$. Using adult equivalent terms, rather than per capita terms, reflects a more accurate picture of poverty, because household structures are highly heterogeneous, with different numbers of adults and children, who have different consumption requirements.

²⁴ This measure is used by the European Union, OECD, the United Nations Children’s Fund and the United Nations Development Programme. See also https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Glossary:At-risk-of-poverty_rate.

35. Using this method, only the level of poverty relative to each year's income distribution is considered, and not the precipitous fall in absolute living standards engendered by the restrictive Israeli measures. It is therefore not surprising that, using the above definition, the poverty rate and the poverty gap remained roughly constant. In contrast, when the 1998 poverty line (\$176) was used, the evolutions of the poverty headcount and poverty gap differed greatly, as they correctly reflected the fact that the additional restrictive measures imposed after the second intifada led to a drastic fall in living standards in the West Bank.

Table 2

West Bank: mean expenditures and 60 per cent of median expenditures per adult equivalent

(Constant 2015 United States dollars)

<i>Year</i>	<i>Mean expenditures per adult equivalent</i>	<i>Poverty line (60 per cent of median expenditures per adult equivalent)</i>
1998	410	176
2004	284	118
2007	335	122
2017	453	195

Source: UNCTAD calculations.

1. Survey-based method

36. The survey-based method directly uses the sample data in the Palestinian expenditures and consumption surveys to calculate the relationship between total expenditure per adult equivalent and individual, household and location characteristics in the survey. The survey samples indicate that the percentage of households in the West Bank living below the corresponding year's poverty line was 11.6 in 1998, 15.2 in 2004, 13.5 in 2007 and 13.7 per cent in 2017. Similarly, the poverty gap remained stable over time, between 2.8 and 4.0 per cent in the selected years.

37. Nevertheless, when the poverty line was kept at its 1998 level (see table 3), the poverty rate increased from 11.6 per cent in 1998 to 35.4 per cent in 2004, following the introduction of the post-intifada restrictions. It declined slightly, to 30.2 per cent, in 2007, but only returned to its pre-second intifada level 20 years later, in 2017. The poverty gap quadrupled, from 2.8 per cent in 1998 to 11.0 per cent in 2004, and only returned to its 1998 level in 2017.

38. The Gini coefficients generated from survey data also indicate that the impact of the Israeli restriction was more severe on the poorer segments of the population. This, in turn, led to an increase in inequality after the second intifada.²⁵ The Gini coefficient increased from 0.325 in 1998 to 0.362 in 2004, and again to 0.393 in 2007, before declining to 0.336 in 2017. Thus, it took 20 years for inequality to return to its 1998 level.

2. Empirical best prediction method

39. To mitigate the potential inefficiency of estimating of poverty indicators using the small sample from the survey-based method, the empirical best prediction method

²⁵ The Gini coefficient is a measure of the inequality of income distribution in a society. It equals 0 when income distribution is perfectly egalitarian and 1 when inequality reaches its maximum level.

combines the survey data with much more extensive census data.²⁶ Explanations concerning the empirical best prediction method and the underlying regression analysis are presented in the annex to the present report.

40. As with most countries, Palestinian census data do not include information on household consumption, expenditures or income. However, through the Palestinian expenditures and consumption surveys of 2004, 2007 and 2017 and the censuses of 2007 and 2017, data are compiled on a relatively broad set of common variables, including location (whether a household lives in an urban or rural area or in a refugee camp); characteristics of the household head (such as educational attainment); demographic characteristics of the household; sector of employment; employment status; access to basic services, such as public water; characteristics of the dwelling; and household assets.

Table 3
West Bank: poverty headcount and poverty gap

Year	Poverty headcount		Poverty gap	
	Survey-based	Empirical best prediction	Survey-based	Empirical best prediction
<i>Poverty line = 60 per cent of the median level of expenditures per adult equivalent for each year</i>				
1998	0.116		0.028	
2004	0.152	0.212	0.040	0.061
2007	0.135	0.188	0.034	0.054
2017	0.137	0.195	0.034	0.050
<i>1998 poverty line</i>				
1998	0.116		0.028	
2004	0.354	0.407	0.110	0.143
2007	0.302	0.352	0.090	0.120
2017	0.103	0.153	0.025	0.037

Source: UNCTAD calculations.

41. As shown in table 3, the poverty headcount and gap measured using the empirical best prediction method are approximately 6 percentage points higher than their survey-based counterparts. The poverty headcounts using the empirical best prediction method in 2004, 2007 and 2017 are estimated at 21, 19 and 20 per cent, respectively. Concomitantly, the measure of the poverty gap in the West Bank using the empirical best prediction method is higher than the survey-based method by about 2 percentage points in each of those years.

42. However, when the 1998 poverty line of \$176 is used, the evolutions of the poverty headcount and the poverty gap are completely different, and it becomes clear that the tighter restrictions, imposed following the intifada by the occupying Power, led to a substantial increase in poverty. As shown in the bottom half of table 3, by holding the poverty line at its 1998 level, the poverty rate increased from 11.6 per cent in 1998 to 40.7 per cent in 2004, and was still at 35.2 per cent in 2007. It only returned to its pre-second intifada level 20 years later, in 2017. The poverty gap was nearly two and half times higher in 2004 using the 1998 poverty line, reaching 14.3 per cent, and also only returned to its 1998 level in 2017.

²⁶ See Chris Elbers, Jean O. Lanjouw and Peter Lanjouw, "Micro-level estimation of poverty and inequality", *Econometrica*, vol. 71, No. 1 (January 2003); and Isabel Molina, J.N.K. Rao and Gauri Sankar Datta, "Small area estimation under a Fay-Herriot model with preliminary testing for the presence of random area effects", *Survey Methodology*, vol. 41, No. 1 (June 2015).

B. Estimated post-second intifada poverty cost of restrictions and closures in the West Bank

43. The minimum cost of eliminating poverty is equivalent to the least monetary aggregate of annual lump-sum transfer needed to lift all households up to the poverty line. It is calculated as follows:

$$\text{minimum cost of eliminating poverty} = \text{poverty gap} \times \text{poverty line} \times 12 \text{ months} \times \text{number of adult equivalents per household} \times \text{number of households.}$$

Using the poverty gap estimated by the empirical best prediction method (see table 3), the minimum real cost of eliminating poverty in constant 2015 United States dollars in the West Bank in 1998, 2004, 2007 and 2017 was calculated and is reported in table 4.

44. Following the tighter closures and restrictions imposed by Israel after the second intifada, the annual minimum real cost of eliminating poverty in the West Bank increased nearly fivefold between 1998 and 2004, from \$73 million (constant 2015 United States dollars) to \$356 million, reaching \$428 million in 2007 (almost six times the minimum cost in 1998). The difference between the 1998 minimum cost and that of the years that followed is a measure of the cost of the Israeli measures in terms of poverty. As presented in table 4, that difference was equivalent to more than 5 per cent of the West Bank GDP in 2004 and 2007. Some 17 years after the second intifada, the percentage difference was 0.7 per cent of the GDP, which reflects the long-lasting effects of the restrictive Israeli measures.

Table 4

West Bank: minimum annual cost of eliminating poverty

(Millions of constant 2015 United States dollars)

Year	Minimum cost	Percentage of West Bank GDP	Difference as compared with 1998	Percentage of West Bank GDP
1998	73	1.6	–	–
2004	356	6.9	283	5.5
2007	428	6.4	355	5.3
2017	162	1.3	89	0.7

Source: UNCTAD calculations.

V. Impact of the economic cost of occupation on poverty in the West Bank

45. The question of what the poverty rate and poverty gap would be had the tighter Israeli restrictions, stricter closure policy and military operations not been imposed following the outbreak of second intifada is addressed in this section. The answer is determined by estimating the poverty indicators associated with growth rates of the West Bank regional economy in the counterfactual scenario set out in table 1.

46. The device used for answering that question is the growth incidence curve,²⁷ which offers a transparent way to understand changes in the distribution of household expenditures over time. The mean growth rate of household expenditures is a useful indicator, but does not provide any idea about how different categories of households have benefited, or not benefited, from increases in average expenditures. If growth is pro-poor, a given mean increase in household expenditures per adult equivalent

²⁷ The growth incidence curve was first introduced in Martin Ravallion and Shaohua Chen, "Measuring pro-poor growth", *Economics Letters*, vol. 78, No. 1 (January 2003).

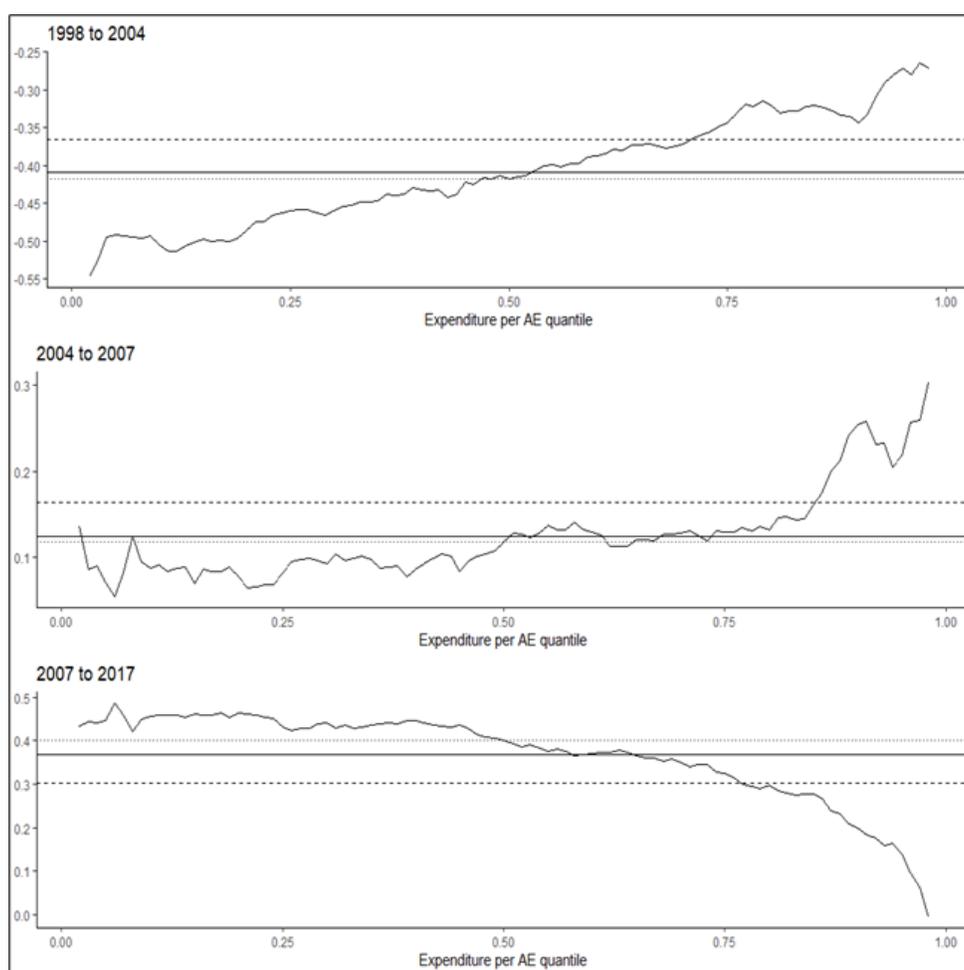
should benefit poor households more than non-poor households. Graphically, pro-poor growth corresponds to a growth incidence curve that is above the mean level of growth for lower quantiles of the expenditure distribution, and below it for higher quantiles, leading to a downward-sloping curve (see figure IV).

47. The immediate effect of the tighter Israeli closures and restrictions imposed on the West Bank after the second intifada was more severe for the poorer segments of the population, as illustrated by the upward sloping nature of the top two growth incidence curves shown in figure IV. It was only after the restrictive measures were somewhat relaxed in the past decade that growth in the West Bank became relatively pro-poor (bottom growth incidence curve in figure IV).

Figure IV

West Bank: growth incidence curves, 1998–2004, 2004–2007 and 2007–2017

(Percentage change in total household expenditures)



Source: UNCTAD calculations.

Note: The growth incidence curve plots the distribution of households' expenditure per adult equivalent over the entire population: the horizontal axis represents each quantile of the distribution, and the vertical axis measures the percentage change in the total household expenditures of each quantile over the analysis period. The horizontal solid line in each of the above graphs represents the mean growth rate of household expenditures per adult equivalent, and the dotted line and the dashed line represent growth at the mean and median, respectively. Any quantile of the population that benefited more than the mean will be on the curve above the horizontal solid line; any quantile of the population that benefited less than the mean will be on the curve below that line. A pro-poor growth therefore corresponds to a downward-sloping curve.

Abbreviation: AE, adult equivalent.

48. The counterfactual poverty headcount and poverty gap were estimated by applying the economic growth rate of the counterfactual scenario (see table 1), the survey-based method and the monthly poverty line of 1998, namely, \$176 per adult equivalent (constant 2015 United States dollars). For 2004, it was assumed that the relative growth of each household's expenditures per adult equivalent would have followed that of the 1998–2004 growth incidence curve. For 2017, in order to ascertain what might have happened had a more pro-poor growth pattern been obtained, it was assumed that the relative growth of each household's expenditures per adult equivalent would have followed the 2007–2017 growth incidence curve for the entire 1998–2017 period.

49. The results are in line with the previous analysis: the counterfactual poverty rate in 2004 would have been 11.7 per cent, in contrast to the actual rate of 35.4 per cent. Similarly, the poverty gap in the counterfactual scenario would have been 4.8 per cent instead of the recorded 11.0 per cent (see table 5). For 2017, the counterfactual poverty rate would have been 6.0 per cent instead of 10.3 per cent, and the poverty gap would have increased slightly, to 4.5 instead of 2.5 per cent.²⁸

Table 5
West Bank: poverty headcount and poverty gap under baseline and alternative scenario

Year	Poverty headcount		Poverty gap	
	Survey-based scenario (baseline)	Alternative scenario	Survey-based scenario (baseline)	Alternative scenario
<i>1998 poverty line</i>				
1998	0.116		0.028	
2004	0.354	0.117	0.110	0.048
2017	0.103	0.060	0.025	0.045

Source: UNCTAD calculations.

50. The clear finding is that the post-second intifada closure policy and restrictions thwarted West Bank economic expansion and led to massive losses in inhabitants' livelihoods, in particular for households living below the 1998 poverty line.

VI. Conclusions and recommendations

51. The tighter closures and restrictions imposed by Israel on the West Bank after the second Palestinian intifada have aggravated the economy's deep-seated and structural weaknesses and vulnerability to internal and external shocks. This is manifested by volatile economic growth, chronic fiscal and external deficits and persistently high unemployment and poverty rates. Not only did those measures have harmful short-term effects, but, more importantly, they also had long-lasting impacts that continue to constrain the regional economy of the West Bank until today.

52. The West Bank regional economy experienced two decades of jobless growth, with the unemployment rate averaging 18 per cent between 1995 and 2019. Without employment in Israel and its settlements, the unemployment rate would have been 16 percentage points higher, at par with the extremely high rate in the Gaza Strip,

²⁸ The reason for the slight increase in the 2017 counterfactual poverty gap is that most of the poor households that moved above the poverty line were not actually far below it; only those who were actually very far below the line remained poor in the counterfactual scenario.

which has been under closure since 2007. The cumulative economic cost of the tighter Israel restrictions during the period 2000–2019 is estimated at \$58 billion (constant 2015 United States dollars), equivalent to four and a half times the size of the regional economy of the West Bank, or three and a half times the size of the entire economy of the occupied Palestinian territory in 2019.

53. In terms of poverty, the impact of the tighter Israeli restrictions was severe and long-lasting, especially for the poorer segments of the population in the West Bank, who were less able to benefit from the economic recovery after the second intifada until 2007. Without the tighter Israeli restrictions imposed after the second intifada, the poverty rate in the West Bank would have been equal to 11.7 per cent in 2004, instead of 35.4 per cent, while the poverty gap would have been equal to 4.8 per cent instead of 11.0 per cent. Furthermore, the real minimum cost of eliminating poverty in the West Bank jumped from \$73 million (constant 2015 United States dollars) in 1998 to \$356 million in 2004, and \$428 million in 2007.

54. Member States may wish to consider the following:

(a) Terminating and reversing the evolving and cumulative cost of the Israeli occupation for the Palestinian people cannot be realized without ending the occupation, in line with the relevant United Nations resolutions;

(b) The fulfilment of paragraph 9 of General Assembly resolution [75/20](#) requires the establishment, within the United Nations system, of a systematic, evidence-based, comprehensive and sustainable framework to assess the costs of occupation and report the results to the Assembly. The establishment of such a framework will require securing additional resources (see [A/71/174](#), paras. 2, 10 and 35; and [A/73/201](#)).

55. Israel, as the occupying Power, should:

(a) Enable the Palestinian public and private sectors to develop agricultural, industrial, commercial and mining business in Area C (at least 60 per cent of the area in the West Bank), which contains the most valuable natural resources, including fertile land, minerals, stones and tourist attraction sites in the occupied Palestinian territory;

(b) Lift all the mobility restrictions in the occupied Palestinian territory and re-establish the contiguity of the territory by reconnecting East Jerusalem and all the cities and villages in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip with each other. Gaza is, and must remain, an integral part of a future Palestinian State as part of a two-State solution. The focus must be on lifting the debilitating closures in Gaza, in line with Security Council resolution [1860 \(2009\)](#) and, ultimately, returning to a peace process that will end the occupation and create a viable two-State solution;

(c) End and reverse all settlement activities in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, as called for by the Security Council in its resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#), in which it reaffirms that the establishment by Israel of settlements in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, has no legal validity and constitutes a flagrant violation under international law.

56. The State of Palestine may wish to consider implementing pro-poor and inclusive growth strategies that target the poor and involve large-scale investment in employment-intensive sectors, so as to reduce poverty and generate sufficient decent job opportunities in the domestic economy and, consequently, reduce dependence on the precarious employment situation in Israel and its settlements.

57. The Palestinian people's right to statehood cannot be replaced by humanitarian and economic assistance, essential as these may be in the interim. The United Nations will continue to work towards the realization of a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East on the basis of relevant United Nations resolutions, including resolutions [242 \(1967\)](#), [338 \(1973\)](#), [1397 \(2002\)](#), [1515 \(2003\)](#), [1850 \(2008\)](#), [1860 \(2009\)](#) and [2334 \(2016\)](#), an end to the occupation that began in 1967 and the

establishment of a sovereign, democratic, viable and contiguous Palestinian State, existing side by side in peace with a secure Israel. It is only by realizing the vision of two States living side by side in peace, security and mutual recognition, with Jerusalem as the capital of both Israel and the State of Palestine, and all final status issues resolved permanently through negotiations, that the legitimate aspirations of both peoples will be achieved.

Annex

Estimation of the empirical best prediction method

1. The empirical best prediction method follows three steps to estimate the poverty headcount and gap. First, data from the expenditures and consumption surveys are used to estimate regression equations for household expenditures per adult equivalent on the basis of the observable characteristics of households. Second, the estimated coefficients of the regressions are combined with the census data to impute household expenditures per adult equivalent for the larger sample of households included in the census.¹ Third, the imputed measures of household expenditures are used to recalculate the poverty headcount and poverty gap measures for each year. For the statistical relationship linking household expenditures per adult equivalent to the household characteristics to be estimated, this information must be available in both the survey data and the census data that constitute the basis for the estimation.

2. The table below shows the results of regressing log expenditures per adult equivalent (in constant 2015 United States dollars) on the set of standard covariates, at the national level. To maximize comparability between the synthetic income measures that will be constructed using census data and the estimated coefficients, a common set of covariates over the three sample surveys were maintained in the regressions for 2004, 2007 and 2017. There are three exceptions, namely: employment abroad in 2004; employment in Israel and the settlements in 2004; and access to electricity in 2017. Of course, the regressions should not be interpreted in causal terms.

Regression results: determinants of monthly real expenditures per adult equivalent

(Constant 2015 United States dollars)

Independent variables	Palestinian expenditures and consumption survey		
	2004	2007	2017
Intercept	4.991 (0.157) ^a	5.442 (0.462) ^a	5.641 (0.148) ^a
Location (West Bank and urban are the base categories)			
Gaza Strip	-0.120 (0.024) ^a	-0.414 (0.045) ^a	-0.408 (0.027) ^a
Rural	0.070 (0.025) ^b	-0.045 (0.044)	-0.053 (0.020) ^b
Camp	-0.012 (0.026)	-0.038 (0.052)	-0.016 (0.029)
Characteristics of household head			
Gender	0.102 (0.035) ^b	0.078 (0.061)	0.036 (0.031)
Marital status	0.072 (0.064)	-0.008 (0.130)	-0.019 (0.058)
Refugee status	-0.066 (0.021) ^b	-0.064 (0.038)	-0.032 (0.019)
Education level	0.066 (0.022) ^b	0.093 (0.039) ^c	0.064 (0.019) ^a
Demographic characteristics of household			
Number of females	-0.098 (0.006) ^a	-0.105 (0.011) ^a	-0.118 (0.007) ^a
Number of males	-0.087 (0.007) ^a	-0.077 (0.013) ^a	-0.089 (0.007) ^a
Number of adult males	-0.001 (0.009)	-0.002 (0.016)	0.003 (0.009)
Number of adult females	0.003 (0.011)	0.018 (0.021)	-0.008 (0.012)
Sector of employment (services are the base category)			
Agriculture	-0.142 (0.031) ^a	-0.110 (0.058)	-0.067 (0.036)

¹ To impute the household level of expenditure per adult equivalent for 2004, the estimated coefficients obtained from the regression using the Palestinian expenditures and consumption surveys from 2004 were combined with the data from the 2007 census, which covered a greater number of households.

<i>Independent variables</i>	<i>Palestinian expenditures and consumption survey</i>		
	<i>2004</i>	<i>2007</i>	<i>2017</i>
Industry	-0.039 (0.031)	0.012 (0.169)	-0.032 (0.030)
Construction	-0.079 (0.027) ^b	-0.019 (0.052)	-0.030 (0.027)
Employment status			
Number of employed household members	0.044 (0.011) ^a	0.066 (0.019) ^a	0.048 (0.011) ^a
Employment in Israel and the settlements		0.209 (0.058) ^a	0.166 (0.027) ^a
Employment abroad		-0.198 (0.199)	0.021 (0.127)
Employment in government	0.074 (0.027) ^b	-0.001 (0.048)	0.107 (0.025) ^a
Access to basic services			
Access to public water	0.013 (0.031)	-0.134 (0.059) ^c	-0.158 (0.027) ^a
Connection to sewage network	0.122 (0.021) ^a	0.146 (0.041) ^a	-0.023 (0.021)
Access to electricity	-0.085 (0.078)	0.027 (0.167)	
Characteristics of dwelling			
House ownership	-0.201 (0.034) ^a	-0.237 (0.050) ^a	-0.053 (0.023) ^c
Number of rooms	0.014 (0.006) ^c	0.049 (0.016) ^b	0.039 (0.012) ^a
Number of bedrooms	0.047 (0.014) ^a	-0.049 (0.029)	-0.007 (0.017)
Gas for cooking energy	0.136 (0.058) ^c	-0.148 (0.112)	0.026 (0.070)
Gas for heating	0.073 (0.023) ^b	0.031 (0.040)	-0.015 (0.021)
House has a kitchen	0.030 (0.103)	0.371 (0.344)	0.053 (0.115)
House has a bathroom	0.077 (0.085)	0.076 (0.325)	-0.067 (0.028) ^c
House has a toilet	-0.219 (0.107) ^c	-0.391 (0.328)	0.034 (0.020)
Household assets			
Car	0.199 (0.023) ^a	0.236 (0.040) ^a	0.379 (0.020) ^a
Refrigerator	0.119 (0.040) ^b	0.083 (0.085)	0.098 (0.052)
Boiler	0.014 (0.021)	0.109 (0.039) ^b	0.096 (0.018) ^a
Central heating	0.283 (0.068) ^a	0.323 (0.128) ^c	0.072 (0.078)
Vacuum	0.146 (0.027) ^a	0.097 (0.043) ^c	0.075 (0.020) ^a
Cooking stove	0.139 (0.086)	-0.030 (0.193)	0.025 (0.030)
Washing machine	0.079 (0.034) ^c	0.062 (0.068)	-0.057 (0.017) ^b
Home library	0.129 (0.024) ^a	0.151 (0.041) ^a	0.090 (0.026) ^a
Television	0.072 (0.042)	0.082 (0.082)	0.170 (0.019) ^a
Telephone line	0.204 (0.021) ^a	0.197 (0.038) ^a	0.072 (0.019) ^a
Computer	0.133 (0.022) ^a	0.155 (0.038) ^a	0.060 (0.019) ^b
Mobile telephone	0.214 (0.023) ^a	0.267 (0.051) ^a	0.191 (0.025) ^a
R ²	0.495	0.515	0.535
Adjusted R ²	0.489	0.498	0.530
Number of observations	3 089	1 223	3 708

Source: UNCTAD calculations.

Note: Standard errors are in parentheses.

Abbreviation: R², proportion of the variance for a dependent variable that is explained by an independent variable.

^a Where p-value is less than 0.001.

^b Where p-value is less than 0.01 but greater than 0.001.

^c Where p-value is less than 0.05 but greater than 0.01.



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Question of Palestine

Economic costs of the Israeli occupation for the Palestinian people: the toll of the additional restrictions in Area C, 2000–2020

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the General Assembly the report prepared by the secretariat of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development.

* [A/77/150](#).



**Report prepared by the secretariat of the United Nations
Conference on Trade and Development on the economic costs of
the Israeli occupation for the Palestinian people: the toll of the
additional restrictions in Area C, 2000–2020**

Summary

The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution [75/20](#), in which the Assembly requested the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development to report to it on the economic costs of the Israeli occupation for the Palestinian people. This report complements the findings of previous UNCTAD reports submitted to the Assembly ([A/71/174](#), [A/73/201](#), [A/74/272](#), [A/75/310](#) and [A/76/309](#)).

With the onset of the occupation in 1967, Israel implemented a long-term policy for the establishment of settlements in Area C of the occupied West Bank and in occupied East Jerusalem. To facilitate the expansion of settlements, Israel imposed strict restrictions on Palestinian economic activities in Area C, over and above those imposed in Areas A and B of the West Bank. Israel, the occupying Power includes 70 per cent of Area C within the boundaries of the regional councils of settlements, rendering that area off limits for Palestinian development. Meanwhile, Palestinian access to the remainder of Area C remains heavily restricted.

A variety of controls imposed by occupation constrain economic development in Areas A and B in the West Bank. These include the ban on the importation of certain technology and inputs under the dual-list system and a myriad of mobility and other restrictions which inflate the cost of production and undermine competitiveness of Palestinian producers in domestic and foreign markets.

This report estimates the economic cost of the additional restrictions on Palestinian economic activity in the remainder of Area C. The annual cost of these restrictions is estimated at 25.3 per cent of West Bank gross domestic product (GDP) and the cumulative GDP loss during the period 2000–2020 is estimated at \$50 billion (\$45 billion constant 2015 dollars), about three times West Bank GDP in 2020 and over 2.5 times Palestinian GDP in the same year. The cost is estimated based on an innovative, well-established methodology which uses nighttime luminosity captured by satellite sensors over a span of time.

Moreover, the contribution of Area C settlements and of occupied East Jerusalem, to the economy of Israel is estimated at an average of \$30 billion (constant 2015 dollars) per year, or 2.7 times annual Palestinian GDP during the period 2000–2020. In other words, the cumulative contribution of settlements to the economy of Israel between 2000 and 2020 is estimated at \$628 billion (constant 2015 dollars), or 2.7 times Palestinian GDP during that period.

Full Palestinian access to all of Area C is a sine qua non for the sustainable development of the Occupied Palestinian Territory and for the emergence of a viable, contiguous Palestinian State based on the two-State solution, in line with relevant United Nations resolutions. This requires ending and reversing settlement activities and lifting all restrictions on Palestinian development in Area C and beyond. As envisioned in General Assembly and Security Council resolutions, a lasting and comprehensive peace can be achieved only through a negotiated two-State solution.

I. Objective and limitation

1. The present report is an addition to five previous reports, prepared by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and submitted to the General Assembly, on the economic costs of the Israeli occupation for the Palestinian people. This report adds to the findings of its predecessors, providing further aspects of the complex and extensive economic cost exacted by the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territory in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem.

2. The present 2022 report focuses on the economic cost of the Israeli occupation of Area C, which accounts for about 60 per cent of the total area of the occupied West Bank. While the occupation also imposes significant restrictions on Palestinian economic activity in Areas A and B, it imposes more restrictions in Area C. This report estimates the cost of these additional restrictions to economic activities in Area C, outside the settlements. The cost to economic activities is estimated by applying an innovative yet well-established methodology that uses nighttime luminosity (NTL), captured by satellite sensors over a span of time, to estimate economic activity.

3. The estimation covers the period 2000–2020. The year 2000 was chosen as a starting point for the estimation, as it was supposed to be the first year following the end of the five-year “interim period”¹ stipulated by the 1993 Oslo Accords. Nevertheless, more than two decades later, the political and economic arrangements of the said interim period continue to shape the reality of Palestinian life on the ground and Israeli settlements, which are illegal under international law, continue to expand in Area C, inflicting considerable damage on the livelihood of the Palestinian people not only in Area C but throughout the entire Occupied Palestinian Territory. The inability of Palestinian producers to access the resources of Area C pre-empts positive spillover effects to the rest of the Palestinian economy through forward and backward linkages. Furthermore, the loss of potential income undermines the fiscal capacity of the Palestinian Government and thus undermines the development of the whole economy.²

4. The report considers these economic costs from two perspectives. First, it estimates conservatively the potential Palestinian gross domestic product (GDP) that has been lost but could have been realized if Palestinian economic activities in Area C (excluding the settlements in that Area and not including East Jerusalem) had been subjected to the same level of restrictions imposed by the occupying Power on economic activities in Areas A and B in the West Bank. Second, it offers an estimation of the portion of Israeli GDP produced in East Jerusalem and in settlements elsewhere in the West Bank.

5. It should be stressed that the estimation in this report accounts for only a fraction of the cost for the Palestinian people emanating from the Israeli occupation of Area C during the period 2000–2020. The estimation includes neither the cost of the presence of settlements and the associated loss of land and natural resources nor the cost of the first layer of restrictions deployed in Areas A, B and C. The cost estimated here pertains only to the additional restrictions on economic activity applied in Area C over and above those imposed on Areas A and B. It is an even smaller fraction of the staggering total cost that occupation imposes on the whole of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, as documented by UNCTAD and other international organizations.

¹ The interim period was a period of five years for reaching a permanent settlement in accordance with Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) from the date of signature of the Agreement on the Gaza Strip and the Jericho Area of 4 May 1994.

² See Security Council resolution 2334 (2016).

II. Settlements, restrictions and the fragmentation of the West Bank

6. The occupying Power deploys a matrix of administrative and physical controls over Palestinian resources, trade and the movement of people. It claims that such restrictions are required for security reasons. In the West Bank, divided into different administrative areas, the multilayer control system that impedes the movement of Palestinian people and goods includes application of a stringent permit regime, bureaucratic controls and hundreds of permanent and flying checkpoints, gates, earth mounds, roadblocks and trenches in addition to the Wall and the physical presence of settlements and the infrastructure networks that sustain them. This matrix of control transforms the West Bank into an archipelago of scattered islands and increases the travel distance between towns and localities as well as the transportation cost. Elements of this complex control system are mutually reinforcing and ultimately contribute to the expansion of settlements.

7. In accordance with the stipulations of the 1993 Oslo Accords, the occupied West Bank was divided into three administrative areas. Area A was placed under the civil and security administration of the Palestinian National Authority. It represents about 18 per cent of the total area of the West Bank and includes the Palestinian cities and most of the Palestinian population of the West Bank. Area B, which represents approximately 22 per cent of the area of the West Bank, is largely rural and subject to Palestinian civil control and joint Israeli-Palestinian security control. Area C, which accounts for about 60 per cent of the area of the West Bank, incorporates all Israeli settlements and is fully under Israeli civil and security control.

8. The Oslo Accords stipulate that Area C would gradually be transferred to the Palestinian National Authority over the course of a five-year period, ending in 1999. However, settlements continued to grow relentlessly, further fragmenting the West Bank and undermining Palestinian livelihoods not only in Area C but throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

9. Areas A and B are subdivided into 166 islands with no contiguity and surrounded by Area C, which is the only contiguous part of the West Bank. Area C is largely inaccessible to Palestinian producers, although it is the largest area and has the most valuable natural resources, such as fertile land, minerals, stone, tourist attractions and ingredients for cosmetic products. The wall, together with the settlements, deepens the economic, physical, administrative and legal fragmentation of the occupied Palestinian territory (figure I).

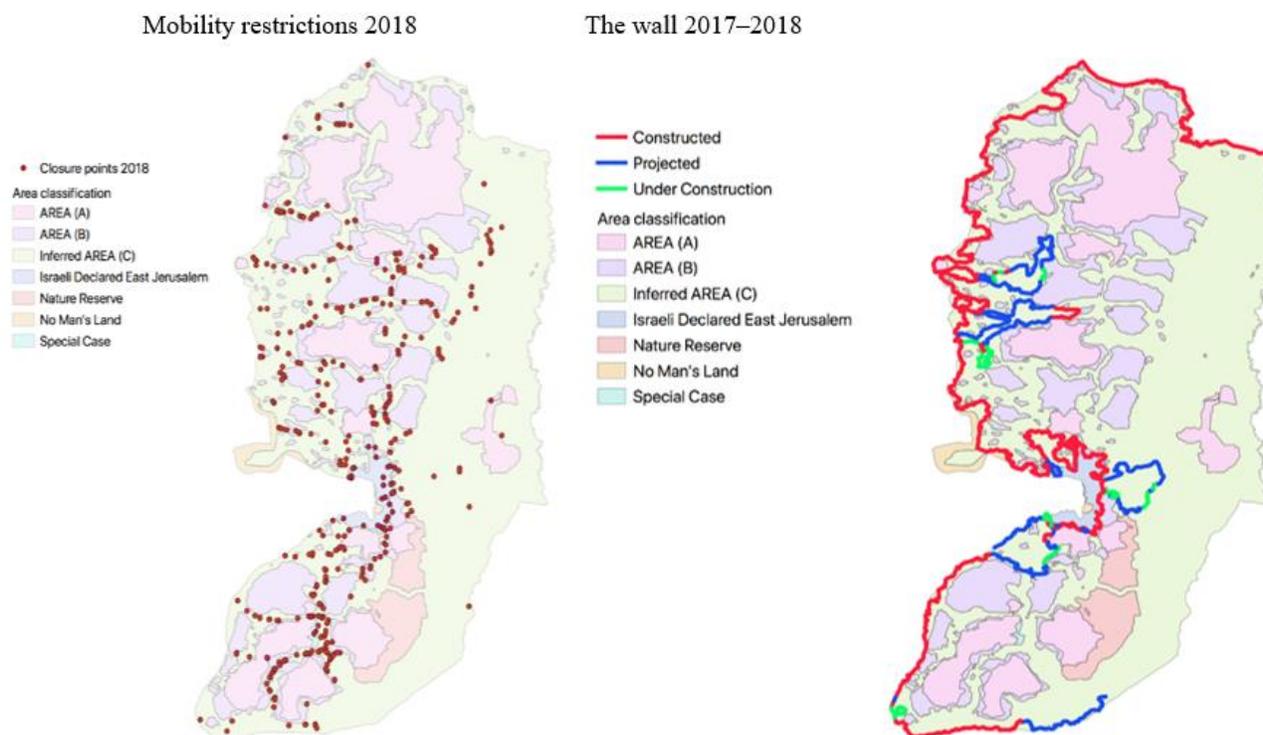
10. In 1967, Israel began establishing settlements in the occupied West Bank, with the growth of settlements in recent years bringing 70 per cent of Area C within the boundaries of their regional councils and rendering that chunk off limits for Palestinian use and development (figure II). Palestinian access to the remainder of Area C is heavily restricted. The present report estimates the economic cost of the additional restrictions on Palestinian economic activity in the remaining 30 per cent of Area C. Those restrictions facilitate the establishment of settlements and their expansion, they foster the setting aside of land and natural resources for settlers and create a difficult environment which forces the Palestinian population to leave Area C.

11. The occupying Power provides significant incentives to facilitate industrial and agricultural ventures, and hundreds of thousands of Israeli citizens were encouraged to move to subsidized settlements, where standards of living are, on average, higher than in Israel.³

³ B'Tselem – Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories, “This is ours, and this, too: Israel’s settlement policy in the West Bank”, 2021. Available at www.btselem.org/publications/202103_this_is_ours_and_this_too. See also UNCTAD, Trade and Development Board, “Report on UNCTAD assistance to the Palestinian people: developments in the economy of the Occupied Palestinian Territory”, note by the UNCTAD secretariat (TD/B/EX(71)/2), 20 September 2021, para. 41.

12. The settler population rose from 198,315 in 2000 to 311,136 in 2010 and to more than 650,000 in early 2021.⁴ However, in several resolutions, the Security Council emphasized the illegality of settlements and the acquisition of territory by force. In its resolution 2334 (2016), the Council reaffirmed that establishment by Israel of settlements in the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem, has no legal validity and constitutes a flagrant violation under international law and a major obstacle to the achievement of the two-State solution and a just, lasting and comprehensive peace.

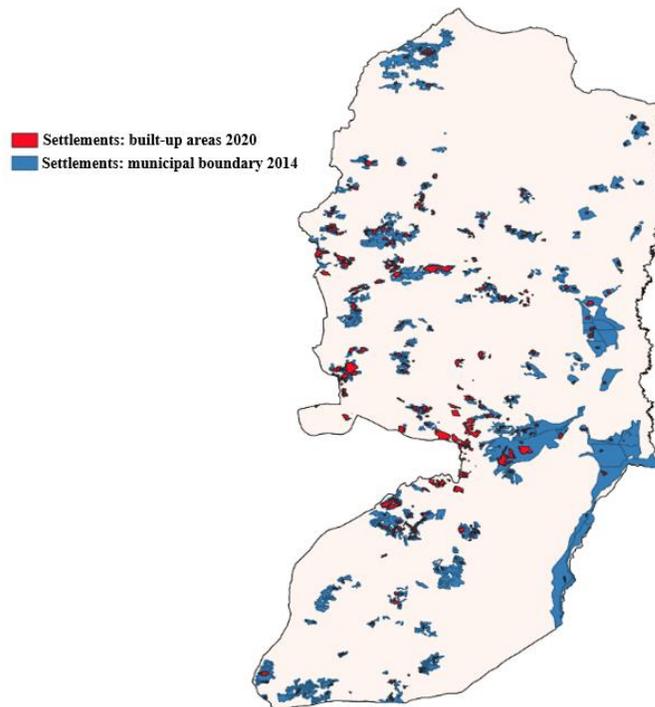
Figure I
Mobility restrictions (2018) and the wall (2017–2018)



Source: United Nations, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, occupied Palestinian territory.

⁴ Ibid.

Figure II
Israeli settlements: Built-up areas (2020) and municipal boundary (2014)



Source: United Nations, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, occupied Palestinian territory.

13. Through settlements and by supporting and subsidizing related residential and agricultural activities, the occupying Power appropriates Palestinian natural resources, including water, while limiting the ability of Palestinian farmers to dig wells and access the water they need.⁵

14. Settlements create a structure of dispossession, they determine the land and roads Palestinians cannot use, the route of the wall and the location of checkpoints, and otherwise restrict the movement of Palestinian people, including workers, and goods. Palestinians and settlers do not have equal rights in the territory controlled by Israel, as attested, inter alia, by different laws and unequal access to factors of production, land, roads, infrastructure, water resources and basic services.⁶

15. “Outposts” in the occupied West Bank are also being established. In the first half of 2021, there were 150 outposts, devoted mostly to agricultural and animal production. Outposts are illegal even under Israeli law, yet some receive public and State support through various direct and indirect means.⁷ They are often integrated into the infrastructure networks serving settlements, which enables them to receive water and electricity, among other vital services. Settlers in some outposts have access to mortgages, roads and, in some cases, schools and other facilities. Once outposts

⁵ Marco Allegra and Erez Maggor, “The metropolitanization of Israel’s settlement policy: the colonization of the West Bank as a strategy of spatial restructuring”, *Political Geography*, vol. 92. No. 2 (January 2022), 102513.

⁶ United Nations, Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, “Concluding observations on the combined seventeenth to nineteenth reports of Israel” (CERD/C/ISR/CO/17-19), 27 January 2020.

⁷ Peace Now, “From de jure to de facto annexation: 2020 settlement construction report”, March 2021. Available at <https://peacenow.org.il/en/settlement-construction-report-2020>.

have been established, the occupying Power retroactively regularizes some of them and integrates them into official settlements. In 2020, plans were advanced to retroactively authorize four outposts as “neighbourhoods” of existing settlements.⁸

16. Another factor detrimental to the economy of the Occupied Palestinian Territory has been the construction of the “Barrier” by Israel in the West Bank, which began in 2002. The wall encroaches deeply into Palestinian land: 85 per cent of the wall will be built on Palestinian land and not along the internationally recognized pre-1967 borders (the Green Line). As a result, when finished, its length will be 712 km, or more than twice the length of the Green Line (320 km). Consequently, 9.4 per cent of the area of the West Bank (527 km²), including East Jerusalem, now lies in the “seam zone”, between the wall and the Green Line (figure I), resulting in a significantly negative impact on economic activity inside the zone.⁹

17. The legal position on the wall was set out by the International Court of Justice following the request of the General Assembly for an advisory opinion. The International Court of Justice found that the construction of the wall by the occupying Power in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including in and around East Jerusalem and its associated regime, are contrary to international law.¹⁰ The loss to Palestinian industry and agriculture stemming from this takeover of land constitutes a cost of occupation for the Palestinian people.

18. Settlements, outposts and the wall in the occupied West Bank inflict a heavy economic cost on the Palestinian people, dispossess them of their inalienable right to development, entrench occupation and pre-empt a meaningful, sustainable two-State solution.

19. A dearth of jobs in the constrained domestic economy forces a large number of Palestinian workers to seek employment in Israel and settlements in the occupied territory. This dependency on employment in the Israeli economy has accelerated in recent years. With the exception of a small percentage employed in the information technology and health sectors, most Palestinians are employed as unskilled workers in different sectors, such as construction and agriculture. By early 2022, the number of Palestinians employed in Israel and settlements had reached 153,000, or one fifth of the West Bank employed labour force. Employment in Israel and settlements generates substantial income for West Bank workers who earn close to \$3 billion per year, about a quarter of West Bank GDP, and thus support aggregate demand in all sectors of the Palestinian economy.¹¹

20. However, Palestinians employed in Israel and settlements lack social protection and are exposed to exploitation, under a permit regime, by middlemen and employers who wield undue power over them.¹²

21. Empirical research suggests that employment in Israel and settlements exerts a variety of negative impacts on Palestinian GDP growth.¹³ It undermines the competitiveness of the Palestinian economy by dampening the incentives to invest in human capital, decreasing skill supply in some sectors and raising domestic wages without corresponding productivity growth. Furthermore, employment is

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ B’Tselem, “The Separation Barrier”, 11 November 2017. Available at www.btselem.org/separation_barrier.

¹⁰ *Legal Consequence of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Advisory opinion, I.C.J. Reports 2004*, p. 136, para. 163.

¹¹ World Bank, Economic Monitoring Report to the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee, May 2022.

¹² International Labour Organizations, *The Situation of Workers of the Occupied Arab Territories* (Geneva, International Labour Office, 2020).

¹³ Johanes Agbahey, Khalid Siddig and Harald Grethe, “Access to Israeli labour markets: effects on the West Bank economy”, 2016.

unpredictable, precarious and extremely sensitive to political and security crises. It cannot be a substitute for rejuvenating the Palestinian labour market by lifting all economic restrictions in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

III. Previous estimates of the economic impact of occupation

22. In addition to the reports prepared for submission to the General Assembly, UNCTAD has produced a series of studies on the economic costs of the Israeli occupation for the Palestinian people. Those studies cover a wide range of issues including the impact of occupation on the human right to development of the Palestinian people, the economic cost of the unrealized oil and natural gas potential in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and the leakage of Palestinian fiscal resources to Israel. Below is a brief overview of some of the quantitative assessments of the cost of occupation.

23. UNCTAD (2021) assessed the cost associated with the major shock to the occupied West Bank economy resulting from the restrictions and closure policy implemented by the occupying Power following the outbreak of the second Intifada, which erupted in September 2000. The study estimates that if these restrictions had been less stringent, the GDP of the West Bank would have been, on average, 35 per cent higher than its actual level, leading to a cumulative real GDP increase of \$58 billion (in constant 2015 dollars) between 2000 and 2019, equivalent to 4.5 times the GDP of the West Bank in 2019 or 3.5 times the GDP of the occupied Palestinian territory in 2019. Had it not been for these restrictions, the poverty rate in the West Bank in 2004 could have been 11.7 per cent, one third of the actual rate of 35.4 per cent.¹⁴

24. UNCTAD (2020) assessed the impact of the prolonged Israeli blockade and economic and movement restrictions on poverty and socioeconomic conditions in Gaza. It estimated the cumulative economic cost of these factors and of military operations at \$16.7 billion (in constant 2015 United States dollars), equivalent to six times the value of Gaza GDP, or 107 per cent of Palestinian GDP, in 2018. In addition, the poverty rate in Gaza could have been 15 per cent in 2017 instead of the actual rate of 56 per cent.¹⁵

25. UNCTAD (2019) examined the economic cost of the unrealized oil and natural gas potential in Gaza and Area C; with reference to the Meged oil and natural gas field, located inside the occupied West Bank in Area C and exploited by Israel. Its reserves are estimated at about 1.525 billion barrels of oil, in addition to some natural gas. The potential of the Meged field ranges between 375 and 534 barrels per day.¹⁶

26. UNCTAD (2019) assessed the leakage of Palestinian fiscal resources to the treasury of the occupying Power. Most of the leakage originates in the occupied West Bank and is rooted in the asymmetric economic relation between the Palestinian Authority and Israel enshrined in the Protocol on Economic Relations (Paris Protocol).¹⁷ The study estimated Palestinian fiscal losses in 2015 at \$1.7 billion, or 13.1 per cent of GDP. Furthermore, cumulative total fiscal leakage and losses during the period 2000–2017 were estimated at \$5.6 billion, equivalent to 39 per cent of Palestinian GDP in 2017. Adding cumulative interest on fiscal leakage for the same period (\$1 billion) raises the cumulative total to \$6.6 billion.

¹⁴ UNCTAD, “The economic costs of the Israeli occupation for the Palestinian people: arrested development and poverty in the West Bank” (UNCTAD/GDS/APP/2021/2 and Corr.1), December 2021.

¹⁵ UNCTAD, “The economic costs of the Israeli occupation for the Palestinian people: the impoverishment of Gaza under blockade”, (UNCTAD/GDS/APP/2020/1), December 2020.

¹⁶ UNCTAD, “The economic costs of the Israeli occupation for the Palestinian people: the unrealized oil and natural gas potential” (UNCTAD/GDS/APP/2019/1), 2019.

¹⁷ UNCTAD, *The Economic Costs of the Israeli Occupation for the Palestinian People: Cumulative Fiscal Costs* (UNCTAD/GDS/APP/2019/2), 2019.

27. Restrictions on Palestinian movement have increased the travel time between all Palestinian major population centres by a median of 51 per cent and the cumulative economic cost of longer travel time is substantial. For example, before the construction of the wall, Palestinians travelled from Ramallah to Hebron, through East Jerusalem, over a 50 km road. The restrictions have resulted in a lengthening of the road to 80 km which, together with the checkpoints, has led to a doubling of the average travel time from 55 to 107 minutes. Delays in the movement of the Palestinian workforce caused by longer roads and procedural restrictions are estimated to have cost the economy \$274 million annually, or 1.7 per cent of GDP in 2018. The environmental costs of longer travel and vehicular delays at gates and checkpoints are self-evident.¹⁸

28. The World Bank (2013) assessed the impact of closures in the occupied West Bank and concluded that they substantially reduced the probability of being employed, hourly wages and the number of days worked, while increasing the number of working hours per day. Much of that impact was driven by reduced firm profitability and labour demand. Checkpoints alone cost the West Bank economy a minimum of 6 per cent of its GDP. Furthermore, placing one checkpoint one minute away from a locality reduced its residents' probability of being employed by 0.41 percentage points, their hourly wage by 6.3 percentage points and working days by 2.6 percentage points.¹⁹

29. The World Bank (2018) concluded that lifting road obstacles just enough to improve market access by 10 per cent would increase local output in the occupied West Bank by 0.6 per cent. Furthermore, in the absence of roadblocks, West Bank GDP per capita would increase by up to 6.1 per cent above the observed level;²⁰ and some easing of other restrictions by Israel would, by 2025, triple the economic growth rate in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.²¹

30. The World Bank (2013) estimated that if restrictions on Palestinian producers were removed, the potential additional output gains alone would amount to at least \$2.2 billion annually, or 23 per cent of 2011 Palestinian GDP.²²

IV. Methodology: nighttime luminosity and economic activity

A. Nighttime luminosity in economic analysis

31. Nighttime luminosity (NTL) is a measure of visible night lights on Earth captured by satellites from outer space. NTL has considerable potential for economic analysis because it reflects human economic activities. Consequently, NTL has recently been increasingly used to estimate GDP in countries where economic data are poor and in areas and subregions where such data do not exist.

¹⁸ Applied Research Institute–Jerusalem, “Assessing the impacts of Israeli movement restrictions on the mobility of people and goods in the West Bank”, 2019. Available at www.arij.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/mobility_2019.pdf.

¹⁹ Massimiliano Cali and Sami H. Miaari, “The labor market impact of mobility restrictions: evidence from the West Bank”, *World Bank Policy Research Working Paper*, No. 6457 (Washington, D.C., World Bank, May 2013).

²⁰ Roy van der Weide and others, “Obstacles on the road to Palestinian economic growth”, *World Bank Policy Research Working Paper*, No. 8385 (Washington, D.C., World Bank, March 2018).

²¹ World Bank, *Unlocking the Trade Potential of the Palestinian Economy: Immediate Measures and a Long Term Vision to Improve Palestinian Trade and Economic Outcomes*. Report No. ACS22471 (Washington, D.C., 2017). Available at <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/29057?locale-attribute=fr>.

²² Orhan Niksic, Nur Nasser Eddin and Massimiliano Cali, *Area C and the Future of the Palestinian Economy* (Washington, D.C., World Bank, 2014).

32. In this report, a measure of NTL in a specific area on Earth is obtained by averaging pixel-level NTL values within that area.²³ The unit of measurement is light intensity which is equal to the number of nanowatts per square centimetre per steradian ($\text{nWcm}^{-2}\text{sr}^{-1}$). For a specific area, NTL is usually presented as an average over a specific period: a month, a quarter or a year. The source of NTL data used in the following analysis is the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA).²⁴

33. The use of NTL as a proxy for economic activity was pioneered in a groundbreaking 2012 paper by Henderson, Storeygard, and Weil.²⁵ The authors of the study had developed a statistical framework for using satellite data on night lights to enhance official income measures, especially in countries with poor national income accounts. The study was followed by many others, whose aim was to quantify the relationship between NTL and economic activity.²⁶ NTL has also been used to forecast GDP or growth rates using elasticity of GDP with respect to NTL.²⁷ In recent years, the World Bank and IMF published several studies that use NTL data as a proxy for economic activity.^{28,29}

34. Levin and others (2020) showed a primary advantage of NTL over official statistics: NTL permits the estimation of GDP at the level of disaggregated geographical units especially where GDP data do not exist or are of poor quality.³⁰ This is of the utmost relevance to the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including to the analysis presented in this report, because NTL would allow the estimation of separate GDPs for Area C, for East Jerusalem and for Israeli settlements elsewhere in the occupied West Bank, as well as disaggregation of Israeli GDP following exclusion of the value of output produced in occupied East Jerusalem and in settlements elsewhere in the West Bank.

²³ Satellite NTL images consist of pixels organized in rows and columns. The spatial resolution of the sensor determines the size of a given pixel. Each pixel stores an NTL value and has a geographical location.

²⁴ The annual NTL data were obtained from the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) Black Marble annual product (VNP46/VJ146). NASA generated this product based on state-of-art application of the data from the Day/Night Band (DNB) sensor of the Visible Infrared Imaging Radiometer Suite (VIIRS). Black Marble annual NTL data have a spatial resolution of 15 arc-second and are available from January 2012 to the present. The data are cloud-free and atmospheric-, terrain-, vegetation-, snow-, lunar- and stray light-corrected. See <https://blackmarble.gsfc.nasa.gov> for further details.

²⁵ J. Vernon Henderson, Adam Storeygard and David N. Weil, “Measuring economic growth from outer space”, *American Economic Review*, vol. 102, No. 2 (April 2012), pp. 994–1028. In the 10 years since this pioneering study was published, it has been cited in more than 880 academic papers.

²⁶ For instance, Pinkovskiy and Sala-i-Martin (2016) assessed the relative quality of GDP per capita and survey means by comparing them with NTL; Storeygard (2016) investigated the role of transport costs on the economic activity of cities proxied by NTL; Alesina, Michalopoulos, and Papaioannou (2016) used NTL to study ethnic inequality; and Henderson and others (2016) studied the spatial distribution of economic activity proxied by NTL.

²⁷ Elasticity measures the percentage change in NTL when GDP changes by 1 percentage point, or vice versa.

²⁸ Yingyao Hu and Jiaxiong Yao, “Illuminating economic growth”, *IMF Working Paper*, No. 19/77 (International Monetary Fund, 2019); and Mark Roberts, “Tracking economic activity in response to the COVID-19 crisis using nighttime lights: the case of Morocco”, *World Bank Policy Research Working Paper*, No. 9538 (February 2021).

²⁹ Hu and Yao (2019) found that NTL data are most useful for measuring economic levels for middle- and low-income countries where traditional GDP per capita data are usually imprecise.

³⁰ Noam Levin and others, “Remote sensing of night lights: a review and an outlook for the future”, *Remote Sensing of Environment*, vol. 237 (February 2020), 111443.

B. Trends in NTL in the West Bank: settlements and Areas A, B and C

35. Over the period 2012–2020, annual average NTL exhibited a noticeable upward trend across the entire occupied West Bank but was much higher in settlements compared with the rest of the West Bank (figure III). Annual average NTL in occupied East Jerusalem and in settlements elsewhere in the West Bank was about $16 \text{ nWcm}^{-2}\text{sr}^{-1}$ and tended upward from 2012 to 2020. If East Jerusalem is excluded, the annual average NTL in settlements was slightly lower but still relatively high at above $10.4 \text{ nWcm}^{-2}\text{sr}^{-1}$. Moreover, the NTL of those settlements alone was about twice that of the whole West Bank (excluding East Jerusalem), for which the average annual NTL was about $5.2 \text{ nWcm}^{-2}\text{sr}^{-1}$. Such significant differences are indicative of substantial economic disparities between Israeli settlements and Palestinian-controlled areas in the West Bank.

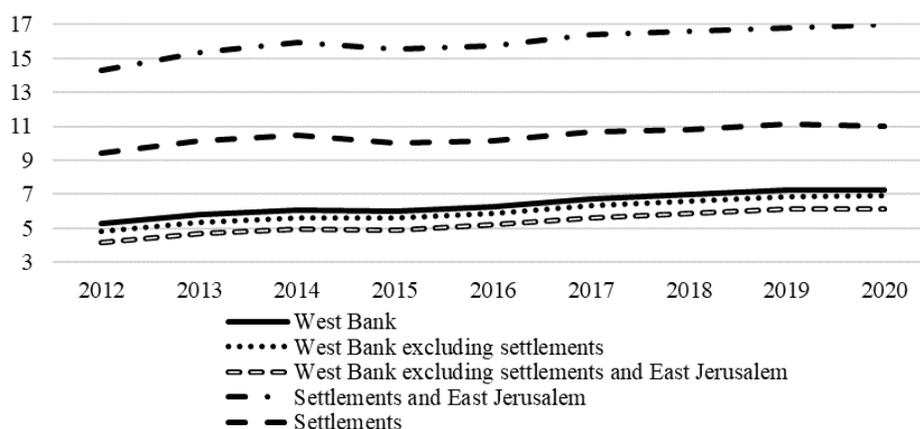
36. Furthermore, the data indicate significant disparities across areas A, B, and C in terms of growth and levels of NTL between 2012 and 2020 (figure IV). The right panel of figure IV shows that between 2012 and 2020 for the whole Area C (including settlements) the NTL grew from 4.8 to $5.9 \text{ nWcm}^{-2}\text{sr}^{-1}$. This is a much more intense level of growth of NTL compared with that for Area C when settlements are excluded. In the latter case, annual average NTL grew from 3.5 to $4.5 \text{ nWcm}^{-2}\text{sr}^{-1}$.

37. NTL increased during the period 2012–2020 in all three Areas of the West Bank, but Area C had the lowest level of growth of NTL compared with Areas A and B, with Area A registering the highest annual average NTL (left panel of figure IV). The NTL gap between Area C and Areas A and B is even greater if NTL from settlements elsewhere in the West Bank is removed from NTL of Area C.

38. Figure V shows the trends in NTL in the three West Bank administrative areas, where NTL from occupied East Jerusalem is not included and NTL from settlements elsewhere in the occupied West Bank has been excluded. Over the period 2012–2020, average annual NTL in Area C, excluding settlements in the Area and not including East Jerusalem, was 46 per cent lower than in Areas A and B.

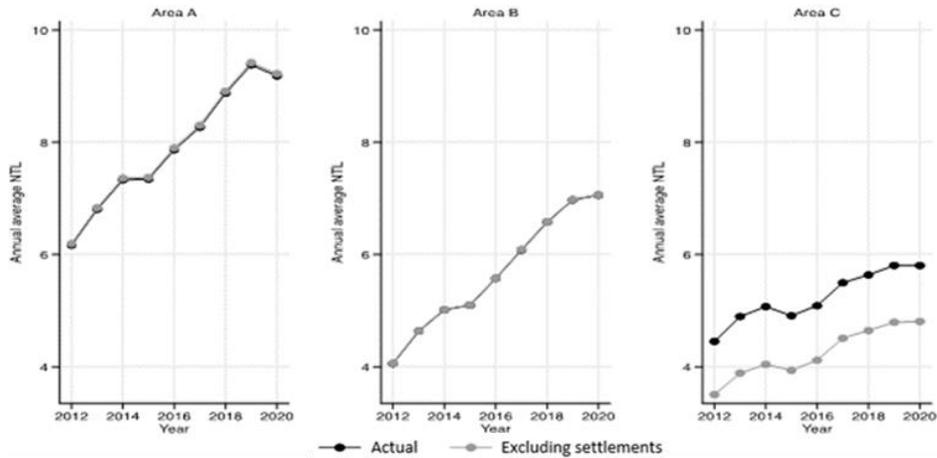
Figure III

Trends in annual average NTL in different geographical parts of the occupied West Bank, 2012–2020 ($\text{nWcm}^{-2}\text{sr}^{-1}$)



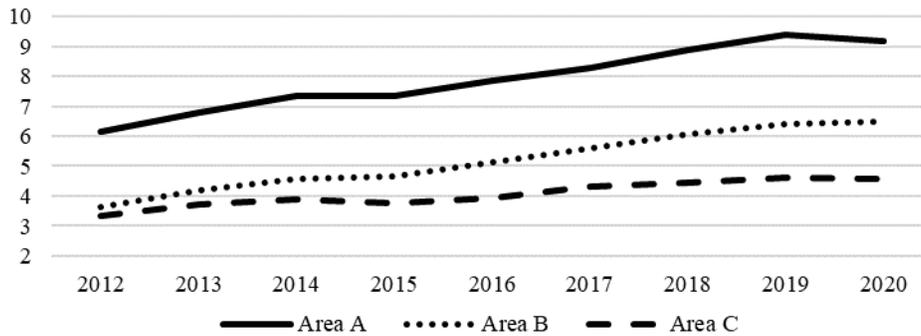
Source: UNCTAD calculation based on NASA Black Marble NTL data and other sources.

Figure IV
Trends in NTL in Areas A, B and C, 2012–2020 (nWcm⁻²sr⁻¹)



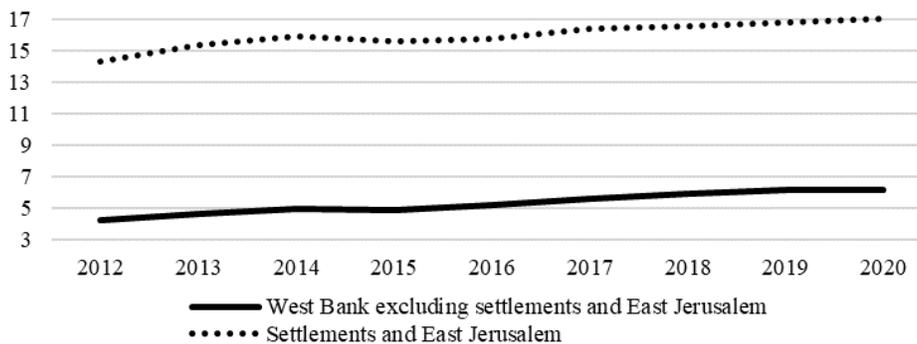
Source: UNCTAD calculation based on NASA Black Marble NTL data and other sources.
Note: The two lines for Areas A and B almost fully overlap.

Figure V
Annual average NTL in the occupied West Bank: Areas A, B and C (nWcm⁻²sr⁻¹)



Source: UNCTAD calculation based on NASA Black Marble NTL data and other sources.
Note: NTL in Area C excludes lights from East Jerusalem and from settlements elsewhere in the West Bank.

Figure VI
Annual average NTL in the occupied West Bank, including occupied East Jerusalem and settlements (nWcm⁻²sr⁻¹)



Source: UNCTAD calculation based on NASA Black Marble NTL data and other sources.

39. There is a large difference between average annual NTL in the area under Palestinian control (composed of the occupied West Bank, excluding occupied East Jerusalem and the settlements elsewhere in the West Bank) and average annual NTL in the area under the complete control of Israel (Area C, occupied East Jerusalem and those Israeli settlements).

40. As shown in figure VI, that difference is vast, implying a huge disparity in the levels of economic activity in occupied East Jerusalem and in settlements elsewhere in the occupied West Bank compared with areas under Palestinian control. During the period 2000–2020, average annual NTL in the areas of the occupied West Bank that were under partial control of the Palestinian National Authority grew from 4.2 to 6.1 $\text{nWcm}^{-2}\text{sr}^{-1}$. Meanwhile, in the area controlled by the occupying Power, average annual NTL grew from 14.1 to 17 $\text{nWcm}^{-2}\text{sr}^{-1}$. Average annual NTL in the areas of the occupied West Bank under Palestinian control was in the range of one third of that in areas under the complete control of Israel. This indicates that economic activity in areas under the control of the Palestinian Authority is much weaker compared with economic activity in areas controlled by the occupying Power.

V. Cost of occupation and size of the economy of the settlements in Area C and occupied East Jerusalem

41. Area C accounts for about 60 per cent of the area of the occupied West Bank. Area C is the only contiguous part of the West Bank and has the most fertile land and the most valuable natural resources. Furthermore, it has geographical space badly needed for Palestinian demographic expansion and economic development. The boundaries of Area C now incorporate Israeli settlements and have been reinforced by closure points and the wall. The ongoing expansion of settlements dispossesses Palestinians of large swaths of Area C land and inflicts huge economic and human costs on the Palestinian people.

42. The present section estimates part of this economic cost of occupation of Area C in terms of the potential Palestinian GDP lost since the end of the Oslo interim period (1994–1999) as a result of the inability to develop the 30 per cent of Area C located outside the boundaries of the regional councils of Israeli settlements and not including East Jerusalem at the same rate observed in Areas A and B. It is crucial to note that the calculated cost does not assume the dismantling of settlements, full Palestinian access to Area C or the lifting of any restrictions imposed on areas A and B: it assumes only that the level of restrictions on Palestinian development in the 30 per cent of Area C concerned was the same as the level of restrictions applied by Israel in Areas A and B. This section therefore estimates only the cost of the additional restrictions imposed on Palestinian economic activity in Area C, over and above those imposed on Areas A and B.

43. This partial estimate is followed by an estimation of the cumulative contribution of settlements to the economy of Israel between 2000 and 2020 as a direct result of occupation and control of the resources of Area C and of East Jerusalem.

A. Some aspects of the economic cost of the occupation of Area C

44. Section V.A attempts to answer the following question: What if, in the year 2000, 30 per cent of Area C of the West Bank had been available for Palestinian expansion and development while being subjected to the same level of economic restrictions imposed in Areas A and B, which are significant but not as stringent as those applied in Area C? Section V.A consequently provides indicators of the economic cost of the occupation of Area C by estimating the potential level of GDP which was not realized because of the additional restrictions imposed on Area C following the end of the interim period in

1999, when a permanent settlement of the conflict was expected to bring to an end the occupation of the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and Gaza.

45. Official GDP statistics pertaining to the Occupied Palestinian Territory compiled by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics are at the national level and are disaggregated only to the levels of the West Bank and Gaza. However, as mentioned earlier, this issue can be overcome using NTL to estimate economic activity at disaggregated levels of smaller geographical units.

46. Figure V depicts NTL trends in West Bank administrative areas where, for Area C, NTL from settlements has been excluded and NTL from East Jerusalem is not included. On average, over the period 2012–2020, luminosity in this part of Area C was 46 per cent lower than that in Areas A and B.

47. This section estimates the cost of the additional restrictions imposed on Area C by using NTL as a proxy for economic activity and calculating the elasticity of GDP with respect to NTL. For this purpose, a counterfactual scenario has been developed based on the conservative assumption that if Area C had been subjected to the same level of restrictions as that imposed on Areas A and B, Palestinian economic development in Area C would have been on a par with the level of development in Areas A and B. The assumption implies that average NTL (per unit of area) in Area C would be equal to the mean of average NTL in Area A and average NTL in area B during the sample period 2012–2020.³¹

48. Accordingly, the mean of average NTL of Area A and average NTL of Area B is applied to Area C, with the assumption that the actual level of average NTL in Area C, outside settlements and not including East Jerusalem, is derived entirely from Palestinian activities. The fact that such NTL reflects activities by settlers and other Israelis suggest that the assumption will bias the estimated cost downward. This bias would reinforce the conservatism of the estimation of the economic loss resulting from the restrictions on Palestinian development in Area C.

49. The weighted average mean of NTL in Area A, NTL in Area B and NTL in Area C in the occupied West Bank is calculated using the relative sizes of Areas A, B and C as weights. Figure VII compares the actual average NTL in the West Bank with the counterfactual weighted average NTL implied by the counterfactual scenario. The gap between them is an indicator of unrealized GDP. It turns out that the annual counterfactual NTL is, on average, 28 per cent higher than the actual NTL in the West Bank.

50. Following the methodology developed by Henderson, Storeygard and Weil (2012), the elasticity of GDP with respect to NTL is utilized to estimate the unrealized potential GDP gains in the counterfactual scenario. Through use of quarterly GDP and NTL data, the elasticity in the occupied West Bank is estimated at 0.903. This means that a 1 per cent increase in average NTL is associated with a 0.903 per cent increase in GDP.³²

51. Applying this elasticity to the difference between the actual and counterfactual NTL levels provides an estimation of lost potential GDP resulting from the additional restrictions on Palestinian economic activities in Area C. The methodology suggests that if Palestinian economic activity in 30 per cent of Area C had been subjected to the same level of restrictions that had been imposed by the occupying Power on Areas A

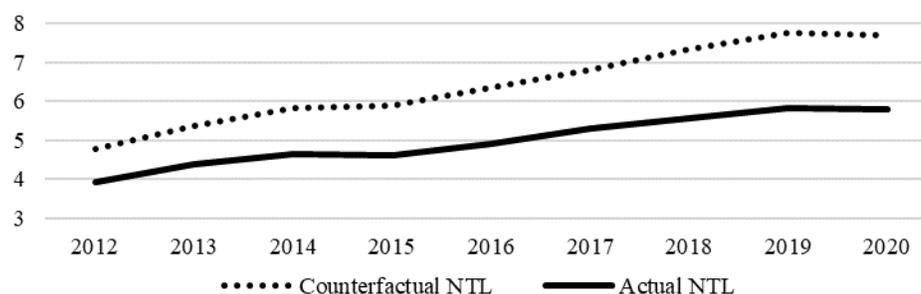
³¹ Areas A and B are the best comparator for establishing what the Palestinian economic activity level in Area C could have been if Palestinians had been allowed to develop Area C under the same level of restrictions. Actual NTL data for Area A and B are driven by economic activity and population density, given that Palestinians are allowed to develop those areas to some degree, while Area C is largely off limits. That is the whole point of the analysis.

³² The elasticity is calculated using the equation $X = Y(\beta) + C$, where X is quarterly NTL, Y is quarterly GDP and β is the elasticity. Rearranging the equation and taking the log on both sides give $\log(Y) = 1/\beta * \log(X) + \log(C)$. Therefore, from the equation, elasticity of GDP with respect to NTL is equal to $1/\beta$, i.e. $1/1.108 = 0.903$.

and B, the size of the West Bank economy would have been 25.3 per cent larger than what was observed.

52. The cumulative GDP losses during the period 2000–2020 amount to \$45 billion (in constant 2015 dollars) or \$50 billion in 2020 dollars (figure VIII and table 1). This is equivalent to about three times GDP in the occupied West Bank in 2020 and over 2.5 times Palestinian GDP in the same year.

Figure VII
Estimated actual and counterfactual NTL in the occupied West Bank 2012–2020
($nWcm^{-2}sr^{-1}$)

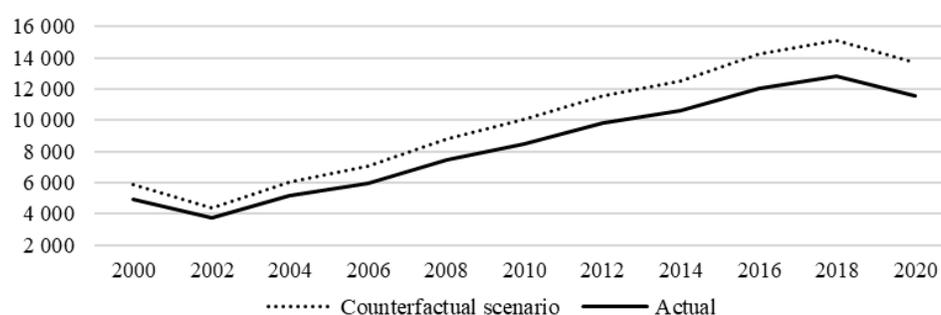


Source: UNCTAD calculations.

Note: NTL from settlements in Area C is excluded and NTL from East Jerusalem is not included.

Figure VIII
Estimated GDP in the occupied West Bank: actual and counterfactual scenario, 2000–2020

(Millions of constant 2015 dollars)



Source: UNCTAD calculations.

Table 1
West Bank's GDP: estimated actual and counterfactual, 2000–2020

(Millions of constant 2015 dollars)

Year	Actual GDP	Counterfactual GDP	Difference
2000	4 958	6 214	1 256
2001	4 366	5 472	1 106
2002	3 725	4 668	944
2003	4 091	5 127	1 036
2004	5 129	6 428	1 299
2005	5 469	6 854	1 385
2006	5 962	7 472	1 510

<i>Year</i>	<i>Actual GDP</i>	<i>Counterfactual GDP</i>	<i>Difference</i>
2007	6 588	8 256	1 669
2008	7 451	9 339	1 888
2009	8 126	10 185	2 059
2010	8 496	10 648	2 152
2011	9 306	11 663	2 357
2012	9 810	12 295	2 485
2013	10 172	12 749	2 577
2014	10 610	13 298	2 688
2015	11 072	13 877	2 805
2016	12 046	15 098	3 052
2017	12 506	15 673	3 168
2018	12 797	16 039	3 242
2019	12 999	16 292	3 293
2020	11 564	14 494	2 929
Total	177 243	222 143	44 899
Total in 2020 dollars			49 910

Source: UNCTAD calculations.

B. Size of the economy of settlements in Area C and occupied East Jerusalem

53. Section V.A assessed part of the cost of occupation of Area C in terms of the additional restrictions imposed by occupation outside settlements. Section V.B provides some indicators of the cost imposed by the presence of the settlements in Area C by assessing their contribution to the economy of Israel. For this purpose, this section estimates the GDP generated by the occupying Power in those settlements between 2000 and 2020 using Palestinian land and natural resources.

54. As Palestinians face severe restrictions on developing or investing in Area C, Israel's long-term policy for the establishment and expansion of settlements in the occupied West Bank continues despite adoption of numerous General Assembly and Security Council resolutions. By early 2021, Israel had established more than 280 settlements in the West Bank, populated by more than 440,000 Israeli citizens excluding East Jerusalem.³³

55. The Government of Israel provides generous incentives to settlers and entrepreneurs, notably underpriced land taken from Palestinians, reduced land fees for investors, tax benefits, housing benefits, business subsidies, industrial zone subsidies and employment subsidies.³⁴ In some areas, corporations pay one third of the tax rate paid in Israel. Generous support is provided for farming cooperatives to accommodate new farmers; in some areas, farmers are exempt from the levy on employing migrant workers; and new farmers receive financial subsidies of up to \$307,000 and up to \$25,000 per herd for open field livestock grazing.³⁵ In addition,

³³ B'Tselem, "This is ours, and this, too: Israel's settlement policy in the West Bank" (2021). Available at www.btselem.org/publications/202103_this_is_ours_and_this_too.

³⁴ UNCTAD, "Report on UNCTAD assistance to the Palestinian people: developments in the economy of the Occupied Palestinian Territory" (TD/B/EX(71)/2), September 2021, para. 40.

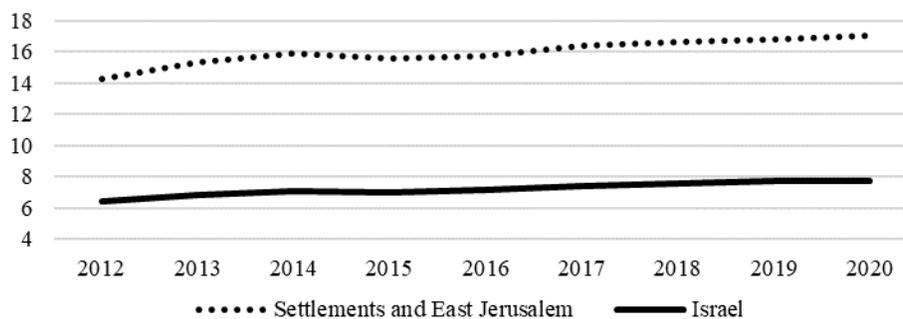
³⁵ B'Tselem, "This is ours, and this, too: Israel's settlement policy in the West Bank" (2021).

the Government of Israel encourages teachers in key disciplines to move to designated national priority areas by offering them a wage increase of up to 70 per cent for several years. Such incentives and benefits have resulted in significant expansion of industrial zones and of investment in agricultural production. By 2019, there were 11 Israeli industrial complexes in Area C. The various incentives motivated hundreds of thousands of Israeli citizens to move to subsidized settlements in the occupied West Bank, where standards of living are higher than those prevailing in Israel.³⁶

56. As a result of the expansion of economic activity in settlements in Area C, the average annual NTL emanating from occupied East Jerusalem and from settlements in Area C is twice that emanating from Israel (figure IX), indicating that GDP per capita generated in East Jerusalem and in settlements in the West Bank is higher than that in Israel.

57. It is therefore possible to use the ratio of the population of East Jerusalem and of settlements elsewhere in the West Bank in the total Israeli population, as reported by Israel, to conservatively estimate the lower bound of Israeli GDP, also as reported by Israel, that could be attributed to occupied East Jerusalem and to settlements elsewhere in the occupied West Bank. This can be done by assuming that the relative contribution of the population to GDP in both areas is the same. While this may underestimate the GDP generated in East Jerusalem and in those settlements, it does provide a useful indicator for assessing the economic dimension of the occupation and the settlement enterprise.

Figure IX
Average annual NTL in East Jerusalem, in settlements elsewhere in the West Bank and in Israel ($\text{nWcm}^{-2}\text{sr}^{-1}$)



Source: UNCTAD calculations based on NASA Black Marble NTL data.

Table 2
Estimated GDP and population: Israel, settlements^a and East Jerusalem, 2000–2020

(Billions of constant 2015 dollars)

Year	Real GDP of Israel	Population of Israel ^b	Population of East Jerusalem and settlements (percentage of total)	GDP of East Jerusalem and settlements
2000	180.80	6 289 000	11.0	19.8
2001	180.98	6 439 000	11.0	19.9
2002	180.63	6 570 000	11.0	19.9
2003	182.70	6 689 700	11.1	20.3
2004	191.68	6 809 000	11.2	21.4

³⁶ Ibid.

<i>Year</i>	<i>Real GDP of Israel</i>	<i>Population of Israel^b</i>	<i>Population of East Jerusalem and settlements (percentage of total)</i>	<i>GDP of East Jerusalem and settlements</i>
2005	199.65	6 930 100	11.2	22.4
2006	211.19	7 053 700	11.3	24.0
2007	224.07	7 180 100	11.5	25.7
2008	231.82	7 308 800	11.6	26.9
2009	234.47	7 485 600	11.5	26.9
2010	247.80	7 623 600	11.6	28.7
2011	261.54	7 765 800	11.7	30.5
2012	268.92	7 910 500	11.8	31.8
2013	281.77	8 059 500	11.9	33.6
2014	293.39	8 215 700	11.9	34.8
2015	300.08	8 380 100	12.0	36.0
2016	313.47	8 546 000	12.1	37.8
2017	327.19	8 713 300	12.1	39.7
2018	340.22	8 882 800	12.2	41.5
2019	353.06	9 054 000	12.3	43.4
2020	345.46	9 216 900	12.4	42.9
Total				627.8
Total in 2020 dollars				851.7

Sources: World Bank, World Development Indicators database for GDP; Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics for population in East Jerusalem; and B'Tselem for population in settlements.

^a Population of East Jerusalem and of the settlements in the West Bank including East Jerusalem settlements.

^b Population of East Jerusalem and of the settlements in the rest of the West Bank is included.

58. Table 2 shows that over the period 2000–2020, the population in Israel, in occupied East Jerusalem and in the settlements elsewhere in the occupied West Bank, if added together, grew from 6.3 million to 9.2 million and the share of that population living in East Jerusalem and in settlements elsewhere in the West Bank grew from 11 per cent in 2000 to 12.4 per cent in 2020. The GDP produced by the occupying Power in East Jerusalem and in those settlements is estimated by multiplying the share of East Jerusalem and of those settlements in that population by the total reported Israeli GDP.³⁷

59. GDP generated by Israel through the occupation of East Jerusalem and Area C of the West Bank between 2000 and 2020 is estimated at minimum, at \$628 billion (constant 2015 dollars), or \$852 billion in 2020 dollars. The estimated average annual GDP produced in East Jerusalem and in settlements elsewhere in the West Bank at current dollars is \$41 billion or 227 per cent of total Palestinian GDP in 2021. The estimated size of GDP produced by Israel in settlements in Area C and East Jerusalem, using Palestinian land and natural resources, is an indicator of the cost of the presence of settlements there for the Palestinian people and suggests that ending the occupation of Area C will enable the Palestinian people to grow their economy severalfold.

³⁷ Using the population in East Jerusalem and settlements and multiplying that figure by GDP per capita would yield the same result.

VI. Conclusion and recommendations

60. The negative impact of the multilayered Israeli control system on Palestinian development and economic activity throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory is substantial. The restrictions on Palestinian economic activity are pronounced in Area C but are by no means limited to it. Gaza remains under closures that have gutted its economy and decimated its productive base. As the Palestinian people do not have a national currency, they use mainly the Israeli new shekel whose exchange rate is incompatible with the needs and level of development of the Palestinian economy. The exchange rate is one of the most important determinants of the prices in any economy. As the Israeli new shekel is too strong for the competitiveness of Palestinian producers, it can foster a high level of imports and weakens exports, GDP growth and job creation.

61. The annual cost of the imposition of additional restrictions on Palestinian economic activity in 30 per cent of Area C is estimated at one quarter of West Bank GDP and the cumulative cost over the period 2000–2020 is estimated at three times West Bank GDP in 2020. These estimates are extremely conservative and should be interpreted as lower bound indicators of only a fraction of the total economic cost of the occupation of Area C.

62. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development recommends that the international community call on Israel to shoulder its responsibilities under international law and:

(a) End and reverse all settlement activities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, consistent with Security Council resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#), in which the Council reaffirmed that the establishment of such settlements has no legal validity and “constitutes a flagrant violation under international law” and a major obstacle to the achievement of the two-State solution and a just, lasting and comprehensive peace;

(b) Lift all restrictions on Palestinian economic activity in Area C, pending a comprehensive settlement, and allow for substantially increased Palestinian economic activity. Lifting such restrictions would provide the Palestinian economy with a badly needed economic and natural resource base for developing and reversing the current trend of increasing socioeconomic deprivation.

63. Furthermore, Member States may wish to consider the following:

(a) In line with the relevant United Nations resolutions, to exert all efforts necessary to bring an end to the occupation and reverse the evolving and substantial economic cost of the Israeli occupation for the Palestinian people;

(b) The cost of occupation poses a huge challenge in terms of resource mobilization. The Palestinian Government is saddled with a responsibility far greater than the resources and the limited policy space at its disposal. Palestinian national self-sufficiency may be pursued but cannot be fully achieved under occupation. Until the occupation is ended, to avert sharp socioeconomic and humanitarian crises, there is no substitute for reversing the ongoing negative trend in foreign aid and strengthening donor support to the Palestinian people to alleviate the adverse socioeconomic conditions imposed by occupation;

(c) The fulfilment of paragraph 9 of General Assembly resolution [75/20](#) requires the establishment, within the United Nations system, of a systematic, evidence-based, comprehensive and sustainable framework to assess the costs of occupation and report the results to the Assembly. The establishment of such a framework requires securing additional resources.

64. The Palestinian people's right to Statehood cannot be replaced by humanitarian and economic assistance, essential as these may be in the interim. The United Nations continues to work towards the realization of a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East on the basis of relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolutions [242 \(1967\)](#), [338 \(1973\)](#), [1397 \(2002\)](#), [1515 \(2003\)](#), [1850 \(2008\)](#), [1860 \(2009\)](#) and [2334 \(2016\)](#), to end the occupation that began in 1967 and establish a sovereign, democratic, viable and contiguous Palestinian State, living side by side in peace and security with Israel within recognized borders, based on the pre-1967 borders. It is only by realizing the vision of two States living side by side in peace, security and mutual recognition, with Jerusalem as the capital of both Israel and the State of Palestine, and all final status issues resolved permanently through negotiations, that the legitimate aspirations of both peoples will be achieved.



United Nations

Report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

**General Assembly
Official Records
Seventy-ninth Session
Supplement No. 35**



Report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People



Note

Symbols of United Nations documents are composed of letters combined with figures. Mention of such a symbol indicates a reference to a United Nations document.

Contents

<i>Chapter</i>	<i>Page</i>
Letter of transmittal	4
I. Introduction	5
II. Overview of the political context relating to the question of Palestine	6
III. Mandate of the Committee	12
IV. Organization of work	13
A. Membership and officers	13
B. Participation in the work of the Committee	13
V. Action taken by the Committee and the Division for Palestinian Rights in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 77/22 and 77/23	14
A. Introduction	14
B. Mobilization of the diplomatic community	14
C. Raising awareness of the question of Palestine	16
D. Cooperation with intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations and United Nations system entities	19
E. Capacity-building	19
VI. Action taken by the Department of Global Communications in accordance with General Assembly resolution 77/24	20
VII. Conclusions and recommendations of the Committee	22
A. Action by the Committee in response to the conflict and humanitarian crisis	22
B. Action by the Committee in response to human rights violations	23
C. Action by the Committee in response to annexation and settlement activities	24
D. Action with the Secretary-General, the General Assembly, the Human Rights Council, the International Court of Justice and the International Criminal Court	25
E. Advocacy and outreach with the international community and civil society	27
F. Action by Member States and regional organizations	27
G. Action by the Secretariat and other United Nations entities	28

Letter of transmittal

[1 September 2024]

Mr. Secretary-General,

I have the honour to enclose herewith the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for submission to the General Assembly and circulation to all the competent bodies of the United Nations for necessary action, as appropriate, in accordance with paragraphs 2 and 10 of Assembly resolution [77/22](#) of 30 November 2022.

The report covers the period from 2 September 2023 to 31 August 2024.

(Signed) Cheikh **Niang**
Chair of the Committee on the Exercise of the
Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

Chapter I

Introduction

1. The present report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People has been submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution [77/22](#), adopted on 30 November 2022. It covers the implementation by the Committee of its programme of work ([A/AC.183/2023/1](#)), formulated to promote the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including their right to self-determination. Its objectives include maintaining international awareness of the plight of the Palestinian people, mobilizing efforts aimed at achieving a just and comprehensive solution to the question of Palestine in accordance with international law and lasting Israeli-Palestinian peace, enhancing international solidarity with the Palestinian people and supporting the Government of the State of Palestine in its capacity-building efforts towards promoting a viable and sustainable independent State of Palestine.
2. Chapter II consists of an overview of the political context relating to the question of Palestine during the reporting period, from 2 September 2023 to 31 August 2024.
3. Chapters III and IV contain an outline of the mandate of the Committee as set out by the General Assembly and information on the membership of the Committee and the organization of its work.
4. Chapter V covers the action taken by the Committee, including its participation in meetings of the Security Council and its continuing engagement with Member States, intergovernmental organizations and civil society. It also covers international conferences, including in virtual format, capacity-building and advocacy activities organized by the Committee and other mandated activities carried out by the Division for Palestinian Rights on behalf of the Committee.
5. Chapter VI provides an overview of the special information programme on the question of Palestine implemented by the Department of Global Communications in accordance with General Assembly resolution [75/23](#).
6. The conclusions and recommendations of the Committee to the General Assembly are set out in chapter VII of the report.

Chapter II

Overview of the political context relating to the question of Palestine

7. The question of Palestine has remained on the agenda of the United Nations for more than 76 years. That period has been marked by a 57-year-long illegal occupation by Israel, grave breaches of international law, including international human rights and international humanitarian law, a 17-year-long blockade of the Gaza Strip and the continuing plight of millions of Palestine refugees. Since October 2023, the devastating military campaign being conducted by Israel in Gaza and increased Israeli military and settler violence in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, has brought heightened attention around the world to the long-standing injustice and suffering that the Palestinian people have endured. In March and again in June, the Security Council adopted resolutions in which it demands a ceasefire, yet it has failed to enforce them (see para. 20) This inaction on the part of the Council has endangered Palestinian lives, undermined peace efforts and jeopardized the two-State solution.

8. On 7 October 2023, Hamas and other Palestinian militant groups launched a major attack from Gaza into southern Israel that claimed the lives of over 1,200 Israelis and foreign nationals and injured more than 5,400 other persons; 255 hostages were taken to Gaza.¹ In response, Israel, the occupying Power, launched extensive and indiscriminate aerial, land and maritime bombardments that have been described as the most devastating collective punishment of civilians in modern history, causing massive loss of human life and destruction.²

9. The Israeli military campaign has resulted in unprecedented Palestinian casualties. The majority of the victims have been children and women, and some families have been wiped out entirely. This military campaign triggered a humanitarian catastrophe that has been marked by the spread of starvation, famine and disease, the displacement of the entire population of Gaza and the dispossession of vital civilian infrastructure. That dispossession is evidenced by the widespread destruction of homes and other civilian infrastructure, including hospitals, universities, schools and businesses, stripping the community of its foundational support systems and services. According to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, as at 21 August, the Israeli military campaign had resulted in more than 40,223 Palestinians being killed, of whom 12,927 were men, 10,627 children, 5,956 women and 2,770 elderly persons, and at least 92,981 others injured in Gaza,³ with thousands presumed buried under the rubble. Concurrently, Israel took further illegal measures to deepen its occupation, including through continued construction and expansion of illegal Israeli settlements in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, seizure of Palestinian land, demolition of homes and displacement of Palestinian civilians. (see paras. 12–14)

10. On 6 December, the Secretary-General made an unprecedented appeal by invoking Article 99 of the Charter of the United Nations, urging the Security Council to “avert a humanitarian catastrophe” and calling for a full ceasefire in Gaza. Regrettably, that call

¹ United Nations, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, reported impact snapshot, Gaza Strip, 21 August 2024.

² United Nations, “Civilians in Gaza must not be collectively punished for atrocities committed by Hamas, speakers tell Security Council, urging ceasefire”, press release, 30 October 2023.

³ United Nations, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, reported impact snapshot, Gaza Strip, 21 August 2024.

had no tangible impact, leading the Secretary-General to decry the international community's inaction to stop the carnage as a "moral stain on humanity".⁴

11. The principles of distinction, proportionality and precaution and other rules of international humanitarian law have been severely breached in this conflict. Data in the report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict (A/78/842-S/2024/384) indicate that children have suffered the highest number of grave violations in the conflict, and that 625,000 deeply traumatized children have been compromised by their inability to attend school since October 2023.⁵

12. The ongoing Israeli attacks have destroyed more than 80 per cent of infrastructure, including hospitals and the water and sanitation and electricity networks, in the Gaza Strip. Israeli-imposed access restrictions, combined with ongoing military operations, further obstructed relief efforts. With half of the population of Gaza facing catastrophic food insecurity,⁶ the Famine Review Committee of the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification has warned of an imminent elevated risk of famine across Gaza if the conflict and access restrictions continued.⁷

13. As the Israeli military aggression continues, reports have emerged of the suffering of Palestinian civilians who have been injured, maimed, orphaned, detained and tortured, and struggling to cope with severe shortages of food, basic necessities and medical supplies, as well as the worrisome spread of communicable diseases, including poliovirus, the containment of which could require massive efforts.⁸ Speaking on 2 July before the Security Council, the Senior Humanitarian and Reconstruction Coordinator for Gaza, Sigrid Kaag, highlighted the increasing decline in aid entering and being distributed in Gaza; that decline was then further exacerbated by Israeli military operations in Rafah, Khan Younis and other areas where people had taken shelter.⁹ The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights condemned the deliberate restrictions imposed by Israel on humanitarian aid to Gaza, and warned that the extent of those restrictions may amount to the use of starvation as a method of war, which constitutes a war crime.¹⁰ On 27 June, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), highlighting the plight of women, noted that at least 557,000 women in Gaza, including pregnant women, faced severe food insecurity.¹¹

14. Against this background, the Palestinian population in Gaza has also endured repeated displacement, forced to flee from one so-called safe zone to another pursuant to evacuation orders issued by Israel, only for these areas to become Israeli military targets. On 27 July, the Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), Phillipe Lazzarini, in a post on the social media platform X (formerly known as Twitter), said that 86 per cent of Gaza was under Israeli military evacuation orders.¹² In addition, insecurity

⁴ United Nations, "Humanitarian situation in Gaza 'a moral stain on us all', Secretary-General tells Security Council, stressing international law must be respected by all", press release, 17 July 2024.

⁵ UNRWA update on traumatized Palestinian children.

⁶ World Food Programme, "Hunger in Gaza: famine findings a 'dark mark' on the world, says WFP Palestine country director", 18 March 2024.

⁷ Integrated Food Security Phase Classification, "Famine Review Committee: Gaza Strip, March 2024, conclusions and recommendations", 18 March 2024.

⁸ United Nations, statement of the Secretary-General on polio in Gaza, 16 August 2024.

⁹ See S/PV.9678.

¹⁰ OHCHR, "Comment by UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk on the risk of famine in Gaza", press release, 19 March 2024.

¹¹ UN-Women, "At least 557,000 women in Gaza are facing severe food insecurity", press release, 27 June 2024.

¹² Available at <https://x.com/UNLazzarini/status/1817615379985740139>.

grew for humanitarian personnel throughout Gaza. Casualties among humanitarian workers surged during the reporting period, with at least 289 personnel killed. Of that number, 211 were United Nations staff – 207 from UNRWA and the rest from the World Health Organization, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Department of Safety and Security.¹³ Several humanitarian workers from Palestinian and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs), including the World Central Kitchen, were also killed during the reporting period.

15. Violence in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem also surged, marked by intensified Israeli military and settler raids, as well as the expansion of illegal settlements and other related illegal measures. According to the Office of United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), in the period from 7 October to 20 November alone, Israeli security forces conducted more than 1,000 raids in Palestinian cities, refugee camps and villages across the West Bank, as well as in East Jerusalem.¹⁴ Between 7 October 2023 and 19 August 2024, more than 600 Palestinians were killed in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and approximately 1,270 attacks by Israeli settlers were recorded, resulting in around 120 Palestinian fatalities and injuries. As Palestinians faced eviction and dispossession, Israeli settlement expansion continued, with Israeli government ministers making open declarations about plans to build more settlements and transfer more Israeli settlers to the Occupied Palestinian Territory, in grave breach of international law. As at 26 March, 4,780 new settlement units had been approved in Area C of the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. Since 7 October, the number of Palestinians displaced in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, owing to demolitions and seizures of Palestinian land and structures, including donor-funded structures, had more than doubled compared to the preceding 10 months, increasing from 1,252 to 3,070.¹⁵ Moreover, between 14 and 18 March, in the central and southern West Bank, settlers opened fire on Palestinians and their livestock, burned vehicles and crops, and established a new illegal settlement outpost in Lubban al-Gharbiyah.¹⁶ The escalation of Israeli settler attacks and violence in the West Bank led several Member States, including Australia, Canada, France and the United States of America to impose sanctions on a few extremist Israeli settlers.

16. In East Jerusalem, Israeli authorities increased their provocations and challenges to the historic and legal status quo at the holy sites, and they pushed to increase the Jewish presence and influence, in particular in Silwan and Shaykh Jarrah. On 27 July, the Minister of National Security of Israel made his second visit to the Haram al-Sharif since 7 October, provocatively aiming to assert Israeli sovereignty over the site. Jordan, the site's custodian, and other Member States condemned that provocation and recurrent violations of the status quo, warning of the dangers of rising tensions stoked by such illegal actions. On 7 August, in another incident of incitement, the Minister of Finance of Israel suggested that deliberately starving Palestinian civilians in Gaza could be “justified and moral”, drawing condemnation by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights¹⁷ and several Member States.

17. In order to prevent catastrophic famine in the Gaza Strip, on 6 March, the Government of South Africa urgently requested the International Court of Justice to

¹³ UNRWA, “Remarks by UNRWA Chief of Staff, Mr. Ben Majekodunmi, at the World Humanitarian Day 2024 UN commemoration”, press release, 19 August 2024.

¹⁴ OHCHR, “Flash Report: The human rights situation in the occupied West Bank including East Jerusalem, 7 October–20 November 2023”, 27 December 2023.

¹⁵ United Nations, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. “Humanitarian Situation Update #201 | West Bank”, 7 August 2024.

¹⁶ UNRWA, “UNRWA situation report # 92 on the situation in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem”, 19 March 2024.

¹⁷ United Nations, “UN rights chief condemns Israeli minister for justifying war crime starvation of civilians in Gaza – OHCHR”, press release, 9 August 2024.

reinforce the provisional measures that the Court had indicated in its order of 26 January 2024.¹⁸ Taking into account the planned assault by Israel on Rafah, where 1.4 million Palestinians were sheltering, the Court responded to the request of South Africa by ordering strengthened provisional measures on 24 May.¹⁹ On 26 March, the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967 affirmed, in a report entitled “Anatomy of a genocide” (A/HRC/55/73), that the actions of Israel in Gaza constituted genocide. In another consequential judicial development, on 20 May, the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, Karim Khan, requested arrest warrants for senior Israeli officials and Hamas leaders for war crimes and crimes against humanity.²⁰ The request of the Prosecutor was consistent with the findings set out in the report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel of 27 May (A/HRC/56/26) and with the statement issued on 25 June by the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories.²¹

18. OHCHR, in a report released on 31 July,²² noted that, since October, Israel had placed thousands of Palestinians in arbitrary, prolonged and incommunicado detention. In addition, United Nations human rights experts reported widespread abuse, torture, sexual assault and rape of Palestinians, resulting in at least 53 deaths during the reporting period. They called for international intervention and an International Criminal Court investigation.²³ Since 7 October, a total of 9,500 Palestinians, including children and women, have been imprisoned. Of that number, one third have been held without charge or trial, and many have been arbitrarily abducted and detained.

19. Amid the ongoing Israeli assault on Gaza and increasing hardships for the population, UNRWA remained a vital lifeline for millions of Palestine refugees. Despite Israeli attempts to discredit, defund and dismantle the Agency, as well as significant funding gaps and restricted access to Gaza, UNRWA continued to deliver on its General Assembly mandate. Since October, UNRWA has delivered food to 1.9 million people, conducted 3.4 million medical consultations, including psychosocial support, produced 112,000 m³ of water daily, provided emergency shelters to thousands of displaced families and maintained humanitarian efforts across the Occupied Palestinian Territory.²⁴ The Secretary-General urged the international community to support the Agency after Israel accused 12 UNRWA staff of colluding in the attack of 7 October. Those allegations caused some donors to temporarily withhold funds at a time of immense humanitarian needs. In July, 123 Member States endorsed a statement of shared commitments on UNRWA, in which they reaffirmed

¹⁸ *Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide in the Gaza Strip (South Africa v. Israel)*, Order of 26 January 2024, *I.C.J. Reports 2024*.

¹⁹ *Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide in the Gaza Strip (South Africa v. Israel)*, Order of 24 May 2024, *I.C.J. Reports 2024*.

²⁰ International Criminal Court, “Statement of ICC Prosecutor Karim A.A. Khan KC: Applications for arrest warrants in the situation in the State of Palestine”, press release, 20 May 2024.

²¹ OHCHR, “UN Special Committee on Israeli practices in occupied territories concludes field mission”, press release, 25 June 2024.

²² OHCHR, “Thematic report: Detention in the context of the escalation of hostilities in Gaza (October 2023–June 2024)”, 31 July 2024.

²³ OHCHR, “Experts hail ICJ declaration on illegality of Israel’s presence in the occupied Palestinian territory as ‘historic’ for Palestinians and international law”, press release, 30 July 2024.

²⁴ UNRWA, “Situation report #127 on the situation in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem”, 9 August 2024.

their unwavering support for the Agency’s mandate and critical role in the region,²⁵ with many donors resuming funding.

20. Since 7 October, both the General Assembly and Security Council have been heavily engaged in addressing the crisis, albeit with limited success in establishing a ceasefire, protecting the Palestinian civilian population under Israeli occupation and addressing the humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza. On 27 October, the General Assembly, at its tenth emergency special session, adopted, with overwhelming support, resolution [ES-10/21](#), in which it called for an “immediate, durable and sustained humanitarian truce leading to a cessation of hostilities”. The Security Council struggled to find consensus on the crisis owing to the exercise of veto power on several occasions, causing the General Assembly to reconvene its tenth emergency special session in October and December. In March, the Security Council adopted resolution [2728 \(2024\)](#), in which it called for a ceasefire during the month of Ramadan. However, it failed to enforce the resolution. In June, the Council adopted resolution [2735 \(2024\)](#), in which it endorsed a ceasefire proposal and three-phase plan for Gaza. However, neither were implemented during the reporting period. Ceasefire negotiations between Israel and Hamas, facilitated by Egypt, Qatar and the United States and aimed at halting the violence and addressing the humanitarian crisis in Gaza, continued throughout the reporting period. However, they have yet to produce tangible results. The conflict continues, while the death toll and misery of Palestinians increases.

21. The Israeli military campaign in Gaza has threatened regional stability, prompting the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process to repeatedly urge restraint, including in a statement delivered before the Security Council on 25 June.²⁶ Efforts to broker a humanitarian ceasefire continued amid rising tensions in the Middle East, including in the aftermath of the killing of a Hamas leader in Tehran on 31 July. In response to that incident, the Secretary-General called for urgent international action to avert further regional escalation and emphasized the need for all efforts to be focused on a Gaza ceasefire, the release of Israeli hostages and increased aid.²⁷

22. On 19 July, in a landmark development, the International Court of Justice, responding to a request that the General Assembly made in its resolution [77/247](#), issued an advisory opinion in which the Court determined that the prolonged presence of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, to be unlawful and that Israel has an obligation to bring an end to its presence as rapidly as possible.²⁸ In addition, the Court affirmed the obligation of Member States not to recognize or support the unlawful presence of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, and it called on the General Assembly and the Security Council to determine the modalities required to bring to an end as rapidly as possible the Israeli occupation.²⁹ The advisory opinion reaffirmed the views of Member States, Palestinians, United Nation experts,³⁰ scholars and civil society, as well as the findings of the legal study that the Committee commissioned concerning the illegality of the ongoing Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territory ([A/78/378-S/2023/694](#)).

23. On 18 April, the United States vetoed a Security Council resolution concerning the bid of the State of Palestine for full membership of the United Nations. In response, the General Assembly voted on 9 May to affirm the eligibility of the State

²⁵ United Nations, “Statement of shared commitments on UNRWA”, press release, 12 July 2024.

²⁶ See [S/PV.9667](#).

²⁷ United Nations, “Statement attributable to the Spokesperson for the Secretary-General – on the Situation in the Middle East”, press release, 31 July 2024.

²⁸ *Legal Consequences Arising from the Policies and Practices of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, Advisory Opinion, I.C.J. Reports 2024.*

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ OHCHR, “Experts hail ICJ declaration on illegality of Israel’s presence in the occupied Palestinian territory as ‘historic’ for Palestinians and international law”, press release, 30 July 2024.

of Palestine for membership of the United Nations and to grant it additional rights in the Assembly. To bolster these efforts, the Committee urged more countries to recognize the State of Palestine. As a result, during the reporting period, Armenia, the Bahamas, Barbados, Ireland, Norway, Slovenia, Spain and Trinidad and Tobago recognized the State of Palestine, bringing to 149 the number of countries that had recognized the State of Palestine as at 9 August.

24. On June 20, in the light of the ongoing Israeli assault and mounting death toll in Gaza, 32 United Nations human rights experts reiterated their demand to States and companies for an immediate halt to arms transfers to Israel. At least 11 Member States, including Bahrain, Belize, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Brazil, Chad, Chile, Colombia, Honduras, Jordan, South Africa and Türkiye, have taken decisive actions in response to the deteriorating situation, such as recalling ambassadors to Israel and severing diplomatic relations, while others have given consideration to imposing economic, trade and travel restrictions. Global calls to stop arms transfers to and impose diplomatic and economic sanctions on Israel continued throughout the reporting period as Israel persisted with its aggression and occupation.

25. Israel also continued to withheld tax revenues from the Palestinian Authority and threatened to isolate Palestinian banks from the global financial system, further undermining the Palestinian Authority. On 23 July, in yet another attempt to achieve Palestinian reconciliation, 14 Palestinian factions signed a declaration in Beijing that was negotiated under the auspices of China to strengthen Palestinian national unity.

Chapter III

Mandate of the Committee

26. The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People was established by the General Assembly in its resolution [3376 \(XXX\)](#) of 10 November 1975 with the task of recommending a programme designed to enable the Palestinian people to exercise their inalienable rights to self-determination, national independence and sovereignty and return to the homes and property from which they had been displaced, as recognized by the Assembly in its resolution [3236 \(XXIX\)](#) of 22 November 1974. The mandate of the Committee has evolved over the years to include greater advocacy for the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. Additional information about the Committee is available on the website maintained by the Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat.³¹

27. On 30 November 2022, the General Assembly renewed the mandate of the Committee (resolution [77/22](#)) and requested the Secretary-General to continue to provide the Division for Palestinian Rights with the resources necessary for its programme of work (resolution [77/23](#)) and to continue to implement the special information programme on the question of Palestine of the Department of Global Communications of the Secretariat (resolution [77/24](#)). The mandates of the Committee, the Division and the Department will be reviewed only as necessary. The Committee's report will continue to be produced annually. The Assembly also adopted resolution [77/25](#), entitled "Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine", in which it reaffirmed the long-standing international position regarding the components of a just, lasting and comprehensive solution, in accordance with international law and the relevant United Nations resolutions.

28. The work of the Committee is fully aligned with the decisions of the main intergovernmental bodies of the United Nations, such as the General Assembly, Security Council, Economic and Social Council, Human Rights Council and the International Court of Justice, as well as with the work of the Secretary-General and the programmes, funds and specialized agencies of the United Nations system, with which it collaborates extensively.

³¹ www.un.org/unispal.

Chapter IV

Organization of work

A. Membership and officers

29. The Committee is composed of 25 Member States that represent different regional groups and that support the international consensus for a two-State solution: Afghanistan, Belarus, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Cuba, Cyprus, Ecuador, Guinea, Guyana, India, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mali, Malta, Namibia, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Pakistan, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Tunisia, Türkiye and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of).

30. The 24 observers of the Committee are Algeria, Bangladesh, Bulgaria, China, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, the Niger, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka, the Syrian Arab Republic, the United Arab Emirates, Viet Nam and Yemen, as well as the State of Palestine, the African Union, the League of Arab States (LAS) and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC).

31. The Bureau of the Committee is elected each year from among the permanent representatives of Committee members. At its 415th meeting, on 31 January, chaired by the Secretary-General, the Committee elected, in his personal capacity, Cheikh Niang (Senegal) as Chair. At its 416th meeting, on 11 March, the Committee elected, in their personal capacity, Gerardo Peñalver Portal (Cuba), Arrmanatha Christiawan Nasir (Indonesia), Ahmad Faisal Muhamad (Malaysia), Neville Melvin Gertze (Namibia) and Jaime Hermida Castillo (Nicaragua) as Vice-Chairs for the year. The new Permanent Representative of Cuba, Ernesto Soberón Guzmán, was elected as Vice-Chair on 26 June at the 417th meeting of the Committee.

32. Members of the Bureau represented the Committee at all international conferences organized by the Committee, including by chairing and moderating conference sessions, and on all delegation visits. On the margins of the conferences and during delegation visits, they held meetings with senior officials of the respective host countries. In accordance with established practice, the State of Palestine participates in the work of both the Committee and Bureau as an observer.

33. Committee members and observers have actively advocated for realization of the rights of the Palestinian people, including in the Security Council. Currently, four Committee members, Ecuador, Guyana, Malta and Sierra Leone, and one observer, Algeria, serve in the Security Council as elected members.

B. Participation in the work of the Committee

34. As in previous years, all States Members of the United Nations and observers wishing to participate in the work of the Committee were welcome to do so. The Committee also regularly engages with civil society representatives, including from Israel, and invites them to attend its activities.

Chapter V

Action taken by the Committee and the Division for Palestinian Rights in accordance with General Assembly resolutions [77/22](#) and [77/23](#)

A. Introduction

35. The Committee implemented its programme of work to promote the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, bring about an end to the Israeli occupation that began in 1967 and support the achievement of the two-State solution on the basis of the pre-1967 lines. Its activities are aligned with international law, including international humanitarian law and international human rights law; Security Council, General Assembly, Economic and Social Council and Human Rights Council resolutions; the advisory opinions of the International Court of Justice; the women and peace and security agenda; the programme of the United Nations country team; and the Sustainable Development Goals. The Committee has continuously adjusted its programme of work in line with developments on the ground in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and geopolitical developments relating to the question of Palestine.

36. The Committee supports the universally recognized rights of an occupied people and the right to self-determination, as enshrined in the Charter and other instruments of international law, including humanitarian and human rights law and the relevant United Nations resolutions. Since the 7 October attacks and the subsequent Israeli assault on Gaza, the Committee further engaged the diplomatic community through formal and informal intergovernmental processes to promote recognition of the State of Palestine, including through Bureau delegation visits and outreach meetings, and it raised public awareness on various aspects of the conflict, including its impact on women and children, through conferences, in-person, hybrid and virtual events, and the media, including social media. In addition, the Committee promoted partnerships with governments, relevant bodies of the United Nations system, including UNRWA, intergovernmental organizations, regional bodies and civil society organizations. It also implemented capacity-building projects for the State of Palestine and convened a commemoration of the Nakbah in May.

B. Mobilization of the diplomatic community

37. The Bureau closely monitored the rapidly evolving situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and held nine meetings in response. Following the events of 7 October, the Bureau postponed delegation visits that had been planned to start in November.

38. On 27 October, the Bureau met with the Chair of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel established by the Human Rights Council, Navanethem Pillay, and Commission member Christopher Sidoti, as well as the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967, Francesca Albanese, to discuss the latest developments, their respective reports to the General Assembly and ways to increase cooperation with the Committee.

39. On 10 November, the Bureau held its annual retreat in New York to reflect on the implementation of its 2023 programme of work and discuss 2024 activities, with heightened focus on advocacy needs concerning the conflict in Gaza.

40. The Bureau met on 10 January with the Permanent Representative of South Africa, who provided a briefing on the proceedings that her country had instituted at the International Court of Justice concerning violations by Israel of its obligations

under the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide in relation to the Palestinian civilian population in the Gaza Strip. On 6 February, the Bureau met with the President of the U.S./Middle East Project, Daniel Levy.

41. On 31 January, in a meeting chaired by the Secretary-General, the Committee elected the Permanent Representative of Senegal, Cheikh Niang, as Chair of the Committee. In addition, the Committee adopted its programme of work for 2024, heard a briefing by the Director of the UNRWA Representative Office in New York about the humanitarian crisis in Gaza and its impact on the Agency's ability to deliver essential support to the population and heard a briefing by South Africa on the proceedings that it had instituted at the International Court of Justice.

42. On 27 February, the Division for Palestinian Rights and the Department of Global Communications, on behalf of the Committee, held the annual briefing session for 25 new delegates of Member States.

43. On 11 March and 26 June, the Committee conducted elections to fill the remaining vacancies in the Bureau (see para. 31). In March, South Africa provided an update on the proceedings that it had instituted at the International Court of Justice. At the Committee meeting of 26 June, a legal counsel for the State of Palestine, Paul Reichler, delivered a briefing on proceeding related to the International Court of Justice advisory opinion on the legal consequences arising from the policies and practices of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem.

44. The Chair led Bureau delegations on visits to Trinidad and Tobago and Guyana from 22 to 26 April. Those visits were instrumental in encouraging Barbados, Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago and the Bahamas to recognize the State of Palestine. The Chair participated in the fifteenth summit of the Heads of State and Government of OIC, which was held in Banjul on 4 and 5 May. On 1 July, a Bureau delegation participated in a joint seminar with OIC in Jeddah, and it visited Riyadh on 2 July to hold meetings with the Government of Saudi Arabia. The Bureau delegation continued onto Indonesia, where it held meetings on 4 and 5 July with government and civil society representatives to harness support for the Palestinian people and to mobilize collective efforts for accountability and a just solution. During the visit to Indonesia, the Bureau held its first meeting with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) to mobilize regional support for Palestinian rights.

45. The Bureau harnessed traditional and social media for global outreach and advocacy. Since the outbreak of the conflict in Gaza, it has issued several press statements. On 17 October, the Bureau condemned the mass killing and wounding by Israel of civilians in Gaza and called for an immediate ceasefire. On 14 February, the Bureau warned of a possible Israeli invasion of Rafah. On 28 February, it called for solidarity and support to sustain UNRWA in the face of a smear campaign by Israel, suspensions of funding for the Agency and the humanitarian suffering of Palestine refugees in Gaza (see para. 19). On 23 July, the Bureau welcomed the landmark advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice and called for rapid action by the international community to uphold its obligations to bring an end to the Israeli occupation and ensure the realization of self-determination by the Palestinian people.

46. The Committee delivered statements at quarterly debates of the Security Council on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question, on 24 October, 23 January, 18 April and 19 July, highlighting the catastrophic situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and called for collective action to end the Israeli military onslaught in Gaza, achieve the two-State solution and realize the rights of the Palestinian people, including the rights to self-determination and independence.

C. Raising awareness on the question of Palestine

47. The Committee continued to raise awareness about the political, human rights and humanitarian situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, with a focus on the conflict in Gaza, including the situation of Palestinian women, children and young persons. It organized up-to-date briefings by experts and exchange of ideas on specific issues during virtual and in-person Committee meetings, side events and conferences, and it continued to disseminate publications and information through social media platforms. Details regarding each activity can be found on the Committee's website.

48. On 12 December, the Committee convened a panel discussion on the theme "2023 conflict in Gaza: the responsibility to prevent genocide". Renowned legal scholars, including from Israel, and civil society representatives discussed the real possibility that Israel may be committing the crime of genocide, as defined in article II of the Genocide Convention, against the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip.

49. On 13 March, the Committee organized a virtual event on the theme "Conflict in Gaza: impact on Palestinian women and children" on the margins of the sixty-eighth session of the Commission on the Status of Women. An all-female panel composed of representatives from UNRWA, the United Nations Population Fund and Save the Children International, as well as a Palestinian physician from Gaza, discussed the impact that the conflict has had on the lives of thousands of Palestinians families. The participants noted that 70 per cent of the casualties in Palestinian families were women and children, and that women bore a heavy burden as primary caregivers.

50. On 3 and 4 April, at the United Nations Office at Geneva, the Committee convened a conference of civil society organizations working on the question of Palestine, under the theme "Building bridges with international civil society to address the ongoing Nakbah". The participants focused on the role of civil society worldwide in advocating for a durable and sustainable ceasefire in Gaza and in achieving accountability for war crimes committed by Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem.

51. On 17 May, the Committee held a commemorative panel discussion on the theme "1948–2024: the ongoing Palestinian Nakbah" at United Nations Headquarters in New York. In all, 53 Member States and Observers and approximately 60 representatives of civil society, as well as members of the public, attended the event. The panellists discussed, inter alia, the origins of the question of Palestine in the United Nations, following the adoption by the General Assembly of the partition plan in 1947, the Organization's continuing responsibilities until a just solution is found, the catastrophic humanitarian situation throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory and the obligations of all States under international law vis-à-vis the grave injustice that has been inflicted on the Palestinian people, including the duty to prevent genocide pursuant to the order issued by the International Court of Justice on 26 January.

52. On 1 July, the Committee and OIC jointly held a symposium on the theme "Jerusalem and the Gaza conflict: Palestinian identity and existence under threat of erasure" at OIC headquarters in Jeddah. The event was attended by representatives of the majority of OIC member States and other diplomatic figures. Panellists and participants discussed the plight of Palestinians in East Jerusalem, "colonial" Israeli urban planning and the intensification of the Israeli settler project in the Occupied Palestinian Territory – all of which were occurring in the shadow of the Gaza conflict. They urged States to recognize the State of Palestine and hold Israel accountable for its grave violations of international law and human rights law.

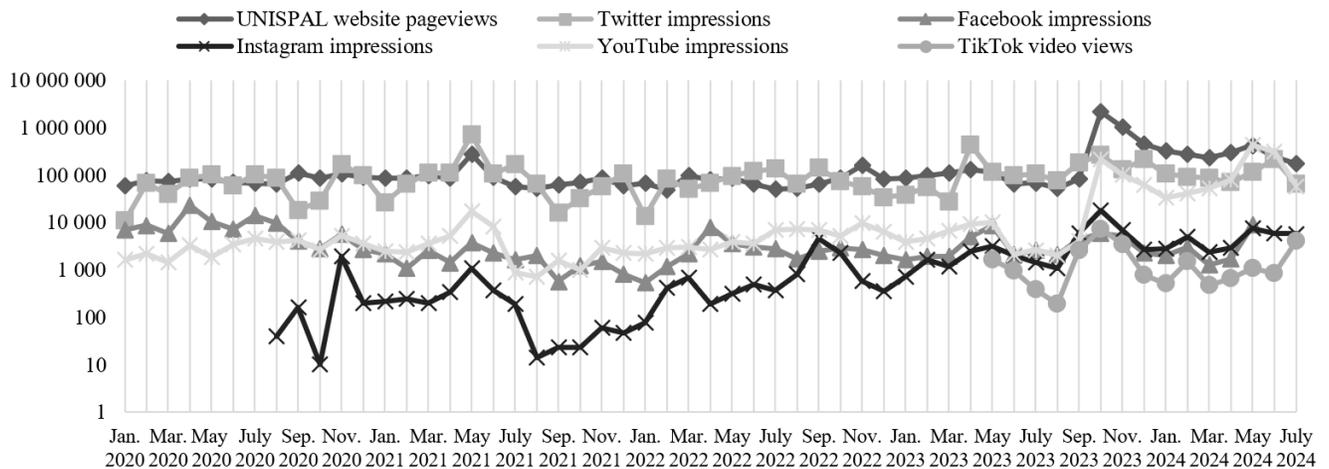
53. As mandated by the General Assembly, the Committee commemorated the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People on 29 November at United Nations Headquarters in New York. The event featured statements by the President of the General Assembly, the President of the Security Council and the Deputy-Secretary-General in which they reaffirmed Palestinian rights and need for a just and lasting solution. The Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine read a message from the President of the State of Palestine. The representatives of the African Union, LAS, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and OIC delivered statements. The Chair of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories and the Reverend Peter Makari, speaking on behalf of civil society organizations, also delivered statements. The commemoration was attended by 105 Member States and 5 NGOs, and messages of solidarity were received from 47 States.³² The speakers underscored the long-standing position of the United Nations with regard to the question of Palestine and called on Israel to comply forthwith with international law and cease its violations and oppression of the Palestinian people. Similar commemorations were held at the United Nations Offices at Geneva, Nairobi and Vienna.

54. A photo exhibit entitled “Palestine: a land with a people” was unveiled at United Nations Headquarters in New York as part of the commemoration of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. The exhibit, which was displayed from 29 November to 6 January, depicted the Palestinian people’s journey before, during and after the Nakbah, highlighting both their suffering and resilience.

55. Through strategic use of digital resources, the Committee continued to inform and engage a growing international audience, enhancing global understanding of the question of Palestine and combating misinformation and disinformation, in particular after the events of 7 October. The graph below illustrates the growth trends of the digital tools that the Committee uses to support its advocacy and awareness-raising efforts. The Committee’s website had 5.6 million pageviews during the reporting period, becoming a key information source. Since January 2020, there has been a steady growth in web page visits, followers on social media channels and mailing list subscribers, with the mailing list alone now having 16,564 subscribers. The mailing list and website were crucial for distributing the Committee’s multilingual publications and statements (see para. 58), while the Committee’s digital platforms, including its account on X (formerly known as Twitter), which has more than 25,000 followers, and its YouTube channel, which has more than 11,800 subscribers and has received 1.5 million views, have become key sources of information about and updates on the Committee’s activities.

³² Available at www.un.org/unispal/2023-international-day-of-solidarity-with-the-palestinian-people/.

Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, digital and social media platform trends, 2020–2024



Source: United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine and Division for Palestinian Rights of the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (July 2024).

Abbreviation: UNISPAL, United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine.

56. The United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine, now in its thirtieth year of operation, remains an indispensable resource for diplomats, researchers and the public, averaging 500,000 page views per month. It holds a growing catalogue of more than 44,000 documents and is the largest, most comprehensive online repository on the subject. The collection ranges from the latest United Nations documents to rare records dating back decades. Moreover, documents are increasingly being disseminated in Arabic, Chinese, French, Russian and Spanish, in addition to English.

57. The Division for Palestinian Rights, in collaboration with the Office of Information and Communications Technology, continued to improve the accessibility of UNPal, an artificial-intelligence-based chatbot for the United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine website. Other enhancements to the website are aimed at making it more accessible to everyone, including speakers of all the official languages and persons with disabilities.

58. As part of its monitoring mandate, the Committee continued to produce publications for dissemination by the Division for Palestinian Rights. They include a weekly publication on NGO action on the question of Palestine, monthly bulletins compiling all official documents of the United Nations and other intergovernmental organizations relating to the question of Palestine, quarterly newsletters on the activities of the Committee, an annual compilation of United Nations reports on the question of Palestine and an annual compilation of all resolutions issued by United Nations bodies on the question of Palestine.

59. On 1 September 2023, the Committee launched the groundbreaking study entitled “The legality of the Israeli occupation of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem”, which was produced by the Irish Centre for Human Rights of the University of Galway, Ireland. This legal analysis, which the Committee commissioned after it had convened successive legal seminars on the subject, has provided advocates with the knowledge and international legal tools needed to pursue justice and accountability and to realize the rights of the Palestinian people. The study, which was translated into Arabic, French and Spanish, has been accessed more 53,609 times on the United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine website. In addition, it was circulated as a document of the General Assembly and of the

Security Council ([A/78/378-S/2023/694](#)) and was submitted to the International Court of Justice. The study served as a partial basis for the landmark advisory opinion that the Court issued on 19 July (see para. 22).

60. The Committee's publications were disseminated to a growing mailing list of subscribers, including research libraries, universities, political figures, members of the diplomatic community, students, NGOs, intergovernmental organizations and journalists. All the publications of the Committee are posted on its website.

61. The Committee, with support from OIC, distributed 2,724 United Nations exhibit booklets worldwide, including to Member States and United Nation offices, and began the process of translating them into French and Spanish, with a view to broadening outreach. The electronic versions of the booklets registered 9,362 views.

D. Cooperation with intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations and United Nations system entities

62. The Committee continued to cooperate with intergovernmental organizations. It jointly organized with OIC the annual International Conference on the Question of Jerusalem. The African Union, LAS and OIC regularly attended Committee meetings as observers and participated in its work. The Chair participated in key OIC events and the Bureau held consultations with ASEAN (see para. 44).

63. In the course of its activities, the Committee, through the Division for Palestinian Rights, continued its long-standing cooperation with the United Nations system, including UNDP, United Nations country teams, UNRWA, the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management, the Department of Global Communications (including the United Nations information centres), the Human Rights Council, OHCHR, UN-Women, the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) and the United Nations System Staff College.

64. The Committee continued to collaborate with NGOs in promoting Palestinian rights. Representative of civil society organizations, including from the State of Palestine and Israel, were invited to all public events (see paras. 48–53). As customary, a civil society representative was also invited to speak at the Committee's commemoration of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People (see para. 53).

E. Capacity-development

65. In accordance with General Assembly resolution [77/23](#), the Committee continued to offer training, both in-person and online, aimed at enhancing the capacity of officials of the State of Palestine.

66. In collaboration with UNITAR, the Committee supported the participation of six officials (four female and two male) from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the State of Palestine and the Palestinian International Cooperation Agency in a training course entitled "The art of speechwriting" from 16 October to 5 November. The course strengthened the individual capacity of diplomats working in roles requiring refined skills in speechwriting and public speaking.

67. From 30 October to 8 December, the Committee conducted its annual six-week capacity-building programme for two Palestinian career diplomats (one male and one female), with an emphasis on multilateral diplomacy, peace, security and global developments shaping the agenda of the United Nations. The programme offered insights into the Organization's formal and informal processes, including the seventy-eighth session of the General Assembly.

Chapter VI

Action taken by the Department of Global Communications in accordance with General Assembly resolution 77/24

68. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 77/24 of 30 November 2022, the Department of Global Communications continued to implement its special information programme on the question of Palestine.

69. From 30 October to 1 December, the Department held its annual training programme for Palestinian broadcasters and journalists in New York and Washington, D.C. The programme was renamed the Shireen Abu Akleh Training Programme for Palestinian Broadcasters and Journalists in honour of the Palestinian journalist Shireen Abu Akleh, who was killed on 11 May 2022. The four Palestinian journalists who participated in the programme attended briefings with United Nations officials and met with representatives of the Committee to Protect Journalists, Al Jazeera, the Washington, D.C., International Film Festival and the Middle East Institute.

70. The Department continued to update the web page on the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People in the six official languages, and it provided technical support for the United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine website.

71. The social media accounts of the United Nations, with more 71 million followers in all six official languages, as well as Hindi, Kiswahili and Portuguese, continued to promote the Committee's events, including on a dedicated Trello board. The Department issued 256 press releases, in English and French, on the question of Palestine, including statements and messages by the Secretary-General, and provided live or on-demand coverage of General Assembly, Security Council and Committee meetings (see chapter V).

72. UN News published over 5,500 stories and audio pieces in the six official languages, as well as Hindi, Kiswahili, Portuguese and Urdu, generating 6.7 million pageviews from 4.2 million users. In addition, the Department provided on-the-ground insights into the tragic situation in Gaza and developments in the West Bank through interviews and features, including an Arabic-language profile of a Palestinian businesswoman who has dedicated her life to helping her community in Gaza.³³

73. UN Photo and the United Nations Photo Library captured and processed more than 1,400 relevant images, and more than 800 images were posted on the UN Photo website. In addition, UN Video created over 110 video packages, which were distributed through various United Nations platforms. UNifeed produced some 500 news video packages that were aired in 110 countries by various media outlets, including Al Jazeera, the British Broadcasting Corporation, Cable News Network and i24 News. Those packages covered such things as humanitarian updates from United Nations agencies in the field and the Secretary-General's annual trip to Egypt and Jordan.

74. The permanent exhibit "The United Nations and the Question of Palestine", which is part of the United Nations guided tour route, continued to raise awareness among visitors. Over 180,000 visitors saw the exhibit during the reporting period, and 123 students were educated about the question of Palestine in five briefings.

75. In connection with the commemoration of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People (see para. 53), the Department facilitated the launch, at United Nations Headquarters, of a photo exhibit entitled "Palestine: a land with a

³³ United Nations, UN News, "An unconquerable determination amidst the devastation of war: Tahani Abu Daqqah is a Palestinian businesswoman who dedicates her life to helping her community in Gaza", 29 May 2024. Available in Arabic at news.un.org/ar/story/2024/05/1131301.

people”. In addition, United Nations information centres around the world, including in Canberra, Manama, Mexico City, Moscow, Pretoria, Nairobi and Sana’a, Yemen, commemorated the occasion by organizing events and disseminating the Secretary-General’s message, including in local languages. On 30 November, the United Nations information centre in Nairobi, in collaboration with the Embassy of the State of Palestine to Kenya, as well as the United Nations Office at Nairobi, marked the occasion at the United Nations complex in Nairobi. More than 500 participants attended the screening of a documentary and an exhibition on Palestine culture. The Nairobi information centre supported the event by inviting the media and providing moderation, photography and social media services.

76. On 17 May, the Department held a “meet the author” event with Ardi Imseis, professor of international law and author of a book entitled *The United Nations and the Question of Palestine: Rule by Law and the Structure of International Legal Subalternity*.

77. Following the outbreak of the conflict in Gaza, United Nations information centres have been providing daily media monitoring for the Spokesperson of the Secretary-General and have supported the United Nations Communications Group crisis cell on Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory established by the Department of Global Communications. In addition, the information centres translated and disseminated press releases and messages of the Secretary-General and the Committee. The Italy desk of the United Nations Regional Information Centre for Western Europe published more than 100 articles in Italian on the crisis, arranged interviews and translated op-ed articles. The information centres also supported visits by high-level United Nations officials, such as the visits conducted by the Secretary-General and several other high-level United Nations officials to the region, including to Rafah. Media briefings were arranged, attracting significant international and national media coverage.

Chapter VII

Conclusions and recommendations of the Committee

78. In developing its recommendations set out below, the Committee has taken into account the deliberations at Committee and Bureau meetings, briefings received, outreach, international conferences and events involving Member States, civil society organizations and regional organizations, as well as recent United Nations resolutions.

A. Action by the Committee in response to the conflict and humanitarian crisis

79. The Committee strongly condemns the Israeli military campaign in Gaza. As at August 2024, more than 40,000 Palestinian had been killed and more than 92,000 men, women, children and elderly persons had been injured as a result of that campaign. It condemns the 7 October 2023 attack by armed Palestinian groups that resulted in the death of 1,200 Israelis and the injury of about 5,400 others; 255 others were abducted and taken as hostages into Gaza.

80. The Committee strongly condemns the disproportionate and indiscriminate military campaign that Israel is waging without regard for human life. This campaign has led to an ever-mounting death toll among Palestinians and caused them severe suffering, including mass displacement, starvation and spread of disease. It has also caused widespread destruction in the Gaza Strip and extensive trauma among the population. The Committee calls for an immediate and unconditional ceasefire, unrestricted humanitarian access, strict adherence to international humanitarian law to protect civilians, the release of hostages and prisoners, and an independent investigation into all human rights violations and war crimes perpetrated.

81. The Committee stresses that Israel, in its aggression against Gaza, has consistently failed to distinguish between civilians and combatants, as well as civilian and military objects, and breached its obligations as an occupying Power under the Fourth Geneva Convention. The Committee also stresses that the indiscriminate launching of rockets towards Israeli population centres by Palestinian armed groups is prohibited by international humanitarian law. The Committee reminds all parties that attacks on densely populated areas, hospitals, places of worship, schools and United Nations premises constitute war crimes and must cease forthwith, and that there must be accountability for all such grave breaches of international humanitarian law. The Committee urges all parties to comply fully with their obligations under international humanitarian and international human rights law, as well as General Assembly resolutions [ES-10/21](#) and [ES-10/22](#), Security Council resolutions [2712 \(2023\)](#), [2720 \(2023\)](#), [2728 \(2024\)](#) and [2735 \(2024\)](#), and Human Rights Council resolutions [55/28](#), [55/30](#), [55/31](#) and [55/32](#).

82. The Committee is alarmed by the humanitarian catastrophe caused by the Israeli military campaign, as a result of which the entire population of Gaza has been displaced multiple times and more than half a million Palestinians are facing famine. It calls for international solidarity and support for immediate humanitarian efforts in Gaza and urges Member States to pressure the Israeli authorities to allow safe unimpeded access for aid organizations bringing food, water, medicine, fuel and other essential supplies to Palestinians, and to prevent any actions aimed at obstructing the delivery of aid to the Palestinian people.

83. The Committee urges the international community to protect the Palestinian civilian population, including by establishing safe humanitarian zones, providing adequate shelter for displaced populations and meeting essential humanitarian and

hygiene needs. The Committee strongly condemns the raids and attacks carried out by Israel against the last remaining places of refuge for displaced Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, including the repeated attacks against UNRWA facilities sheltering the displaced and refugee camps across Gaza. It deplores the evacuation orders issued by Israel, because they continue to cause the displacement of and inflict suffering on Palestinians and spawn fear and trauma among a population that is being repeatedly forced to flee and seek safety in a place where nowhere is safe. The Committee notes that refugee centres are crucial sources of humanitarian aid, providing essential food, medical care and shelter, and must be treated as safe zones and respected in accordance with international law.

84. The Committee demands action to address war crimes committed by Israel in Gaza, including by investigating the weaponization of starvation as a method of warfare and other war crimes prohibited under international law. The Committee also denounces Israeli military offensives aimed at obstructing humanitarian aid to Palestinian civilians, who, after enduring months of bombings, disease and hunger, continue to endure collective punishment potentially involving acts of genocide.

85. The Committee demands that measures be taken to enhance safety for aid workers, including by requiring Israel to establish and respect safe corridors and ensure the protection of humanitarian personnel, including UNRWA staff, and the continuous delivery of aid.

86. The Committee expresses its deep concern about escalating settler violence in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. The increase in settler violence could further destabilize the area. In addition, the Committee calls for an immediate end to the use of lethal force by Israeli forces and armed settlers against Palestinian civilians, including children. The use of lethal force by Israeli forces and armed settlers has made 2024 the deadliest year on record for children in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

87. The Committee condemns the expansion of illegal settlements and outposts and the continued suffering and dispossession of Palestinian communities, which are facing an ongoing Nakbah driven by Israeli State policy and acts of terror by extremists. The Committee calls on Israeli government officials to halt their provocations, rhetoric and incitement in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem.

B. Action by the Committee in response to human rights violations

88. The Committee condemns the recurring human rights violations committed by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian civilian population in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, as amply documented by international organizations, including the United Nations and its human rights mechanisms, as well as human rights organizations, including organizations from Israel.

89. The Committee condemns the punitive measures imposed by the Government of Israel to perpetuate the occupation, weaken the Palestinian Authority and repress the Palestinian people. The Committee calls on Israel to immediately reverse its punitive measures against the Palestinian Authority, disarm Israeli settlers and immediately stop settler violence and all settlement activities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and provide protection to Palestinian civilians, as called for in Security Council resolution [904 \(1994\)](#) and General Assembly resolution [ES-10/20](#) and in line with its obligations under international humanitarian law.

90. The Committee demands that the United Nations and the international community take additional measures to ensure accountability in response to the failure of Israel to fulfil its responsibility to investigate and prosecute acts committed

by its agents or third parties that involve grave breaches of international humanitarian law and gross violations of the human rights of Palestinians. The Committee commends the Member States that have imposed sanctions against Israeli settlers involved in violence against Palestinians, and urges other Member States to act accordingly to ensure accountability.

91. The Committee urges Israel to uphold its obligations under international humanitarian and human rights law and to fully respect the status quo at the holy sites in Jerusalem, including the Aqsa Mosque compound, and to recognize the special role of Jordan as custodian of the compound. It condemns the attempts of Israel to change the historic and legal status of the holy sites and East Jerusalem, as well as to alter the demographic composition and character of East Jerusalem, in violation of international law and relevant United Nations resolutions.

92. The Committee commends the Secretary-General and the relevant humanitarian mechanisms for their response to continued and escalating aggression and violence by Israel, including the disproportionate use of military force in densely populated civilian areas in Gaza and the West Bank. The Committee underscores the seriousness of the findings in the most recent report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict ([A/78/842-S/204/384](#)) with regard to grave violations against Palestinian children, and notes that Israeli security forces and armed Palestinian groups are among those responsible for these violations.

93. The Committee is deeply worried that OHCHR, in its report of 31 July (see para. 18), indicated that thousands of Palestinians have been detained in Gaza, the West Bank and Israel, including since October 2023, in violation of international human rights and international humanitarian law. The Committee strongly condemns the sexual violence committed against and the deaths, disappearances, torture and inhumane treatment of Palestinian prisoners in Israel, including men, women and children. It also denounces the actions of Israeli extremists who call for the right to rape Palestinian prisoners.

94. The Committee deplores the killing and silencing by Israeli forces of Palestinian journalists and media professionals in Gaza and the West Bank, who are central to exposing the atrocities, violations and acts of genocide being perpetrated in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

95. The Committee welcomes the order issued by the International Court of Justice in response to the proceedings instituted by South Africa. In that order, the Court indicates that Israel must “take all measures within its power to prevent the commission of all acts within the scope of Article II” of the Genocide Convention. The Committee also highlights the extreme vulnerability of civilians in Gaza owing to repeated Israeli military assaults, and demands that Israel ensure that its forces do not commit further genocidal acts.

96. The Committee welcomes measure taken by the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court aimed at holding Israeli leaders and the leaders of Palestinian armed group accountable for war crimes and crimes against humanity as a result of their actions in the Gaza conflict. It calls on the International Criminal Court to act on the Prosecutor’s request.

C. Action by the Committee in response to annexation and settlement activities

97. The Committee welcomes the landmark advisory opinion that the International Court of Justice issued on 19 July and calls on the General Assembly and Security Council to urgently implement it, including through the adoption of the modalities

required to bring an end the unlawful Israeli occupation and a halt to all new settlement activities, to evacuate existing settlers, to make reparations for damages in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and to support the realization by the Palestinian people of their inalienable right to self-determination. The Assembly, supported by the Council, should formulate a road map for ending the unlawful occupation. Such a road map should specify the obligations of all States, in accordance with the advisory opinion, and include clear benchmarks, and its implementation should be monitored. The Committee supports the call for all Member States to uphold international law and reject the unlawful presence of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and to refrain from actions that assist or sustain that unlawful presence.

98. The Committee reiterates that the annexation of any part of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, is illegal. It calls on the Israeli authorities to cease all actions aimed at changing the demographic composition, status and character of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and to abide scrupulously by its international legal obligations. Such illegal colonization measures violate the inalienable right to self-determination of the Palestinian people and undermine the prospect of achieving a two-State solution by systematically eroding a contiguous, independent, viable and sovereign Palestinian State, based on the pre-1967 borders, with East Jerusalem serving as its capital, in accordance with international law and the pertinent United Nations resolutions, including, inter alia, Security Council resolution 2334 (2016) and General Assembly resolution 77/26, as well as the Madrid terms of reference and the Arab Peace Initiative.

99. The Committee is gravely concerned at the stated objective of the Government of Israel to dramatically increase the number of settlers in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, with the Government openly referring to the occupied territory as the “land of Israel”, contrary to international law, countless United Nations resolutions and the international consensus on the two-State solution based on the pre-1967 borders. The Committee supports the demands made by the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Human Rights Council for the cessation of all such illegal activities, including expropriation of and encroachment on Palestinian land and demolition of Palestinian homes and properties.

100. The Committee urges the Government of Israel to refrain from seizing Palestinian land, stop conducting demolitions, including of donor-funded structures, and end all forced evictions and forcible displacement of Palestinians.

101. The Committee concurs with the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel that discrimination against Palestinians and the ongoing occupation and associated abuses, such as unlawful killings, forced displacement and denial of rights, resemble apartheid and are primary causes of the conflict. The Committee calls for urgent action to safeguard Palestinian human rights and condemns political attacks on the Special Rapporteurs and the Independent International Commission of Inquiry, which undermine their efforts to document abuses, advocate for Palestinian rights and promote accountability.

D. Action with the Secretary-General, the Security Council, the General Assembly, the Human Rights Council, the International Court of Justice and the International Criminal Court

102. The Committee concurs with the stance of the Secretary-General on the question of Palestine, which is based on international law and numerous United Nations resolutions, and it urges him to continue leveraging his good offices to pursue a just resolution to the question of Palestine. It calls on the international community to fulfil

its political, legal, humanitarian and moral obligations in responding to the dangerous crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory that led the Secretary-General to invoke Article 99 of the Charter.

103. The Committee urges the Security Council and the General Assembly to ensure the speedy implementation of the long-standing parameters for peace affirmed in relevant United Nations resolutions, including Council resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#) and Assembly resolution [77/25](#). Doing so includes ensuring that Member States and intergovernmental organizations take tangible measures to implement their obligations under those resolutions, in particular distinguishing between Israel and the territories that have remained under its occupation since 1967. In addition, Member States must refrain from aiding, assisting or recognizing the unlawful presence of Israel, the occupying Power, in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, as reaffirmed most recently in the International Court of Justice advisory opinion of 19 July.

104. The Committee requests the Secretary-General to continue to submit his reports to the Security Council on the implementation of resolutions [2334 \(2016\)](#), [2728 \(2024\)](#) and [2735 \(2024\)](#) in written format and, pursuant to the applicable paragraphs of those resolutions, to include references to the implementation of the provision by Member States. Pursuant to those resolutions, the Committee also calls upon the Council to examine practical ways and means to secure the full implementation of relevant Council resolutions, including the use of sanctions on States and private entities violating Council resolutions.

105. The Committee calls on the Security Council to demand the immediate implementation of resolution [2735 \(2024\)](#), in which a three-phase ceasefire deal is outlined, and to also demand an immediate halt to Israeli military actions. The Committee also calls on the Security Council to act urgently to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian assistance to Gaza, and calls for a peaceful resolution to the conflict, which has been delayed for too long. The Committee expresses concern over the failure of the Security Council to halt atrocities in Gaza, such as the killing of non-combatants, including men, women, children, young persons and elderly people, and strongly condemns the silence that normalizes these acts. It acknowledges the efforts of States, including Egypt, Qatar and the United States, to broker a ceasefire and the release of hostages and urges the continuation of those efforts until the suffering in Gaza has been brought to end.

106. The Committee urges further efforts to implement the mandate of the Senior Humanitarian and Reconstruction Coordinator for Gaza, as set out in Security Council resolution [2720 \(2023\)](#), with the objective of expediting the delivery of humanitarian assistance to the Palestinian civilian population in Gaza, and calls for Member States to support the Coordinator's efforts.

107. The Committee notes that any initiatives aimed at resolving the conflict in Gaza and ending the prolonged occupation in order to achieve a just solution to the question of Palestine must, first and foremost, take into account the legitimate rights and aspirations of the Palestinian people, engage the Palestinian leadership and be based on the two-State solution, in accordance with international law and the relevant United Nations resolutions.

108. The Committee commends the ongoing efforts of the International Court of Justice and the International Criminal Court in upholding international law and humanitarian principles in matters related to the question of Palestine and that are crucial for ensuring accountability, justice and the protection of Palestinian rights.

E. Advocacy and outreach with the international community and civil society

109. The Committee calls upon regional organizations, in particular LAS, the European Union, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and OIC, to take a politically active role in stopping the annexation of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, by Israel and to take tangible measures, including with regard to accountability, in order to bring an end to the occupation and achieve a just solution to the question of Palestine. The Committee notes that any comprehensive resolution to the question of Palestine will require a regional approach, such as the approach set out in the Arab Peace Initiative.

110. The Committee fully supports the ongoing efforts by Member States, as well as the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, to promote calm and a just and lasting resolution to the question of Palestine. The Committee commends the recent efforts of Algeria, China and Egypt to promote Palestinian unity, as it recognizes that Palestinian unity is essential to ending the conflict and advancing the resolution of the question of Palestine.

111. The Committee recognizes the crucial role of global civil society in advocating for Palestinian rights and an end to the immense suffering in Gaza, and in urging Member States to heed the demands of the public and take decisive action in line with their international legal obligations. The Committee condemns the threats that have been made against civil society organizations and NGOs delivering aid in Gaza. It calls on Israel to reverse policies that restrict access for civil society organizations and hamper their vital work, and to ensure safe access for humanitarian workers.

F. Action by Member States and regional organizations

112. The Committee calls on Member States and regional organizations to act, collectively and individually, in line with international law to pressure Israel, the occupying Power, to fulfil its responsibilities to safeguard Palestinian civilians under international law, stop the assault on Gaza and the violence in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and end its unlawful occupation as rapidly as possible.

113. The Committee considers unilateral recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and the relocation of embassies to Jerusalem as being invalid, because those actions violate Security Council resolutions [476 \(1980\)](#), [478 \(1980\)](#) and [2334 \(2016\)](#). It commends those States that have reversed such recognition and, in that connection, recalls the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice of 19 July.

114. The Committee welcomes General Assembly resolution [ES-10/23](#), in which the Assembly reaffirms the right of Palestinians to self-determination and an independent State, and it urges the Security Council to recommend the admission of the State of Palestine as a full member of the United Nations, in line with the broad international consensus in that regard. The Committee also welcomes the recent decisions of several States to recognize the State of Palestine and urges those States that have yet to do so to take decisive action now, in keeping with the duty to uphold the Palestinian people's inalienable right to self-determination and independence.

115. The Committee encourages OHCHR to continue updating the database of business enterprises engaged in certain activities in relation to illegal Israeli settlement activity in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and stresses the importance of the database for accountability measures.

116. The Committee reaffirms its strong support for UNRWA and the Agency's indispensable role in providing services to millions of Palestine refugees, many of

whom are now sheltering in its facilities in Gaza. The Committee urges continued political support for the Agency's mandate, which was established by the General Assembly, and urges donors to increase funding for UNRWA. In that connection, the Committee emphasizes the Secretary-General's recognition of the Agency's critical role and highlights the need to hold accountable those responsible for the deaths of United Nations staff. The Committee demands that Israel reverse its classification of UNRWA as a terrorist organization and stop its campaign to delegitimize UNRWA, as that undermines the Agency's crucial humanitarian efforts in Gaza and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory and in the other fields of operation in Jordan, Lebanon and Syria.

117. The Committee calls on Member States to support the fiscal stability of the Palestinian Authority and strengthen Palestinian institutions, in order to improve economic and social conditions in the State of Palestine, especially in view of the suffering and deprivation that the actions of Israel have caused.

118. Recognizing the vital role of legislative bodies in garnering support for the peaceful resolution of the question of Palestine, the Committee calls for parliamentary diplomacy to help bring an end to the Gaza conflict and the Israeli occupation and find a just and lasting solution to the question of Palestine.

G. Action by the Secretariat and other United Nations entities

119. The Committee requests the Division for Palestinian Rights of the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs to continue providing secretariat support across all aspects of its General Assembly mandate, and to facilitate synergy, collaboration and cooperation with United Nations entities working on the question of Palestine. The Committee expresses its appreciation to the Division for supporting and adapting the Committee's communications and outreach tools, including its multilingual website, its social media accounts and audiovisual content pertaining to its activities, with a view to promoting the Committee's advocacy and awareness-raising efforts in the dynamic context of the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

120. The Committee encourages enhanced collaboration with the special information programme on the question of Palestine of the Department of Global Communications, with a view to ensuring broader outreach. In addition, it encourages the Department to reinstitute its dedicated web portal on the Israel-Gaza crisis.

121. The Committee also welcomes the ongoing efforts to improve the targeted capacity-building projects for Palestinian officials and to promote inclusivity, gender balance and South-South cooperation.





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Question of Palestine

Economic costs of the Israeli occupation for the Palestinian people: the welfare cost of the fragmentation of the occupied West Bank

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the General Assembly the report prepared by the secretariat of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development.

* [A/78/150](#).



Report prepared by the secretariat of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development on the economic costs of the Israeli occupation for the Palestinian people: the welfare cost of the fragmentation of the occupied West Bank

Summary

The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution [77/22](#), in which the Assembly requested the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) to continue to report to it on economic development in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the economic costs of the Israeli occupation for the Palestinian people. The report complements previous UNCTAD reports submitted to the Assembly ([A/71/174](#), [A/73/201](#), [A/74/272](#), [A/75/310](#), [A/76/309](#) and [A/77/295](#)).

In the occupied West Bank, Israel implements a series of administrative and physical barriers that control the movements of Palestinian people and limit their access to markets, both domestic and foreign, and to natural and economic resources. Area C accounts for more than 60 per cent of the area of the West Bank and is fully under the control of Israel. In tandem with the expansion of settlements, Israel imposes stricter restrictions on Palestinian economic activities in Area C over and above those imposed in Areas A and B of the West Bank.

The present report quantifies the impact of the relative share of Area C in Palestinian localities on household welfare, measured by expenditure using two cross-sectional data sets on 457 localities in 10 governorates. The exercise reveals that the greater the share of Area C in a locality, the stronger the negative impact on total household expenditure. The extent of this negative effect, however, is heterogeneous across West Bank governorates.

The present report complements previous reports and concludes that removing the additional restrictions on all of Area C would more than double household expenditure in the West Bank and significantly reduce poverty in Area C. Reducing restrictions in Area C to levels similar to Areas A and B, as a step towards ending the occupation, in line with relevant United Nations resolutions, could boost total Palestinian household expenditure substantially, by up to 200 per cent in some localities, and help to reduce poverty substantially across much of the Occupied Palestinian Territory. For instance, in 2017, total household expenditure in the West Bank, excluding Jerusalem Governorate, could have been \$4.4 billion higher (in constant 2015 United States dollars) than it actually was. This is equivalent to a 57 per cent increase in total household expenditure in the West Bank. Transferring land currently categorized as Area C, as stipulated in the Oslo Accords, to Area A or B would amount only to a partial removal of restrictions, however. If all restrictions in the three Areas were removed, as a step towards ending the occupation, the positive economic impact would be much greater.

The report concludes that ending and reversing settlement activities, in line with Security Council resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#), and lifting all restrictions on Palestinian economic development, including in Area C, is a sine qua non for the eradication of poverty and achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and the emergence of a viable, contiguous Palestinian State, based on the two-State solution, in line with relevant United Nations resolutions.

I. Objective and limitations

1. The present report is an addition to six previous reports, prepared by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and submitted to the General Assembly, on the economic costs of the Israeli occupation for the Palestinian people. The report sheds light on the extensive economic cost exacted by the Israeli occupation of Area C and the fragmentation of the West Bank that it entails.
2. While the occupation imposes significant restrictions on Palestinian economic activity in Areas A and B, it enforces additional restrictions in Area C. The present report adds to the findings of the 2022 report (A/77/295) on the economic cost of the additional restrictions imposed by the occupation in Area C, which represents about 60 per cent of the total area of the occupied West Bank.
3. The present report quantifies the welfare impact of the relative share of Area C in Palestinian localities on household welfare, using expenditure as a proxy, by assuming a counterfactual scenario in which the share of Area C in each locality is set to zero. This implies that the restrictions in Area C are set at the level of the significant, but relatively less severe, restrictions imposed in Areas A and B.
4. The report estimates the above-mentioned cost from a microeconomic vantage point. Given the census and survey data sets used and the microeconomic nature of the exercise, the cost is estimated for one year, 2017, but the results apply to other years.

II. Background and context

5. With the onset of the occupation in 1967, Israel began establishing settlements in Area C of the West Bank. According to the non-governmental organization Peace Now, the settler population in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, rose from 198,315 in 2000 to almost 700,000 at the end of 2022.¹ These settlements inflict a significant economic cost on the Palestinian people, dispossess them of their inalienable right to development, entrench occupation and pre-empt a meaningful, sustainable two-State solution.
6. The Security Council, in several resolutions, has emphasized the illegality of settlements and the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force. In its resolution 2334 (2016), the Security Council reaffirmed that the establishment by Israel of settlements in the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem, has no legal validity and constitutes a flagrant violation under international law and a major obstacle to the achievement of the two-State solution and a just, lasting and comprehensive peace.
7. In accordance with the 1993 Oslo Accords, the occupied West Bank was divided into three administrative areas. Area A was placed under the civil and security administration of the Palestinian Authority. It represents about 18 per cent of the total area of the West Bank, includes the Palestinian cities and is home to most of the Palestinian population of the West Bank. Area B represents approximately 22 per cent of the area of the West Bank, is largely rural and is subject to Palestinian civil control and joint Israeli-Palestinian security control. Area C, which accounts for about 60 per

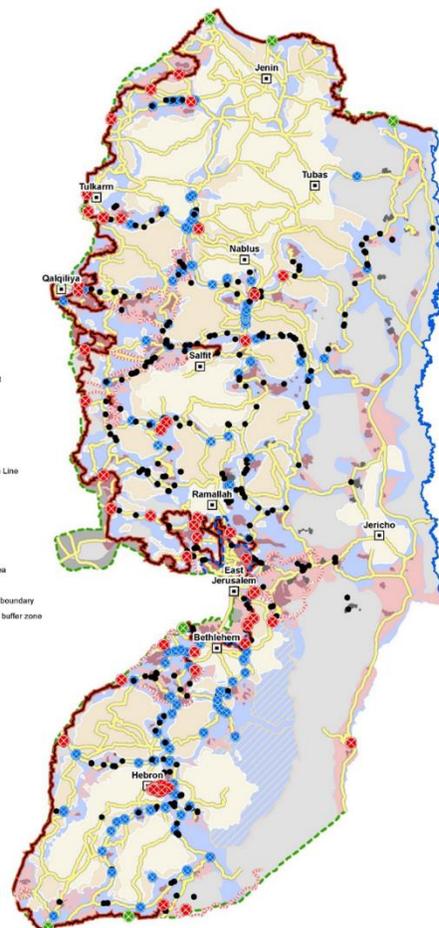
¹ See Peace Now, "West Bank population", Settlements Watch database. Available at <https://peacenow.org.il/en/settlements-watch/settlements-data/population> (accessed May 2023; 465,400 in the West Bank); and Peace Now, "Jerusalem population", Settlements Watch database. Available at <https://peacenow.org.il/en/settlements-watch/settlements-data/jerusalem> (accessed May 2023; 229,377 in East Jerusalem).

cent of the West Bank, incorporates all Israeli settlements and is fully under Israeli civil and security control (see [A/77/295](#), p. 2).

8. As such, Palestinian physical and economic geography is fragmented by subdividing Areas A and B into 166 disconnected islands, leaving Area C as the only contiguous part of the West Bank (figure II). The Oslo Accords envisioned the gradual transfer of Area C to the Palestinian Authority over a five-year period ending in 1999. However, to the present day, the occupation continues, and Area C is largely inaccessible to Palestinian producers, although it is the largest of the three Areas and has the most valuable natural resources, such as water, fertile land, minerals and stone, as well as tourist attractions and Dead Sea resources for cosmetic products.

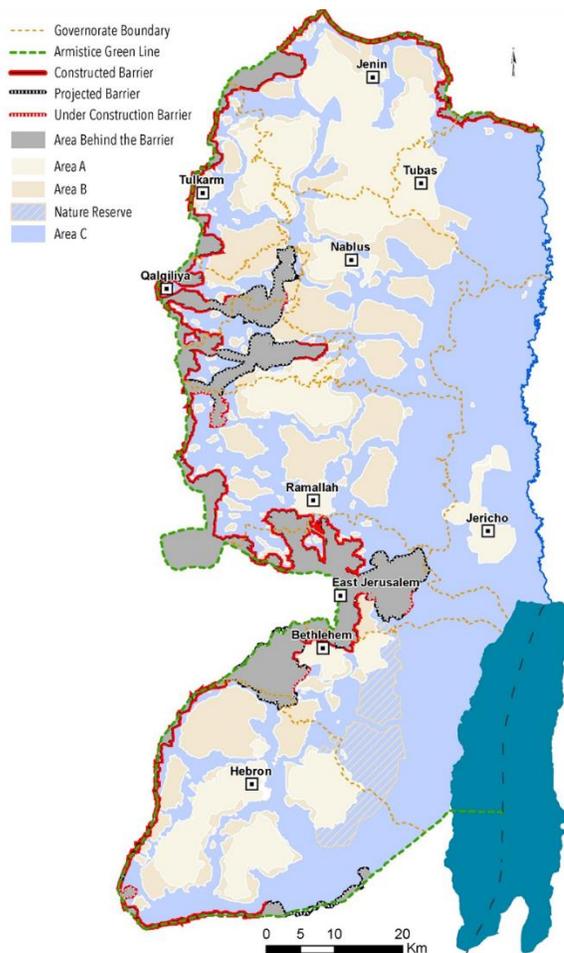
9. Instead of transferring Area C to the Palestinian Authority, Israel has continued to use a complex matrix of administrative and physical controls over the movement of Palestinian people and their access to their land and natural resources, citing security reasons (figure I). These restrictions on movement, trade and investment, combined with settlements, violence and the wall, serve to foster a coercive environment that alters the demographic composition by pushing Palestinians out of their land while settlements and the settler population grow (figure II) (see [A/77/295](#)).

Figure I
Israeli access restrictions in the West Bank



Source: United Nations, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, occupied Palestinian territory.

Figure II
Israeli barrier route in the West Bank



Source: United Nations, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, occupied Palestinian territory.

10. The Israeli occupation exacts a significant negative impact on development by preventing Palestinians from building on over 99 per cent of Area C.² It is extremely difficult for Palestinians to obtain permits from the Israeli authorities to build residential structures or structures for investment or to develop infrastructure such as roads and networks for water and power. If a structure is built without a permit, as is often the case, the occupying Power demolishes it at the owner's expense. Over the years, the demolition and seizure of Palestinian structures and the human displacement they entail have increased. Schools, water pipes and donor-funded humanitarian structures are not exempt from demolitions.³ Owners are forced to demolish their own property, at their own expense, to avoid paying for the cost of demolition if carried out by the occupying Power, which may include additional fines.

² Office of the European Union Representative (West Bank and Gaza Strip, United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East), "One-year report on demolitions and seizures in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. Reporting period: 1 January–31 December 2021", 14 February 2022. Available at <https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/EU%20Demolition%20Report%202021.pdf>.

³ United Nations, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, "West Bank demolitions and displacement: December 2022", 21 February 2023.

It is estimated that between 2009 and 2021, in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, 7,400 Palestinian-owned structures were destroyed.⁴ Recently, both demolition and “self-demolition” have been increasing. The year 2022 witnessed the highest number of demolitions of Palestinian structures in over a decade. Israel demolished 954 structures, including water cisterns, storerooms, agricultural buildings, businesses and public buildings. As a result of the demolition of 193 residential structures, 1,032 Palestinians were displaced, half of them (508) minors. According to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 144 structures were demolished in East Jerusalem, including 74 demolished by their owners to avoid additional fines.⁵

11. Over the years, UNCTAD has published studies and reports for the General Assembly and the Trade and Development Board that have assessed various dimensions of the economic costs of the Israeli occupation for the Palestinian people. These covered a wide range of topics, including the impact of the occupation on the Palestinian people’s human right to development, the economic cost of the unrealized oil and natural gas potential, the leakage of Palestinian fiscal resources to the Israeli treasury and the contribution of the occupation to widespread poverty in Gaza, the West Bank and East Jerusalem.

12. UNCTAD (2022) estimated the annual cost of the additional restrictions imposed by Israel in 30 per cent of Area C at 25.3 per cent of West Bank gross domestic product (GDP).⁶ UNCTAD (2021) assessed the cost of restrictions and closure policy implemented by the occupying Power following the outbreak of the second intifada in 2000⁷ and concluded that those restrictions cost the economy of the West Bank 35 per cent of its GDP and increased the poverty rate by 200 per cent. UNCTAD (2020) concluded that, in Gaza, military operations, restrictions on movement and blockade increased the poverty rate from 40 to 64 per cent between 2007 and 2017.⁸ UNCTAD (2019) reflected on the economic cost of the unrealized oil and natural gas potential in Gaza and Area C (Meged oil and natural gas field) located inside the occupied West Bank and exploited by Israel.⁹ UNCTAD (2019) estimated the Palestinian fiscal resources that leak to the treasury of the occupying Power at 13.1 per cent of Palestinian GDP.¹⁰

13. The World Bank (2013, 2014 and 2018) has found that closures in the occupied West Bank substantially reduce the probability of being employed, hourly wages and the number of days worked while increasing the number of working hours per day. Checkpoints alone cost the West Bank economy about 6 per cent of its GDP.¹¹ Lifting road obstacles within the West Bank enough to improve Palestinians’ market access by 10 per cent would increase local output by 0.6 per cent, and, in the absence of roadblocks, GDP per capita in the West Bank would have been 4.1 to 6.1 per cent

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ UNCTAD, *The Economic Costs of the Israeli Occupation for the Palestinian People: The Cost of Restrictions in Area C Viewed from Above* (UNCTAD/GDS/APP/2022/1).

⁷ UNCTAD, *The Economic Costs of the Israeli Occupation for the Palestinian People: Arrested Development and Poverty in the West Bank* (UNCTAD/GDS/APP/2021/2 and Corr.1).

⁸ UNCTAD, *The Economic Costs of the Israeli Occupation for the Palestinian People: The Impoverishment of Gaza under Blockade* (UNCTAD/GDS/APP/2020/1).

⁹ UNCTAD, *The Economic Costs of the Israeli Occupation for the Palestinian People: The Unrealized Oil and Natural Gas Potential* (UNCTAD/GDS/APP/2019/1).

¹⁰ UNCTAD, *The Economic Costs of the Israeli Occupation for the Palestinian People: Cumulative Fiscal Costs* (UNCTAD/GDS/APP/2019/2).

¹¹ Massimiliano Cali and Sami H. Miaari, “The labor market impact of mobility restrictions: evidence from the West Bank”, Policy Research Working Paper, No. 6457 (Washington, D.C., World Bank, 2013).

higher each year.¹² Overall, according to the World Bank, if restrictions on Palestinian producers in Area C were removed, with the occupation still in place, the potential additional output gains would amount to at least \$2.2 billion annually, or 23 per cent of Palestinian GDP.¹³

III. Methodology and data

A. Special economic zones

14. Special economic zones are a policy instrument commonly used in most developing and many developed economies to accelerate development. They are geographically defined areas within which governments aim to promote investment, achieve structural transformation and accelerate development by providing fiscal, regulatory and other incentives, land use rights and other advantages, and infrastructure support. Among other goals, special economic zones may be used to target poorer regions. Special economic zones are typically subject to different economic regulations than other regions within the same country.¹⁴ Under the right circumstances, gains from special economic zones include boosting income, promoting exports, attracting foreign direct investment, job creation and advancing the development of targeted regions.¹⁵

15. UNCTAD (2019) explores the explosive growth of special economic zones and documents that more than 1,000 special economic zones were developed worldwide between 2014 and 2019. By 2019, there were some 5,400 zones in 147 countries, with more in the pipeline. In many cases, special economic zones have played a key role in structural transformation and have led to greater participation in global value chains.¹⁶

16. As shown above, the multilayered restrictions in Area C have a negative impact on Palestinian development. The share of Area C in Palestinian West Bank localities plays a role akin to an adverse (negative) special economic zone that, instead of fostering investment, suppresses it and prevents development. A cursory examination of the disincentives emanating from the restrictions imposed by the occupation in Area C suggests that designating part of a Palestinian locality as Area C introduces an adverse special economic zone whose negative impact spills over beyond the limits of the zone. The welfare cost of these adverse special economic zones will be explored in subsequent sections of the present report. It will be shown that ensuring that Palestinian investors have more access to Area C could eliminate poverty and boost total Palestinian household expenditure substantially.

B. Estimation of total household expenditure at the locality level

17. The 2007 and 2017 censuses of the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics divide the West Bank into 523 localities in 11 governorates: Ramallah, Janin, Tubas, Tulkarm, Nablus, Qalqilyah, Salfit, Jericho, Jerusalem, Bethlehem and Hebron. The

¹² World Bank, *Unlocking the Trade Potential of the Palestinian Economy: Immediate Measures and a Long-Term Vision to Improve Palestinian Trade and Economic Outcomes*, Report No. ACS22471 (Washington, D.C., 2017).

¹³ World Bank, *West Bank and Gaza: Area C and the Future of the Palestinian Economy*, Report No. AUS2922 (Washington, D.C., 2013).

¹⁴ UNCTAD, *World Investment Report 2019: Special Economic Zones* (UNCTAD/WIR/2019).

¹⁵ Douglas Zhihua Zeng, "Global experiences with special economic zones: focus on China and Africa", Policy Research Working Paper, No. 7240 (Washington, D.C., World Bank, 2015).

¹⁶ UNCTAD, *World Investment Report 2019*.

analysis hereafter excludes Jerusalem Governorate, as it is completely under Israeli control and no data are available.¹⁷ The analysis covers 457 localities in the 10 remaining governorates, excluding Jerusalem and its localities.

18. Table 1 presents a summary of the geographical characteristics of localities in the West Bank, excluding the governorate of Jerusalem and its localities. It shows that the average share of Area C per locality area is 52 per cent. The distribution is presented in figure III. The average shares of Areas A and B per West Bank locality area are 26 and 20 per cent, respectively (see table 1). Some localities are fully accounted for by Areas A, B or C. In addition, the average share of Palestinian locality area that falls within the municipal boundaries of Israeli settlements is 7.5 per cent, but varies significantly, from 0 to 93.5 per cent.¹⁸

Table 1
Summary: geographical characteristics of West Bank localities

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Standard deviation</i>	<i>Median</i>	<i>Minimum</i>	<i>Maximum</i>
Locality area (km ²)	114.0	216.0	61.3	0.3	2 140.0
Share of Area A in locality	0.209	0.343	0.000	0.000	1.000
Share of Area B in locality	0.259	0.298	0.145	0.000	1.000
Share of Area C in locality	0.517	0.366	0.555	0.000	1.000
Share of Israeli settlements in locality	0.075	0.141	0.000	0.000	0.935
Number of observations: 457					

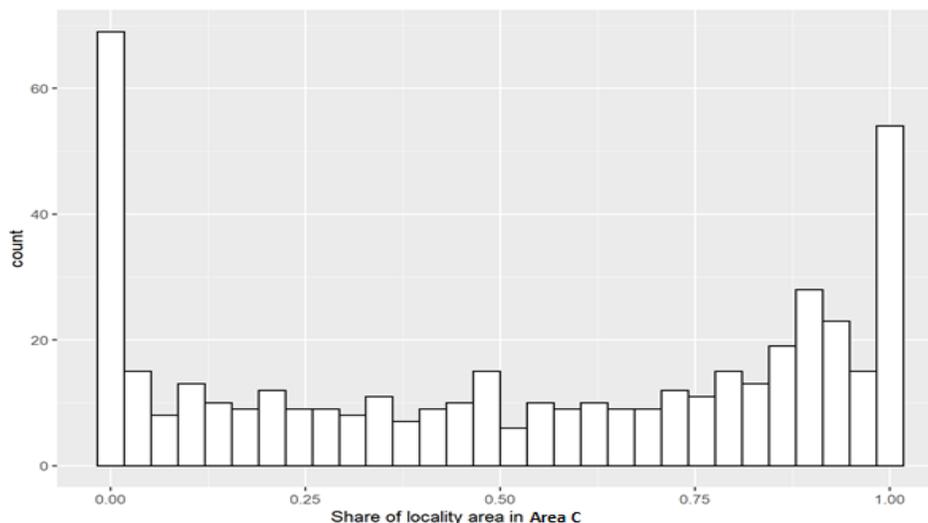
Sources: UNCTAD calculations based on censuses of the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics; and United Nations, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, occupied Palestinian territory data.

Note: The data exclude Jerusalem and its localities.

¹⁷ Jerusalem Governorate covers East Jerusalem (J1, under Israeli control) and the rest of Jerusalem governorate (J2). There are many Israeli settlements in J2 and, consequently, many parts of the governorate are inaccessible to Palestinians.

¹⁸ The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics' division of the West Bank into localities was done for statistical reasons. The locality is the smallest geographical statistical unit in the census. It does not consider the Israeli settlements that are built on Palestinian land. Thus, some of the localities are within the Israeli settlements' municipal boundaries, but remain Palestinian land taken over by the occupying Power.

Figure III
Share of Area C in locality



Source: UNCTAD calculations.

19. Total household expenditure by locality is estimated by the empirical best prediction method, which follows two steps to estimate the poverty headcount. The same methodology was used in previous UNCTAD reports submitted to the General Assembly (A/75/310 and A/76/309). First, data from the Palestinian Expenditure and Consumption Surveys are used to estimate regression equations for household expenditure per adult equivalent on the basis of the observable characteristics of households. Second, the estimated coefficients of the regressions are combined with census data to impute household expenditure per adult equivalent for the larger set of households included in the census. In order to estimate the statistical relationship linking household expenditure per adult equivalent to the household characteristics, this information must be available in both the survey and the census data.¹⁹

20. Palestinian censuses, like those of other countries, do not include data on household or individual consumption, expenditure or income. However, the Palestinian Expenditure and Consumption Surveys of 2011 and 2017 and the censuses of 2007 and 2017 compile data on a relatively broad set of common variables, including location, whether urban, rural or a refugee camp; characteristics of the head of household, such as education level and employment status; sector of employment; demographic characteristics of the household; access to basic services such as water; characteristics of the household dwelling; and household assets.

21. Estimates of expenditure per adult equivalent are based on the regression results provided in the annex to the present report. The results of weighted regressions of log expenditure per adult equivalent (in constant 2015 dollars) on the set of standard covariates interact with regional dummy variables of both the West Bank and Gaza for better regional estimates.²⁰ Inclusion of all census data enhances the efficiency of

¹⁹ Chris Elbers, Jean O. Lanjouw and Peter Lanjouw, "Micro-level estimation of poverty and inequality", *Econometrica*, vol. 71, No. 1 (January 2003); and Isabel Molina, J.N.K. Rao and Gauri Sankar Datta, "Small area estimation under a Fay-Herriot model with preliminary testing for the presence of random area effects", *Survey Methodology*, vol. 41, No. 1 (June 2015).

²⁰ The estimates of West Bank expenditure using only the West Bank data subset yield the exact results, but with a higher error term. Thus, using the full data set, which includes Gaza, and assigning regional dummies yield more efficient and less noisy estimates of expenditure.

regional estimates, as the larger sample size improves precision and lowers the error term.

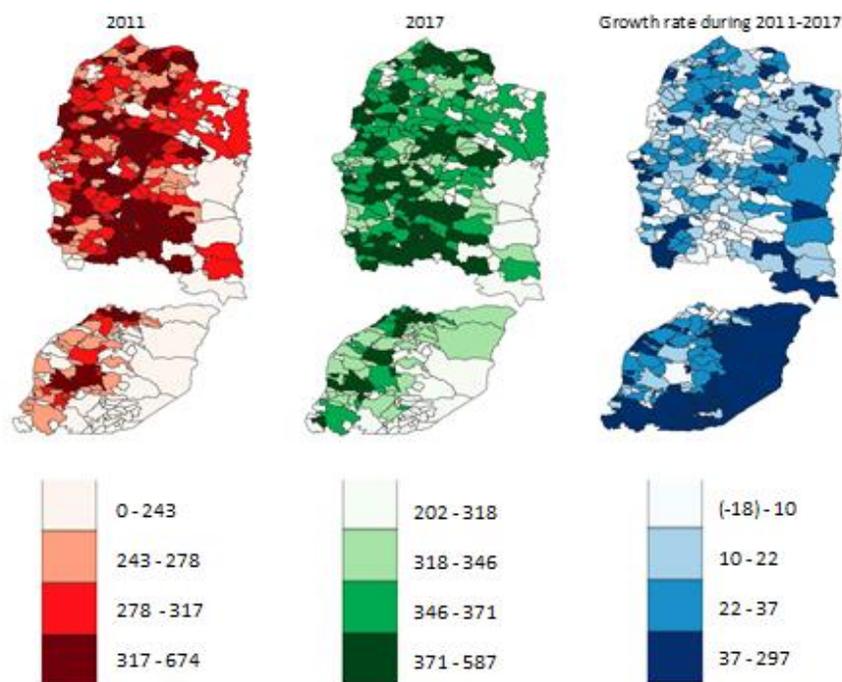
22. In order to maximize comparability between the synthetic expenditure measures constructed using census data and the estimated coefficients, a common set of covariates over the two sample surveys were maintained in the regressions for 2011 and 2017.²¹

23. The estimated average expenditure per adult equivalent and poverty rates by locality are mapped in figures IV and V. Expenditure per adult equivalent in general shows an increase between 2011 and 2017. The spatial distribution of expenditure per adult equivalent does not change much in general; it shows convergence, as growth is higher in areas with initially lower expenditure per adult equivalent in 2011 (see figure IV).

24. Between 2011 and 2017, the spatial distribution of poverty remained stable (see figure V), with the east and south poorer than the rest of the West Bank. In addition, the poorest regions in the West Bank are those that are fully or partially in Area C, namely, across the Jordan Valley and the south.

Figure IV

Estimated level and growth of average monthly expenditure per adult equivalent (constant 2015 dollars) by locality, 2011–2017

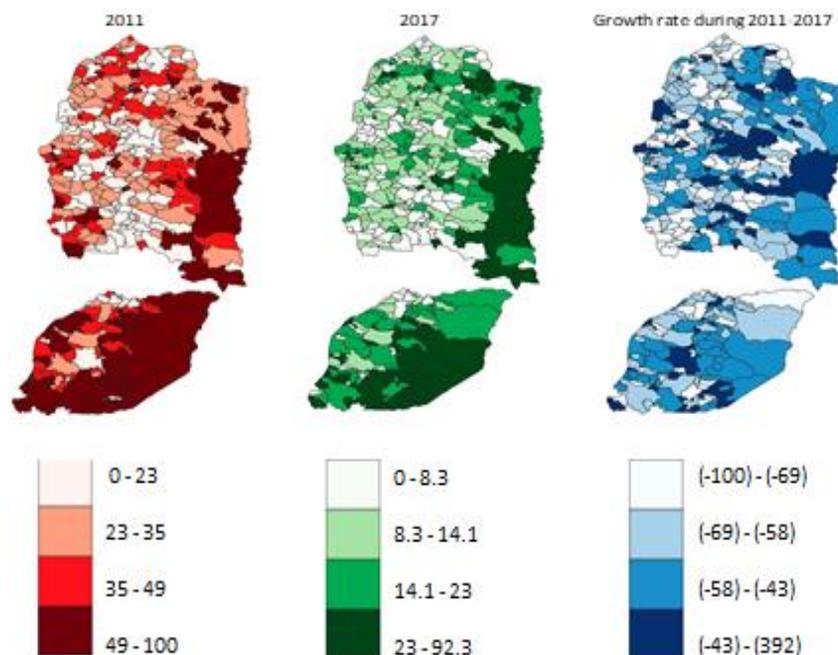


Source: UNCTAD calculations.

Note: The legend value is classified by quartile.

²¹ These estimates differ from those in [A/75/310](#) and [A/76/309](#) in three ways: first, [A/75/310](#) and [A/76/309](#) use a sample of the censuses (about 20 per cent) while the present report uses the full census. Second, in [A/75/310](#) and [A/76/309](#), Jerusalem is included, whereas it is not included in the present report. Third, in the present report, the regression is weighted; i.e. it incorporates household weight (the inverse of the selection probability of the household). These weights are used to correct or adjust baseline expansion factors in the regression.

Figure V
Estimated rate and growth of poverty by locality, 2011–2017

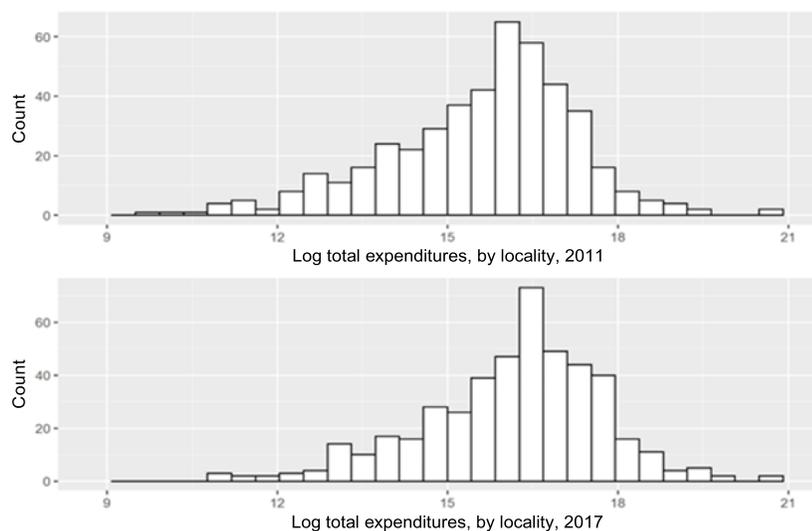


Source: UNCTAD calculations.

Note: The legend value is classified by quartile.

25. Estimated total expenditures at locality level are quite heterogeneous, as shown in the histograms, using a logarithmic scale (figure VI). In 2011, mean total locality expenditure was \$9.9 million and the median was \$4.1 million. In 2017, the mean was \$15.5 million while the median was \$6.4 million. Large standard deviations of \$30.0 million and \$42.4 million, respectively, indicate significant inequality. As the two histograms show, the distribution shifted to the right between 2011 and 2017, reflecting a modicum of economic growth in the West Bank, with total expenditure increasing from \$4.54 billion in 2011 to \$7.11 billion in 2017.

Figure VI
West Bank: estimated total expenditure by locality, 2011 and 2017



Source: UNCTAD calculations.

26. Table 2 shows that, in real terms, estimated locality average expenditure per adult equivalent increased by 24.5 per cent between 2011 and 2017. However, given population growth, the average locality expenditure increased by 54 per cent, from \$277 in 2011 to \$345 in 2017.

27. Income measures constructed using survey or administrative data can be enhanced by recourse to night-time luminosity data. Locality-level average night-time luminosity, outside Israeli settlements' municipal boundaries, is used in the regression analysis to account for the unobserved variation in expenditure not captured by the small area estimates. Table 2 shows that locality average annual night-time luminosity outside Israeli settlements' municipal boundaries also increased by 34.5 per cent between 2011 and 2017.

Table 2
Summary statistics of West Bank locality night-time luminosity and estimated expenditure measures

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Standard deviation</i>	<i>Median</i>	<i>Minimum</i>	<i>Maximum</i>
Panel, 2011					
Average expenditure per adult equivalent (constant 2015 dollars) ^a	277	72	279	73	674
Total locality annual expenditure of households (constant thousand 2015 dollars) ^a	9 940	30 100	4167	4	404 000
Locality average annual night-time luminosity outside Israeli settlement municipal boundaries (nWcm ⁻² sr ⁻¹)	5.8	8.5	3.1	0.0	67.8
Panel, 2017					
Average expenditure per adult equivalent (constant 2015 dollars) ^a	345	51	346	202	587
Total locality annual expenditure of households (constant thousand 2015 dollars) ^a	15 300	42 100	6 381	6	563 000

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Standard deviation</i>	<i>Median</i>	<i>Minimum</i>	<i>Maximum</i>
Locality average annual night-time luminosity outside Israeli settlement municipal boundaries (nW cm ⁻² sr ⁻¹)	7.8	9.2	4.9	0.2	71.9
Number of observations: 457					

Source: UNCTAD calculations based on Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics and National Aeronautics and Space Administration black marble night-time luminosity data.

^a Night-time luminosity data from settlements in Area C and from East Jerusalem are excluded.

IV. The welfare cost of the fragmentation of the occupied West Bank

28. Area C accounts for more than 60 per cent of the total area of the West Bank, is the only contiguous part of the West Bank and has the most fertile land and the most valuable natural resources.

29. While occupation also imposes significant restrictions on Palestinian economic activity in Areas A and B, the restrictions it imposes in Area C are more stringent, forcing the Area to play a role akin to an “adverse special economic zone” that disincentivizes Palestinian investment and undermines household welfare. The ongoing expansion of settlements dispossesses Palestinians of most of Area C and its natural resources, thus exacting a significant socioeconomic toll.

30. Section IV estimates part of the economic cost of occupation in Area C in terms of lost household welfare. It is crucial to note that the estimated cost is partial and does not include the cost of the restrictions imposed in areas A and B, which, it is assumed, would persist after a hypothetical modification of restrictions in Area C to resemble the restrictions in Areas A and B. The exercise estimates the negative impact of the share of Area C in Palestinian localities on household welfare, using the level of expenditure as a proxy. The estimated cost leaves out several channels other than expenditure through which occupation seriously undermines the general welfare of the Palestinian people.

31. The cost, in terms of percentage and dollar value, is measured using a counterfactual scenario that reverses the negative impact of Area C share in Palestinian localities on total household expenditure. Section IV.A below estimates the cost in percentage terms, while section IV.B measures the cost in dollar value.

A. Area C as an “adverse economic zone”

32. Section IV.A investigates the relationship between the share of Area C in the locality and the latter’s total household expenditure. An econometric model is developed with (a) total expenditure by locality as a function of a period dummy (= 1 for 2017 and 0 otherwise) to account for the growth in total expenditure and population, (b) nine governorate dummies (Ramallah is the excluded dummy) to account for the unobserved characteristics of the governorates, with Ramallah as the benchmark and (c) the logarithm of the locality’s area. The results presented in column 1 of table 3 report the corresponding estimates, where total locality expenditures are expressed in logarithmic form and standard errors are clustered at the governorate level to account for common shocks affecting localities within a given governorate. Even this bare-bones specification accounts for 31.5 per cent of the variance of the response variable.

Table 3
Regression results: log estimated total expenditure by locality with standard errors, clustered at the governorate level, in parentheses (457 localities, 10 governorates, two years (2011 and 2017))

<i>Independent variables from the Palestinian Expenditure and Consumption Survey</i>	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Intercept	6.435 ^a (1.692)	0.213 (1.256)	0.486 (0.785)	0.375 (0.841)
2017 dummy	0.548 ^a (0.059)	0.096 ^c (0.052)	0.111 ^c (0.059)	0.118 ^c (0.061)
Janin	-0.456 ^a (0.034)	0.483 ^a (0.091)	0.300 ^a (0.057)	0.145 ^b (0.062)
Tubas	-1.960 ^a (0.021)	-0.566 ^a (0.131)	-0.504 ^a (0.086)	-0.467 ^a (0.050)
Tulkarm	0.020 (0.029)	0.313 ^a (0.034)	0.273 ^a (0.021)	-0.050 (0.047)
Nablus	-0.199 ^a (0.004)	0.313 ^a (0.048)	0.117 ^a (0.031)	0.143 ^a (0.040)
Qalqiliyah	-0.698 ^a (0.070)	-0.804 ^a (0.046)	-0.395 ^a (0.040)	-0.009 (0.065)
Salfit	-0.267 ^a (0.019)	-0.522 ^a (0.027)	-0.263 ^a (0.028)	-0.281 ^a (0.066)
Jericho	-1.186 ^a (0.102)	-0.716 ^a (0.079)	-0.504 ^a (0.062)	-0.061 (0.066)
Bethlehem	0.083 (0.068)	-0.117 ^b (0.048)	0.008 (0.029)	0.137 ^b (0.058)
Hebron	-0.711 ^a (0.003)	0.090 (0.075)	0.020 (0.047)	0.299 ^a (0.038)
Log locality area	0.593 ^a (0.103)	0.809 ^a (0.071)	0.845 ^a (0.044)	0.853 ^a (0.051)
Log night-time luminosity outside settlements		1.177 ^a (0.110)	1.138 ^a (0.070)	1.120 ^a (0.070)
Share of Area C in locality			-1.466 ^a (0.134)	
Share of Area C in locality C x Janin				-1.066 ^a (0.041)
Share of Area C in locality C x Tubas				-1.531 ^a (0.075)
Share of Area C in locality x Tulkarm				-0.779 ^a (0.037)
Share of Area C in locality x Nablus				-1.500 ^a (0.020)
Share of Area C in locality x Qalqiliyah				-1.919 ^a (0.078)

<i>Independent variables from the Palestinian Expenditure and Consumption Survey</i>	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Share of Area C in locality x Salfit				-1.408 ^a (0.109)
Share of Area C in locality x Ramallah				-1.426 ^a (0.084)
Share of Area C in locality x Jericho				-2.084 ^a (0.173)
Share of Area C in locality x Bethlehem				-1.631 ^a (0.095)
Share of Area C in locality x Hebron				-2.008 ^a (0.044)
R ²	0.323	0.601	0.693	0.699
Adjusted R ²	0.315	0.595	0.689	0.691
Number of observations	914	914	914	914

Source: UNCTAD calculations.

Note: Standard errors are in parentheses.

Abbreviation: R², proportion of the variance for a dependent variable that is explained by an independent variable.

^a Where p-value is less than 0.01.

^b Where p-value is less than 0.05.

^c Where p-value is less than 0.1.

33. The significant relationship between night-time luminosity outside settlements and Palestinian economic activity is established in the previous report by UNCTAD to the General Assembly.²² In column 2, in order to capture a significant portion of the residual variance owing to the small area estimates of total expenditure, the logarithm of the mean luminosity of the locality (outside the municipal boundaries of Israeli settlements) is added. The point estimate of the elasticity is close to 1, indicating that a 1 per cent increase in mean luminosity is associated, ceteris paribus, with a 1 per cent increase in Palestinian expenditure. In this specification, R² increases to 0.595, corroborating a strong link between luminosity and expenditure.

34. Column 3 adds the share (which varies between 0 and 1) of Area C in locality area. The column captures the unrealized potential gains of transferring Area C to greater Palestinian control. These gains can be estimated by observing the substantial variation in the share of localities under effective Palestinian control (Areas A and B) and the substantial number of localities lying at each extreme. Nevertheless, this share is time-invariant and therefore cannot, from a statistical perspective, exploit within-locality variance in the share to identify its effect, as there is none.

35. The precise point estimate associated with the share of Area C in the locality is presented in column 3. This number (-1.466) implies that if a hypothetical locality currently entirely inside Area C is reassigned entirely to Areas A or B, its total expenditure would increase by 146.6 per cent. A graphical representation of the relationship is illustrated in figure VIII, where the straight line represents the relationship between the share of Area C in the locality and the logarithm of total expenditure in the locality, while controlling for other covariates.

36. In column 4, the effect of the share of Area C in locality is allowed to vary by governorate. The coefficients vary from (-1.066) for Janin to (-2.084) for Jericho,

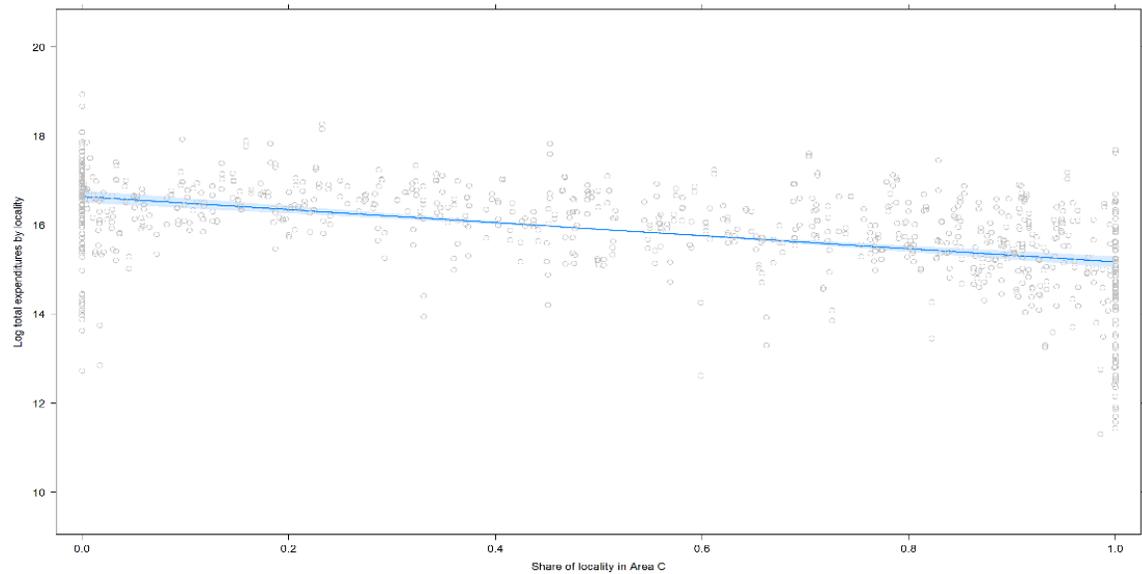
²² For more on night-time luminosity and its use in economic research, see [A/77/295](#).

with Ramallah (-1.426) close to the West Bank mean. The estimation results suggest that most of the differences are statistically significant at the usual levels of confidence. The observed heterogeneity in the marginal effect on total expenditure is illustrated in figure VIII, which plots the governorate-specific linear relationships.

37. The share of Area C in a locality has a negative impact on Palestinians' household welfare through several channels: it restricts them from living, developing, investing, building and accessing land, water and vital services such as health care and education.

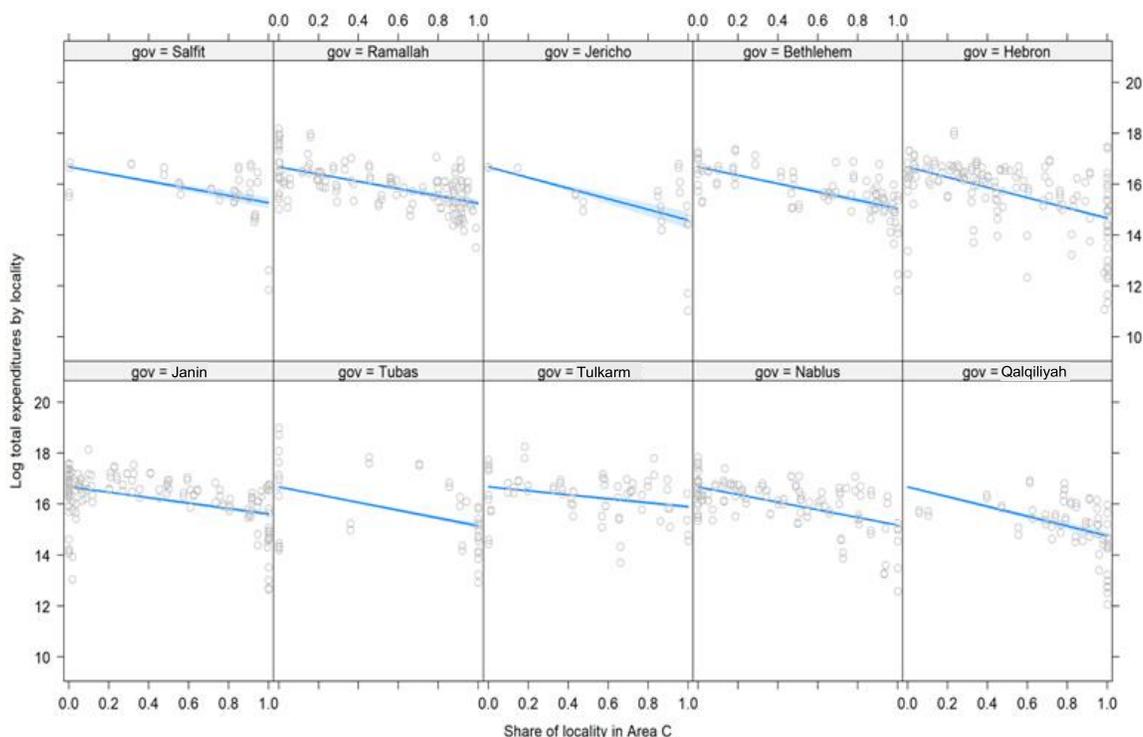
Figure VII

West Bank: relationship between the share of Area C in a locality and the logarithm of total estimated expenditure in the locality



Source: UNCTAD calculations.

Figure VIII
West Bank: relationship between the share of Area C in a locality and the logarithm of total estimated expenditure in the locality, by governorate



Source: UNCTAD calculations.

B. The welfare cost of the occupation

38. To estimate the welfare cost of the additional restrictions imposed in Area C, a counterfactual scenario was developed. It involves the use of the aforementioned estimates to compute the potential gain in total estimated 2017 expenditure that could have accrued in West Bank localities had the total land of Area C been reallocated to Areas A or B. The unrealized potential gains reflect a part, not all, of the cost of the occupation stemming from reduced access (compared to Areas A and B) of Palestinians to their land and economic resources.

39. The logarithmic transformation of the dependent variable in the linear results presented in table 3 and figure VII renders them appropriate for computing the percentage gains that would accrue by assigning all land in a locality to Areas A or B.²³ For example, for the simple linear model presented in column 3 of table 3, the predicted value of the response variable is first computed. The “share of Area C in locality” variable is then set to zero in order to recompute the corresponding predicted response variable.

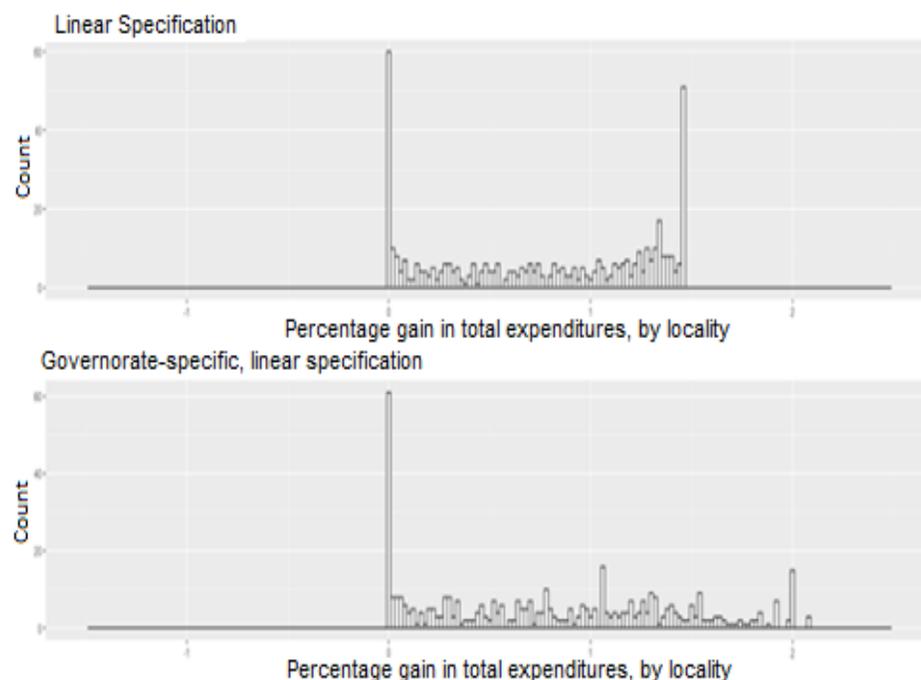
40. As both predictions for each locality are expressed in logarithmic terms, subtracting the first from the second gives the percentage gain in total expenditure for each locality. For columns 3 and 4 in table 3, the gain will necessarily be positive, given that the marginal effects of the share variable are all negative. As expected, the

²³ Using the logarithm of total expenditure as the response variable implies that the conditional mean being estimated is given by $E(\log(y)) = Xb$, where y is total expenditure, X is the matrix of covariates and b represents the corresponding coefficients.

percentage gains are all positive for the two linear specifications. For the linear specification with a constant marginal effect in column 3 of table 3, the annual gains in 2017 vary between 0 and 150 per cent, with a mean gain of 77 per cent. As for the linear specification where the marginal effects are constant within governorates, the gains vary between 0 and slightly above 200 per cent in 2017, with a mean value of 80.9 per cent (see figure IX).

Figure IX

West Bank: histogram of annual estimated percentage expenditure gains, by locality, with different regression specifications



Source: UNCTAD calculations.

41. The regression results in table 3 contain an estimate of the percentage of negative impact of the share of Area C in a locality; that is, it measures the expectation of the log (expenditure). In order to estimate the negative impact in dollar terms, the regression specification should estimate $\log(E(y)) = Xb$. Therefore, a generalized linear model with a log link function is estimated, the results of which are presented in table 4.²⁴

42. The second specification is appropriate to compute the absolute gains when the counterfactual exercise is in aggregate dollars. For the generalized linear model specification in which the marginal effect of the share variable is constant, the estimated aggregate gain in 2017 from reassigning all Area C land to Areas A or B stands at \$3.78 billion. However, owing to the heterogeneity of the impact of the share across governorates, evident from tables 3 and 5, it is more accurate to allow the impact of the share of Area C in localities to vary across governorates, in which case the corresponding annual gain is \$4.4 billion in 2017 (in constant 2015 dollars).

²⁴ The model $(\log(E(y)) = Xb)$ in table 4 is not the same as $(E(\log(y)) = Xb)$ in table 3, because the mean of the log is not necessarily the same as the log of the mean. This will be particularly apparent when the variable is highly skewed, as is the case for total expenditure by locality.

43. The unrealized estimated \$4.4 billion potential gain in household expenditure that would have materialized by reallocating Area C land to Areas A and B would have significantly enhanced household welfare by increasing their expenditure by 57 per cent in 2017. As can be seen in figures IV and V, this is especially relevant to the localities in the Jordan Valley and the southern parts of the West Bank, which are dominated by Area C and have the lowest expenditure per adult equivalent and the highest poverty rates.

44. The unrealized estimated \$4.4 billion in additional expenditure would be sufficient to reduce poverty in localities where the share of Area C is greater than zero, and the positive spillover to the rest of the West Bank economy – through expansion of aggregate demand, forward and backward linkages and fiscal channels – would contribute significantly to the reduction of poverty everywhere else.

45. The findings of the present report demonstrate that lowering the restrictions imposed in Area C to the levels applied in Areas A and B, as a step towards ending the occupation, could improve the economic situation of the Palestinian people significantly. It follows that the economic gains will be much greater when the occupation is brought to an end, in line with relevant United Nations resolutions, and the conflict is resolved in line with international law, in pursuit of the vision of the two-State solution.

Table 4

Result of generalized linear model (standard errors, clustered at the governorate level)

<i>Independent variables from the Palestinian Expenditure and Consumption Survey</i>	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Intercept	3.051 (3.386)	-1.751 ^c (0.819)	-1.196 ^c (0.581)	-1.291 ^b (0.568)
2017 dummy	0.448 ^a (0.037)	0.100 ^b (0.031)	0.095 ^a (0.027)	0.095 ^a (0.026)
Janin	0.097 (0.073)	0.859 ^a (0.037)	0.520 ^a (0.031)	0.479 ^a (0.041)
Tubas	-0.942 ^a (0.194)	0.585 ^a (0.088)	0.597 ^a (0.078)	0.603 ^a (0.065)
Tulkarm	0.428 ^a (0.097)	0.529 ^a (0.007)	0.362 ^a (0.006)	0.217 ^a (0.013)
Nablus	0.358 ^a (0.037)	0.639 ^a (0.011)	0.329 ^a (0.024)	0.381 ^a (0.036)
Qalqiliyah	0.112 (0.160)	-0.083 ^b (0.029)	0.174 ^a (0.032)	0.743 ^a (0.038)
Salfit	-0.222 ^a (0.035)	-0.407 ^a (0.007)	-0.134 ^a (0.024)	0.035 (0.060)
Jericho	-1.440 ^a (0.335)	-0.653 ^a (0.071)	-0.604 ^a (0.043)	0.091 ^c (0.045)
Bethlehem	-0.035 (0.184)	0.042 (0.023)	0.042 (0.029)	0.022 (0.060)
Hebron	0.401 ^a (0.048)	0.752 ^a (0.029)	0.542 ^a (0.027)	0.643 ^a (0.030)

<i>Independent variables from the Palestinian Expenditure and Consumption Survey</i>	<i>(1)</i>	<i>(2)</i>	<i>(3)</i>	<i>(4)</i>
Log locality area	0.775 ^a (0.197)	0.884 ^a (0.045)	0.900 ^a (0.032)	0.905 ^a (0.029)
Log luminosity outside settlements		1.177 ^a (0.047)	1.140 ^a (0.050)	1.135 ^a (0.055)
Share of Area C in locality			-1.272 ^a (0.077)	
Share of Area C in locality x Janin				-1.029 ^a (0.017)
Share of Area C in locality x Tubas				-1.253 ^a (0.075)
Share of Area C in locality x Tulkarm				-0.843 ^a (0.035)
Share of Area C in locality x Nablus				-1.361 ^a (0.074)
Share of Area C in locality x Qalqiliyah				-2.031 ^a (0.055)
Share of Area C in locality x Salfit				-1.462 ^a (0.078)
Share of Area C in locality x Ramallah				-1.216 ^a (0.018)
Share of Area C in locality x Jericho				-2.542 ^a (0.140)
Share of Area C in locality x Bethlehem				-1.159 ^a (0.064)
Share of Area C in locality x Hebron				-1.477 ^a (0.047)
Observations: 914				

Note: Standard errors are in parentheses.

Abbreviation: R², proportion of the variance for a dependent variable that is explained by an independent variable.

^a Where p-value is less than 0.01.

^b Where p-value is less than 0.05.

^c Where p-value is less than 0.1.

V. Conclusions and recommendations

46. The multilayered Israeli control on movements has a significant negative impact on Palestinian economic activity, development and household welfare throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory. In the West Bank, the restrictions on economic activity are more pronounced in Area C but are by no means limited to it.

47. In the previous report of UNCTAD to the General Assembly, the economic cost of the additional restrictions on Palestinian economic activity imposed by Israel in 30 per cent of Area C was estimated at 25.3 per cent of West Bank GDP. The present report complements the previous one and contains the conclusion that applying the same economic restrictions imposed in Areas A and B to Area C, i.e. removing the

additional restrictions in all of Area C, could significantly enhance household expenditure and reduce poverty in localities partially or fully in Area C. In the present report, it is demonstrated that if the additional restrictions imposed in Area C are lowered to the levels imposed in Areas A and B, as a step towards ending the occupation, total expenditure in Palestinian localities would increase by a range of up to 200 per cent. Estimation results suggest that, in 2017, total household expenditure would have been \$4.4 billion (constant 2015 dollars) higher than actual expenditure, which is equivalent to a 57 per cent increase in expenditure in the West Bank, excluding Jerusalem Governorate. The unrealized expenditure is not confined to 2017, as it applies to every year, at substantial rates.

48. The findings suggest that lowering the restrictions imposed in Area C could improve the economic situation significantly. The United Nations continues to work towards the realization of a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East on the basis of relevant Security Council resolutions in order to end the occupation and establish an independent, sovereign, democratic, viable and contiguous State of Palestine, living side by side in peace and security with Israel, on the basis of the pre-1967 borders. In the present report, it is estimated that, absent the additional restrictions in Area C, Palestinian households would have spent 57 per cent more to access life-preserving, welfare-enhancing essential goods and services. The estimated forgone expenditure thus severely impoverishes the Palestinian people and limits their access to the essential goods and services that dominate their expenditure, such as food, education, health, transport, housing and communication.

49. The ratio of estimated expenditure to GDP is consistently high in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, and household expenditure represents an essential component of aggregate demand. Previous UNCTAD reports suggested that the Palestinian economy is constrained on both the supply and demand sides. Greater spending by households stimulates economic growth, creates jobs, enhances fiscal revenue and expands the policy space available for the Palestinian Government without important inflationary consequences for an economy that lacks a sovereign, national currency.

50. Area C plays a role akin to an “adverse economic zone”. The present report estimates the negative impact of restrictions and the administrative fragmentation of the West Bank on the welfare of Palestinian households. When the occupation ends, the positive potential of introducing ordinary special economic zones should be considered in order to unlock the huge potential currently suppressed by the current situation on the ground.

51. The Secretary-General recommends that the international community call on Israel to comply with its responsibilities under international law by, among other things:

(a) Implementing Security Council resolutions, including resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#), which reaffirms that the establishment of settlements has no legal validity and constitutes a flagrant violation under international law and a major obstacle to the achievement of the two-State solution and a just, lasting and comprehensive peace;

(b) Lifting all restrictions on Palestinian economic activity in Area C and beyond in order to provide the Palestinian economy with a much-needed economic and natural resource base for demographic expansion, development and realistic pursuit of the Sustainable Development Goals;

(c) Exerting all efforts necessary to bring an end to the occupation to arrest and reverse its evolving and substantial economic cost for the Palestinian people.

52. In addition, UNCTAD recommends that the international community take steps to:

(a) Reverse the ongoing trend of declining donor support to the Palestinian people, which is crucial for the mitigation of the adverse socioeconomic conditions imposed by Israel. The cost of the occupation poses a huge challenge in terms of resource mobilization. Until the occupation is ended, in order to avoid a further sharp deterioration in socioeconomic and humanitarian conditions, there is no current substitute for substantial foreign aid;

(b) Secure additional resources for the fulfilment of General Assembly requests to UNCTAD to assess and report on the economic cost of the occupation for the Palestinian people. This requires the establishment within the United Nations system of a systematic, evidence-based, comprehensive and sustainable framework to assess the economic costs of the occupation and report the results to the Assembly.

53. The Palestinian people's right to development, self-determination and statehood cannot be replaced by humanitarian and economic assistance, essential as these may be in the interim. The United Nations continues to work towards the realization of a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East on the basis of relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions, including resolutions [242 \(1967\)](#), [338 \(1973\)](#), [1397 \(2002\)](#), [1515 \(2003\)](#), [1850 \(2008\)](#), [1860 \(2009\)](#) and [2334 \(2016\)](#), to end the occupation and establish an independent, sovereign, democratic, viable and contiguous Palestinian State, living side by side in peace and security with Israel, on the basis of the pre-1967 borders. It is only by realizing the vision of two States living side by side in peace, security and mutual recognition, with Jerusalem as the capital of both Israel and the State of Palestine, and all final status issues resolved permanently through negotiations, that the legitimate aspirations of both peoples will be achieved.

Annex

Weighted regression results: log real monthly expenditure per adult equivalent

<i>Independent variables from the Palestinian Expenditure and Consumption Survey</i>	<i>2017</i>	<i>2011</i>
Intercept	5.495 (0.285)	4.321 (0.475) ^a
West Bank	0.104 (0.344)	0.970 (0.524) ^c
Rural * Gaza	-0.115 (0.0627) ^c	-0.0393 (0.0358)
Rural * West Bank	-0.0386 (0.0207) ^c	0.0240 (0.0231)
Camp * Gaza	0.0160 (0.0441)	-0.0539 (0.0348)
Camp * West Bank	-0.0561 (0.0385)	-0.0817 (0.0310) ^a
Characteristics of head of household		
Gender * Gaza	0.264 (0.0660) ^a	0.104 (0.0474) ^b
Gender * West Bank	-0.0320 (0.0341)	0.0196 (0.0324)
Marital status * Gaza	-0.230 (0.177)	-0.187 (0.130)
Marital status * West Bank	-0.00938 (0.0614)	-0.0594 (0.0604)
Refugee status* Gaza	0.00314 (0.0422)	-0.00779 (0.0319)
Refugee status * West Bank	-0.0414 (0.0213) ^c	0.00617 (0.0235)
Education level * Gaza	0.0593 (0.0415)	0.0653 (0.0302) ^b
Education level * West Bank	0.0617 (0.0208) ^a	0.0410 (0.0224) ^c
Employment status		
Sector of employment (services is base category)		
Agriculture * Gaza	-0.129 (0.0810)	-0.0338 (0.0448)
Agriculture * West Bank	-0.0528 (0.0399)	-0.106 (0.0340) ^a
Construction * Gaza	-0.117 (0.0931)	-0.104 (0.0714)
Construction * West Bank	-0.0247 (0.0324)	-0.0905 (0.0319) ^a
Industry * Gaza	-0.0858 (0.0742)	-0.0810 (0.0581)
Industry * West Bank	-0.0227 (0.0287)	-0.0618 (0.0285) ^b
Number of employed household members * Gaza	0.0561 (0.0260) ^b	0.0426 (0.0163) ^a
Number of employed household members * West Bank	0.0532 (0.0124) ^a	0.0521 (0.0105) ^a
Employment in Israel * Gaza	1.639 (0.494) ^a	0.0540 (0.0392)
Employment in Israel * West Bank	0.130 (0.0280) ^a	0.177 (0.0308) ^a
Employment abroad * Gaza	0.371 (0.350)	-0.102 (0.144)
Employment abroad * West Bank	-0.0294 (0.136)	0.165 (0.0310) ^a
Employment in national government * Gaza	0.261 (0.0431) ^a	0.199 (0.0331) ^a
Employment in national government * West Bank	0.0210 (0.0305)	0.0402 (0.0328)
Demographic characteristics of household		
Number of females * Gaza	-0.112 (0.0147) ^a	-0.0903 (0.0117) ^a
Number of females * West Bank	-0.120 (0.00882) ^a	-0.123 (0.00862) ^a
Number of males * Gaza	-0.0872 (0.0149) ^a	-0.0877 (0.0122) ^a
Number of males * West Bank	-0.0955 (0.00935) ^a	-0.108 (0.00886) ^a
Number of children * Gaza	0.00523 (0.0138)	0.00147 (0.0107)
Number of children * West Bank	-0.000200 (0.00858)	0.00205 (0.00820)

<i>Independent variables from the Palestinian Expenditure and Consumption Survey</i>	2017	2011
Access to basic services		
Access to public water * Gaza	-0.107 (0.0913)	-0.0180 (0.145)
Access to public water * West Bank	-0.152 (0.0278) ^a	-0.126 (0.0227) ^a
Access to electricity * Gaza		0.544 (0.293) ^c
Access to electricity * West Bank		-0.255 (0.122) ^b
Connection to sewage network * Gaza	-0.110 (0.0528) ^b	0.121 (0.0350) ^a
Connection to sewage network * West Bank	-0.00923 (0.0228)	0.0915 (0.0237) ^a
Characteristics of household dwelling		
House ownership * Gaza	-0.0111 (0.0448)	0.0233 (0.0533)
House ownership * West Bank	-0.0774 (0.0259) ^a	-0.0806 (0.0255) ^a
Number of rooms * Gaza	0.0144 (0.0225)	0.0446 (0.0149) ^a
Number of rooms * West Bank	0.0428 (0.0119) ^a	0.0314 (0.00947) ^a
Number of bedrooms * Gaza	0.0502 (0.0359)	-0.0433 (0.0238) ^c
Number of bedrooms * West Bank	-0.0208 (0.0185)	0.0271 (0.0165)
Kitchen * Gaza	-0.0802 (0.183)	0.169 (0.257)
Kitchen * West Bank	0.174 (0.144)	0.162 (0.146)
Bathroom and toilet * Gaza	0.0378 (0.0591)	0.0603 (0.248)
Bathroom and toilet * West Bank	0.0549 (0.0385)	0.158 (0.163)
Main source of cooking energy is gas * Gaza	-0.00506 (0.0963)	0.288 (0.0687) ^a
Main source of cooking energy is gas * West Bank	-0.0689 (0.103)	0.0632 (0.0663)
Main source of heating is gas * Gaza	0.138 (0.122)	0.101 (0.136)
Main source of heating is gas * West Bank	-0.0171 (0.0208)	0.0237 (0.0205)
Household assets		
Car * Gaza	0.458 (0.0703) ^a	0.280 (0.0528) ^a
Car * West Bank	0.372 (0.0207) ^a	0.301 (0.0224) ^a
Refrigerator * Gaza	0.0442 (0.0737)	0.113 (0.0557) ^b
Refrigerator * West Bank	0.0936 (0.0745)	0.181 (0.0598) ^a
Boiler * Gaza	0.0619 (0.0371) ^c	-0.000375 (0.0286)
Boiler * West Bank	0.112 (0.0199) ^a	0.0358 (0.0213) ^c
Central heating * Gaza	0.864 (0.493) ^c	–
Central heating * West Bank	0.0589 (0.0793)	0.155 (0.0586) ^a
Vacuum * Gaza	0.0763 (0.0604)	0.160 (0.0460) ^a
Vacuum * West Bank	0.0798 (0.0212) ^a	0.153 (0.0231) ^a
Cooking stove * Gaza	-0.0471 (0.0647)	0.102 (0.118)
Cooking stove * West Bank	0.0323 (0.0346)	0.0962 (0.0942)
Washing machine * Gaza	-0.0421 (0.0367)	0.0919 (0.0552) ^c
Washing machine * West Bank	-0.0549 (0.0197) ^a	0.0902 (0.0452) ^b
Home library * Gaza	0.188 (0.0588) ^a	0.136 (0.0404) ^a
Home library * West Bank	0.0602 (0.0292) ^b	0.0922 (0.0247) ^a
Television * Gaza	0.131 (0.0437) ^a	-0.00629 (0.0747)
Television * West Bank	0.184 (0.0211) ^a	0.0908 (0.0655)
Telephone line * Gaza	0.189 (0.0448) ^a	0.108 (0.0322) ^a
Telephone line * West Bank	0.0469 ^b	0.123 (0.0209) ^a

<i>Independent variables from the Palestinian Expenditure and Consumption Survey</i>	2017	2011
Computer * Gaza	0.0876 (0.0441) ^b	0.162 (0.0315) ^a
Computer * West Bank	0.0576 (0.0211) ^a	0.0838 (0.0209) ^a
Mobile telephone * Gaza	0.200 (0.0432) ^a	-0.0140 (0.0802)
Mobile telephone * West Bank		
R²	0.5511	0.5004
Number of observations	3 734	4 317

Source: UNCTAD calculations.

Note: Standard errors are in parentheses.

Abbreviations: R², proportion of the variance for a dependent variable that is explained by an independent variable; * Gaza, multiplied by Gaza dummy variable; * West Bank, multiplied by West Bank dummy variable.

^a Where p-value is less than 0.01.

^b Where p-value is less than 0.05.

^c Where p-value is less than 0.1.



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Question of Palestine

Economic costs of the Israeli occupation for the Palestinian people: the economic impact of the Israeli military operation in Gaza from October 2023 to May 2024

Note by the Secretary-General**

The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the General Assembly the report prepared by the secretariat of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development.

* [A/79/150](#).

** The present document was submitted to the conference services for processing after the deadline for technical reasons beyond the control of the submitting office.



Report prepared by the secretariat of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development on the economic costs of the Israeli occupation for the Palestinian people: the economic impact of the Israeli military operation in Gaza from October 2023 to May 2024

Summary

The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution [77/22](#), in which the Assembly requested the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) to continue to report to it on economic development in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the economic costs of the Israeli occupation for the Palestinian people. The report complements previous UNCTAD reports to the Assembly ([A/71/174](#), [A/73/201](#), [A/74/272](#), [A/75/310](#), [A/76/309](#), [A/77/295](#) and [A/78/303](#)).

Since the early 1990s, Israel, the occupying Power, has imposed restrictions on the movement of goods and people in and out of Gaza. The restrictions have been greatly intensified since the 2007 takeover by Hamas of the Gaza Strip. For 17 years, 2.3 million Palestinian people have been confined to a small, 365 km² enclave with one of the highest population densities in the world. Entry of goods has been reduced to basic needs and humanitarian relief. In addition, Gaza has endured numerous extensive military operations in just over a decade and a half: in 2008–2009, 2012, 2014, 2021, 2022 and May 2023 and since October 2023. The restrictions, closures and recurrent military operations have resulted in the utter destruction of Gaza's infrastructure and productive base. The hollowing out of the economy has cultivated a profound dependency on external aid.

The war that followed the attacks by Hamas and other Palestinian armed groups on 7 October 2023 devastated the remnants of Gaza's economy and infrastructure. The intense military operations in Gaza resulted in an unprecedented humanitarian, environmental and social catastrophe and propelled Gaza from de-development to utter ruin. The far-reaching repercussions will linger for years to come, and it may take decades to return Gaza to the status quo ante.

The income loss in Gaza caused by 16 years of closures and severe economic and movement restrictions and repeated military operations is staggering. According to thorough estimations described in the present report, in the absence of those constraints, by the end of 2023 it is estimated that Gaza's gross domestic product (GDP) would have been, on average, 77.6 per cent higher than its actual level. This implies a conservatively estimated cumulative loss of \$35.8 billion (in constant 2015 dollars) of unrealized GDP potential during the period 2007–2023 – equivalent to 17 times the GDP of Gaza in 2023.

The damage caused by the war between 7 October 2023 and 20 May 2024 reduced GDP per capita in Gaza by over one half, while other factors redoubled the income loss. Furthermore, physical damage to Gaza's infrastructure caused during the period from 7 October 2023 until the end of January 2024 was estimated at \$18.5 billion – equivalent to seven times Gaza's GDP in 2022.

Once a ceasefire is reached, a return to the 2007–2022 growth trend would imply that it would take Gaza 350 years just to restore GDP to its level in 2022.

I. Objective and scope

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution [77/22](#), in which the Assembly requested the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) to continue to report to it on economic development in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the economic costs of the Israeli occupation for the Palestinian people. It adds to seven reports prepared by UNCTAD and submitted to the Assembly on the subject.

2. In the context of 57 years of Israeli occupation, Israel has imposed closures and severe economic and movement restrictions on Gaza since June 2007 and conducted a number of major military operations, which destroyed its infrastructure and the productive base of its economy. Prior to October 2023, the economy of Gaza was hollowed out and its people were nearly completely dependent on international aid. On 7 October 2023, Hamas and other Palestinian armed groups launched large-scale attacks on Israel and committed numerous acts of terror. Since then, Israeli sources have reported a total of over 1,500 Israelis and foreign nationals killed in this context, including at least 338 women and 38 children, and 690 members of the security forces. Around 6,200 Israelis and foreigners were injured, according to official Israeli sources. Furthermore, 33 attacks on Israeli medical facilities and personnel were recorded. In addition, some 250 people, both Israelis and foreign nationals, including approximately 65 women and 34 children, were abducted and taken into Gaza, with some subsequently released in November. Following the attacks on 7 October, Israel launched a military operation in Gaza. The ensuing war in Gaza destroyed nearly all of what was left of Gaza's economic base and life-sustaining infrastructure.

3. The objective of the present report is to evaluate the economic impact of the latest Israeli military operation in terms of three key indicators, using different time periods based on the availability of data: gross domestic product (GDP) loss, the time horizon for recovery, and the direct impact of the damage on economic activities from the war up until 20 May 2024. Furthermore, building on the findings of UNCTAD in 2020 (see [A/75/310](#)), the present report provides an assessment of the cumulative economic cost of the Israeli closures and other restrictions and the aforementioned military operations between 2007 and 2023 on Gaza. Finally, other data on the war, ongoing at the time of writing, are included up until 12 August 2024.

4. The military operation was still ongoing at the time of conclusion of the present report. Hence, all quantitative assessments are lower-bound, interim estimates of the loss and damage inflicted on Gaza in terms of the economic impact, cost and time frame for recovery.

II. Background and context

A. Before October 2023

5. Israel has occupied Gaza and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, since June 1967. Despite the unilateral disengagement in 2005, Israel has retained effective control over Gaza's airspace and areas around all land borders with Israel, including crossing points, and sea areas adjacent to Gaza, except for the 12 km border with Egypt, part of which was reoccupied by Israel in May 2024.

6. Since the early 1990s, the Palestinian people in Gaza have been subjected to prolonged, severe restrictions on their movement in and out of the Strip and a separation policy with the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem. Israel has restricted Gaza's exports and imports and banned or restricted the importation of critical production inputs and technology. Furthermore, for two decades, Israel has not allowed the construction and operation of airports or seaports. Since 2007, the

restrictions have been greatly amplified. The blockade and closures by Israel of Gaza, one of the most densely populated areas in the world, since 2007, following the takeover by Hamas of the Gaza Strip the same year, may amount to collective punishment, which is prohibited by international law.

7. At just 365 km², Gaza's area has one of the highest population densities in the world – 6,085 people per square kilometre in 2023. Furthermore, citing security grounds, Israel restricts Palestinian access to areas within 300 m of the Gaza side of the perimeter fence, with areas several hundred metres beyond deemed not safe, thereby preventing, discouraging or restricting human and productive activities therein.¹ The resulting buffer zone along the eastern border of Gaza that entails 24 per cent of the total area of Gaza is effectively “off limits”, thus worsening the high population density problem.²

8. Several military operations were conducted by Israel in Gaza before October 2023, including in 2008–2009, 2012, 2014, 2021, 2022 and 2023. The operations caused internal displacement, death and repeated destruction of physical infrastructure, residential buildings, capital stock and productive assets, including agricultural land, rendering them unproductive, crops, livestock sheds, greenhouses, fruit trees, storage facilities, boats, fishing equipment, agribusinesses, irrigation canals, water pumping systems, electricity networks, Internet networks, factories, office buildings, educational facilities and healthcare centres.³

9. Prior to October 2023, much of the damage from previous military operations remained unrepaired, while the people suffered the consequences of living in chronic conflict conditions, with inadequate access to clean water, without electricity for much of the day and without a proper sewage system. Close to half of the workforce was unemployed, and two thirds of the population lived in poverty.⁴

10. The impact of military operations on the productive base of Gaza has been examined by the International Monetary Fund, which notes that the military operation in 2008–2009 destroyed the equivalent of over 60 per cent of the total capital stock, including machinery, buildings, tools and equipment, and that the military operation in 2014 resulted in the decline of 85 per cent of the capital stock that had survived the previous operation.⁵ The erosion of the capital stock has stunted growth potential, constrained productivity growth and entrenched poverty and dependency on international assistance.

11. A cycle of destruction and insufficient reconstruction was set in motion. In the period 2007–2022, Gaza's GDP grew only by 1.1 per cent, while the population grew by 61 per cent, leading to real GDP per capita shrinking by 27 per cent, from \$1,994 in 2006 to \$1,257 in 2022. Meanwhile, the share of Gaza in the Palestinian economy contracted from 31 per cent to 17.4 per cent as its growth performance lagged behind the economy of the occupied West Bank, which has also been operating well below potential.⁶

12. During the same period, Gaza's labour force grew by 112 per cent and the number of unemployed workers increased by 157 per cent. As a result, unemployment rose

¹ United Nations, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, “Gaza Strip: the humanitarian impact of 15 years of the blockade”, June 2022.

² State of Palestine, Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, “Dr. Ola Awad, reviews the conditions of the Palestinian people via statistical figures and findings, on the 74th Annual Commemoration of the Palestinian Nakba”, 15 May 2022.

³ UNCTAD, “Preliminary assessment of the economic impact of the destruction in Gaza and prospects for economic recovery”, January 2024.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ International Monetary Fund, “West Bank and Gaza: report to the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee”, 31 August 2017.

⁶ TD/B/EX(74)/2, paras. 46 and 47.

from 34.8 to 45.3 per cent, one of the highest figures in the world. A dearth of jobs has resulted in lost generations of impoverished, unskilled and deskilled workers.⁷

13. Key economic indicators before and after 2007 illustrate aspects of the de-development of Gaza. Upon the establishment of the Palestinian Authority in 1994, Gaza had about the same standard of living as the West Bank. However, the ratio of Gaza's GDP per capita to that of the West Bank fell from parity in 1994 to 44 per cent in 2007 and reached 28 per cent in 2021.⁸

14. UNCTAD estimated the impact of restrictions and military operations on household welfare, noting that, if the economy of Gaza had been allowed to continue to grow at the same pace as that of the West Bank, that is, by 6.6 per cent, the annual GDP of Gaza would have been 50 per cent higher in 2017 and GDP per capita would have been 105.5 per cent higher than its actual level in 2018.⁹

15. For over a decade and a half prior to October 2023, Gaza was largely removed from the national and international development agenda, as the recurrent destruction transformed Gaza into a humanitarian crisis area, with 80 per cent of the population dependent on international aid.¹⁰

B. Unparalleled devastation

16. Following the large-scale attacks by Hamas and other Palestinian armed groups on 7 October 2023, which included numerous acts of terror, Israel launched a large-scale military operation, which has resulted in a catastrophic situation for the 2.3 million inhabitants of Gaza, who were already living under dire social and economic conditions in view of 57 years of occupation and 17 years of closures. The military operation has caused a severe death toll, the destruction of civilian infrastructure, and multiple mass displacement of the Palestinians living in Gaza.

17. According to the Ministry of Health in Gaza, as at 12 August 2024, 39,897 Palestinians, the majority of them women and children, had been killed. At least 92,152 Palestinians had been injured and thousands more were missing, very likely trapped or dead under the rubble.¹¹ The prevalence of disability is expected to increase significantly as a result of injuries, compared with the estimates prior to October 2023 of 21 per cent of households reportedly having a member with a disability. By 29 July 2024, the death toll was a multiple of the combined toll of all past Israeli military operations since 2007.

18. The number of children killed over the first three weeks of bombing exceeded the combined total annual number of children killed in armed conflicts in more than 20 countries over the past three years.¹² By May 2024, more than 14,000 Palestinian children were killed. Thousands more were injured or lost family members, loved ones or friends, while about 17,000 children were estimated to be unaccompanied or separated.¹³

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid., para. 47. The earliest available data on Palestinian GDP date back to 1994, the year the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics began compiling and publishing economic statistics. This roughly coincided with the signing of the Oslo Accords and the establishment of the Palestinian National Authority.

⁹ A/75/310, para. 41.

¹⁰ See TD/B/EX(74)/2.

¹¹ United Nations, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, "Humanitarian situation update, No. 203: Gaza Strip", 12 August 2024.

¹² Save the Children, "Gaza: 3,195 children killed in three weeks surpasses annual number of children killed in conflict zones since 2019", 29 October 2023.

¹³ UNICEF, "Statement by UNICEF Executive Director Catherine Russell on military operations and border closures in Rafah, Gaza", 9 May 2024.

19. More than eight months into the operation, an estimated 1.7 million people, or nearly 80 per cent of the population of Gaza, were internally displaced, many of them displaced several times.¹⁴ The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) estimates that nearly 1 million women and girls were displaced.¹⁵ Many of the displaced were sheltered in severely overcrowded schools run by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), clinics and other public buildings, and some camped in open space near shelters.¹⁶

20. Displacement and the inability of people to leave Gaza have further severely aggravated the already extremely high density of a population lacking basic services and supplies, who only have access to unclean water and inadequate sanitation and hygiene systems. These conditions elevate public health risks to dangerous levels. Overcrowding and poor sanitary conditions at shelters contribute to the spread of infectious diseases and reinforce the impact of rising malnutrition on present and future health.¹⁷ The poliovirus was detected in July 2024 in environmental samples from Khan Yunis and Dayr al-Balah, and three children presenting suspected acute flaccid paralysis, a common symptom of polio, have since been reported in the Gaza Strip. Moreover, an estimated 52,000 pregnant women have been caught in the war, with an estimated 180 deliveries every day. However, only three overwhelmed maternity hospitals remain. Persons with disabilities have lost their assistive devices or these have been damaged, and they have been cut off from medical services and medication needed as a result of the destruction of hospitals and disruption of services. According to the United Nations Satellite Centre (UNOSAT), between 7 October and 26 November 2023, 37,379 buildings, or 18 per cent of the total structures in Gaza, were damaged.¹⁸ By 7 January 2024, 69,147 buildings were damaged; by 29 February, 88,868 buildings were damaged, equivalent to 35 per cent of Gaza's total structures.¹⁹ The number of damaged or destroyed buildings had reached 137,297 by 3 May 2024,²⁰ more than six times the number of buildings damaged in the 2014 military operation.²¹ The scale of destruction of housing and civil infrastructure, and the resulting rubble, has limited the movement of persons with disabilities and their access to protection, safety, essential services and humanitarian assistance.

21. By the end of July 2024, 88 per cent of school buildings had sustained some level of damage. Hospitals suffered heavy damage, 21 out of 36 hospitals were out of service, and 43 per cent (45 out of 105) of primary health facilities were not

¹⁴ United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), "UNRWA situation report, No. 107, on the situation in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem", 14 May 2024.

¹⁵ UN-Women, "Gender alert: the gendered impact of the crisis in Gaza", January 2024.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ UNOSAT, "Occupied Palestinian Territory: Gaza Strip – imagery analysis: 26 November 2023", UNOSAT Gaza Strip Comprehensive Damage Assessment database. Available at https://unosat.org/static/unosat_filesystem/3769/OCHA-OPT-003_UNOSAT_A3_Gaza_Strip_OPT_CDA_20231126_V2.0.pdf.

¹⁹ UNOSAT, "Occupied Palestinian Territory: Gaza Strip – imagery analysis: 29 February 2024", UNOSAT Gaza Strip Comprehensive Damage Assessment database. Available at https://unosat.org/static/unosat_filesystem/3804/OCHA-OPT-005_UNOSAT_A3_Gaza_Strip_CDA_March2024_v1.pdf.

²⁰ UNOSAT, "Occupied Palestinian Territory: Gaza Strip – imagery analysis: 3 May 2024", UNOSAT Gaza Strip Comprehensive Damage Assessment database. Available at https://unosat.org/static/unosat_filesystem/3861/OCHA-OPT-014_UNOSAT_A3_Gaza_Strip_OPT_CDA_31052024.pdf.

²¹ According to UNOSAT, in the 2014 military operation's 51 days of bombardment, 22,737 structures were damaged. See "Density of damage assessment in Gaza Strip, Occupied Palestinian Territory", 19 September 2014, UNOSAT Gaza Strip Comprehensive Damage Assessment database. Available at https://unosat.org/static/unosat_filesystem/847/UNOSAT_A3_Density_Map_Gaza_Strip_20140828.pdf.

operational.²² Over 62 per cent of residential buildings were damaged or destroyed, and over 59 per cent of the water, sanitation and hygiene sector infrastructure was heavily damaged, impacting water and sanitation services. Meanwhile, about 62 per cent of Gaza's electricity feeder lines were damaged or destroyed.²³ The full closure of Gaza imposed on 9 October included shutting off Israeli-supplied water (two connection points were subsequently reopened) and electricity, as well as restricting the entry of all imports, including food and fuel.²⁴

22. Prior to 7 October 2023, nearly three in four adults in Gaza suffered ailments consistent with depression symptoms.²⁵ The damage to health facilities and the restrictions on the delivery of humanitarian supplies have caused major disruption to healthcare provision at a time of great need for mental and physical healthcare.

23. By mid-May 2024, about 625,000 students had lost access to education and effectively lost the school year – the third major interruption in the past four years. The large-scale destruction of educational and health infrastructure, houses, schools, universities and hospitals, missed school days, and mental health impact will have a lasting impact on the quality of life and lifetime earning potential of the active and future workforce. The extensive damage will set human development several decades back and undermine human capital formation for generations to come. The damage suffered by health and education facilities, lost school years, trauma, and various forms of disability have strong long-term consequences for health, productivity, employment prospects and quality of life.

24. Since 7 October 2023, Israel has intensified restrictions on the entry of humanitarian supplies, food, water, fuel and other needed items for the 2.3 million Palestinians of Gaza. Following the full closure of Gaza by Israel until 21 October, the humanitarian supplies being allowed entry have been far below what is required to meet the extensive needs of the people in Gaza. Between 8 October 2023 and 20 May 2024, the number of trucks allowed to enter Gaza dropped by 80 per cent.²⁶

25. The continued restrictions have precipitated a severe food security crisis as the population exhausted its ability to cope. A humanitarian crisis has spread across Gaza, with a high risk of famine persisting across the whole Gaza Strip. About 96 per cent of the population in the Gaza Strip (2.15 million people) faces high levels of acute food insecurity until September 2024. While the whole territory is classified as being at emergency levels of food insecurity (Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) phase 4), over 495,000 people, or 22 per cent of the population, are still facing catastrophic levels of acute food insecurity (IPC phase 5). In phase 5, households experience an extreme lack of food, starvation, and exhaustion of coping capacities.²⁷ Nearly 31 per cent, or one in three children under 2 years of age, was acutely malnourished in northern Gaza. In Rafah, where delivery of humanitarian aid was relatively less restricted during the early months of the operation, 10 per cent of children under 2 years of age were acutely malnourished.²⁸

²² United Nations, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, "Reported impact snapshot: Gaza Strip", 17 July 2024.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ [A/HRC/55/28](#), paras. 18 and 19; and World Bank, "Impacts of the conflict in the Middle East on the Palestinian economy", May 2024.

²⁵ World Bank, "Note on the impacts of the conflict in the Middle East on the Palestinian economy", February 2024.

²⁶ UNRWA, Gaza Supplies and Dispatch Tracking database, available at www.unrwa.org/what-we-do/gaza-supplies-and-dispatch-tracking.

²⁷ Integrated Food Security Phase Classification, "Gaza Strip: IPC acute food insecurity special snapshot – 1 May–31 September 2024", 25 June 2024.

²⁸ World Bank, "Impacts of the conflict in the Middle East on the Palestinian economy".

26. Solid waste and rubble generated by the military operation pose long-term threats to public health, the environment, agricultural lands and the aquifer. By the end of April 2024, the military operation had left about 37 million tons of debris, with 200 kg of rubble per square metre in impacted areas.²⁹ It could take 14 years of work to remove the debris in an optimistic case scenario, assuming higher effectiveness in removal than for previous military operations.³⁰ For comparison, the 2014 military operation produced about 2.5 million tons of rubble, and its removal extended over two years after the termination of the operation. If the latest military operation had ended by April 2024, and debris removal were to proceed at the 2014 pace, it would take about 30 years to clear the rubble.³¹ If the complications arising from unexploded ordnance, estimated at over 10 per cent of ammunition fired, are taken into account, clearing the rubble may take even longer.³²

III. Economic impact of the war in Gaza

A. Economic collapse

27. By the end of January 2024, the damage to the infrastructure was estimated at about \$18.5 billion, equivalent to about seven times Gaza's GDP in 2022. Residential buildings accounted for 72 per cent of the total damage, while commerce, industry and services sector buildings accounted for 9 per cent. The remainder is accounted for by infrastructure and services such as education, water, sanitation and hygiene, health, energy, information and communications technology, municipal services and transport.³³ The continuation of the war beyond January caused further damage and destruction.

28. Economic activity across all productive sectors in Gaza ground to a halt, except for minimum humanitarian health and food services provided under conditions of severe water, fuel and electricity shortages and severe access constraints. Figure I shows that the value added in all sectors saw extraordinarily large declines in the fourth quarter of 2023 compared with the fourth quarter of 2022: by 96 per cent in construction, 93 per cent in agriculture, 92 per cent in the industrial sector and 76 per cent in the services sector.

²⁹ UN News, "Gaza's unexploded ordnance could take 14 years to clear", 26 April 2024.

³⁰ Ibid.

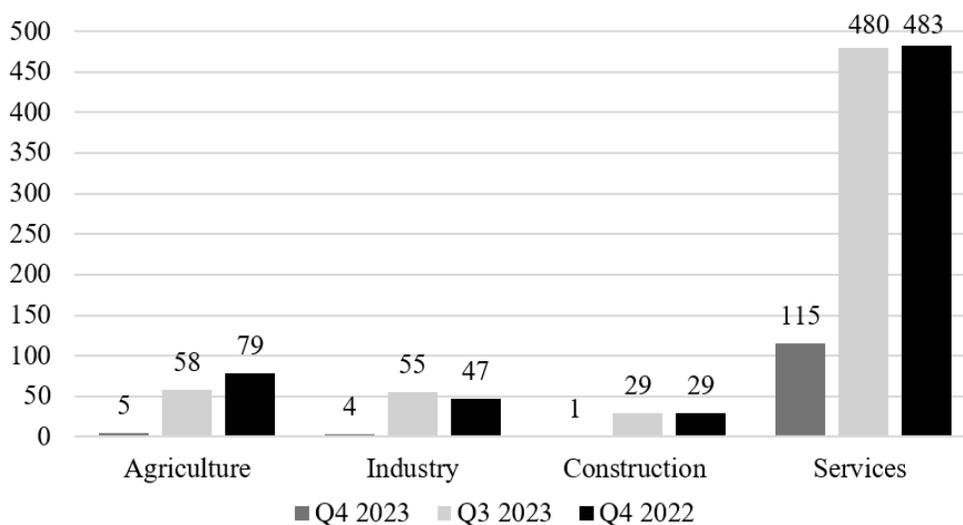
³¹ Palestine Economic Policy Research Institute, "Palestine economic update", April 2024.

³² Ibid.

³³ World Bank, European Union and United Nations, "Gaza Strip interim damage assessment: summary note", 29 March 2024.

Figure I
Gaza quarterly sectoral GDP

(Millions of constant 2015 United States dollars)



Source: UNCTAD calculations based on Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics quarterly national accounts data available at https://www.pcbs.gov.ps/statisticsIndicatorsTables.aspx?lang=en&table_id=3538.

29. In the fourth quarter of 2023, Gaza registered its largest economic drop in recent history. GDP contracted by 81.3 per cent compared with the fourth quarter of 2022 and by 80.8 per cent compared with the third quarter of 2023. The GDP loss in the fourth quarter of 2023 amounted to \$545 million (constant 2015 dollars), equivalent to 26 per cent of Gaza's GDP in 2023 (see figure II).³⁴

30. For the entirety of 2023, Gaza's economy contracted by 22.6 per cent. Over 90 per cent of that contraction took place in the fourth quarter, following 7 October 2023. The share of Gaza in the Palestinian economy dropped from 31 per cent in 2007 to 17 per cent in 2022 and to 14 per cent by the end of 2023.

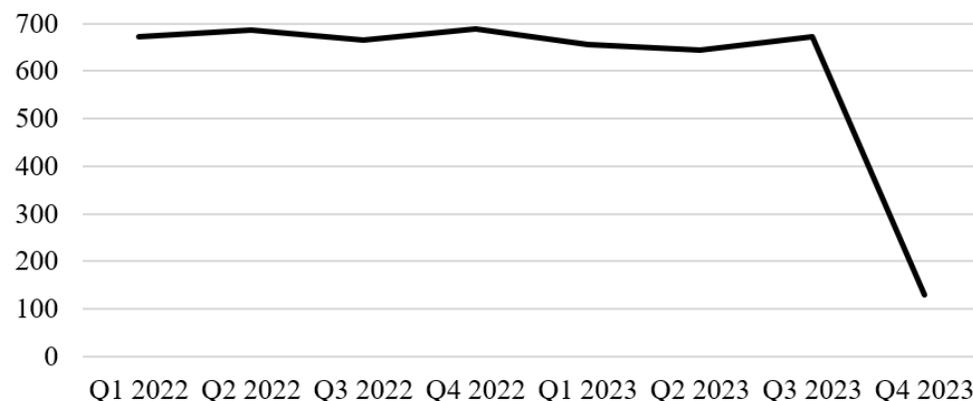
31. In the fourth quarter of 2023, GDP per capita contracted by 82.3 per cent compared with the fourth quarter of 2022 and by 81.4 per cent compared with the third quarter of 2022 (see figure III). For the entirety of 2023, GDP per capita contracted by 25 per cent compared with 2022, which represents just a third of its peak in 2005.³⁵

³⁴ The quarterly GDP contraction due to the Israeli military operation in 2014 was only 37 per cent. UNCTAD calculations based on Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics quarterly national accounts data, available at www.pcbs.gov.ps/statisticsIndicatorsTables.aspx?lang=en&table_id=3538.

³⁵ Ibid.

Figure II
Quarterly real GDP in Gaza, 2022–2023

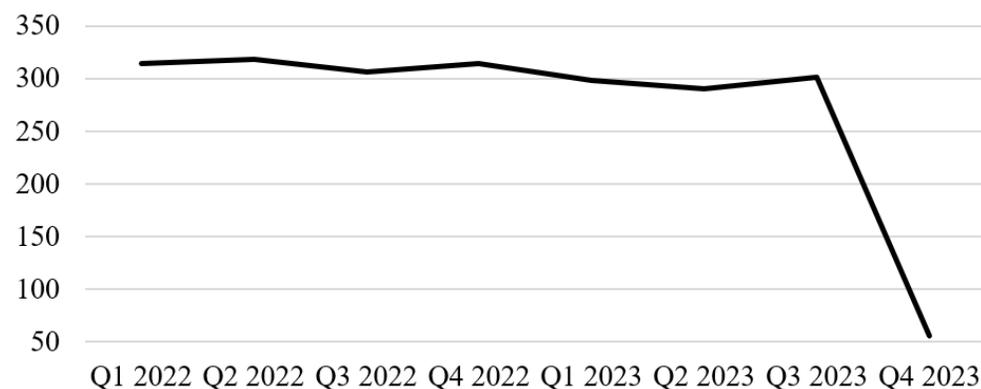
(Millions of constant 2015 United States dollars)



Source: UNCTAD calculations based on Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics quarterly national accounts data available at https://www.pcbs.gov.ps/statisticsIndicatorsTables.aspx?lang=en&table_id=3538.

Figure III
Quarterly real GDP per capita in Gaza, 2022–2023

(Constant 2015 United States dollars)



Source: UNCTAD calculations based on Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics quarterly national accounts data available at https://www.pcbs.gov.ps/statisticsIndicatorsTables.aspx?lang=en&table_id=3538.

32. By the end of the third quarter of 2023, unemployment in Gaza was at 45.1 per cent.³⁶ The International Labour Organization (ILO) estimates that 61 per cent of employment, or 182,000 jobs, has been lost compared with pre-October 2023 levels.³⁷ By December 2023, unemployment had reached 79.3 per cent. By the end of January 2024, Gaza had lost two thirds of its pre-October jobs (201,000 jobs), and unemployment reached 81.7 per cent in the first quarter of 2024, a rate likely to worsen or persist for as long as the military operation continues.³⁸

³⁶ State of Palestine, Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, “Labour force survey (July–September, 2023) round (Q3/2023) before the war in Gaza”, 8 November 2023.

³⁷ ILO, “Impact of the war in Gaza on the labour market and livelihoods in the Occupied Palestinian Territory”, Bulletin No. 1 (2023).

³⁸ ILO, “Impact of the war in Gaza on the labour market and livelihoods in the Occupied Palestinian Territory”, Bulletin No. 3 (2024); and UNCTAD calculations.

33. Gaza's economy was in a dire state prior to October 2023 and was among the worst performers in the world. Based on UNCTAD calculations provided in table 1, the income and employment impact of the war during its first three months was nearly equivalent to the cumulative impact of 16 years of closures and six past military operations.

Table 1
Gaza 2006–2023, selected economic indicators

<i>Indicator</i>	2006	2022	2023	2006–2022 percentage change	2006–2023 percentage change	2022–2023 percentage change
Population (thousands)	1 349	2 166	2 221	60	65	3
Population density (people/km ²)	3 696	5 934	6 085	60	65	3
Real GDP (millions of 2015 dollars)	2 691	2 723	2 100	1	-22	-23
Real GDP per capita (2015 dollars)	1 994	1 257	946	-37	-53	-25
Share of Gaza in Palestinian GDP (percentage)	31	17	14	-45	-54	-16
Labour force (thousands)	267	527	531	97	99	1
Unemployed workers (thousands)	93	239	421	157	353	76
Unemployment rate (percentage)	35	45	79	28	126	76
Poverty (percentage)	39 ^a	65	96	66	146	48

Source: Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics and ILO data and UNCTAD calculations.

^a 2007.

34. UNCTAD estimates that, if the Israeli military operations and restrictions were to continue throughout 2024, Gaza's annual GDP may plunge below the level observed in the fourth quarter of 2023, implying the loss of over 80 per cent of pre-October 2023 GDP. The economy may contract by an additional 75.4 per cent in 2024 compared with 2023. GDP may fall from \$2.1 billion in 2023 to \$516 million – a loss of \$1.55 billion. Combined with the \$545 million GDP loss incurred in the fourth quarter of 2023, the total loss may reach \$2.1 billion by the end of 2024 – equivalent to 100 per cent of Gaza's GDP in 2023. This income loss is separate from the cost of replacing the assets and infrastructure destroyed or damaged during the war following 7 October 2023.

35. The estimated reduction in absolute GDP would also imply a 76.2 per cent decline in per capita GDP in 2024, falling to \$225 or 9 per cent of its 2005 peak and 18 per cent of its 2022 level. Meanwhile, unemployment would continue to hover around the 80 per cent level observed in the fourth quarter of 2023 and first quarter of 2024 if the war were to continue until the end of 2024.

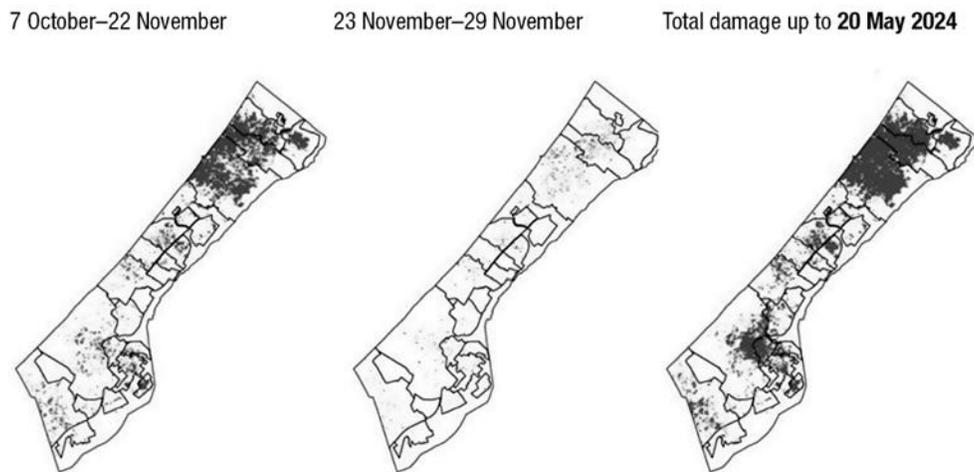
B. Immediate impact of the war on GDP per capita

36. A reliable method for estimating the immediate impact of the war following 7 October on economic activity in Gaza, given the lack of reliable, timely data, is to use satellite images of damage and night-time lights (NTL). NTL has been widely used as a measure of economic development and is available on a daily basis.³⁹ The Black Marble Visible Infrared Imaging Radiometer Suite night lights measurements are shown to be accurate proxies for economic activity, especially for highly

³⁹ Xi Chen and William D. Nordhaus, "Using luminosity data as a proxy for economic statistics", *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, vol. 108, No. 21 (May 2011); John Gibson, Susan Olivia and Geua Boe-Gibson, "Night lights in economics: sources and uses", *Journal of Economic Surveys*, vol. 34, No. 5 (December 2020); and John Gibson and others, "Which night lights data should we use in economics, and where?", *Journal of Development Economics*, vol. 149 (March 2021).

disaggregated spatial units.⁴⁰ The maps in figure IV represent likely damage to human settlements (cities, towns, villages) across Gaza and are based on 40 x 40 m spatial resolution data. Each darker pixel on each map represents a 40 x 40 m area, which is likely to have been bombed in the corresponding time period.

Figure IV
Damage intensity of 40 x 40 m pixels



Source: Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, damage analysis of Copernicus Sentinel-1 satellite data by Corey Scher of the Graduate School and University Center of the City University of New York and Jamon Van Den Hoek of Oregon State University, available at <https://www.conflict-damage.org> (accessed on 28 May 2024).

Note: The designations employed and the presentation of material on these maps do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the Secretariat of the United Nations concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries.

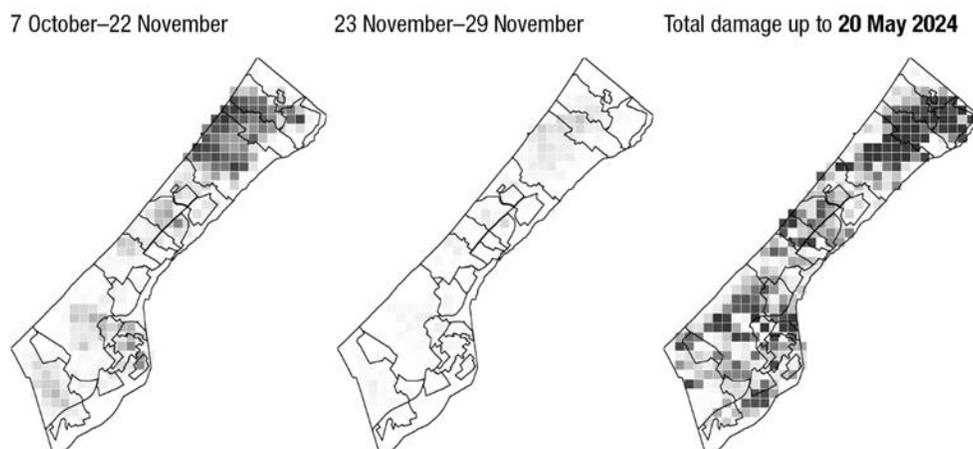
37. To estimate the immediate impact of the damage on infrastructure and its downstream effect on economic activity caused by the war approximated by NTL, a panel of 365 grid cells of 1 km² was constructed for the whole of the Gaza Strip for the damage and NTL. Each cell was observed from 5 October 2023 to 20 May 2024 for both variables.

38. The three maps in figure V show damage to the Gaza Strip in comparison to the pre-7 October 2023 period, taken as a baseline (zero damage).⁴¹ Until 20 May, the average number of bombarded cells was 331 per square kilometre (52.9 per cent of each grid surface and of the total area of the Gaza Strip). The 1 km² grid cell with the highest number of bombarded 40 x 40 m cells is in Bayt Lahya, with 624 cells bombarded out of 625 (99.8 per cent of its grid surface). The map on the left shows the damage up to 22 November 2023; the one in the middle shows the damage caused between 23 and 29 November, which includes the seven-day humanitarian pause from 24 to 30 November; and the one on the right shows the damage up to 20 May 2024.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Each 1 km² grid cell aggregates 625 of the 40 x 40 m grid cells available in the damage data. The associated measurement represents the number of 40 x 40 m cells damaged within each 1 km² grid.

Figure V
**Damage intensity grids of 1 km² caused within specific periods between
 7 October 2023 and 20 May 2024**



Source: Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics; UNCTAD calculations, based on the damage analysis of Copernicus Sentinel-1 satellite data by Corey Scher of the Graduate School and University Center of the City University of New York and Jamon Van Den Hoek of Oregon State University, available at <https://www.conflict-damage.org> (accessed on 28 May 2024).

Notes: The designations employed and the presentation of material on these maps do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the Secretariat of the United Nations concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries. The period between 23 and 29 November 2023 includes the seven-day humanitarian pause from 24 to 30 November.

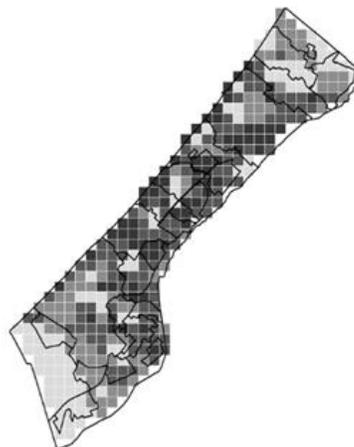
39. The NTL measurements are obtained from the Black Marble project of the United States National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), using day/night boundary radiance during the night of each respective day, expressed in watt per steradian per square centimetre, aggregated at a 500 x 500 m level. NTL data are aggregated at a 1 x 1 km grid level, composed of four 500 m x 500 m units, for compatibility with the resolution of the damage maps.

Figure VI
 NTL at different days in 2023–2024, grids of 1 km²

Average NTL for the nights
 between 22 September and 6 October 2023



The night of 23–24 November 2023



The night of 30 November–1 December 2023



The night of 20–21 May 2024



Source: Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics; UNCTAD calculations, based on the Black Marble NASA project, specifically the VNP46A1 VIIRS/NPP Daily Gridded Day Night Band Linear Lat Lon Grid Night product suite, available at <https://ladsweb.Modaps.eosdis.nasa.gov/> (accessed on 28 May 2024).

Notes: The designations employed and the presentation of material on these maps do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the Secretariat of the United Nations concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries. The four maps in the figure show NTL in the Gaza Strip to illustrate the damage to economic activity. The map on the top left shows the average NTL for the nights between 22 September and 6 October (before the military operation). The map on the top right shows NTL on the night of 23 November (at the end of the first period of the data on damage). The map on the bottom left shows NTL on the night of 30 November (at the end of the seven-day humanitarian pause). The map on the bottom right shows NTL on the night of 21 May 2024.

40. The impact of the war on NTL is estimated by comparing the average change in NTL in grid cells that were damaged by bombing with the change in NTL in grid cells that were not bombarded, compared using the difference-in-differences estimation. The pre-war NTL average of the daily measurements between 22 September and

6 October is used for comparing the estimates, for more robust results when conducting various different model specifications.⁴²

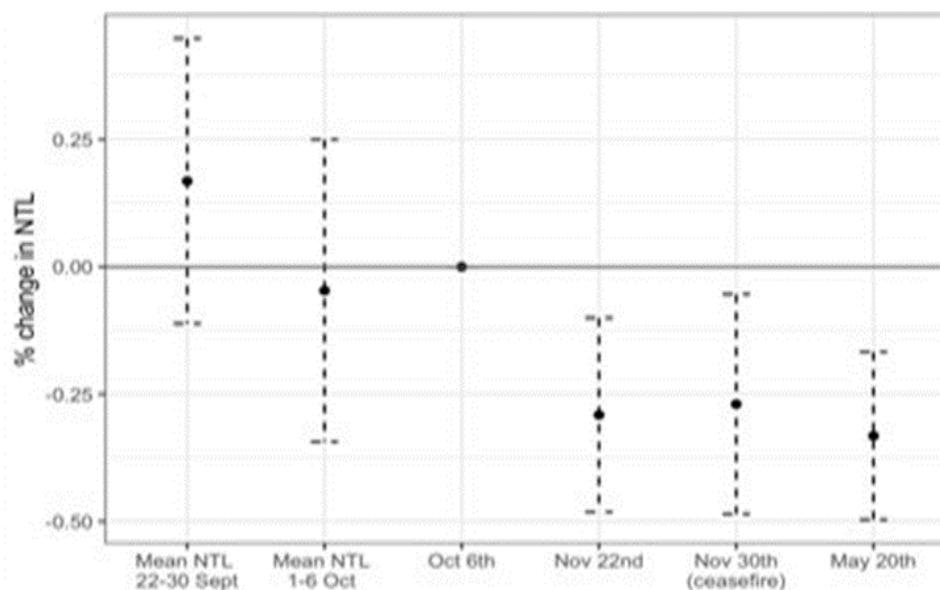
41. The first round of Israeli bombardment between 7 October and 22 November reduced NTL by 27.5–30.0 per cent. The cumulative effect of bombardment between 7 October and 30 November, which includes both the first round of bombing and the seven-day humanitarian pause, is a reduction in NTL of 20.2–25.8 per cent. The difference between the two estimates suggests that the seven-day humanitarian pause allowed NTL to recover by between 5 and 7 per cent.

42. The cumulative effect of the war between 7 October 2023 and 20 May 2024 was a reduction in NTL of 41.7–44.9 per cent. The estimate measures the change in average NTL before and after bombardment for grids that include at least one 40 x 40 m cell that was bombarded in that period. Two more NTL measurements are included in the data set: the average NTL for 22–30 September and the average for 1–6 October. These data points are included in order to evaluate the absence of pre-existing trends in the change in NTL which would invalidate the causal interpretation of the estimates, which is illustrated in figure VII.

43. In addition to the cumulative impact, the impact of the intensity of damage on NTL is considered: each extra damage caused by a bombarded 40 x 40 m cell within each 1 km² grid corresponds with an NTL loss of 0.088 per cent. This implies, in a linear setting, that the 1 km² grid which suffered the highest level of damage incurred an NTL loss of 55 per cent. When considering a non-linear estimate, the grid cells that suffered the highest level of damage experienced NTL loss greater than 60 per cent, as shown in figure VIII. It should be noted that excluding Rafah would yield an NTL loss of 47.2 per cent, around 2–3 per cent higher.

Figure VII

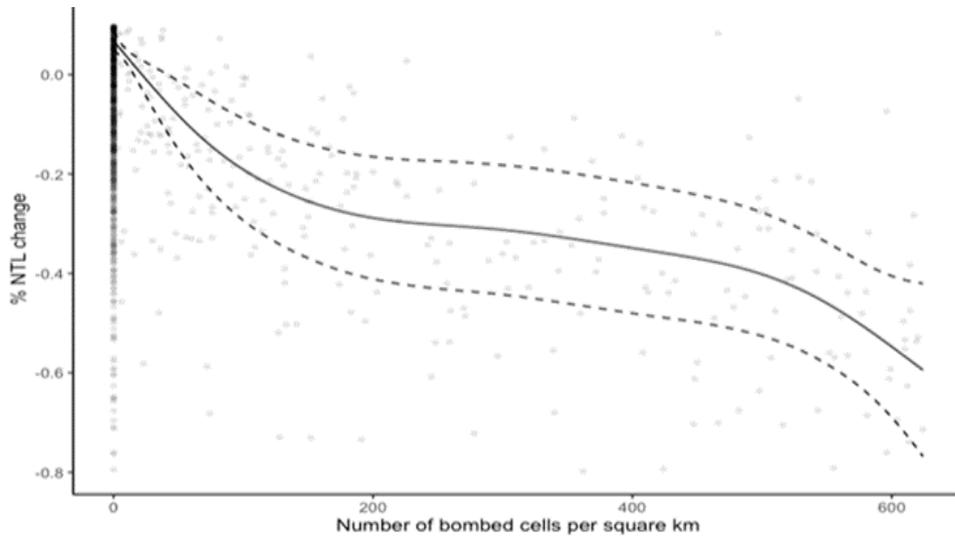
Point estimates and 95 per cent confidence interval of NTL percentage change over different points in time



Source: UNCTAD calculations based on the damage and NTL data between 22 September 2023 and 20 May 2024.

⁴² Difference-in-differences estimation attempts to measure the effects of a sudden change in the economic activity because of a certain event or policy referred to as a treatment. The estimation is done by taking the difference between the average change in NTL for damaged grids and undamaged grids between the pre-war levels and NTL at a certain date.

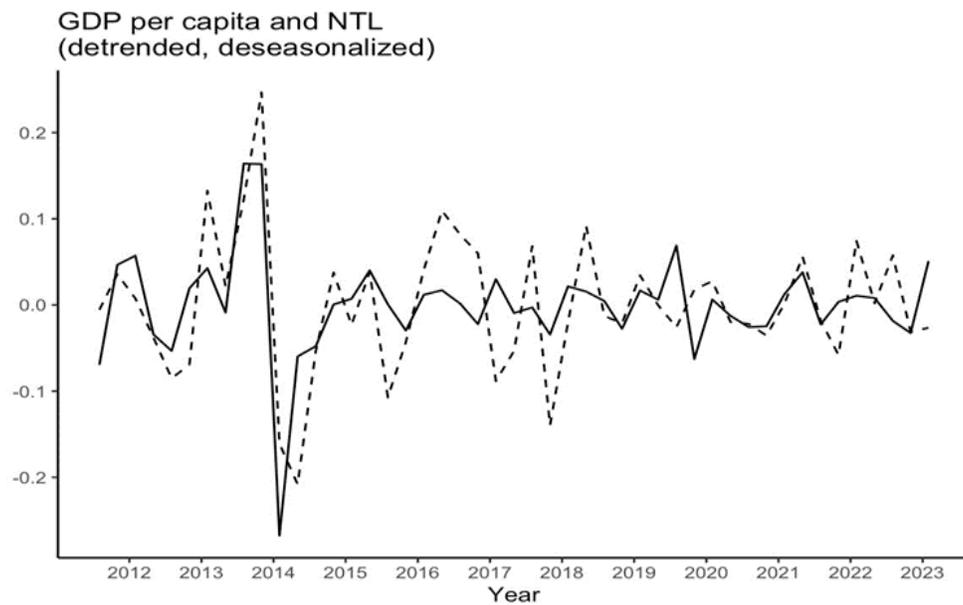
Figure VIII
Impact of number of bombed 40 x 40 m cells per square kilometre on NTL
(percentage change)



Source: UNCTAD calculations based on the damage and NTL data between 22 September 2023 and 20 May 2024.

Note: The dotted line above and below the solid line represent the 95 per cent confidence interval of the estimates.

Figure IX
Log quarterly NTL and GDP per capita, Q1 2012–Q3 2023



Source: UNCTAD calculations based on quarterly Black Marble NTL data and Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics GDP per capita data.

Note: To use NTL as a predictor of GDP per capita, UNCTAD estimated the elasticity of quarterly GDP per capita in Gaza with respect to quarterly NTL from the first quarter of 2012 to the third quarter of 2023. At 1.22, the elasticity implies that a 1 per cent reduction in NTL is associated with a 1.22 per cent reduction in GDP per capita. As shown in the figure, NTL is a good predictor of GDP per capita. For example, looking at the impact of the 2014 war, NTL data closely mirror the decline in GDP per capita caused by the war, even in absolute terms.

44. The elasticity of NTL with respect to GDP per capita therefore implies a 33.6–36.6 per cent reduction in GDP per capita between 7 October and 22 November 2023. Once the seven-day humanitarian pause from 24 to 30 November is taken into account, the fall in GDP per capita between 7 October and 30 November 2023 is estimated to be in the range of 24.6 to 31.5 per cent. Between 7 October 2023 and 20 May 2024, the fall in GDP per capita is estimated to be between 50.9 and 54.8 per cent. It is crucial to note that the estimated GDP per capita loss accounts only for the effect of the damage caused by the war; it does not account for the impact of other factors on output.

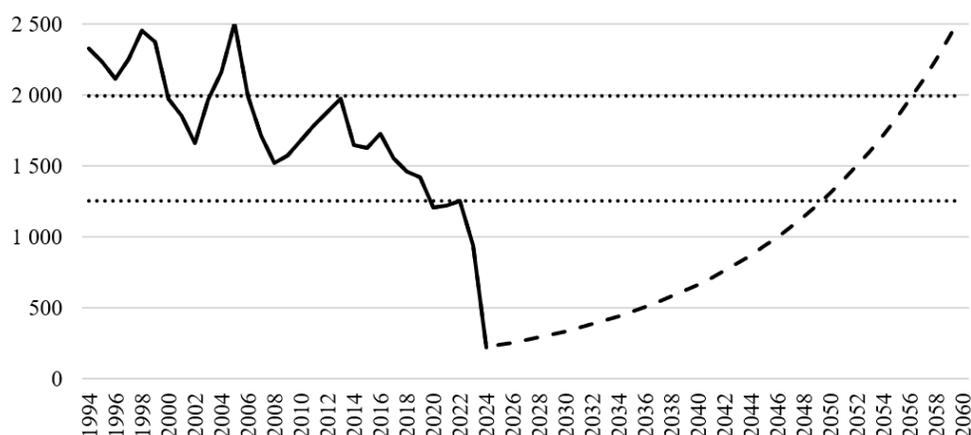
IV. Long-lasting impact: prospects for the recovery of Gaza

45. The possibility and speed of recovery of Gaza depend on the intensity and duration of the war, as well as the scope and speed of reconstruction, all of which were unknown as at 12 August 2024.

46. Assuming no military operation, and freedom of movement of goods and people and a significant level of investment, and population growth of 2.8 per cent per year, UNCTAD estimates that Gaza's GDP per capita will return to its 2022 level by 2050, to its 2006 level by 2057 and to its 1994 level by 2059 (see figure X).

Figure X

GDP per capita assuming 10 per cent average annual GDP growth (1994–2060)



Source: UNCTAD projections for 2024 onward. The data for the period 1994–2023 are actual data from the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics available at https://www.pcbs.gov.ps/site/lang_en/741/default.aspx.

Note: The upper dotted line represents the GDP level in 2006, while the lower dotted line represents the 2022 level.

47. However, it is important to note that the return of GDP per capita to pre-October 2023 levels does not mean restoration of well-being because GDP and GDP per capita recovery does not account for the cost of replacing damaged assets and infrastructure. Considering the reconstruction cost, in an optimistic scenario of double-digit growth rates facilitated by a large injection of foreign aid, it will take several decades for Gaza to return to the pre-October 2023 welfare levels.

48. Therefore, once a ceasefire is reached, a return to the pre-October 2023 status quo would not put Gaza on the path needed for recovery and sustainable development. UNCTAD estimates that, if the 2007–2022 growth trend returns, with an average growth rate of 0.4 per cent, it will take Gaza 350 years just to restore the GDP levels of 2022, with GDP per capita continuously and precipitously falling, driven by population growth. This underscores the urgency of a political horizon leading to a

two-State solution and significant economic support by the international community to facilitate recovery from the immense damage caused by the war.

49. Ideally, the initial phase of reconstruction requires a substantial infusion of investment to rebuild vital institutions and infrastructure to foster economic recovery. This, in turn, would pave the way for the private sector and foreign direct investment to assume a prominent role in economic recovery.

50. At present, it is hard to ascertain the extent of foreign aid required to bring Gaza back to the level of socioeconomic conditions that prevailed prior to 7 October 2023, let alone what is needed to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Preliminary UNCTAD estimations, and also considering recovery costs from past military operations, suggest that several tens, possibly more, of billions of dollars will be needed just to restore Gaza to pre-7 October 2023 conditions and that even more resources will be needed to create conditions conducive to sustainable development.

51. Immediate and robust budgetary support, alongside technical assistance and advisory services to the Government of the State of Palestine, will be important to avert the collapse of the Government and to enable it to address its challenges, strengthen its governance capacity, pave the way for long-term reconstruction, and prepare it to reassume its responsibilities in Gaza.

52. There is an urgent need for concrete steps towards unifying Gaza and the occupied West Bank politically, economically and administratively. Gaza is and must remain an integral part of an independent, democratic, contiguous, sovereign and viable Palestinian State, as part of resolving the conflict in line with international law, including relevant United Nations resolutions. This solution would need a unified infrastructure and enhance energy security across the Occupied Palestinian Territory. New modalities for dispensing relief have been proposed in response to the widespread devastation for the people of Gaza. One proposal suggests a two-year, renewable, unconditional universal emergency basic income programme as part of a comprehensive recovery plan to be implemented with support from the international community.⁴³ Said proposal foresees an unconditional monthly payment to cover the cost of a basic basket of essential goods and services, with an additional payment for the most vulnerable, including persons with disabilities. The level of income provided would depend on the available resources, but at \$100–\$150 per person per month, it is seen as a potentially highly beneficial approach.⁴⁴

53. Among the merits of the proposed universal basic income is ease of implementation with considerably lower administrative costs and fewer bureaucratic complications, thereby maximizing the net impact of foreign aid. Furthermore, direct cash payments will be more effective in stimulating the local economy, especially with regard to food production, than imported food aid, which tends to have a negative impact on domestic producers.

V. Cumulative cost of closures, other restrictions and recurrent military operations

54. Building on the methodology developed by UNCTAD,⁴⁵ the present section provides estimates of the cumulative economic cost exacted by 16 years of Israeli closures and economic and movement restrictions and of recurrent military operations in Gaza during the period 2007–2023.

⁴³ Palestine Economic Policy Research Institute, “‘Recovery dividends’: an emergency basic income for Palestine”, February 2024.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ See A/75/310.

55. Endogeneity, overlapping causal factors and measurement problems complicate estimation of the economic cost of the prolonged closures, economic and movement restrictions, and military operations that took place during the period 2007–2023 as well as Palestinian political division. Furthermore, the costs of closures and other restrictions cannot be delineated and estimated separately from the cost resulting from military operations. Nonetheless, a counterfactual growth path (scenario) can be estimated, a scenario in which the closures, other restrictions and military operations did not occur, and GDP implied by this hypothetical scenario, calculated. The deviation of GDP in the counterfactual scenarios from its baseline (actual) values reflects the combined cost of closures, other restrictions and military operations.

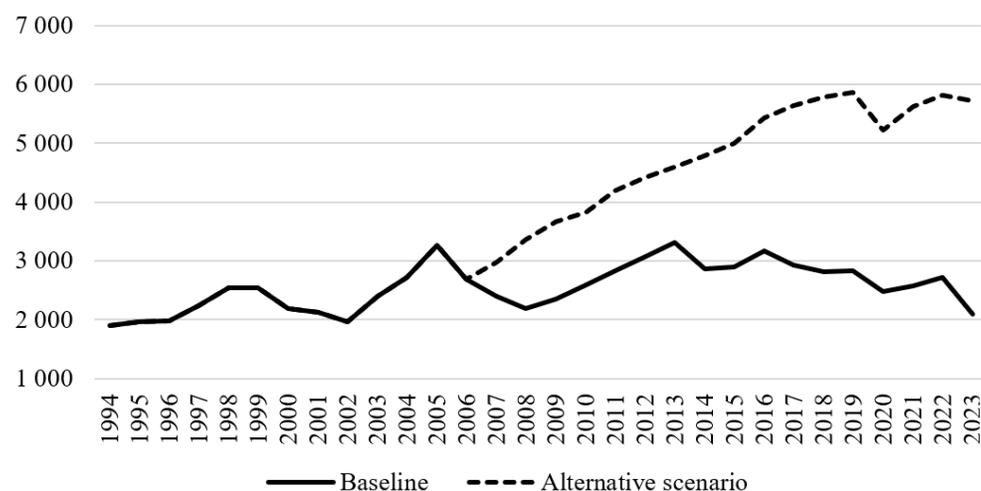
56. The counterfactual growth path (scenario) is constructed assuming that the share of Gaza in the Palestinian economy remained at the same level as in 2006. In other words, it is assumed that Gaza's economy grew at the same rate as that of the occupied West Bank during the assessment period 2007–2023. In reality, during these 16 years, Gaza's actual share in the Palestinian economy plunged from 31 per cent in 2006 to 14 per cent in 2023. The closures, restrictions and military operations are likely to be the key drivers of the steep decline in Gaza's share in the Palestinian economy. The economic cost is the difference between the baseline, which is the actual GDP and GDP per capita figures, and the counterfactual scenario figures.

57. If Gaza's economy had continued to grow at the same rate as that of the West Bank in the period 2007–2023, it is estimated that its annual GDP would have been, on average, 77.6 per cent higher than its actual level. This implies an estimated cumulative loss of \$35.8 billion (in constant 2015 dollars) of unrealized GDP potential during the period 2007–2023. The sum is equivalent to 13 times Gaza's GDP in 2022 and 17 times its GDP in 2023 (see figure XI and table 2). Meanwhile, it is estimated that GDP per capita in 2023 would have been \$2,575, or 172.3 per cent higher than its actual level (see figure XII and table 3).

Figure XI

Gaza: GDP, actual (baseline) and counterfactual scenario (absent the closures, other restrictions and military operations), 1994–2023

(Millions of constant 2015 United States dollars)



Source: UNCTAD calculations. Baseline scenario is the actual figures from Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics national accounts data (1994–2023).

Table 2
Gaza: real GDP, actual (baseline) and counterfactual scenario, 2007–2023

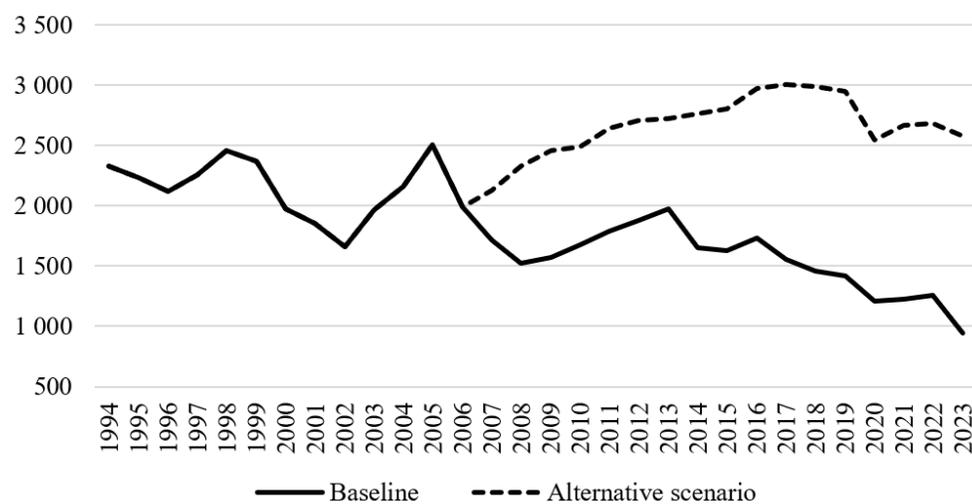
(Millions of constant 2015 United States dollars)

<i>Year</i>	<i>Baseline scenario</i>	<i>Alternative scenario</i>	<i>Difference</i>	<i>Percentage difference</i>
2007	2 393.2	2 973.2	580.0	24.2
2008	2 196.7	3 363.0	1 166.3	53.1
2009	2 350.8	3 667.7	1 316.9	56.0
2010	2 586.3	3 834.6	1 248.3	48.3
2011	2 840.5	4 200.1	1 359.6	47.9
2012	3 076.7	4 427.7	1 351.0	43.9
2013	3 320.5	4 590.9	1 270.4	38.3
2014	2 860.7	4 788.8	1 928.1	67.4
2015	2 900.1	4 997.3	2 097.2	72.3
2016	3 164.9	5 436.8	2 271.9	71.8
2017	2 921.4	5 644.2	2 722.8	93.2
2018	2 818.9	5 775.9	2 957.0	104.9
2019	2 830.2	5 866.8	3 036.6	107.3
2020	2 473.3	5 219.3	2 746.0	111.0
2021	2 578.1	5 616.2	3 038.1	117.8
2022	2 722.7	5 817.6	3 094.9	113.7
2023	2 100.4	5 719.9	3 619.5	172.3
Cumulative	46 135.4	81 940.0	35 804.5	77.6

Source: UNCTAD calculations. Baseline scenario is the actual figures from Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics national accounts data (1994–2023).

Figure XII
Gaza: GDP per capita, actual (baseline) and counterfactual scenario, 1994–2023

(Constant 2015 United States dollars)



Source: UNCTAD calculations. Baseline scenario is the actual figures from Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics national accounts data (1994–2023).

Table 3
Gaza: real GDP per capita, actual (baseline) and counterfactual scenario, 2007–2023
 (Constant 2015 United States dollars)

<i>Year</i>	<i>Baseline scenario</i>	<i>Alternative scenario</i>	<i>Difference</i>	<i>Percentage difference</i>
2007	1 714.7	2 130.3	415.6	24.2
2008	1 521.4	2 329.2	807.8	53.1
2009	1 575.6	2 458.2	882.6	56.0
2010	1 679.4	2 490.0	810.6	48.3
2011	1 788.7	2 644.8	856.1	47.9
2012	1 880.3	2 705.9	825.6	43.9
2013	1 971.5	2 725.8	754.3	38.3
2014	1 651.3	2 764.3	1 113.0	67.4
2015	1 628.9	2 806.8	1 177.9	72.3
2016	1 730.8	2 973.3	1 242.5	71.8
2017	1 556.6	3 007.4	1 450.8	93.2
2018	1 458.3	2 988.0	1 529.7	104.9
2019	1 422.2	2 948.1	1 525.9	107.3
2020	1 207.6	2 548.4	1 340.8	111.0
2021	1 223.9	2 666.2	1 442.3	117.8
2022	1 256.8	2 685.4	1 428.6	113.7
2023	945.7	2 575.4	1 629.7	172.3

Source: UNCTAD calculations. Baseline scenario is the actual figures from Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics national accounts data (1994–2023).

58. The closures, other restrictions and military operations and war stunted Gaza's economy and resulted in significant GDP loss and fostered poverty and aid dependence. However, it should be stressed that the quantitative assessment based on the counterfactual scenario gives partial, lower-bound, conservative estimates for at least two reasons: (a) it assumes a growth performance under conditions of enduring occupation, where the constraints on economic activity are not fully lifted but persist at their significant pre-2007 levels; (b) it does not take into account the considerable negative impact of occupation on the economy of the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, extensively documented by UNCTAD, other United Nations organs, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and other organizations.

59. Therefore, the estimates provided in the present report are conservative and partial. By restricting the span of assessment, it leaves out the cost of 39 years of occupation from 1967 to 2006 and considers just a fraction of the total costs of the destruction of Gaza during the period 2007–2023. The toll exacted by the war in 2024 adds to the tally. Furthermore, the estimated cost above does not include the costs of replacing infrastructure, as well as public and private assets destroyed during several major military operations, including in 2008–2009, 2012, 2014, 2021, 2022 and May 2023 and during the war since October 2023, nor does it account for non-tangible assets such as human capital formation, likely to be strongly affected, as exemplified by the loss of education of one school year for children in Gaza.

VI. Concluding observations

60. I strongly condemn the horrific attacks by Hamas and other Palestinian armed groups in Israel on 7 October 2023 and the continued holding of hostages in Gaza. Nothing can justify these acts of terror. I reiterate my call for all hostages to be released immediately and unconditionally.

61. Civilians throughout Gaza face grave danger. A humanitarian ceasefire is needed immediately. The scope of death and destruction in Gaza as a result of the war has been catastrophic, unprecedented and horrifying. Nothing can justify the collective punishment of the Palestinian people. I unequivocally condemn the widespread killing and maiming of civilians in Gaza, including women and children.

62. Prior to October 2023, stringent air, sea and land closures and restrictions, including on the importation of technology and essential inputs, had a severe impact on Gaza's economy and precipitated a deep humanitarian crisis within the densely populated Strip. The socioeconomic challenges were daunting even before October 2023.

63. Since 7 October 2023, hostilities of an unprecedented intensity have taken place in Gaza. Economic activity across all productive sectors ground to a halt, except for minimum humanitarian, health and food services provided under conditions of severe water, fuel and electricity shortages and access constraints. The intense hostilities have made the already precarious living conditions far worse for the people of Gaza, half of them children.

64. Israel's military response and the war have resulted in a catastrophic situation for Gaza's 2.3 million inhabitants, who were already living under dire social and economic conditions in view of 57 years of occupation and 17 years of closures of Gaza. Monetary poverty has widened and deepened, while multidimensional poverty has engulfed the entire population, given deprivations in food, education, health and basic infrastructure.

65. Absent the closures, economic and movement restrictions and recurrent rounds of escalations and the war since 7 October at a minimum, Gaza would very likely have at least maintained its share in the Palestinian economy and its GDP would have been about 77.6 per cent higher and GDP per capita would have been about 172 per cent higher than the actual figures in 2023.

66. The constraints on the Palestinian economy in general, and in Gaza in particular, are not solely a consequence of recent events but are rooted in a prolonged 57-year occupation and 17 years of closures. Achieving sustainable development across the Occupied Palestinian Territory requires ending the occupation and extending substantial financial and political support from the international community.

67. The future of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory will be largely determined by the actions of the Government of Israel, the Government of the State of Palestine, donors and the international community. The vicious cycle of destruction and partial reconstruction must be broken by ending the occupation and by a negotiated two-State solution, based on international law and relevant United Nations resolutions.

68. A new approach to economic rehabilitation centred around peacebuilding cannot merely aim to restore the pre-October 2023 status quo. Only sustainable political solutions and lifting the debilitating Israeli closures, in line with Security Council resolution 1860 (2009), will restore hope to the long-suffering population of Gaza. Piecemeal, reversible measures cannot be a substitute for lifting the closure off Gaza to allow its economy to recover, and to trade normally and freely with the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the rest of the world.

69. There is an urgent need for concrete steps towards unifying Gaza and the occupied West Bank politically, economically and administratively. Gaza is and must remain an integral part of an independent, democratic, contiguous, sovereign and viable Palestinian State, as part of resolving the conflict in line with international law, including relevant United Nations resolutions. The international community should play a key role in facilitating such a solution by providing consistent political, technical and financial support.

70. Beyond a permanent ceasefire and immediate relief, the recovery and sustainable development of Gaza demand urgent action from the international community to inject massive aid for rebuilding the devastated Gaza Strip. Building Gaza back fully and better is not impossible. History shows that rebuilding war-torn societies is possible if the international community rallies together.

71. For this to succeed, there will be a need to convene an international conference for the reconstruction of Gaza during which donors can make credible pledges to a fund dedicated for reconstruction, relief and budget support for the Government of the State of Palestine. A comprehensive recovery plan for the State of Palestine, not just Gaza, is needed for fostering long-term recovery, peace and stability. The plan should address immediate humanitarian needs and prioritize the restoration of critical, life-sustaining infrastructure as part of a comprehensive intervention to facilitate the two-State solution and lay the economic foundations for lasting peace and stability in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Israel and across the region.

72. Rapid restoration of infrastructure and essential services is crucial for containing the long-term consequences of the recent, unprecedented war. There is a glaring, urgent need for an extensive recovery programme that prioritizes rebuilding the entire infrastructure, especially in such vital public goods as water, sanitation and hygiene, education, and health, in addition to the restoration of full public access to electricity. Throughout the recovery process, gender perspectives will need to be included to account for differentiated needs. Likewise, accessibility for persons with disabilities must be integrated into rebuilding and reconstruction in order to protect their rights and ensure their inclusion in society.

73. This solution would be enhanced by enabling a unified Government of the State of Palestine to develop the natural gas fields discovered in the 1990s in the Mediterranean Sea off the shore of Gaza to help to finance the reconstruction of infrastructure and rebuild the productive base of Gaza and enhance energy security across the Occupied Palestinian Territory.⁴⁶

74. Development gains can be maximized by fostering a synergy linking relief to development whereby donor-funded reconstruction efforts prioritize employing Palestinian workers and professionals and contracting Palestinian firms from Gaza, as well as the West Bank, including East Jerusalem.

75. The ability of UNRWA to meet the growing needs of Palestine refugees across the Occupied Palestinian Territory has been significantly limited. UNRWA remains the largest humanitarian actor in Gaza by far and is the backbone of the humanitarian response. Its vital role in providing essential support, mitigating the impact of humanitarian crises and fostering regional stability is widely recognized and has become even more crucial during this war.

76. The Palestinian people's right to development, self-determination and statehood cannot be replaced by humanitarian and economic assistance, essential as these may be in the interim. The devastation and misery of the past months have reinforced a

⁴⁶ *The Economic Costs of the Israeli Occupation for the Palestinian People: The Unrealized Oil and Natural Gas Potential* (United Nations publication, 2019).

simple truth: Palestinians and Israelis can no longer wait to establish a viable political horizon. Now is the time to lay the foundations for a better future for Palestinians, Israelis and the people of the broader region. Israelis, Palestinians, the States of the region and the broader international community must urgently take steps that will enable the parties to re-engage on the long-delayed political path to achieving a two-State solution.

77. The United Nations remains committed to supporting Palestinians and Israelis in ending the occupation and resolving the conflict in line with international law and relevant United Nations resolutions and bilateral agreements in pursuit of the vision of two States – Israel and a fully independent, democratic, contiguous, viable and sovereign Palestinian State, of which Gaza is an integral part – living side by side in peace and security within secure and recognized borders, on the basis of the pre-1967 lines, with Jerusalem as the capital of both States.



General Assembly

Distr.
GENERAL

A/RES/51/26
12 December 1996

Fifty-first session
Agenda item 35

RESOLUTION ADOPTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

[without reference to a Main Committee (A/51/L.36 and Add.1)]

51/26. Peaceful settlement of the question of
Palestine

The General Assembly,

Recalling its relevant resolutions,

Recalling also the relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolutions 242 (1967) of 22 November 1967 and 338 (1973) of 22 October 1973,

Having considered the report of the Secretary-General¹ submitted pursuant to the request made in its resolution 50/84 D of 15 December 1995,

Convinced that achieving a final and peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, is imperative for the attainment of a comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East,

Aware that the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples is among the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations,

Affirming the principle of the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war,

Affirming also the illegality of the Israeli settlements in the territory occupied since 1967 and of Israeli actions aimed at changing the status of Jerusalem,

¹ A/51/678-S/1996/953.

Affirming once again the right of all States in the region to live in peace within secure and internationally recognized borders,

Aware of the mutual recognition between the Government of the State of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization, the representative of the Palestinian people, and the signing by the two parties of the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements² in Washington, D.C., on 13 September 1993, as well as the subsequent implementation agreements, including the Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip signed in Washington, D.C., on 28 September 1995,

Noting with satisfaction the withdrawal of the Israeli army, which took place in the Gaza Strip and the Jericho area in accordance with the agreements reached by the parties, and the initiation of the Palestinian Authority in those areas, as well as the beginning of the redeployment of the Israeli army in the rest of the West Bank,

Noting also with satisfaction the successful holding of the first Palestinian general elections,

Aware that the United Nations has participated as a full, extraregional participant in the work of the multilateral working groups of the Middle East peace process,

Noting the establishment of the Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator in the Occupied Territories and its positive contribution,

Welcoming the convening of the Conference to Support Middle East Peace in Washington, D.C., on 1 October 1993, and all follow-up meetings,

Concerned over the serious difficulties facing the Middle East peace process and the deterioration of the socio-economic conditions of the Palestinian people as a result of the Israeli positions and measures,

1. Reaffirms the necessity of achieving a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, in all its aspects;

2. Expresses its full support for the ongoing peace process which began in Madrid and the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements² of 1993, as well as the subsequent implementation agreements, including the Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip of 1995, and expresses the hope that the process will lead to the establishment of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East;

3. Stresses the necessity for the immediate and scrupulous implementation of the agreements reached between the parties and the commencement of the negotiations on the final settlement;

4. Calls upon the concerned parties, the co-sponsors of the peace process and the entire international community to exert all the necessary efforts to ensure the success of the peace process;

² A/48/486-S/26560, annex.

5. Stresses the need for:

(a) The realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, primarily the right to self-determination;

(b) The withdrawal of Israel from the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967;

6. Also stresses the need for resolving the problem of the Palestine refugees in conformity with its resolution 194 (III) of 11 December 1948;

7. Urges Member States to expedite the provision of economic and technical assistance to the Palestinian people during this critical period;

8. Emphasizes the importance for the United Nations to play a more active and expanded role in the current peace process and in the implementation of the Declaration of Principles;

9. Requests the Secretary-General to continue his efforts with the parties concerned, and in consultation with the Security Council, for the promotion of peace in the region and to submit progress reports on developments in this matter.

72nd plenary meeting
4 December 1996



General Assembly

Distr.
GENERAL

A/RES/52/52
28 January 1998

Fifty-second session
Agenda item 36

RESOLUTION ADOPTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

[without reference to a Main Committee (A/52/L.52 and Corr.1 and Add.1)]

52/52. Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine

The General Assembly,

Recalling its relevant resolutions, including resolutions adopted at the tenth emergency special session,

Recalling also the relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolutions 242 (1967) of 22 November 1967 and 338 (1973) of 22 October 1973,

Aware that 1997 marks fifty years since the adoption of resolution 181 (II) of 29 November 1947 and thirty years since the occupation of Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem,

Having considered the report of the Secretary-General¹ submitted pursuant to the request made in its resolution 51/26 of 4 December 1996,

Convinced that achieving a final and peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, is imperative for the attainment of a comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East,

Aware that the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples is among the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations,

Affirming the principle of the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war,

Affirming also the illegality of the Israeli settlements in the territory occupied since 1967 and of Israeli actions aimed at changing the status of Jerusalem,

¹ A/52/581-S/1997/866. For the final text, see *Official Records of the Security Council, Fifty-second Year, Supplement for October, November and December 1997*, document S/1997/866.

Affirming once again the right of all States in the region to live in peace within secure and internationally recognized borders,

Recalling the mutual recognition between the Government of the State of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization, the representative of the Palestinian people, and the signing by the two parties of the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements in Washington, D.C., on 13 September 1993,² as well as the subsequent implementation agreements, including the Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip signed in Washington, D.C., on 28 September 1995,³

Recalling also the withdrawal of the Israeli army, which took place in the Gaza Strip and the Jericho area in 1995 in accordance with the agreements reached by the parties, and the initiation of the Palestinian Authority in those areas, as well as the beginning of the redeployment of the Israeli army in the rest of the West Bank in 1996,

Noting with satisfaction the successful holding of the first Palestinian general elections,

Noting with appreciation the work of the Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator in the Occupied Territories and its positive contribution,

Welcoming the convening of the Conference to Support Middle East Peace in Washington, D.C., on 1 October 1993, as well as all follow-up meetings and the international mechanisms established to provide assistance to the Palestinian people,

Concerned about the serious difficulties facing the Middle East peace process, including the lack of implementation of the agreements reached and the deterioration of the socio-economic conditions of the Palestinian people as a result of the Israeli positions and measures,

1. *Reaffirms* the necessity of achieving a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, in all its aspects;

2. *Expresses its full support* for the ongoing peace process which began in Madrid and the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements of 1993,² as well as the subsequent implementation agreements, including the Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip of 1995,³ and expresses the hope that the process will lead to the establishment of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East;

3. *Stresses* the necessity for commitment to the principle of land for peace and the implementation of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), which form the basis of the Middle East peace process, and the need for the immediate and scrupulous implementation of the agreements reached between the parties, including the redeployment of the Israeli forces from the West Bank and the commencement of the negotiations on the final settlement;

4. *Calls upon* the concerned parties, the co-sponsors of the peace process and other interested parties, as well as the entire international community to exert all the necessary efforts and initiatives to bring the peace process back on track and to ensure its continuity and success;

² A/48/486-S/26560, annex. For the final text, see *Official Records of the Security Council, Forty-eighth Year, Supplement for October, November and December 1993*, document S/26560.

³ A/51/889-S/1997/357, annex. For the final text, see *Official Records of the Security Council, Fifty-second Year, Supplement for April, May and June 1997*, document S/1997/357.

5. *Stresses* the need for:

(a) The realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, primarily the right to self-determination;

(b) The withdrawal of Israel from the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967;

6. *Also stresses* the need for resolving the problem of the Palestine refugees in conformity with its resolution 194 (III) of 11 December 1948;

7. *Urges* Member States to expedite the provision of economic and technical assistance to the Palestinian people during this critical period;

8. *Emphasizes* the importance for the United Nations to play a more active and expanded role in the current peace process and in the implementation of the Declaration of Principles;

9. *Requests* the Secretary-General to continue his efforts with the parties concerned and, in consultation with the Security Council, for the promotion of peace in the region and to submit progress reports on developments in this matter.

*68th plenary meeting
9 December 1997*



General Assembly

Distr.
GENERAL

A/RES/53/42
20 January 1999

Fifty-third session
Agenda item 39

RESOLUTION ADOPTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

[*without reference to a Main Committee (A/53/L.51 and Add.1)*]

53/42. Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine

The General Assembly,

Recalling its relevant resolutions, including resolutions adopted at the tenth emergency special session,

Recalling also the relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolutions 242 (1967) of 22 November 1967 and 338 (1973) of 22 October 1973,

Aware that 1997 marked fifty years since the adoption of resolution 181 (II) of 29 November 1947 and thirty years since the occupation of Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem,

Having considered the report of the Secretary-General¹ submitted pursuant to the request made in its resolution 52/52 of 9 December 1997,

Convinced that achieving a final and peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, is imperative for the attainment of a comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East,

Aware that the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples is among the purposes and principles embodied in the Charter of the United Nations,

¹ A/53/652-S/1998/1050; see *Official Records of the Security Council, Fifty-third Year, Supplement for October, November and December 1998*, document S/1998/1050.

Affirming the principle of the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war,

Affirming also the illegality of the Israeli settlements in the territory occupied since 1967 and of Israeli actions aimed at changing the status of Jerusalem,

Affirming once again the right of all States in the region to live in peace within secure and internationally recognized borders,

Recalling the mutual recognition between the Government of the State of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization, the representative of the Palestinian people, and the signing by the two parties of the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements in Washington, D.C., on 13 September 1993,² as well as the subsequent implementation agreements, including the Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, signed in Washington, D.C., on 28 September 1995,³

Recalling also the withdrawal of the Israeli army, which took place in the Gaza Strip and the Jericho area in 1995 in accordance with the agreements reached by the parties, and the initiation of the Palestinian Authority in those areas, as well as the beginning of the redeployment of the Israeli army in the rest of the West Bank in 1996,

Noting with satisfaction the successful holding of the first Palestinian general elections,

Noting with appreciation the work of the Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator in the Occupied Territories and its positive contribution,

Welcoming the convening of the Conference to Support Middle East Peace in Washington, D.C., on 1 October 1993, as well as all follow-up meetings and the international mechanisms established to provide assistance to the Palestinian people,

Concerned about the serious difficulties facing the Middle East peace process, and expressing the hope that the Wye River Memorandum, signed in Washington, D.C., on 23 October 1998, will be fully implemented towards full compliance with the existing agreements,

1. *Reaffirms* the necessity of achieving a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, in all its aspects;

2. *Expresses its full support* for the ongoing peace process which began in Madrid and the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements of 1993,² as well as the subsequent implementation agreements, including the Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip of 1995,³ and expresses the hope that the process will lead to the establishment of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East;

² A/48/486-S/26560, annex; see *Official Records of the Security Council, Forty-eighth Year, Supplement for October, November and December 1993*, document S/26560.

³ A/51/889-S/1997/357, annex; see *Official Records of the Security Council, Fifty-second Year, Supplement for April, May and June 1997*, document S/1997/357.

3. *Stresses* the necessity for commitment to the principle of land for peace and the implementation of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), which form the basis of the Middle East peace process, and the need for the immediate and scrupulous implementation of the agreements reached between the parties, including the redeployment of the Israeli forces from the West Bank and the commencement of the negotiations on the final settlement;

4. *Calls upon* the concerned parties, the co-sponsors of the peace process and other interested parties, as well as the entire international community to exert all the necessary efforts and initiatives to bring the peace process back on track and to ensure its continuity and success;

5. *Stresses* the need for:

(a) The realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, primarily the right to self-determination;

(b) The withdrawal of Israel from the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967;

6. *Also stresses* the need for resolving the problem of the Palestine refugees in conformity with its resolution 194 (III) of 11 December 1948;

7. *Urges* Member States to expedite the provision of economic and technical assistance to the Palestinian people during this critical period;

8. *Emphasizes* the importance for the United Nations to play a more active and expanded role in the current peace process and in the implementation of the Declaration of Principles;

9. *Requests* the Secretary-General to continue his efforts with the parties concerned, and in consultation with the Security Council, for the promotion of peace in the region and to submit progress reports on developments in this matter.

*76th plenary meeting
2 December 1998*



General Assembly

Distr.
GENERAL

A/RES/54/42
21 January 2000

Fifty-fourth session
Agenda item 44

RESOLUTION ADOPTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

[without reference to a Main Committee (A/54/L.45 and Add.1)]

54/42. Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine

The General Assembly,

Recalling its relevant resolutions, including resolutions adopted at the tenth emergency special session,

Recalling also the relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolutions 242 (1967) of 22 November 1967 and 338 (1973) of 22 October 1973,

Aware that it has been more than fifty years since the adoption of resolution 181 (II) of 29 November 1947 and thirty-two years since the occupation of Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, in 1967,

Having considered the report of the Secretary-General¹ submitted pursuant to the request made in its resolution 53/42 of 2 December 1998,

Reaffirming the permanent responsibility of the United Nations with regard to the question of Palestine until the question is resolved in all its aspects,

¹ A/54/457-S/1999/1050; see *Official Records of the Security Council, Fifty-fourth Year, Supplement for October, November and December 1999*, document S/1999/1050.

Convinced that achieving a final and peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, is imperative for the attainment of a comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East,

Aware that the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples is among the purposes and principles embodied in the Charter of the United Nations,

Affirming the principle of the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war,

Affirming also the illegality of the Israeli settlements in the territory occupied since 1967 and of Israeli actions aimed at changing the status of Jerusalem,

Affirming once again the right of all States in the region to live in peace within secure and internationally recognized borders,

Recalling the mutual recognition between the Government of the State of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization, the representative of the Palestinian people, and the signing by the two parties of the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements in Washington, D.C., on 13 September 1993,² as well as the subsequent implementation agreements, including the Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, signed in Washington, D.C., on 28 September 1995,³

Recalling also the withdrawal of the Israeli army, which took place in the Gaza Strip and the Jericho area in 1995 in accordance with the agreements reached by the parties, and the initiation of the Palestinian Authority in those areas, as well as the subsequent redeployments of the Israeli army in the rest of the West Bank,

Noting with satisfaction the successful holding of the first Palestinian general elections,

Noting with satisfaction also the signing of the Memorandum at Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, on 4 September 1999,

Noting the appointment by the Secretary-General of the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General to the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Palestinian Authority, and its positive contribution,

Welcoming the convening of the Conference to Support Middle East Peace in Washington, D.C., on 1 October 1993, as well as all follow-up meetings and the international mechanisms established to provide assistance to the Palestinian people, including the donor meeting held at Tokyo on 14 October 1999,

² A/48/486-S/26560, annex; see *Official Records of the Security Council, Forty-eighth Year, Supplement for October, November and December 1993*, document S/26560.

³ A/51/889-S/1997/357, annex; see *Official Records of the Security Council, Fifty-second Year, Supplement for April, May and June 1997*, document S/1997/357.

Expressing the hope that the Sharm el-Sheikh Memorandum will be fully implemented towards full compliance with the existing agreements and the conclusion of the final settlement by the agreed time of September 2000,

1. *Reaffirms* the necessity of achieving a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, in all its aspects;

2. *Expresses its full support* for the ongoing peace process which began in Madrid and the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements of 1993,² as well as the subsequent implementation agreements, including the Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip of 1995³ and the Sharm el-Sheikh Memorandum of 1999, and expresses the hope that the process will lead to the establishment of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East;

3. *Stresses* the necessity for commitment to the principle of land for peace and the implementation of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), which form the basis of the Middle East peace process, and the need for the immediate and scrupulous implementation of the agreements reached between the parties, including the redeployment of the Israeli forces from the West Bank, and takes note with satisfaction of the commencement of the negotiations on the final settlement;

4. *Calls upon* the concerned parties, the co-sponsors of the peace process and other interested parties, as well as the entire international community to exert all the necessary efforts and initiatives to ensure the continuity and success of the peace process and its conclusion by the time agreed upon;

5. *Stresses* the need for:

(a) The realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, primarily the right to self-determination;

(b) The withdrawal of Israel from the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967;

6. *Also stresses* the need for resolving the problem of the Palestine refugees in conformity with its resolution 194 (III) of 11 December 1948;

7. *Urges* Member States to expedite the provision of economic and technical assistance to the Palestinian people during this critical period;

8. *Emphasizes* the importance for the United Nations to play a more active and expanded role in the current peace process and in the implementation of the Declaration of Principles;

9. *Requests* the Secretary-General to continue his efforts with the parties concerned, and in consultation with the Security Council, for the promotion of peace in the region and to submit progress reports on developments in this matter.



General Assembly

Distr.: General
25 January 2001

Fifty-fifth session
Agenda item 41

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly

[without reference to a Main Committee (A/55/L.48 and Add.1)]

55/55. Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine

The General Assembly,

Recalling its relevant resolutions, including resolutions adopted at the tenth emergency special session,

Recalling also the relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolutions 242 (1967) of 22 November 1967 and 338 (1973) of 22 October 1973,

Aware that it has been more than fifty years since the adoption of resolution 181 (II) of 29 November 1947 and thirty-three years since the occupation of Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, in 1967,

Having considered the report of the Secretary-General¹ submitted pursuant to the request made in its resolution 54/42 of 1 December 1999,

Reaffirming the permanent responsibility of the United Nations with regard to the question of Palestine until the question is resolved in all its aspects,

Convinced that achieving a final and peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, is imperative for the attainment of a comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East,

Aware that the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples is among the purposes and principles embodied in the Charter of the United Nations,

Affirming the principle of the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war,

Affirming also the illegality of the Israeli settlements in the territory occupied since 1967 and of Israeli actions aimed at changing the status of Jerusalem,

Affirming once again the right of all States in the region to live in peace within secure and internationally recognized borders,

Recalling the mutual recognition between the Government of the State of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization, the representative of the Palestinian people, and the signing by the two parties of the Declaration of Principles on Interim

¹ A/55/639-S/2000/1113.

Self-Government Arrangements in Washington, D.C., on 13 September 1993,² as well as the subsequent implementation agreements, including the Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, signed in Washington, D.C., on 28 September 1995,³

Recalling also the withdrawal of the Israeli army, which took place in the Gaza Strip and the Jericho area in 1995 in accordance with the agreements reached by the parties, and the initiation of the Palestinian Authority in those areas, as well as the subsequent redeployments of the Israeli army in the rest of the West Bank,

Noting with satisfaction the successful holding of the first Palestinian general elections,

Noting the signing of the Memorandum at Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, on 4 September 1999,

Noting the appointment by the Secretary-General of the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General to the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Palestinian Authority, and its positive contribution,

Welcoming the convening of the Conference to Support Middle East Peace in Washington, D.C., on 1 October 1993, as well as all follow-up meetings and the international mechanisms established to provide assistance to the Palestinian people, including the donor meeting held in Tokyo on 15 October 1999,

Expressing its deep concern over the tragic events in Occupied East Jerusalem and the Occupied Palestinian Territory since 28 September 2000, which have resulted in a high number of deaths and injuries, mostly among Palestinian civilians, and concerned also about the clashes between the Israeli armed forces and the Palestinian police and the casualties on both sides,

Expressing its deep concern also over the serious deterioration of the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem, and the difficulties facing the Middle East peace process,

1. *Reaffirms* the necessity of achieving a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, in all its aspects;

2. *Expresses its full support* for the ongoing peace process which began in Madrid and the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements of 1993,² as well as the subsequent implementation agreements, including the Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip of 1995³ and the Sharm el-Sheikh Memorandum of 1999, and expresses the hope that the process will lead to the establishment of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East;

3. *Stresses* the necessity for commitment to the principle of land for peace and the implementation of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), which form the basis of the Middle East peace process, and the need for the immediate and scrupulous implementation of the agreements reached between the parties, including the redeployment of the Israeli forces from the West Bank, and

² A/48/486-S/26560, annex.

³ A/51/889-S/1997/357, annex.

calls for the speedy conclusion of the final settlement agreement between the two sides;

4. *Calls upon* the concerned parties, the co-sponsors of the peace process and other interested parties, as well as the entire international community to exert all the necessary efforts and initiatives to reverse immediately all measures taken on the ground since 28 September 2000, in implementation of the Sharm el-Sheikh understandings and in order to ensure a successful and speedy conclusion of the peace process;

5. *Stresses* the need for:

(a) The realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, primarily the right to self-determination;

(b) The withdrawal of Israel from the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967;

6. *Also stresses* the need for resolving the problem of the Palestine refugees in conformity with its resolution 194 (III) of 11 December 1948;

7. *Urges* Member States to expedite the provision of economic and technical assistance to the Palestinian people during this critical period;

8. *Emphasizes* the importance for the United Nations to play a more active and expanded role in the current peace process and in the implementation of the Declaration of Principles;

9. *Requests* the Secretary-General to continue his efforts with the parties concerned, and in consultation with the Security Council, for the promotion of peace in the region and to submit progress reports on developments in this matter.

*78th plenary meeting
1 December 2000*



General Assembly

Distr.: General
18 December 2001

Fifty-sixth session
Agenda item 41

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly

[without reference to a Main Committee (A/56/L.22 and Add.1)]

56/36. Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine

The General Assembly,

Recalling its relevant resolutions, including resolutions adopted at the tenth emergency special session,

Recalling also the relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolutions 242 (1967) of 22 November 1967 and 338 (1973) of 22 October 1973,

Aware that it has been more than fifty years since the adoption of resolution 181 (II) of 29 November 1947 and thirty-four years since the occupation of Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, in 1967,

Having considered the report of the Secretary-General submitted pursuant to the request made in its resolution 55/55 of 1 December 2000,¹

Reaffirming the permanent responsibility of the United Nations with regard to the question of Palestine until the question is resolved in all its aspects,

Convinced that achieving a final and peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, is imperative for the attainment of a comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East,

Aware that the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples is among the purposes and principles embodied in the Charter of the United Nations,

Affirming the principle of the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war,

Affirming also the illegality of the Israeli settlements in the territory occupied since 1967 and of Israeli actions aimed at changing the status of Jerusalem,

Affirming once again the right of all States in the region to live in peace within secure and internationally recognized borders,

Recalling the mutual recognition between the Government of the State of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization, the representative of the Palestinian people, and the signing by the two parties of the Declaration of Principles on Interim

¹ A/56/642-S/2001/1100.

Self-Government Arrangements in Washington, D.C., on 13 September 1993,² as well as the subsequent implementation agreements, including the Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, signed in Washington, D.C., on 28 September 1995,³

Recalling also the withdrawal of the Israeli army, which took place in the Gaza Strip and the Jericho area in 1995 in accordance with the agreements reached by the parties, and the initiation of the Palestinian Authority in those areas, as well as the subsequent redeployments of the Israeli army in the rest of the West Bank,

Noting with satisfaction the successful holding of the first Palestinian general elections,

Noting the appointment by the Secretary-General of the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General to the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Palestinian Authority, and its positive contribution,

Welcoming the convening of the Conference to Support Middle East Peace in Washington, D.C., on 1 October 1993, as well as all follow-up meetings and the international mechanisms established to provide assistance to the Palestinian people, including the donor meetings held in Lisbon on 7 and 8 June 2000 and in Stockholm on 11 April 2001,

Expressing its deep concern over the tragic events in Occupied East Jerusalem and the Occupied Palestinian Territory since 28 September 2000, which have resulted in a high number of deaths and injuries, mostly among Palestinian civilians, and concerned also about the clashes between the Israeli armed forces and the Palestinian police and the casualties on both sides,

Expressing its deep concern also over the continued imposition of closures and restrictions by Israel on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem, as well as the serious incursions into Palestinian-controlled areas and actions against Palestinian institutions,

Expressing its grave concern over the serious deterioration of the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem, and the difficulties facing the Middle East peace process,

Affirming the urgent need for the parties to implement the recommendations of the Sharm el-Sheikh Fact-Finding Committee (Mitchell Committee) and to resume negotiations towards a final peaceful settlement,

1. *Reaffirms* the necessity of achieving a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, in all its aspects;

2. *Expresses its full support* for the peace process, which began in Madrid, and the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements of 1993,² as well as the subsequent implementation agreements, and expresses the hope that the process will be reinvigorated and will soon lead to the establishment of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East;

² A/48/486-S/26560, annex.

³ A/51/889-S/1997/357, annex.

3. *Stresses* the necessity for commitment to the principle of land for peace and the implementation of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), which form the basis of the Middle East peace process;

4. *Calls upon* the concerned parties, the co-sponsors of the peace process and other interested parties, as well as the entire international community to exert all the efforts and initiatives necessary to reverse immediately all measures taken on the ground since 28 September 2000, in implementation of the recommendations of the Sharm el-Sheikh Fact-Finding Committee (Mitchell Committee), and in order to ensure a successful and speedy resumption of negotiations and conclusion of the peace process;

5. *Stresses* the need for:

(a) The realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, primarily the right to self-determination and the right to establish their independent State;

(b) The withdrawal of Israel from the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967;

6. *Also stresses* the need for resolving the problem of the Palestine refugees in conformity with its resolution 194 (III) of 11 December 1948;

7. *Urges* Member States to expedite the provision of economic and technical assistance to the Palestinian people during this critical period;

8. *Emphasizes* the importance for the United Nations to play a more active and expanded role in the current peace process and in the implementation of the Declaration of Principles;

9. *Requests* the Secretary-General to continue his efforts with the parties concerned, and in consultation with the Security Council, for the promotion of peace in the region and to submit progress reports on developments in this matter.

*72nd plenary meeting
3 December 2001*



General Assembly

Distr.: General
14 February 2003

Fifty-seventh session
Agenda item 35

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly

[without reference to a Main Committee (A/57/L.37 and Add.1)]

57/110. Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine

The General Assembly,

Recalling its relevant resolutions, including those adopted at the tenth emergency special session,

Recalling also the relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolutions 242 (1967) of 22 November 1967, 338 (1973) of 22 October 1973 and 1397 (2002) of 12 March 2002,

Welcoming the affirmation by the Security Council of the vision of a region where two States, Israel and Palestine, live side by side within secure and recognized borders,

Noting that it has been fifty-five years since the adoption of resolution 181 (II) of 29 November 1947 and thirty-five years since the occupation of Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, in 1967,

Having considered the report of the Secretary-General submitted pursuant to the request made in its resolution 56/36 of 3 December 2001,¹

Reaffirming the permanent responsibility of the United Nations with regard to the question of Palestine until the question is resolved in all its aspects,

Convinced that achieving a final and peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, is imperative for the attainment of a comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East,

Aware that the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples is among the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations,

Affirming the principle of the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war,

Affirming also the illegality of the Israeli settlements in the territory occupied since 1967 and of Israeli actions aimed at changing the status of Jerusalem,

¹ A/57/621-S/2002/1268.

Affirming once again the right of all States in the region to live in peace within secure and internationally recognized borders,

Recalling the mutual recognition between the Government of the State of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization, the representative of the Palestinian people,² as well as the existing agreements concluded between the two sides, and the need for full compliance with those agreements,

Noting with satisfaction the establishment of the Palestinian Authority and the holding of the first Palestinian general elections, as well as the preparations being undertaken for the second elections,

Noting the appointment by the Secretary-General of the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General to the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Palestinian Authority, and its positive contribution,

Welcoming the convening of the Conference to Support Middle East Peace in Washington, D.C., on 1 October 1993, as well as all follow-up meetings and the international mechanisms established to provide assistance to the Palestinian people,

Expressing its grave concern at the tragic events in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, since 28 September 2000 and the continued deterioration of the situation, including the rising number of deaths and injuries, mostly among Palestinian civilians, the deepening humanitarian crisis facing the Palestinian people and the widespread destruction of Palestinian property and infrastructure, both private and public, including many institutions of the Palestinian Authority,

Expressing its grave concern also at the repeated incursions into Palestinian-controlled areas and the reoccupation of many Palestinian population centres by the Israeli occupying forces,

Emphasizing the importance of the safety and well-being of all civilians in the whole Middle East region, and condemning all acts of violence and terror against civilians on both sides,

Gravely concerned at the increased suffering and casualties on both the Palestinian and Israeli sides, the loss of confidence on both sides and the dire situation facing the Middle East peace process,

Affirming the urgent need for the parties to cooperate with all international efforts, including the efforts of the Quartet of the United States of America, the Russian Federation, the European Union and the United Nations, to end the current tragic situation and to resume negotiations towards a final peace settlement,

1. *Reaffirms* the necessity of achieving a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, in all its aspects and of intensifying all efforts to that end;

2. *Also reaffirms* its full support for the Middle East peace process, which began in Madrid, and the existing agreements between the Israeli and Palestinian sides, stresses the necessity for the establishment of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East, and welcomes in this regard the efforts of the Quartet;

² See A/48/486-S/26560, annex.

3. *Welcomes* the Arab Peace Initiative adopted by the Council of the League of Arab States at its fourteenth session, held in Beirut on 27 and 28 March 2002;³

4. *Stresses* the necessity for a commitment to the vision of the two-State solution and the principle of land for peace, as well as the implementation of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 1397 (2002);

5. *Also stresses* the need for a speedy end to the reoccupation of Palestinian population centres and for the complete cessation of all acts of violence, including military attacks, destruction and acts of terror;

6. *Calls upon* the concerned parties, the Quartet and other interested parties to exert all efforts and initiatives necessary to halt the deterioration of the situation and to reverse all measures taken on the ground since 28 September 2000, and to ensure the successful and speedy resumption of the peace process and the conclusion of a final peaceful settlement;

7. *Stresses* the need for:

(a) The withdrawal of Israel from the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967;

(b) The realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, primarily the right to self-determination and the right to their independent State;

8. *Also stresses* the need for resolving the problem of the Palestine refugees in conformity with its resolution 194 (III) of 11 December 1948;

9. *Urges* Member States to expedite the provision of economic, humanitarian and technical assistance to the Palestinian people and the Palestinian Authority during this critical period to help to alleviate the suffering of the Palestinian people, rebuild the Palestinian economy and infrastructure and support the restructuring and reform of Palestinian institutions;

10. *Requests* the Secretary-General to continue his efforts with the parties concerned, and in consultation with the Security Council, towards the attainment of a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine and the promotion of peace in the region and to submit to the General Assembly at its fifty-eighth session a report on these efforts and on developments on this matter.

*66th plenary meeting
3 December 2002*

³ A/56/1026-S/2002/932, annex II, resolution 14/221.



General Assembly

Distr.: General
22 January 2004

Fifty-eighth session
Agenda item 38

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 3 December 2003

[without reference to a Main Committee (A/58/L.26/Rev.1 and Add.1)]

58/21. Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine

The General Assembly,

Recalling its relevant resolutions, including those adopted at the tenth emergency special session,

Recalling also the relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolutions 242 (1967) of 22 November 1967, 338 (1973) of 22 October 1973, 1397 (2002) of 12 March 2002 and 1515 (2003) of 19 November 2003,

Welcoming the affirmation by the Security Council of the vision of a region where two States, Israel and Palestine, live side by side within secure and recognized borders,

Noting that it has been fifty-six years since the adoption of resolution 181 (II) of 29 November 1947 and thirty-six years since the occupation of Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, in 1967,

Having considered the report of the Secretary-General submitted pursuant to the request made in its resolution 57/110 of 3 December 2002,¹

Reaffirming the permanent responsibility of the United Nations with regard to the question of Palestine until the question is resolved in all its aspects,

Convinced that achieving a final and peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, is imperative for the attainment of a comprehensive and lasting peace and stability in the Middle East,

Aware that the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples is among the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations,

Affirming the principle of the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war,

Reaffirming the illegality of the Israeli settlements in the territory occupied since 1967 and of Israeli actions aimed at changing the status of Jerusalem, and affirming that the construction by Israel of a wall inside the Occupied Palestinian

¹ A/58/416-S/2003/947.

Territory, including in and around East Jerusalem, is in contravention of relevant provisions of international law,

Affirming once again the right of all States in the region to live in peace within secure and internationally recognized borders,

Recalling the mutual recognition between the Government of the State of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization, the representative of the Palestinian people,² and the existing agreements concluded between the two sides, and the need for full compliance with those agreements,

Welcoming the endorsement by the Security Council, in resolution 1515 (2003), of the Quartet performance-based road map to a permanent two-State solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict,³ and stressing the need for its implementation and compliance with its provisions,

Noting with satisfaction the establishment of the Palestinian Authority, and recognizing the urgent need to rebuild, reform and strengthen its damaged institutions,

Welcoming the positive contribution of the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General to the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Palestinian Authority to the peace process, including in the framework of the activities of the Quartet,

Welcoming the convening of international donor meetings, as well as the establishment of international mechanisms to provide assistance to the Palestinian people,

Expressing its grave concern over the tragic events in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, since 28 September 2000 and the continued deterioration of the situation, including the rising number of deaths and injuries, mostly among Palestinian civilians, the deepening humanitarian crisis facing the Palestinian people and the widespread destruction of Palestinian property and infrastructure, both private and public, including many institutions of the Palestinian Authority,

Expressing its grave concern also over the repeated incursions into Palestinian-controlled areas and the reoccupation of many Palestinian population centres by the Israeli occupying forces,

Emphasizing the importance of the safety and well-being of all civilians in the whole Middle East region, and condemning all acts of violence and terror against civilians on both sides, including the suicide bombings and extrajudicial executions,

Gravely concerned over the increased suffering and casualties on both the Palestinian and Israeli sides, the loss of confidence on both sides and the dire situation facing the Middle East peace process,

Aware of the urgent need for revitalized and active international involvement to support both parties in overcoming the current dangerous impasse in the peace process,

² See A/48/486-S/26560, annex.

³ S/2003/529, annex.

Affirming the urgent need for the parties to cooperate with all international efforts, including the efforts of the Quartet, to end the current tragic situation and to resume negotiations towards a final peace settlement,

Welcoming recent initiatives and efforts undertaken by civil society in pursuit of a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine,

1. *Reaffirms* the necessity of achieving a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, in all its aspects and of intensifying all efforts towards that end;

2. *Reaffirms also* its full support for the Middle East peace process, which began in Madrid, and the existing agreements between the Israeli and Palestinian sides, stresses the necessity for the establishment of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East, and welcomes in this regard the efforts of the Quartet;

3. *Welcomes* the Arab Peace Initiative adopted by the Council of the League of Arab States at its fourteenth session, held in Beirut on 27 and 28 March 2002;⁴

4. *Calls upon* both parties to fulfil their obligations in implementation of the road map³ by taking parallel and reciprocal steps in this regard, and stresses the importance and urgency of establishing a credible and effective third-party monitoring mechanism including all members of the Quartet;

5. *Stresses* the necessity for a commitment to the vision of the two-State solution and the principle of land for peace, and the implementation of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973), 1397 (2002) and 1515 (2003);

6. *Also stresses* the need for a speedy end to the reoccupation of Palestinian population centres and for the complete cessation of all acts of violence, including military attacks, destruction and acts of terror;

7. *Calls upon* the concerned parties, the Quartet and other interested parties to exert all efforts and undertake initiatives necessary to halt the deterioration of the situation and to reverse all measures taken on the ground since 28 September 2000, and to ensure a successful and speedy resumption of the peace process and the conclusion of a final peaceful settlement;

8. *Stresses* the need for:

(a) The withdrawal of Israel from the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967;

(b) The realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, primarily the right to self-determination and the right to their independent State;

9. *Also stresses* the need for resolving the problem of the Palestine refugees in conformity with its resolution 194 (III) of 11 December 1948;

10. *Urges* Member States to expedite the provision of economic, humanitarian and technical assistance to the Palestinian people and the Palestinian Authority during this critical period to help to alleviate the suffering of the Palestinian people, rebuild the Palestinian economy and infrastructure and support the restructuring and reform of Palestinian institutions;

⁴ A/56/1026-S/2002/932, annex II, resolution 14/221.

11. *Requests* the Secretary-General to continue his efforts with the parties concerned, and in consultation with the Security Council, towards the attainment of a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine and the promotion of peace in the region and to submit to the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session a report on these efforts and on developments on this matter.

*68th plenary meeting
3 December 2003*



General Assembly

Distr.: General
31 January 2005

Fifty-ninth session
Agenda item 37

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 1 December 2004

[without reference to a Main Committee (A/59/L.37 and Add.1)]

59/31. Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine

The General Assembly,

Recalling its relevant resolutions, including those adopted at the tenth emergency special session,

Recalling also its resolution 58/292 of 6 May 2004,

Recalling further the relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolutions 242 (1967) of 22 November 1967, 338 (1973) of 22 October 1973, 1397 (2002) of 12 March 2002, 1515 (2003) of 19 November 2003 and 1544 (2004) of 19 May 2004,

Welcoming the affirmation by the Security Council of the vision of a region where two States, Israel and Palestine, live side by side within secure and recognized borders,

Noting with concern that it has been fifty-seven years since the adoption of resolution 181 (II) of 29 November 1947 and thirty-seven years since the occupation of Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, in 1967,

Having considered the report of the Secretary-General submitted pursuant to the request made in its resolution 58/21 of 3 December 2003,¹

Reaffirming the permanent responsibility of the United Nations with regard to the question of Palestine until the question is resolved in all its aspects in accordance with international law,

Recalling the advisory opinion rendered on 9 July 2004 by the International Court of Justice on the *Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory*,² and recalling also its resolution ES-10/15 of 20 July 2004,

Convinced that achieving a final and peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, is imperative for the attainment of comprehensive and lasting peace and stability in the Middle East,

¹ A/59/574-S/2004/909.

² See A/ES-10/273 and Corr.1.

Aware that the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples is among the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations,

Affirming the principle of the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war,

Recalling its resolution 2625 (XXV) of 24 October 1970,

Reaffirming the illegality of the Israeli settlements in the territory occupied since 1967 and of Israeli actions aimed at changing the status of Jerusalem,

Reaffirming also that the construction by Israel, the occupying Power, of a wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including in and around East Jerusalem, and its associated regime, are contrary to international law,

Affirming once again the right of all States in the region to live in peace within secure and internationally recognized borders,

Recalling the mutual recognition between the Government of the State of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization, the representative of the Palestinian people,³ and the agreements concluded between the two sides, and the need for full compliance with those agreements,

Recalling also the endorsement by the Security Council, in resolution 1515 (2003), of the Quartet road map to a permanent two-State solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict,⁴ and stressing the urgent need for its implementation and compliance with its provisions,

Noting the establishment of the Palestinian Authority, and recognizing the urgent need to rebuild, reform and strengthen its damaged institutions,

Welcoming the contribution to the peace process of the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General to the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Palestinian Authority, including in the framework of the activities of the Quartet,

Welcoming also the convening of international donor meetings, as well as the establishment of international mechanisms to provide assistance to the Palestinian people,

Expressing its grave concern over the tragic events in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, since 28 September 2000 and the continuing deterioration of the situation, including the rising number of deaths and injuries, mostly among Palestinian civilians, the deepening humanitarian crisis facing the Palestinian people and the widespread destruction of Palestinian property and infrastructure, both private and public, including institutions of the Palestinian Authority,

Expressing its grave concern also over the repeated military actions in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and the reoccupation of Palestinian population centres by the Israeli occupying forces,

Emphasizing the importance of the safety and well-being of all civilians in the whole Middle East region, and condemning all acts of violence and terror against civilians on both sides, including the suicide bombings, the extrajudicial executions and the excessive use of force,

³ See A/48/486-S/26560, annex.

⁴ S/2003/529, annex.

Gravely concerned over the increased suffering and casualties on both the Palestinian and Israeli sides, the loss of confidence on both sides and the dire situation facing the Middle East peace process,

Aware of the urgent need for revitalized and active international involvement to support both parties in overcoming the current dangerous impasse in the peace process,

Affirming the urgent need for the parties to cooperate with all international efforts, including the efforts of the Quartet, to end the current tragic situation and to resume and accelerate negotiations towards a final peace settlement,

Welcoming the initiatives and efforts undertaken by civil society in pursuit of a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine,

Taking note of the findings by the International Court of Justice, in its advisory opinion, including on the urgent necessity for the United Nations as a whole to redouble its efforts to bring the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which continues to pose a threat to international peace and security, to a speedy conclusion, thereby establishing a just and lasting peace in the region,⁵

1. *Reaffirms* the necessity of achieving a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, in all its aspects, and of intensifying all efforts towards that end;

2. *Reaffirms its full support* for the Middle East peace process, which began in Madrid, and the existing agreements between the Israeli and Palestinian sides, stresses the necessity for the establishment of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East, and welcomes in this regard the ongoing efforts of the Quartet;

3. *Welcomes* the Arab Peace Initiative adopted by the Council of the League of Arab States at its fourteenth session, held in Beirut on 27 and 28 March 2002;⁶

4. *Calls upon* both parties to fulfil their obligations in implementation of the road map⁴ by taking parallel and reciprocal steps in this regard, and stresses the importance and urgency of establishing a credible and effective third-party monitoring mechanism including all members of the Quartet;

5. *Stresses* the need for a speedy end to the reoccupation of Palestinian population centres and for the complete cessation of all acts of violence, including military attacks, destruction and acts of terror;

6. *Calls upon* the parties, with the support of the Quartet and other interested parties, to exert all efforts necessary to halt the deterioration of the situation, to reverse all measures taken on the ground since 28 September 2000 and to facilitate a speedy resumption of the peace process and the conclusion of a final peaceful settlement;

7. *Demands* that Israel, the occupying Power, comply with its legal obligations, as mentioned in the advisory opinion,² and calls upon all States Members of the United Nations to comply with their legal obligations as mentioned in the advisory opinion;

⁵ See A/ES-10/273 and Corr.1, advisory opinion, para. 161.

⁶ A/56/1026-S/2002/932, annex II, resolution 14/221.

8. *Reaffirms its commitment*, in accordance with international law, to the two-State solution of Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security within recognized borders, based on the pre-1967 borders;

9. *Reiterates its demand* for the complete cessation of all Israeli settlement activities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and in the occupied Syrian Golan, and calls for the implementation of the relevant Security Council resolutions;

10. *Stresses* the need for:

(a) The withdrawal of Israel from the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967;

(b) The realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, primarily the right to self-determination and the right to their independent State;

11. *Also stresses* the need for resolving the problem of the Palestine refugees in conformity with its resolution 194 (III) of 11 December 1948;

12. *Urges* Member States to expedite the provision of economic, humanitarian and technical assistance to the Palestinian people and the Palestinian Authority during this critical period to help to alleviate the suffering of the Palestinian people, rebuild the Palestinian economy and infrastructure and support the restructuring and reform of Palestinian institutions;

13. *Requests* the Secretary-General to continue his efforts with the parties concerned, and in consultation with the Security Council, towards the attainment of a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine and the promotion of peace in the region and to submit to the General Assembly at its sixtieth session a report on these efforts and on developments on this matter.

*64th plenary meeting
1 December 2004*



General Assembly

Distr.: General
16 February 2006

Sixtieth session
Agenda item 15

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 1 December 2005

[without reference to a Main Committee (A/60/L.31 and Add.1)]

60/39. Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine

The General Assembly,

Recalling its relevant resolutions, including those adopted at the tenth emergency special session,

Recalling also its resolution 58/292 of 6 May 2004,

Recalling further relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolutions 242 (1967) of 22 November 1967, 338 (1973) of 22 October 1973, 1397 (2002) of 12 March 2002, 1515 (2003) of 19 November 2003 and 1544 (2004) of 19 May 2004,

Welcoming the affirmation by the Security Council of the vision of a region where two States, Israel and Palestine, live side by side within secure and recognized borders,

Noting with concern that it has been fifty-eight years since the adoption of resolution 181 (II) of 29 November 1947 and thirty-eight years since the occupation of Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, in 1967,

Having considered the report of the Secretary-General submitted pursuant to the request made in its resolution 59/31 of 1 December 2004,¹

Reaffirming the permanent responsibility of the United Nations with regard to the question of Palestine until the question is resolved in all its aspects in accordance with international law,

Recalling the advisory opinion rendered on 9 July 2004 by the International Court of Justice on the *Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory*,² and recalling also its resolution ES-10/15 of 20 July 2004,

Convinced that achieving a final and peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, is imperative for the attainment of comprehensive and lasting peace and stability in the Middle East,

¹ A/60/539-S/2005/701.

² See A/ES-10/273 and Corr.1.

Aware that the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples is among the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations,

Affirming the principle of the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war,

Recalling its resolution 2625 (XXV) of 24 October 1970,

Reaffirming the illegality of the Israeli settlements in the territory occupied since 1967 and of Israeli actions aimed at changing the status of Jerusalem,

Reaffirming also that the construction by Israel, the occupying Power, of a wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including in and around East Jerusalem, and its associated regime, are contrary to international law,

Affirming once again the right of all States in the region to live in peace within secure and internationally recognized borders,

Recalling the mutual recognition between the Government of the State of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization, the representative of the Palestinian people,³ and the agreements concluded between the two sides and the need for full compliance with those agreements,

Recalling also the endorsement by the Security Council, in resolution 1515 (2003), of the Quartet road map to a permanent two-State solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict,⁴ and stressing the urgent need for its implementation and compliance with its provisions,

Recognizing the efforts being undertaken by the Palestinian Authority, with international support, to rebuild, reform and strengthen its damaged institutions,

Welcoming the important contribution to the peace process of the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General to the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Palestinian Authority, including in the framework of the activities of the Quartet,

Welcoming also the convening of international donor meetings, as well as the establishment of international mechanisms to provide assistance to the Palestinian people,

Expressing its concern over the tragic events that have occurred in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, since 28 September 2000, including the large number of deaths and injuries, mostly among Palestinian civilians, the deterioration of the socio-economic and humanitarian conditions of the Palestinian people and the widespread destruction of public and private Palestinian property and infrastructure,

Expressing its grave concern over the repeated military actions in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and the reoccupation of Palestinian population centres by the Israeli occupying forces, and emphasizing in this regard the need for the implementation of the Sharm el-Sheikh understandings,

Emphasizing the importance of the safety and well-being of all civilians in the whole Middle East region, and condemning all acts of violence and terror against

³ See A/48/486-S/26560, annex.

⁴ S/2003/529, annex.

civilians on both sides, including the suicide bombings, the extrajudicial executions and the excessive use of force,

Acknowledging the importance of the Israeli withdrawal from within the Gaza Strip and parts of the northern West Bank and of the dismantlement of the settlements therein as a step towards the implementation of the road map,

Stressing the urgent need for sustained and active international involvement, including by the Quartet, to support both parties in revitalizing the peace process towards the resumption and acceleration of direct negotiations between the parties for the achievement of a final peace settlement, in accordance with the road map,

Welcoming the initiatives and efforts undertaken by civil society in pursuit of a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine,

Taking note of the findings by the International Court of Justice, in its advisory opinion, including on the urgent necessity for the United Nations as a whole to redouble its efforts to bring the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which continues to pose a threat to international peace and security, to a speedy conclusion, thereby establishing a just and lasting peace in the region,⁵

1. *Reaffirms* the necessity of achieving a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, in all its aspects, and of intensifying all efforts towards that end;

2. *Also reaffirms* its full support for the Middle East peace process, which began in Madrid, and the existing agreements between the Israeli and Palestinian sides, stresses the necessity for the establishment of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East, and welcomes in this regard the ongoing efforts of the Quartet;

3. *Welcomes* the Arab Peace Initiative adopted by the Council of the League of Arab States at its fourteenth session, held in Beirut on 27 and 28 March 2002;⁶

4. *Calls upon* both parties to fulfil their obligations in implementation of the road map⁴ by taking parallel and reciprocal steps in this regard, and stresses the importance and urgency of establishing a credible and effective third-party monitoring mechanism including all members of the Quartet;

5. *Welcomes* the Israeli withdrawal from within the Gaza Strip and parts of the northern West Bank and the dismantlement of the settlements therein as a step towards the implementation of the road map;

6. *Calls upon* Israel, the occupying Power, in this regard, to comply strictly with its obligations under international law, including international humanitarian law, with respect to the alteration of the character and status of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem;

7. *Emphasizes* the need for the parties, with the help of the international community, speedily and fully to resolve all remaining issues in the Gaza Strip, including a durable arrangement for the border crossings, the airport, the construction of the seaport, the removal of the rubble and the establishment of a permanent physical link between the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, and welcomes

⁵ See A/ES-10/273 and Corr.1, advisory opinion, para. 161.

⁶ A/56/1026-S/2002/932, annex II, resolution 14/221.

the positive role being played in this regard by the Quartet Special Envoy for Disengagement;

8. *Stresses* the need for a speedy end to the reoccupation of Palestinian population centres and for the complete cessation of all acts of violence, including military attacks, destruction and acts of terror;

9. *Also stresses* the need for the immediate implementation of the Sharm el-Sheikh understandings;

10. *Calls upon* the parties, with the support of the Quartet and other interested parties, to exert all efforts necessary to halt the deterioration of the situation, to reverse all measures taken on the ground since 28 September 2000 and to facilitate a speedy resumption of the peace process and the conclusion of a final peaceful settlement;

11. *Demands* that Israel, the occupying Power, comply with its legal obligations under international law, as mentioned in the advisory opinion² and as demanded in resolutions ES-10/13 of 21 October 2003 and ES-10/15 of 20 July 2004 and, inter alia, that it immediately cease its construction of the wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and calls upon all States Members of the United Nations to comply with their legal obligations, as mentioned in the advisory opinion;

12. *Reaffirms its commitment*, in accordance with international law, to the two-State solution of Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security within recognized borders, based on the pre-1967 borders;

13. *Reiterates its demand* for the complete cessation of all Israeli settlement activities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and in the occupied Syrian Golan, and calls for the full implementation of the relevant Security Council resolutions;

14. *Stresses* the need for:

(a) The withdrawal of Israel from the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967;

(b) The realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, primarily the right to self-determination and the right to their independent State;

15. *Also stresses* the need for resolving the problem of Palestine refugees in conformity with its resolution 194 (III) of 11 December 1948;

16. *Welcomes* the recent agreement on movement and access between the two sides, and stresses the need to ensure that the commitments made therein are fully implemented in accordance with the timeline set out in the agreement;

17. *Urges* Member States to expedite the provision of economic, humanitarian and technical assistance to the Palestinian people and the Palestinian Authority during this critical period to help to alleviate the humanitarian crisis being faced by the Palestinian people, rebuild the Palestinian economy and infrastructure and support the restructuring and reform of Palestinian institutions;

18. *Requests* the Secretary-General to continue his efforts with the parties concerned, and in consultation with the Security Council, towards the attainment of a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine and the promotion of peace in the region and to submit to the General Assembly at its sixty-first session a report on these efforts and on developments on this matter.

*60th plenary meeting
1 December 2005*



General Assembly

Distr.: General
2 March 2007

Sixty-first session
Agenda item 14

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 1 December 2006

[without reference to a Main Committee (A/61/L.34)]

61/25. Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine

The General Assembly,

Recalling its relevant resolutions, including those adopted by its tenth emergency special session,

Recalling also its resolution 58/292 of 6 May 2004,

Recalling further relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolutions 242 (1967) of 22 November 1967, 338 (1973) of 22 October 1973, 1397 (2002) of 12 March 2002, 1515 (2003) of 19 November 2003 and 1544 (2004) of 19 May 2004,

Welcoming the affirmation by the Security Council of the vision of a region where two States, Israel and Palestine, live side by side within secure and recognized borders,

Noting with concern that it has been fifty-nine years since the adoption of resolution 181 (II) of 29 November 1947 and thirty-nine years since the occupation of Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, in 1967,

Having considered the report of the Secretary-General submitted pursuant to the request made in its resolution 60/39 of 1 December 2005,¹

Reaffirming the permanent responsibility of the United Nations with regard to the question of Palestine until the question is resolved in all its aspects in accordance with international law,

Recalling the advisory opinion rendered on 9 July 2004 by the International Court of Justice on the *Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory*,² and recalling also its resolution ES-10/15 of 20 July 2004,

Convinced that achieving a just, lasting and comprehensive settlement of the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, is imperative for the attainment of comprehensive and lasting peace and stability in the Middle East,

¹ A/61/355-S/2006/748.

² See A/ES-10/273 and Corr.1.

Aware that the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples is among the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations,

Affirming the principle of the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war,

Recalling its resolution 2625 (XXV) of 24 October 1970,

Reaffirming the illegality of the Israeli settlements in the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967,

Reaffirming also the illegality of Israeli actions aimed at changing the status of Jerusalem, including measures such as the so-called E-1 plan and all other unilateral measures aimed at altering the status of the city and the territory as a whole,

Reaffirming further that the construction by Israel, the occupying Power, of a wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including in and around East Jerusalem, and its associated regime, are contrary to international law,

Expressing deep concern about the Israeli policy of closure and the severe restrictions, including curfews and the permit regime, that continue to be imposed on the movement of persons and goods, including medical and humanitarian personnel and goods, throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the consequent negative impact on the socio-economic situation of the Palestinian people, which remains that of a dire humanitarian crisis,

Concerned about the continued establishment of Israeli checkpoints in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the transformation of several of these checkpoints into structures akin to permanent border crossings inside the Occupied Palestinian Territory, which are severely impairing the territorial contiguity of the Territory and severely undermining efforts to rehabilitate and develop the Palestinian economy,

Affirming once again the right of all States in the region to live in peace within secure and internationally recognized borders,

Recalling the mutual recognition between the Government of the State of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization, the representative of the Palestinian people,³ and the agreements concluded between the two sides and the need for full compliance with those agreements,

Recalling also the endorsement by the Security Council, in resolution 1515 (2003), of the Quartet road map to a permanent two-State solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict,⁴ and stressing the urgent need for its implementation and compliance with its provisions,

Welcoming the efforts of the Arab Foreign Ministers, demonstrated in the meeting of the Security Council on 21 September 2006, who called for, among other things, a solution to the conflict on the basis of relevant United Nations resolutions, especially from the Security Council, the Arab Peace Initiative and the road map,

Welcoming also the important contribution to the peace process of the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General to the Palestine Liberation Organization

³ See A/48/486-S/26560, annex.

⁴ S/2003/529, annex.

and the Palestinian Authority, including in the framework of the activities of the Quartet,

Welcoming further the “Stockholm Donor Conference on the Humanitarian Situation in the Palestinian Territories” of 1 September 2006 and encouraging further donor meetings, as well as the establishment of international mechanisms, and in this regard acknowledging the Temporary International Mechanism, to provide assistance to the Palestinian people to alleviate the financial crisis and the dire socio-economic and humanitarian situation being faced by the Palestinian people,

Recognizing the efforts being undertaken by the Palestinian Authority, with international support, to rebuild, reform and strengthen its damaged institutions, and emphasizing the need to preserve the Palestinian institutions and infrastructure,

Expressing its concern over the tragic events that have occurred in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, since 28 September 2000, including the large number of deaths and injuries, mostly among Palestinian civilians, the widespread destruction of public and private Palestinian property and infrastructure, the internal displacement of civilians, and the serious deterioration of the socio-economic and humanitarian conditions of the Palestinian people,

Expressing its grave concern over the repeated military actions in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and the reoccupation of Palestinian population centres by the Israeli occupying forces, and emphasizing in this regard the need for the implementation by both sides of the Sharm el-Sheikh understandings,

Welcoming the Palestinian truce initiative and its acceptance by Israel that came into effect on 26 November 2006, and urging both sides to maintain this truce, which could pave the way for genuine negotiations towards a just resolution to the conflict, and extend it to the West Bank,

Emphasizing the importance of the safety and well-being of all civilians in the whole Middle East region, and condemning all acts of violence and terror against civilians on both sides, including the suicide bombings, the extrajudicial executions and the excessive use of force,

Noting the Israeli withdrawal from within the Gaza Strip and parts of the northern West Bank and the importance of the dismantlement of the settlements therein as a step towards the implementation of the road map,

Stressing the urgent need for sustained and active international involvement, including by the Quartet, to support both parties in revitalizing the peace process towards the resumption and acceleration of direct negotiations between the parties for the achievement of a just, lasting and comprehensive peace settlement, in accordance with the road map,

Welcoming the initiatives and efforts undertaken by civil society in pursuit of a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine,

Taking note of the findings by the International Court of Justice, in its advisory opinion, including on the urgent necessity for the United Nations as a whole to redouble its efforts to bring the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which continues to pose

a threat to international peace and security, to a speedy conclusion, thereby establishing a just and lasting peace in the region,⁵

1. *Reaffirms* the necessity of achieving a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, in all its aspects, and of intensifying all efforts towards that end;

2. *Also reaffirms* its full support for the Middle East peace process, which began in Madrid, and the existing agreements between the Israeli and Palestinian sides, stresses the necessity for the establishment of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East, and welcomes in this regard the ongoing efforts of the Quartet;

3. *Welcomes* the Arab Peace Initiative adopted by the Council of the League of Arab States at its fourteenth session, held in Beirut on 27 and 28 March 2002;⁶

4. *Calls upon* the parties themselves, with the support of the Quartet and other interested parties, to exert all efforts necessary to halt the deterioration of the situation, to reverse all measures taken on the ground since 28 September 2000 and to immediately resume direct peace negotiations towards the conclusion of a final peaceful settlement on the basis of relevant United Nations resolutions, especially from the Security Council, the Arab Peace Initiative, the terms of reference of the Madrid Conference and the road map;⁴

5. *Calls upon* the Quartet, together with the international community, to take immediate steps, including confidence-building measures between the parties, aimed at stabilizing the situation and restarting the peace process;

6. *Stresses* the need for a speedy end to the reoccupation of Palestinian population centres and for the complete cessation of all acts of violence, including military attacks, destruction and acts of terror;

7. *Also stresses* the need for the immediate implementation of the Sharm el-Sheikh understandings;

8. *Calls upon* both parties to fulfil their obligations in respect of the implementation of the road map by taking parallel and reciprocal steps in this regard, and stresses the importance and urgency of establishing a credible and effective third-party monitoring mechanism, including all members of the Quartet;

9. *Notes* the Israeli withdrawal from within the Gaza Strip and parts of the northern West Bank and the dismantlement of the settlements therein as a step towards the implementation of the road map;

10. *Emphasizes* the need for the parties, with the help of the international community, speedily and fully to resolve all remaining issues in the Gaza Strip, including a durable arrangement for the border crossings, the airport, the construction of the seaport, the removal of the rubble and the establishment of a permanent physical link between the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, and stresses also the need for the full implementation by both parties of the Agreement on Movement and Access and the Agreed Principles for the Rafah Crossing, of 15 November 2005;

⁵ See A/ES-10/273 and Corr.1, advisory opinion, para. 161.

⁶ A/56/1026-S/2002/932, annex II, resolution 14/221.

11. *Calls upon* Israel, the occupying Power, to comply strictly with its obligations under international law, including international humanitarian law, and that it cease all of its measures that are contrary to international law and unilateral actions in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, that are aimed at altering the character and status of the Territory, including via the de facto annexation of land, and thus at prejudging the final outcome of peace negotiations;

12. *Demands accordingly* that Israel, the occupying Power, comply with its legal obligations under international law, as mentioned in the advisory opinion² and as demanded in resolutions ES-10/13 of 21 October 2003 and ES-10/15 of 20 July 2004 and, inter alia, that it immediately cease its construction of the wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and calls upon all States Members of the United Nations to comply with their legal obligations, as mentioned in the advisory opinion;

13. *Reiterates its demand* for the complete cessation of all Israeli settlement activities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and in the occupied Syrian Golan, and calls for the full implementation of the relevant Security Council resolutions;

14. *Reaffirms its commitment*, in accordance with international law, to the two-State solution of Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security within recognized borders, based on the pre-1967 borders;

15. *Stresses* the need for:

(a) The withdrawal of Israel from the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967;

(b) The realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, primarily the right to self-determination and the right to their independent State;

16. *Also stresses* the need for resolving the problem of Palestine refugees in conformity with its resolution 194 (III) of 11 December 1948;

17. *Urges* Member States to expedite the provision of economic, humanitarian and technical assistance to the Palestinian people and the Palestinian Authority during this critical period to help to alleviate the humanitarian crisis being faced by the Palestinian people, rehabilitate the Palestinian economy and infrastructure and support the rebuilding, restructuring and reform of Palestinian institutions;

18. *Requests* the Secretary-General to continue his efforts with the parties concerned, and in consultation with the Security Council, towards the attainment of a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine and the promotion of peace in the region and to submit to the General Assembly at its sixty-second session a report on these efforts and on developments on this matter.

*63rd plenary meeting
1 December 2006*



General Assembly

Distr.: General
21 January 2008

Sixty-second session
Agenda item 18

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 10 December 2007

[without reference to a Main Committee (A/62/L.21/Rev.1)]

62/83. Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine

The General Assembly,

Recalling its relevant resolutions, including those adopted at its tenth emergency special session,

Recalling also its resolution 58/292 of 6 May 2004,

Recalling further relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolutions 242 (1967) of 22 November 1967, 338 (1973) of 22 October 1973, 1397 (2002) of 12 March 2002, 1515 (2003) of 19 November 2003 and 1544 (2004) of 19 May 2004,

Welcoming the affirmation by the Security Council of the vision of a region where two States, Israel and Palestine, live side by side within secure and recognized borders,

Noting with concern that it has been sixty years since the adoption of resolution 181 (II) of 29 November 1947 and forty years since the occupation of Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, in 1967,

Having considered the report of the Secretary-General submitted pursuant to the request made in its resolution 61/25 of 1 December 2006,¹

Reaffirming the permanent responsibility of the United Nations with regard to the question of Palestine until the question is resolved in all its aspects in accordance with international law,

Recalling the advisory opinion rendered on 9 July 2004 by the International Court of Justice on the *Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory*,² and recalling also its resolutions ES-10/15 of 20 July 2004 and ES-10/17 of 15 December 2006,

Convinced that achieving a just, lasting and comprehensive settlement of the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, is imperative for the attainment of comprehensive and lasting peace and stability in the Middle East,

¹ A/62/344-S/2007/553.

² See A/ES-10/273 and Corr.1.

Aware that the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples is among the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations,

Affirming the principle of the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war,

Recalling its resolution 2625 (XXV) of 24 October 1970,

Reaffirming the illegality of the Israeli settlements in the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem,

Reaffirming also the illegality of Israeli actions aimed at changing the status of Jerusalem, including measures such as the so-called E-1 plan and all other unilateral measures aimed at altering the character, status and demographic composition of the city and the territory as a whole,

Reaffirming further that the construction by Israel, the occupying Power, of a wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including in and around East Jerusalem, and its associated regime, are contrary to international law,

Expressing deep concern about the continuing Israeli policy of closures and severe restrictions on the movement of persons and goods, including medical and humanitarian personnel and goods, via imposition of crossing closures as well as of checkpoints and a permit regime throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the consequent negative impact on the socio-economic situation of the Palestinian people, which remains that of a dire humanitarian crisis,

Concerned about the continued establishment of Israeli checkpoints in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the transformation of several of these checkpoints into structures akin to permanent border crossings inside the Occupied Palestinian Territory, which are severely impairing the territorial contiguity of the Territory and severely undermining efforts and aid aimed at rehabilitating and developing the Palestinian economy,

Recalling the mutual recognition between the Government of the State of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization, the representative of the Palestinian people,³ and the agreements concluded between the two sides and the need for full compliance with those agreements,

Recalling also the endorsement by the Security Council, in resolution 1515 (2003), of the Quartet road map to a permanent two-State solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict,⁴ and stressing the urgent need for its implementation and compliance with its provisions,

Welcoming the Arab Peace Initiative adopted by the Council of the League of Arab States at its fourteenth session, held in Beirut on 27 and 28 March 2002,⁵

Welcoming also the convening of the international conference held at Annapolis, United States of America, on 27 November 2007, in particular the decision by the parties to launch meaningful, direct negotiations towards the achievement of a just, lasting and peaceful settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian

³ See A/48/486-S/26560, annex.

⁴ S/2003/529, annex.

⁵ A/56/1026-S/2002/932, annex II, resolution 14/221.

conflict and ultimately the Arab-Israeli conflict as a whole for the realization of a comprehensive peace in the Middle East,

Noting the important contribution to the peace process of the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General to the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Palestinian Authority, including in the framework of the activities of the Quartet,

Welcoming the convening of the meeting of the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee for the Coordination of the International Assistance to Palestinians, under the chairmanship of Norway, on 24 September 2007, as well as the Paris donors' conference of 17 December 2007 to mobilize donors in follow-up to the Annapolis conference to provide financial support to the Palestinian Authority to enable it to build a prosperous and viable Palestinian State and, in the meantime, to also provide assistance to alleviate the socio-economic and humanitarian crisis being faced by the Palestinian people, and acknowledging the contribution of the Temporary International Mechanism in this regard,

Recognizing the efforts being undertaken by the Palestinian Authority, with international support, to rebuild, reform and strengthen its damaged institutions, and emphasizing the need to preserve the Palestinian institutions and infrastructure,

Expressing its concern over the negative developments that have continued to occur in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, including the large number of deaths and injuries, mostly among Palestinian civilians, the widespread destruction of public and private Palestinian property and infrastructure, the internal displacement of civilians and the serious deterioration of the socio-economic and humanitarian conditions of the Palestinian people,

Expressing its grave concern over repeated military actions in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and the reoccupation of Palestinian population centres by the Israeli occupying forces, and emphasizing in this regard the need for the implementation by both sides of the Sharm el-Sheikh understandings,

Emphasizing the importance of the safety and well-being of all civilians in the whole Middle East region, and condemning all acts of violence and terror against civilians on both sides,

Noting the Israeli withdrawal from within the Gaza Strip and parts of the northern West Bank and the importance of the dismantlement of the settlements therein as a step towards the implementation of the road map,

Expressing concern over the unlawful takeover of Palestinian Authority institutions in the Gaza Strip in June 2007, and calling for the restoration of the situation to that which existed prior to June 2007 to allow for the resumption of a dialogue for the restoration of Palestinian national unity,

Stressing the urgent need for sustained and active international involvement, including by the Quartet, to support both parties in revitalizing the peace process towards the resumption and acceleration of direct negotiations between the parties for the achievement of a just, lasting and comprehensive peace settlement, on the basis of United Nations resolutions, the road map and the Arab Peace Initiative,

Acknowledging the efforts being undertaken by civil society to promote a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine,

Taking note of the findings by the International Court of Justice, in its advisory opinion, including on the urgent necessity for the United Nations as a whole to

redouble its efforts to bring the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which continues to pose a threat to international peace and security, to a speedy conclusion, thereby establishing a just and lasting peace in the region,⁶

Affirming once again the right of all States in the region to live in peace within secure and internationally recognized borders,

1. *Reaffirms* the necessity of achieving a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, in all its aspects, and of intensifying all efforts towards that end;

2. *Also reaffirms* its full support for the Middle East peace process, which began in Madrid, and the existing agreements between the Israeli and Palestinian sides, stresses the necessity for the establishment of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East, and welcomes in this regard the ongoing efforts of the Quartet and of the League of Arab States;

3. *Welcomes* the Arab Peace Initiative, adopted by the Council of the League of Arab States at its fourteenth session⁵ and the follow-up steps being undertaken by the Ministerial Committee formed after reaffirmation of the Initiative by the Riyadh summit in March 2007;

4. *Welcomes also* the international conference convened at Annapolis, and encourages the parties to undertake immediate steps in follow-up to their joint understanding, including through active and serious resumed bilateral negotiations;

5. *Welcomes further* the appointment of the Quartet's Special Representative, Tony Blair, and his efforts to strengthen Palestinian institutions, promote Palestinian economic development and mobilize international donor support;

6. *Calls upon* the parties themselves, with the support of the Quartet and other interested parties, to exert all efforts necessary to halt the deterioration of the situation, to reverse all measures taken on the ground since 28 September 2000 and to sustain and accelerate direct peace negotiations towards the conclusion of a final peaceful settlement on the basis of relevant United Nations resolutions, especially of the Security Council, the terms of reference of the Madrid Conference, the road map⁴ and the Arab Peace Initiative;

7. *Underscores* the need for the parties to undertake, with the support of the Quartet and the international community, confidence-building measures aimed at improving the situation, promoting stability and fostering the peace process, recognizes in this respect recent developments such as the opening of a Gaza border crossing for agricultural goods and the release of some prisoners, and emphasizes the contribution of such measures to the overall environment between the two sides and the well-being of the Palestinian people in particular;

8. *Calls upon* both parties to fulfil their obligations in respect of the implementation of the road map by taking parallel and reciprocal steps in this regard;

9. *Stresses* the need for a speedy end to the reoccupation of Palestinian population centres, inter alia, by easing movement and access, including by the removal of checkpoints within the Occupied Palestinian Territory, and the need for

⁶ See A/ES-10/273 and Corr.1, advisory opinion, para. 161.

respect and preservation of the territorial unity, contiguity and integrity of all of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem;

10. *Also stresses* the need for an immediate and complete cessation of all acts of violence, including military attacks, destruction and acts of terror;

11. *Notes* the Israeli withdrawal from within the Gaza Strip and parts of the northern West Bank and the dismantlement of the settlements therein as a step towards the implementation of the road map, and the need for the parties to resolve all remaining issues in the Gaza Strip;

12. *Stresses* the need for the full implementation by both parties of the Agreement on Movement and Access and the Agreed Principles for the Rafah Crossing, of 15 November 2005, and the need, in specific, to allow for the opening of all crossings into and out of the Gaza Strip for humanitarian supplies, movement and access as well as for commercial flows, which are essential for improving the living conditions of the Palestinian people and ensuring the viability of the Palestinian economy;

13. *Calls upon* Israel, the occupying Power, to comply strictly with its obligations under international law, including international humanitarian law, and to cease all of its measures that are contrary to international law and unilateral actions in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, that are aimed at altering the character and status of the Territory, including via the de facto annexation of land, and thus at prejudging the final outcome of peace negotiations;

14. *Demands*, accordingly, that Israel, the occupying Power, comply with its legal obligations under international law, as mentioned in the advisory opinion² and as demanded in resolutions ES-10/13 of 21 October 2003 and ES-10/15 and, inter alia, that it immediately cease its construction of the wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and calls upon all States Members of the United Nations to comply with their legal obligations, as mentioned in the advisory opinion;

15. *Reiterates its demand* for the complete cessation of all Israeli settlement activities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and in the occupied Syrian Golan, and calls for the full implementation of the relevant Security Council resolutions;

16. *Reaffirms its commitment*, in accordance with international law, to the two-State solution of Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security within recognized borders, based on the pre-1967 borders;

17. *Stresses* the need for:

(a) The withdrawal of Israel from the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem;

(b) The realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, primarily the right to self-determination and the right to their independent State;

18. *Also stresses* the need for justly resolving the problem of Palestine refugees in conformity with its resolution 194 (III) of 11 December 1948;

19. *Urges* Member States to expedite the provision of economic, humanitarian and technical assistance to the Palestinian people and the Palestinian Authority during this critical period to help to alleviate the humanitarian crisis being faced by the Palestinian people, particularly in the Gaza Strip, to rehabilitate the

Palestinian economy and infrastructure and to support the rebuilding, restructuring and reform of Palestinian institutions;

20. *Requests* the Secretary-General to continue his efforts with the parties concerned, and in consultation with the Security Council, towards the attainment of a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine and the promotion of peace in the region and to submit to the General Assembly at its sixty-third session a report on these efforts and on developments on this matter.

*65th plenary meeting
10 December 2007*



General Assembly

Distr.: General
22 January 2009

Sixty-third session
Agenda item 16

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 26 November 2008

[without reference to a Main Committee (A/63/L.35 and Add.1)]

63/29. Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine

The General Assembly,

Recalling its relevant resolutions, including those adopted at its tenth emergency special session,

Recalling also its resolution 58/292 of 6 May 2004,

Recalling further relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolutions 242 (1967) of 22 November 1967, 338 (1973) of 22 October 1973, 1397 (2002) of 12 March 2002, 1515 (2003) of 19 November 2003 and 1544 (2004) of 19 May 2004,

Welcoming the affirmation by the Security Council of the vision of a region where two States, Israel and Palestine, live side by side within secure and recognized borders,

Noting with concern that it has been more than sixty years since the adoption of resolution 181 (II) of 29 November 1947 and forty-one years since the occupation of Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, in 1967,

Having considered the report of the Secretary-General submitted pursuant to the request made in its resolution 62/83 of 10 December 2007,¹

Reaffirming the permanent responsibility of the United Nations with regard to the question of Palestine until the question is resolved in all its aspects in accordance with international law,

Recalling the advisory opinion rendered on 9 July 2004 by the International Court of Justice on the *Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory*,² and recalling also its resolutions ES-10/15 of 20 July 2004 and ES-10/17 of 15 December 2006,

Convinced that achieving a just, lasting and comprehensive settlement of the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, is imperative for the attainment of comprehensive and lasting peace and stability in the Middle East,

¹ A/63/368-S/2008/612.

² See A/ES-10/273 and Corr.1; see also *Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Advisory Opinion, I.C.J. Reports 2004*, p. 136.

Aware that the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples is among the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations,

Affirming the principle of the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war,

Recalling its resolution 2625 (XXV) of 24 October 1970,

Reaffirming the illegality of the Israeli settlements in the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem,

Reaffirming also the illegality of Israeli actions aimed at changing the status of Jerusalem, including measures such as the so-called E-1 plan and all other unilateral measures aimed at altering the character, status and demographic composition of the city and the territory as a whole,

Reaffirming further that the construction by Israel, the occupying Power, of a wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including in and around East Jerusalem, and its associated regime, are contrary to international law,

Expressing deep concern about the continuing Israeli policy of closures and severe restrictions on the movement of persons and goods, including medical and humanitarian personnel and goods, via the imposition of crossing closures as well as the continued establishment of checkpoints and the imposition of a permit regime throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the consequent negative impact on the socio-economic situation of the Palestinian people, which remains that of a dire humanitarian crisis, as well as on efforts aimed at rehabilitating and developing the damaged Palestinian economy, and on the contiguity of the Territory,

Recalling the mutual recognition between the Government of the State of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization, the representative of the Palestinian people,³ and the need for full compliance with the agreements concluded between the two sides,

Recalling also the endorsement by the Security Council, in resolution 1515 (2003), of the Quartet road map to a permanent two-State solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict,⁴ and stressing the urgent need for its implementation and compliance with its provisions,

Recalling further the Arab Peace Initiative adopted by the Council of the League of Arab States at its fourteenth session, held in Beirut on 27 and 28 March 2002,⁵

Recalling the convening of the international conference held at Annapolis, United States of America, on 27 November 2007, in particular the decision by the parties to launch meaningful, direct negotiations towards the achievement of a just, lasting and peaceful settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and ultimately the Arab-Israeli conflict as a whole for the realization of a comprehensive peace in the Middle East,

Noting the important contribution to the peace process of the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and Personal Representative

³ See A/48/486-S/26560, annex.

⁴ S/2003/529, annex.

⁵ A/56/1026-S/2002/932, annex II, resolution 14/221.

of the Secretary-General to the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Palestinian Authority, including in the framework of the activities of the Quartet,

Welcoming the reconvening of the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee for the Coordination of the International Assistance to Palestinians, under the chairmanship of Norway, at United Nations Headquarters on 22 September 2008, and affirming the importance of continued follow-up and fulfilment of pledges made at the Paris donors' conference of 17 December 2007 to mobilize donors to provide financial support to the Palestinian Authority to enable it to build a prosperous and viable Palestinian State and, in the meantime, to also provide assistance to alleviate the socio-economic and humanitarian crisis being faced by the Palestinian people, and acknowledging the contribution of the Palestinian-European Mechanism for the Management of Socio-Economic Aid of the European Commission in this regard,

Welcoming also the convening of the Bethlehem Conference on Private-Sector Investment from 21 to 23 May 2008, aimed at promoting an enabling environment for Palestinian private-sector growth and development,

Recognizing the efforts being undertaken by the Palestinian Authority, with international support, to rebuild, reform and strengthen its damaged institutions, and emphasizing the need to preserve the Palestinian institutions and infrastructure,

Welcoming the outcome of the Berlin Conference in Support of Palestinian Civil Security and the Rule of Law, held on 24 June 2008, and calling for its speedy implementation,

Welcoming also the progress observed in Jenin, and calling upon the parties to continue cooperation benefiting both Palestinians and Israelis, in particular for promoting security and building confidence, and expressing the hope that such progress will be extended to other major population centres,

Expressing its concern over the negative developments that have continued to occur in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, including the large number of deaths and injuries, mostly among Palestinian civilians, the acts of violence and brutality committed against Palestinian civilians by Israeli settlers in the West Bank, the widespread destruction of public and private Palestinian property and infrastructure, the internal displacement of civilians and the serious deterioration of the socio-economic and humanitarian conditions of the Palestinian people,

Expressing its grave concern over continuing military actions in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and the reoccupation of Palestinian population centres by the Israeli occupying forces, and emphasizing in this regard the need for the implementation by both sides of the Sharm el-Sheikh understandings,

Taking note of the calm prevailing between the Gaza Strip and southern Israel since June 2008, and calling for its continued respect by both sides,

Emphasizing the importance of the safety and well-being of all civilians in the whole Middle East region, and condemning all acts of violence and terror against civilians on both sides,

Expressing concern over the unlawful takeover of Palestinian Authority institutions in the Gaza Strip in June 2007, and calling for the restoration of the situation to that which existed prior to June 2007 and for the continuation of serious efforts for the resumption of dialogue and the restoration of Palestinian national unity,

Stressing the urgent need for sustained and active international involvement, including by the Quartet, to support both parties in advancing and accelerating the peace process negotiations between the parties for the achievement of a just, lasting and comprehensive peace settlement, on the basis of United Nations resolutions, the road map and the Arab Peace Initiative,

Acknowledging the efforts being undertaken by civil society to promote a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine,

Taking note of the findings by the International Court of Justice, in its advisory opinion, including on the urgent necessity for the United Nations as a whole to redouble its efforts to bring the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which continues to pose a threat to international peace and security, to a speedy conclusion, thereby establishing a just and lasting peace in the region,⁶

Affirming once again the right of all States in the region to live in peace within secure and internationally recognized borders,

1. *Reaffirms* the necessity of achieving a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, in all its aspects, and of intensifying all efforts towards that end;

2. *Also reaffirms* its full support for the Middle East peace process, which began in Madrid, and the existing agreements between the Israeli and Palestinian sides, stresses the necessity for the establishment of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East, and welcomes in this regard the ongoing efforts of the Quartet and of the League of Arab States;

3. *Further reaffirms* the importance of the Arab Peace Initiative, adopted by the Council of the League of Arab States at its fourteenth session,⁵ and encourages continued serious efforts to follow up and promote the Initiative, including by the Ministerial Committee formed at the Riyadh summit in March 2007;

4. *Reaffirms* the importance of the international conference convened at Annapolis, and urges the parties to undertake, with the support of the Quartet and the international community, immediate and concrete steps in follow-up to their joint understanding, including through active and serious resumed bilateral negotiations;

5. *Calls upon* both parties to fulfil their obligations in respect of the implementation of the road map⁴ by taking immediate parallel and reciprocal steps in this regard;

6. *Calls upon* the parties themselves, with the support of the Quartet and other interested parties, to exert all efforts necessary to halt the deterioration of the situation and to reverse all measures taken on the ground since 28 September 2000;

7. *Underscores* the need for the parties to take confidence-building measures aimed at improving the situation on the ground, promoting stability and fostering the peace process, including the need for the further release of prisoners;

8. *Stresses* the need for a speedy end to the reoccupation of Palestinian population centres, inter alia, by easing movement and access, including by the removal of checkpoints and other obstructions to movement, and the need for

⁶ See A/ES-10/273 and Corr.1, advisory opinion, para. 161; see also *Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Advisory Opinion, I.C.J. Reports 2004*, p. 136.

respect and preservation of the territorial unity, contiguity and integrity of all of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem;

9. *Also stresses* the need for an immediate and complete cessation of all acts of violence, including military attacks, destruction and acts of terror;

10. *Notes* the Israeli withdrawal in 2005 from within the Gaza Strip and parts of the northern West Bank and the dismantlement of the settlements therein as a step towards the implementation of the road map, and the need for the parties to resolve all remaining issues in the Gaza Strip;

11. *Reiterates* the need for the full implementation by both parties of the Agreement on Movement and Access and the Agreed Principles for the Rafah Crossing, of 15 November 2005, and the need, in specific, to allow for the opening of all crossings into and out of the Gaza Strip for humanitarian supplies, movement and access as well as for commercial flows, which are essential for improving the living conditions of the Palestinian people and ensuring the viability of the Palestinian economy;

12. *Calls upon* Israel, the occupying Power, to comply strictly with its obligations under international law, including international humanitarian law, and to cease all of its measures that are contrary to international law and unilateral actions in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, that are aimed at altering the character, status and demographic composition of the Territory, including via the de facto annexation of land, and thus at prejudging the final outcome of peace negotiations;

13. *Demands*, accordingly, that Israel, the occupying Power, comply with its legal obligations under international law, as mentioned in the advisory opinion² and as demanded in resolutions ES-10/13 of 21 October 2003 and ES-10/15 and, inter alia, that it immediately cease its construction of the wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and calls upon all States Members of the United Nations to comply with their legal obligations, as mentioned in the advisory opinion;

14. *Reiterates its demand* for the complete cessation of all Israeli settlement activities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and in the occupied Syrian Golan, and calls for the full implementation of the relevant Security Council resolutions;

15. *Reaffirms its commitment*, in accordance with international law, to the two-State solution of Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security within recognized borders, based on the pre-1967 borders;

16. *Stresses* the need for:

(a) The withdrawal of Israel from the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem;

(b) The realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, primarily the right to self-determination and the right to their independent State;

17. *Also stresses* the need for justly resolving the problem of Palestine refugees in conformity with its resolution 194 (III) of 11 December 1948;

18. *Calls upon* the parties to accelerate direct peace negotiations towards the conclusion of a final peaceful settlement on the basis of relevant United Nations resolutions, especially of the Security Council, the terms of reference of the Madrid Conference, the road map and the Arab Peace Initiative;

19. *Urges* Member States to expedite the provision of economic, humanitarian and technical assistance to the Palestinian people and the Palestinian Authority during this critical period to help to alleviate the humanitarian crisis being faced by the Palestinian people, particularly in the Gaza Strip, to rehabilitate the Palestinian economy and infrastructure and to support the rebuilding, restructuring and reform of Palestinian institutions;

20. *Welcomes*, in this regard, the continuing efforts of the Quartet's Special Representative, Tony Blair, to strengthen Palestinian institutions, promote Palestinian economic development and mobilize international donor support;

21. *Requests* the Secretary-General to continue his efforts with the parties concerned, and in consultation with the Security Council, towards the attainment of a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine and the promotion of peace in the region and to submit to the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session a report on these efforts and on developments on this matter.

*60th plenary meeting
26 November 2008*



General Assembly

Distr.: General
25 January 2010

Sixty-fourth session
Agenda item 16

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 2 December 2009

[without reference to a Main Committee (A/64/L.23 and Add.1)]

64/19. Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine

The General Assembly,

Recalling its relevant resolutions, including those adopted at its tenth emergency special session,

Recalling also its resolution 58/292 of 6 May 2004,

Recalling further relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolutions 242 (1967) of 22 November 1967, 338 (1973) of 22 October 1973, 1397 (2002) of 12 March 2002, 1515 (2003) of 19 November 2003, 1544 (2004) of 19 May 2004 and 1850 (2008) of 16 December 2008,

Welcoming the affirmation by the Security Council of the vision of a region where two States, Israel and Palestine, live side by side within secure and recognized borders,

Noting with concern that it has been more than sixty years since the adoption of its resolution 181 (II) of 29 November 1947 and forty-two years since the occupation of Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, in 1967,

Having considered the report of the Secretary-General submitted pursuant to the request made in its resolution 63/29 of 26 November 2008,¹

Reaffirming the permanent responsibility of the United Nations with regard to the question of Palestine until the question is resolved in all its aspects in accordance with international law,

Recalling the advisory opinion rendered on 9 July 2004 by the International Court of Justice on the *Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory*,² and recalling also its resolutions ES-10/15 of 20 July 2004 and ES-10/17 of 15 December 2006,

¹ A/64/351-S/2009/464.

² See A/ES-10/273 and Corr.1; see also *Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Advisory Opinion, I.C.J. Reports 2004*, p. 136.



Convinced that achieving a just, lasting and comprehensive settlement of the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, is imperative for the attainment of comprehensive and lasting peace and stability in the Middle East,

Aware that the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples is among the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations,

Affirming the principle of the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war,

Recalling its resolution 2625 (XXV) of 24 October 1970,

Reaffirming the illegality of the Israeli settlements in the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem,

Stressing the detrimental impact of Israeli settlement policies, decisions and activities on efforts to resume the peace process and achieve peace in the Middle East,

Reaffirming the illegality of Israeli actions aimed at changing the status of Jerusalem, including measures such as the so-called E-1 plan and all other unilateral measures aimed at altering the character, status and demographic composition of the city and of the Territory as a whole,

Reaffirming also that the construction by Israel, the occupying Power, of a wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including in and around East Jerusalem, and its associated regime are contrary to international law,

Expressing deep concern about the continuing Israeli policy of closures and severe restrictions on the movement of persons and goods, including medical and humanitarian personnel and goods, via the imposition of prolonged closures and severe economic and movement restrictions that in effect amount to a blockade, crossing closures, checkpoints and a permit regime throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the consequent negative impact on the socio-economic situation of the Palestinian people, which remains that of a dire humanitarian crisis, as well as on efforts aimed at rehabilitating and developing the damaged Palestinian economy and on the contiguity of the Territory,

Recalling the mutual recognition between the Government of the State of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization, the representative of the Palestinian people,³ and the need for full compliance with the agreements concluded between the two sides,

Recalling also the endorsement by the Security Council, in resolution 1515 (2003), of the Quartet road map to a permanent two-State solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict⁴ and the call in Council resolution 1850 (2008) for the parties to fulfil their obligations under the road map, as affirmed in the Israeli-Palestinian Joint Understanding reached at the international conference held in Annapolis, United States of America, on 27 November 2007,⁵ and to refrain from any steps that could undermine confidence or prejudice the outcome of negotiations,

³ See A/48/486-S/26560, annex.

⁴ S/2003/529, annex.

⁵ Available from <http://unispal.un.org>.

Noting the Israeli withdrawal in 2005 from the Gaza Strip and parts of the northern West Bank and the dismantlement of the settlements therein as a step towards the implementation of the road map,

Recalling the Arab Peace Initiative adopted by the Council of the League of Arab States at its fourteenth session, held in Beirut on 27 and 28 March 2002,⁶

Expressing support for the agreed principles for bilateral negotiations, as affirmed by the parties at the Annapolis conference, aimed at concluding a peace treaty resolving all outstanding issues, including all core issues, without exception, for the achievement of a just, lasting and peaceful settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and ultimately of the Arab-Israeli conflict as a whole for the realization of a comprehensive peace in the Middle East,

Expressing support also for the convening of an international conference in Moscow, as envisioned by the Security Council in resolution 1850 (2008), for the advancement and acceleration of a resumed peace process,

Noting the important contribution to the peace process of the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General to the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Palestinian Authority, including within the framework of the activities of the Quartet,

Welcoming the reconvening of the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee for the Coordination of the International Assistance to Palestinians, under the chairmanship of Norway, at United Nations Headquarters on 22 September 2009, affirming the importance of continued follow-up and fulfilment of pledges made at the International Conference in Support of the Palestinian Economy for the Reconstruction of Gaza, held in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, on 2 March 2009, for the provision of emergency assistance and support for reconstruction and economic recovery in the Gaza Strip and alleviation of the socio-economic and humanitarian crisis being faced by the Palestinian people, and acknowledging the contribution of the Palestinian-European Mechanism for the Management of Socio-Economic Aid of the European Commission in this regard,

Recognizing the efforts being undertaken by the Palestinian Authority, with international support, to rebuild, reform and strengthen its damaged institutions, emphasizing the need to preserve and develop the Palestinian institutions and infrastructure, and welcoming in this regard the Palestinian Authority's plan for constructing the institutions of a Palestinian State within a twenty-four-month period as a demonstration of its serious commitment to an independent State that provides opportunity, justice and security for the Palestinian people and is a responsible neighbour to all States in the region,

Welcoming the efforts and progress made in the security sector by the Palestinian Authority, calling upon the parties to continue cooperation that benefits both Palestinians and Israelis, in particular by promoting security and building confidence, and expressing the hope that such progress will be extended to all major population centres,

Reiterating its concern over the negative developments that have continued to occur in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, including the large number of deaths and injuries, mostly among Palestinian civilians, the acts of

⁶ A/56/1026-S/2002/932, annex II, resolution 14/221.

violence and brutality committed against Palestinian civilians by Israeli settlers in the West Bank, the widespread destruction of public and private Palestinian property and infrastructure, the internal displacement of civilians and the serious deterioration of the socio-economic and humanitarian conditions of the Palestinian people,

Expressing grave concern, in particular, over the crisis in the Gaza Strip as a result of the continuing prolonged Israeli closures and severe economic and movement restrictions that in effect amount to a blockade and the military operations in the Gaza Strip between December 2008 and January 2009, which caused extensive loss of life and injury, particularly among Palestinian civilians, including children and women, widespread damage and destruction to Palestinian homes, properties, vital infrastructure, public institutions, including hospitals and schools, and United Nations facilities, and internal displacement of civilians,

Stressing the need for the full implementation by all parties of Security Council resolution 1860 (2009) of 8 January 2009 and General Assembly resolution ES-10/18 of 16 January 2009,

Expressing concern over continuing military actions in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including raids and arrest campaigns, and over the continued imposition of hundreds of checkpoints and obstacles to movement in and around Palestinian population centres by the Israeli occupying forces, and emphasizing in this regard the need for the implementation by both sides of the Sharm el-Sheikh understandings,

Emphasizing the importance of the safety, protection and well-being of all civilians in the whole Middle East region, and condemning all acts of violence and terror against civilians on both sides,

Expressing concern over the unlawful takeover of Palestinian Authority institutions in the Gaza Strip in June 2007, and calling for the restoration of the situation to that which existed prior to June 2007 and for the continuation of the serious efforts being exerted by Egypt, the League of Arab States and other concerned parties for the promotion of dialogue towards reconciliation and the restoration of Palestinian national unity,

Stressing the urgent need for sustained and active international involvement, including by the Quartet, to support both parties in resuming, advancing and accelerating the peace process negotiations for the achievement of a just, lasting and comprehensive peace settlement, on the basis of United Nations resolutions, the road map and the Arab Peace Initiative,

Acknowledging the efforts being undertaken by civil society to promote a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine,

Recalling the findings by the International Court of Justice, in its advisory opinion, including on the urgent necessity for the United Nations as a whole to redouble its efforts to bring the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which continues to pose a threat to international peace and security, to a speedy conclusion, thereby establishing a just and lasting peace in the region,⁷

⁷ See A/ES-10/273 and Corr.1, advisory opinion, para. 161; see also *Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Advisory Opinion, I.C.J. Reports 2004*, p. 136.

Affirming once again the right of all States in the region to live in peace within secure and internationally recognized borders,

1. *Reaffirms* the necessity of achieving a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, in all its aspects, and of intensifying all efforts towards that end;

2. *Also reaffirms* its full support for the Middle East peace process, based on the relevant United Nations resolutions, the terms of reference of the Madrid Conference, including the principle of land for peace, the Arab Peace Initiative adopted by the Council of the League of Arab States at its fourteenth session⁶ and the Quartet road map to a permanent two-State solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict,⁴ and for the existing agreements between the Israeli and Palestinian sides, stresses the necessity for the establishment of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East, and welcomes in this regard the ongoing efforts of the Quartet and of the League of Arab States;

3. *Encourages* continued serious regional and international efforts to follow up and promote the Arab Peace Initiative, including by the Ministerial Committee formed at the Riyadh summit in March 2007;

4. *Urges* the parties to undertake, with the support of the Quartet and the international community, immediate and concrete steps in follow-up to the Israeli-Palestinian Joint Understanding reached at the international conference held in Annapolis, United States of America, on 27 November 2007,⁵ including through the resumption of active and serious bilateral negotiations;

5. *Encourages*, in this regard, the convening of an international conference in Moscow, as envisioned by the Security Council in resolution 1850 (2008), for the advancement and acceleration of a resumed peace process;

6. *Calls upon* both parties to act on their previous agreements and obligations, in particular adherence to the road map, irrespective of reciprocity, in order to create the conditions necessary for the resumption of negotiations in the near term;

7. *Calls upon* the parties themselves, with the support of the Quartet and other interested parties, to exert all efforts necessary to halt the deterioration of the situation and to reverse all unilateral and unlawful measures taken on the ground since 28 September 2000;

8. *Underscores* the need for the parties to take confidence-building measures aimed at improving the situation on the ground, promoting stability and fostering the peace process, including the need for the further release of prisoners;

9. *Stresses* the need for a speedy end to the reoccupation of Palestinian population centres, inter alia, by easing movement and access, including through the removal of checkpoints and other obstructions to movement, and the need for respect and preservation of the territorial unity, contiguity and integrity of all of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem;

10. *Also stresses* the need for an immediate and complete cessation of all acts of violence, including military attacks, destruction and acts of terror;

11. *Reiterates its demand* for the full implementation of Security Council resolution 1860 (2009);

12. *Reiterates* the need for the full implementation by both parties of the Agreement on Movement and Access and of the Agreed Principles for the Rafah

Crossing, of 15 November 2005, and the need, specifically, to allow for the sustained opening of all crossings into and out of the Gaza Strip for humanitarian supplies, movement and access, as well as for commercial flows and all necessary construction materials, which are essential for alleviating the dire humanitarian crisis, improving the living conditions of the Palestinian people and promoting the recovery of the Palestinian economy;

13. *Stresses*, in this regard, the urgent necessity for the advancement of reconstruction in the Gaza Strip, including through the completion of numerous suspended projects managed by the United Nations, according to the proposal of the Secretary-General, and the commencement of United Nations-led civilian reconstruction activities;

14. *Calls upon* Israel, the occupying Power, to comply strictly with its obligations under international law, including international humanitarian law, and to cease all of its measures that are contrary to international law and unilateral actions in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, that are aimed at altering the character, status and demographic composition of the Territory, including via the de facto annexation of land, and thus at prejudging the final outcome of peace negotiations;

15. *Reiterates its demand* for the complete cessation of all Israeli settlement activities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and in the occupied Syrian Golan, and calls for the full implementation of the relevant Security Council resolutions;

16. *Calls for* the cessation of all provocations, including by Israeli settlers, in East Jerusalem, including in and around religious sites;

17. *Demands*, accordingly, that Israel, the occupying Power, comply with its legal obligations under international law, as mentioned in the advisory opinion rendered on 9 July 2004 by the International Court of Justice² and as demanded in General Assembly resolutions ES-10/13 of 21 October 2003 and ES-10/15, and, inter alia, that it immediately cease its construction of the wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and calls upon all States Members of the United Nations to comply with their legal obligations, as mentioned in the advisory opinion;

18. *Reaffirms its commitment*, in accordance with international law, to the two-State solution of Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security within recognized borders, based on the pre-1967 borders;

19. *Stresses* the need for:

(a) The withdrawal of Israel from the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem;

(b) The realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, primarily the right to self-determination and the right to their independent State;

20. *Also stresses* the need for a just resolution of the problem of Palestine refugees in conformity with its resolution 194 (III) of 11 December 1948;

21. *Calls upon* the parties to resume and accelerate direct peace negotiations towards the conclusion of a final peaceful settlement on the basis of relevant United Nations resolutions, especially of the Security Council, the terms of reference of the Madrid Conference, the road map and the Arab Peace Initiative;

22. *Urges* Member States to expedite the provision of economic, humanitarian and technical assistance to the Palestinian people and the Palestinian Authority during this critical period in order to help to alleviate the humanitarian crisis being faced by the Palestinian people, particularly in the Gaza Strip, to rehabilitate the Palestinian economy and infrastructure and to support the rebuilding, restructuring and reform of Palestinian institutions and Palestinian State-building efforts;

23. *Encourages*, in this regard, the continuing efforts of the Quartet's Special Representative, Tony Blair, to strengthen Palestinian institutions, promote Palestinian economic development and mobilize international donor support;

24. *Requests* the Secretary-General to continue his efforts with the parties concerned, and in consultation with the Security Council, towards the attainment of a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine and the promotion of peace in the region and to submit to the General Assembly at its sixty-fifth session a report on these efforts and on developments on this matter.

*54th plenary meeting
2 December 2009*



General Assembly

Distr.: General
25 January 2011

Sixty-fifth session
Agenda item 37

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 30 November 2010

[without reference to a Main Committee (A/65/L.17 and Add.1)]

65/16. Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine

The General Assembly,

Recalling its relevant resolutions, including those adopted at its tenth emergency special session,

Recalling also its resolution 58/292 of 6 May 2004,

Recalling further relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolutions 242 (1967) of 22 November 1967, 338 (1973) of 22 October 1973, 1397 (2002) of 12 March 2002, 1515 (2003) of 19 November 2003, 1544 (2004) of 19 May 2004 and 1850 (2008) of 16 December 2008,

Recalling the affirmation by the Security Council of the vision of a region where two States, Israel and Palestine, live side by side within secure and recognized borders,

Noting with concern that it has been more than sixty years since the adoption of its resolution 181 (II) of 29 November 1947 and forty-three years since the occupation of Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, in 1967,

Having considered the report of the Secretary-General submitted pursuant to the request made in its resolution 64/19 of 2 December 2009,¹

Reaffirming the permanent responsibility of the United Nations with regard to the question of Palestine until the question is resolved in all its aspects in accordance with international law and relevant resolutions,

Recalling the advisory opinion rendered on 9 July 2004 by the International Court of Justice on the *Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory*,² and recalling also its resolutions ES-10/15 of 20 July 2004 and ES-10/17 of 15 December 2006,

¹ A/65/380-S/2010/484 and Add.1.

² See A/ES-10/273 and Corr.1; see also *Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Advisory Opinion, I.C.J. Reports 2004*, p. 136.



Convinced that achieving a just, lasting and comprehensive settlement of the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, is imperative for the attainment of comprehensive and lasting peace and stability in the Middle East,

Stressing that the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples is among the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations,

Reaffirming the principle of the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war,

Recalling its resolution 2625 (XXV) of 24 October 1970,

Reaffirming the illegality of the Israeli settlements in the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem,

Stressing the extremely detrimental impact of Israeli settlement policies, decisions and activities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, on efforts to resume and advance the peace process and to achieve peace in the Middle East,

Reaffirming the illegality of Israeli actions aimed at changing the status of Jerusalem, including measures such as the so-called E-1 plan, home demolitions, evictions of Palestinian residents, excavations in and around religious and historic sites, and all other unilateral measures aimed at altering the character, status and demographic composition of the city and of the Territory as a whole,

Reaffirming also that the construction by Israel, the occupying Power, of a wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including in and around East Jerusalem, and its associated regime are contrary to international law,

Expressing deep concern about the continuing Israeli policy of closures and severe restrictions on the movement of persons and goods, including medical and humanitarian, via the imposition of prolonged closures and severe economic and movement restrictions that in effect amount to a blockade, as well as of checkpoints and a permit regime throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the consequent negative impact on the socio-economic situation of the Palestinian people, which remains that of a humanitarian crisis, and on the efforts aimed at rehabilitating and developing the damaged Palestinian economy and on the contiguity of the Territory, while taking note of recent developments regarding the situation of access to the Gaza Strip,

Recalling the mutual recognition between the Government of the State of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization, the representative of the Palestinian people,³ and the need for full compliance with the agreements concluded between the two sides,

Recalling also the endorsement by the Security Council, in resolution 1515 (2003), of the Quartet road map to a permanent two-State solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict⁴ and the call in Council resolution 1850 (2008) for the parties to fulfil their obligations under the road map, as affirmed in the Israeli-Palestinian Joint Understanding reached at the international conference held in

³ See A/48/486-S/26560, annex.

⁴ S/2003/529, annex.

Annapolis, United States of America, on 27 November 2007,⁵ and to refrain from any steps that could undermine confidence or prejudice the outcome of negotiations,

Noting the Israeli withdrawal in 2005 from the Gaza Strip and parts of the northern West Bank and the dismantlement of the settlements therein as a step towards the implementation of the road map, and recalling in this regard the road map obligation upon Israel to freeze settlement activity, including so-called “natural growth”, and to dismantle all settlement outposts erected since March 2001,

Recalling the Arab Peace Initiative adopted by the Council of the League of Arab States at its fourteenth session, held in Beirut on 27 and 28 March 2002,⁶

Expressing support for the agreed principles for bilateral negotiations, as affirmed by the parties at the Annapolis conference, aimed at concluding a peace treaty resolving all outstanding issues, including all core issues, without exception, for the achievement of a just, lasting and peaceful settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and ultimately of the Arab-Israeli conflict as a whole for the realization of a comprehensive peace in the Middle East,

Reiterating support for the convening of an international conference in Moscow, as envisioned by the Security Council in resolution 1850 (2008), for the advancement and acceleration of a resumed peace process,

Noting the important contribution to the peace process of the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General to the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Palestinian Authority, including within the framework of the activities of the Quartet,

Welcoming the reconvening of the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee for the Coordination of the International Assistance to Palestinians, under the chairmanship of Norway, at United Nations Headquarters on 21 September 2010, affirming the importance of continued follow-up and fulfilment of pledges made at the International Conference in Support of the Palestinian Economy for the Reconstruction of Gaza, held in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, on 2 March 2009, for the provision of emergency assistance and support for reconstruction and economic recovery in the Gaza Strip and alleviation of the socio-economic and humanitarian crisis being faced by the Palestinian people, and acknowledging the contribution of the Palestinian-European Mechanism for the Management of Socio-Economic Aid of the European Commission in this regard,

Recognizing the efforts being undertaken by the Palestinian Authority, with international support, to rebuild, reform and strengthen its damaged institutions, emphasizing the need to preserve and develop the Palestinian institutions and infrastructure and affirming, in this regard, its support for the Palestinian Authority’s August 2009 plan for constructing the institutions of an independent Palestinian State within a twenty-four-month period, and commending the significant progress towards that goal, as confirmed by international institutions, including the World Bank in its Economic Monitoring Report of 13 April 2010 to the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee,

Welcoming the continued efforts and tangible progress made in the security sector by the Palestinian Authority, calling upon the parties to continue cooperation

⁵ Available from <http://unispal.un.org>.

⁶ A/56/1026-S/2002/932, annex II, resolution 14/221.

that benefits both Palestinians and Israelis, in particular by promoting security and building confidence, and expressing the hope that such progress will be extended to all major population centres,

Reiterating its concern over the negative developments that have continued to occur in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, including the large number of deaths and injuries, mostly among Palestinian civilians, the construction and expansion of settlements and the wall, acts of violence, vandalism and brutality committed against Palestinian civilians by Israeli settlers in the West Bank, the widespread destruction of public and private Palestinian property and infrastructure, the internal displacement of civilians and the serious deterioration of the socio-economic and humanitarian conditions of the Palestinian people,

Expressing grave concern, in particular, over the crisis in the Gaza Strip as a result of the continuing prolonged Israeli closures and severe economic and movement restrictions that in effect amount to a blockade and the military operations in the Gaza Strip between December 2008 and January 2009, which caused extensive loss of life and injury, particularly among Palestinian civilians, including children and women, widespread damage and destruction to Palestinian homes, properties, vital infrastructure, public institutions, including hospitals and schools, and United Nations facilities, and internal displacement of civilians,

Stressing the need for the full implementation by all parties of Security Council resolution 1860 (2009) of 8 January 2009 and General Assembly resolution ES-10/18 of 16 January 2009,

Expressing concern over continuing military actions in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including raids and arrest campaigns, and over the continued imposition of hundreds of checkpoints and obstacles to movement in and around Palestinian population centres by the Israeli occupying forces, and emphasizing in this regard the need for the implementation by both sides of the Sharm el-Sheikh understandings,

Emphasizing the importance of the safety, protection and well-being of all civilians in the whole Middle East region, and condemning all acts of violence and terror against civilians on both sides,

Expressing concern over the unlawful takeover of Palestinian Authority institutions in the Gaza Strip in June 2007, and calling for the restoration of the situation to that which existed prior to June 2007 and for the continuation of the serious efforts being exerted by Egypt, the League of Arab States and other concerned parties for the promotion of dialogue for the achievement of reconciliation and the restoration of Palestinian national unity,

Stressing the urgent need for sustained and active international involvement, including by the Quartet, to support both parties in resuming, advancing and accelerating the peace process negotiations for the achievement of a just, lasting and comprehensive peace settlement, on the basis of United Nations resolutions, the road map and the Arab Peace Initiative,

Noting the Quartet's determination in the recent period to support the parties throughout the negotiations, which can be completed and resolve all final status issues within one year, and in the implementation of an agreement between the two sides that ends the occupation which began in 1967 and results in the emergence of an independent, democratic and viable Palestinian State living side by side in peace and security with Israel and its other neighbours,

Acknowledging the efforts being undertaken by civil society to promote a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine,

Recalling the findings by the International Court of Justice, in its advisory opinion, including on the urgent necessity for the United Nations as a whole to redouble its efforts to bring the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which continues to pose a threat to international peace and security, to a speedy conclusion, thereby establishing a just and lasting peace in the region,⁷

Affirming once again the right of all States in the region to live in peace within secure and internationally recognized borders,

1. *Reaffirms* the necessity of achieving a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, in all its aspects, and of intensifying all efforts towards that end;

2. *Also reaffirms* its full support for the Middle East peace process, based on the relevant United Nations resolutions, the terms of reference of the Madrid Conference, including the principle of land for peace, the Arab Peace Initiative adopted by the Council of the League of Arab States at its fourteenth session,⁶ and the Quartet road map to a permanent two-State solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict,⁴ and for the existing agreements between the Israeli and Palestinian sides, stresses the necessity for the establishment of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East, and welcomes in this regard the ongoing efforts of the Quartet and of the League of Arab States;

3. *Encourages* continued serious regional and international efforts to follow up and promote the Arab Peace Initiative, including by the Ministerial Committee formed at the Riyadh summit in March 2007;

4. *Urges* the parties to undertake, with the support of the Quartet and the international community, immediate and concrete steps in follow-up to the Israeli-Palestinian Joint Understanding reached at the international conference held in Annapolis,⁵ including through the resumption of active and serious bilateral negotiations;

5. *Encourages*, in this regard, the convening of an international conference in Moscow, as envisioned by the Security Council in resolution 1850 (2008), for the advancement and acceleration of a resumed peace process;

6. *Calls upon* both parties to act on the basis of international law and their previous agreements and obligations, in particular adherence to the road map, irrespective of reciprocity, in order to create the conditions necessary for the resumption and accelerated advancement of negotiations in the near term;

7. *Calls upon* the parties themselves, with the support of the Quartet and other interested parties, to exert all efforts necessary to halt the deterioration of the situation and to reverse all unilateral and unlawful measures taken on the ground since 28 September 2000;

8. *Calls upon* the parties to observe calm and restraint and to refrain from provocative actions and inflammatory rhetoric, especially in areas of religious and cultural sensitivity;

⁷ See A/ES-10/273 and Corr.1, advisory opinion, para. 161; see also *Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Advisory Opinion, I.C.J. Reports 2004*, p. 136.

9. *Underscores* the need for the parties to take confidence-building measures aimed at improving the situation on the ground, promoting stability and fostering the peace process, including the need for the further release of prisoners;

10. *Stresses* the need for the removal of checkpoints and other obstructions to the movement of persons and goods throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the need for respect and preservation of the territorial unity, contiguity and integrity of all of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem;

11. *Also stresses* the need for an immediate and complete cessation of all acts of violence, including military attacks, destruction and acts of terror;

12. *Reiterates its demand* for the full implementation of Security Council resolution 1860 (2009);

13. *Reiterates* the need for the full implementation by both parties of the Agreement on Movement and Access and of the Agreed Principles for the Rafah Crossing, of 15 November 2005, and the need, specifically, to allow for the sustained opening of all crossings into and out of the Gaza Strip for humanitarian supplies, movement and access, as well as for commercial flows and all necessary construction materials, which are essential for alleviating the humanitarian crisis, improving the living conditions of the Palestinian people and promoting the recovery of the Palestinian economy;

14. *Stresses*, in this regard, the urgent necessity for the advancement of reconstruction in the Gaza Strip, including through the completion of numerous suspended projects managed by the United Nations and the commencement of United Nations-led civilian reconstruction activities;

15. *Calls upon* Israel, the occupying Power, to comply strictly with its obligations under international law, including international humanitarian law, and to cease all of its measures that are contrary to international law and unilateral actions in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, that are aimed at altering the character, status and demographic composition of the Territory, including via the de facto annexation of land, and thus at prejudging the final outcome of peace negotiations;

16. *Reiterates its demand* for the complete cessation of all Israeli settlement activities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and in the occupied Syrian Golan, and calls for the full implementation of the relevant Security Council resolutions;

17. *Stresses*, in this regard, the need for Israel forthwith to abide by its road map obligation to freeze all settlement activity, including so-called “natural growth”, and to dismantle settlement outposts erected since March 2001;

18. *Calls for* the cessation of all provocations, including by Israeli settlers, in East Jerusalem, including in and around religious sites;

19. *Demands*, accordingly, that Israel, the occupying Power, comply with its legal obligations under international law, as mentioned in the advisory opinion rendered on 9 July 2004 by the International Court of Justice² and as demanded in General Assembly resolutions ES-10/13 of 21 October 2003 and ES-10/15, and, inter alia, that it immediately cease its construction of the wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and calls upon all States Members of the United Nations to comply with their legal obligations, as mentioned in the advisory opinion;

20. *Reaffirms its commitment*, in accordance with international law, to the two-State solution of Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security within recognized borders, based on the pre-1967 borders;

21. *Stresses* the need for:

(a) The withdrawal of Israel from the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem;

(b) The realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, primarily the right to self-determination and the right to their independent State;

22. *Also stresses* the need for a just resolution of the problem of Palestine refugees in conformity with its resolution 194 (III) of 11 December 1948;

23. *Calls upon* the parties to resume and accelerate direct peace negotiations towards the conclusion of a final peaceful settlement on the basis of relevant United Nations resolutions, especially of the Security Council, the terms of reference of the Madrid Conference, the road map and the Arab Peace Initiative;

24. *Urges* Member States to expedite the provision of economic, humanitarian and technical assistance to the Palestinian people and the Palestinian Authority during this critical period in order to help to alleviate the humanitarian crisis being faced by the Palestinian people, particularly in the Gaza Strip, to rehabilitate the Palestinian economy and infrastructure and to support the rebuilding, restructuring and reform of Palestinian institutions and Palestinian State-building efforts;

25. *Encourages*, in this regard, the continuing efforts of the Quartet's Special Representative, Mr. Tony Blair, to strengthen Palestinian institutions, promote Palestinian economic development and mobilize international donor support;

26. *Requests* the Secretary-General to continue his efforts with the parties concerned, and in consultation with the Security Council, towards the attainment of a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine and the promotion of peace in the region and to submit to the General Assembly at its sixty-sixth session a report on these efforts and on developments on this matter.

*55th plenary meeting
30 November 2010*



General Assembly

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Agenda item 37

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 30 November 2011

[without reference to a Main Committee (A/66/L.18 and Add.1)]

66/17. Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine

The General Assembly,

Recalling its relevant resolutions, including those adopted at its tenth emergency special session,

Recalling also its resolution 58/292 of 6 May 2004,

Recalling further relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolutions 242 (1967) of 22 November 1967, 338 (1973) of 22 October 1973, 1397 (2002) of 12 March 2002, 1515 (2003) of 19 November 2003, 1544 (2004) of 19 May 2004 and 1850 (2008) of 16 December 2008,

Recalling the affirmation by the Security Council of the vision of a region where two States, Israel and Palestine, live side by side within secure and recognized borders,

Noting with concern that it has been more than sixty years since the adoption of its resolution 181 (II) of 29 November 1947 and forty-four years since the occupation of Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, in 1967,

Having considered the report of the Secretary-General submitted pursuant to the request made in its resolution 65/16 of 30 November 2010,¹

Reaffirming the permanent responsibility of the United Nations with regard to the question of Palestine until the question is resolved in all its aspects in accordance with international law and relevant resolutions,

Recalling the advisory opinion rendered on 9 July 2004 by the International Court of Justice on the *Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory*,² and recalling also its resolutions ES-10/15 of 20 July 2004 and ES-10/17 of 15 December 2006,

¹ A/66/367-S/2011/585.

² See A/ES-10/273 and Corr.1; see also *Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Advisory Opinion, I.C.J. Reports 2004*, p. 136.



Convinced that achieving a just, lasting and comprehensive settlement of the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, is imperative for the attainment of comprehensive and lasting peace and stability in the Middle East,

Stressing that the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples is among the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations,

Reaffirming the principle of the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war,

Recalling its resolution 2625 (XXV) of 24 October 1970,

Reaffirming the illegality of the Israeli settlements in the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem,

Stressing the extremely detrimental impact of Israeli settlement policies, decisions and activities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, on efforts to resume and advance the peace process and to achieve peace in the Middle East,

Reaffirming the illegality of Israeli actions aimed at changing the status of Jerusalem, including settlement construction and expansion, home demolitions, evictions of Palestinian residents, excavations in and around religious and historic sites, and all other unilateral measures aimed at altering the character, status and demographic composition of the city and of the Territory as a whole,

Reaffirming also that the construction by Israel, the occupying Power, of a wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including in and around East Jerusalem, and its associated regime are contrary to international law,

Expressing deep concern about the continuing Israeli policy of closures and severe restrictions on the movement of persons and goods, including medical and humanitarian, via the imposition of prolonged closures and severe economic and movement restrictions that in effect amount to a blockade, as well as of checkpoints and a permit regime throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the consequent negative impact on the contiguity of the Territory and the serious socio-economic and humanitarian situation of the Palestinian people, which is critical in the Gaza Strip, and on the efforts aimed at rehabilitating and developing the damaged Palestinian economy, while taking note of recent developments regarding the situation of access to the Gaza Strip,

Recalling the mutual recognition between the Government of the State of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization, the representative of the Palestinian people,³ and the need for full compliance with the agreements concluded between the two sides,

Recalling also the endorsement by the Security Council, in resolution 1515 (2003), of the Quartet road map to a permanent two-State solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict⁴ and the call in Council resolution 1850 (2008) for the parties to fulfil their obligations under the road map and to refrain from any steps that could undermine confidence or prejudice the outcome of negotiations, and

³ See A/48/486-S/26560, annex.

⁴ S/2003/529, annex.

recalling further in this regard the relevant Quartet statements, including that of 23 September 2011,⁵

Noting the Israeli withdrawal in 2005 from the Gaza Strip and parts of the northern West Bank and the dismantlement of the settlements therein as a step towards the implementation of the road map, and stressing in this regard the road-map obligation upon Israel to freeze settlement activity, including so-called “natural growth”, and to dismantle all settlement outposts erected since March 2001,

Recalling the Arab Peace Initiative adopted by the Council of the League of Arab States at its fourteenth session, held in Beirut on 27 and 28 March 2002,⁶

Expressing support for the agreed principles for bilateral negotiations, as affirmed by the parties in the Israeli-Palestinian Joint Understanding reached at the international conference held in Annapolis, United States of America, on 27 November 2007,⁷ aimed at concluding a peace treaty resolving all outstanding issues, including all core issues, without exception, for the achievement of a just, lasting and peaceful settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and ultimately of the Arab-Israeli conflict as a whole for the realization of a comprehensive peace in the Middle East,

Reiterating support for the convening of an international conference in Moscow, as envisioned by the Security Council in resolution 1850 (2008) and the Quartet statement of 23 September 2011, for the advancement and acceleration of a resumed peace process,

Noting the important contribution to the peace process of the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General to the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Palestinian Authority, including within the framework of the activities of the Quartet,

Noting also the continuing efforts of the Quartet’s Special Representative towards the resumption of the peace process, in particular the efforts to strengthen Palestinian institutions, promote Palestinian economic development and mobilize donor support,

Welcoming the meeting of the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee for the Coordination of the International Assistance to Palestinians, under the chairmanship of Norway, at United Nations Headquarters on 18 September 2011, at which, based on relevant reports by the United Nations, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, the donor countries reconfirmed the assessment that the institutions of the Palestinian Authority are above the threshold of a functioning State in the key sectors studied and reaffirmed the necessity of continued donor support for the Palestinian Authority,

Recognizing the efforts being undertaken by the Palestinian Authority, with international support, to rebuild, reform and strengthen its damaged institutions, emphasizing the need to preserve and further develop Palestinian institutions and infrastructure and commending, in this regard, the implementation of the Palestinian Authority’s August 2009 plan for constructing the institutions of an independent Palestinian State within a twenty-four-month period, and the significant achievements made, as confirmed by international institutions, including the World Bank, the

⁵ Available from www.unsco.org.

⁶ A/56/1026-S/2002/932, annex II, resolution 14/221.

⁷ Available from <http://unispal.un.org>.

International Monetary Fund and the United Nations, in their reports to the meeting of the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee on 13 April 2011,

Welcoming the continued efforts and tangible progress made in the security sector by the Palestinian Authority, calling upon the parties to continue cooperation that benefits both Palestinians and Israelis, in particular by promoting security and building confidence, and expressing the hope that such progress will be extended to all major population centres,

Reiterating its concern over the negative developments that have continued to occur in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, including the large number of deaths and injuries, mostly among Palestinian civilians, the construction and expansion of settlements and the wall, acts of violence, vandalism and brutality committed against Palestinian civilians by Israeli settlers in the West Bank, the widespread destruction of public and private Palestinian property and infrastructure, the internal displacement of civilians and the serious deterioration of the socio-economic and humanitarian conditions of the Palestinian people,

Expressing grave concern, in particular, over the crisis in the Gaza Strip as a result of the continuing prolonged Israeli closures and severe economic and movement restrictions that in effect amount to a blockade and the military operations in the Gaza Strip between December 2008 and January 2009, which caused extensive loss of life and injury, particularly among Palestinian civilians, including children and women, widespread damage and destruction to Palestinian homes, properties, vital infrastructure, public institutions, including hospitals and schools, and United Nations facilities, and internal displacement of civilians,

Stressing the need for the full implementation by all parties of Security Council resolution 1860 (2009) of 8 January 2009 and General Assembly resolution ES-10/18 of 16 January 2009,

Expressing concern over continuing military actions in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including raids and arrest campaigns, and over the continued imposition of hundreds of checkpoints and obstacles to movement in and around Palestinian population centres by the Israeli occupying forces, and emphasizing in this regard the need for the implementation by both sides of the Sharm el-Sheikh understandings,

Emphasizing the importance of the safety, protection and well-being of all civilians in the whole Middle East region, and condemning all acts of violence and terror against civilians on both sides,

Expressing the hope for speedy progress towards Palestinian reconciliation for the restoration of Palestinian unity, under the leadership of the President of the Palestinian Authority, Mahmoud Abbas, and consistent with Palestine Liberation Organization commitments, and of the situation in the Gaza Strip to that which existed prior to June 2007, and calling for the continuation of the serious efforts being exerted by Egypt, the League of Arab States and other concerned parties towards the achievement of this aim,

Stressing the urgent need for sustained and active international involvement, including by the Quartet, to support both parties in resuming, advancing and accelerating the peace process negotiations for the achievement of a just, lasting and comprehensive peace settlement, on the basis of United Nations resolutions, the road map and the Arab Peace Initiative,

Noting the Quartet's determination in the recent period to support the parties throughout the negotiations, which can be completed and resolve all final status issues within one year, and in the implementation of an agreement between the two

sides that ends the occupation which began in 1967 and results in the independence of a democratic, contiguous and viable Palestinian State living side by side in peace and security with Israel and its other neighbours,

Taking note of the application of Palestine for admission to membership in the United Nations, submitted on 23 September 2011,⁸

Acknowledging the efforts being undertaken by civil society to promote a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine,

Recalling the findings by the International Court of Justice, in its advisory opinion, including on the urgent necessity for the United Nations as a whole to redouble its efforts to bring the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which continues to pose a threat to international peace and security, to a speedy conclusion, thereby establishing a just and lasting peace in the region,⁹

Affirming once again the right of all States in the region to live in peace within secure and internationally recognized borders,

1. *Reaffirms* the necessity of achieving a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, in all its aspects, and of intensifying all efforts towards that end, and stresses in this regard the urgency of salvaging the prospects for realizing the two-State solution of Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security within recognized borders, based on the pre-1967 borders;

2. *Also reaffirms* its full support for the Middle East peace process, based on the relevant United Nations resolutions, the terms of reference of the Madrid Conference, including the principle of land for peace, the Arab Peace Initiative adopted by the Council of the League of Arab States at its fourteenth session,⁶ and the Quartet road map to a permanent two-State solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict,⁴ and for the existing agreements between the Israeli and Palestinian sides, stresses the necessity for the establishment of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East, and welcomes in this regard the ongoing efforts of the Quartet and of the League of Arab States;

3. *Encourages* continued serious regional and international efforts to follow up and promote the Arab Peace Initiative, including by the Ministerial Committee formed at the Riyadh summit in March 2007;

4. *Urges* the parties to undertake, with the support of the Quartet and the international community, immediate and concrete steps in follow-up to the Israeli-Palestinian Joint Understanding reached at the international conference held in Annapolis,⁷ including through the resumption of active and serious bilateral negotiations;

5. *Encourages*, in this regard, the convening of an international conference in Moscow, as envisioned by the Security Council in resolution 1850 (2008), for the advancement and acceleration of a resumed peace process;

6. *Calls upon* both parties to act on the basis of international law and their previous agreements and obligations, in particular adherence to the road map,

⁸ A/66/371-S/2011/592, annex I.

⁹ See A/ES-10/273 and Corr.1, advisory opinion, para. 161; see also *Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Advisory Opinion, I.C.J. Reports 2004*, p. 136.

irrespective of reciprocity, in order to create the conditions necessary for the resumption and accelerated advancement of negotiations in the near term;

7. *Calls upon* the parties themselves, with the support of the Quartet and other interested parties, to exert all efforts necessary to halt the deterioration of the situation and to reverse all unilateral and unlawful measures taken on the ground since 28 September 2000;

8. *Calls upon* the parties to observe calm and restraint and to refrain from provocative actions and inflammatory rhetoric, especially in areas of religious and cultural sensitivity;

9. *Underscores* the need for the parties to take confidence-building measures aimed at improving the situation on the ground, promoting stability and fostering the peace process, including the need for the further release of prisoners following the exchange of prisoners in October 2011;

10. *Stresses* the need for the removal of checkpoints and other obstructions to the movement of persons and goods throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the need for respect and preservation of the territorial unity, contiguity and integrity of all of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem;

11. *Also stresses* the need for an immediate and complete cessation of all acts of violence, including military attacks, destruction and acts of terror;

12. *Reiterates its demand* for the full implementation of Security Council resolution 1860 (2009);

13. *Reiterates* the need for the full implementation by both parties of the Agreement on Movement and Access and of the Agreed Principles for the Rafah Crossing, of 15 November 2005, and the need, specifically, to allow for the sustained opening of all crossings into and out of the Gaza Strip for humanitarian supplies, movement and access, as well as for commercial flows and all necessary construction materials, which are essential for alleviating the humanitarian crisis, improving the living conditions of the Palestinian people and promoting the recovery of the Palestinian economy;

14. *Stresses*, in this regard, the urgent necessity for the advancement of reconstruction in the Gaza Strip, including through the completion of numerous suspended projects managed by the United Nations and the accelerated implementation of United Nations-led civilian reconstruction activities;

15. *Calls upon* Israel, the occupying Power, to comply strictly with its obligations under international law, including international humanitarian law, and to cease all of its measures that are contrary to international law and unilateral actions in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, that are aimed at altering the character, status and demographic composition of the Territory, including via the confiscation and de facto annexation of land, and thus at prejudging the final outcome of peace negotiations;

16. *Reiterates its demand* for the complete cessation of all Israeli settlement activities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and in the occupied Syrian Golan, and calls for the full implementation of the relevant Security Council resolutions;

17. *Stresses*, in this regard, the need for Israel forthwith to abide by its road-map obligation to freeze all settlement activity, including so-called “natural growth”, and to dismantle settlement outposts erected since March 2001;

18. *Calls for* the cessation of all provocations, including by Israeli settlers, in East Jerusalem, including in and around religious sites;

19. *Demands*, accordingly, that Israel, the occupying Power, comply with its legal obligations under international law, as mentioned in the advisory opinion rendered on 9 July 2004 by the International Court of Justice² and as demanded in General Assembly resolutions ES-10/13 of 21 October 2003 and ES-10/15, and, inter alia, that it immediately cease its construction of the wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and calls upon all States Members of the United Nations to comply with their legal obligations, as mentioned in the advisory opinion;

20. *Reaffirms its commitment*, in accordance with international law, to the two-State solution of Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security within recognized borders, based on the pre-1967 borders;

21. *Stresses* the need for:

(a) The withdrawal of Israel from the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem;

(b) The realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, primarily the right to self-determination and the right to their independent State;

22. *Also stresses* the need for a just resolution of the problem of Palestine refugees in conformity with its resolution 194 (III) of 11 December 1948;

23. *Calls upon* the parties to resume and accelerate direct peace negotiations towards the conclusion of a final peaceful settlement on the basis of relevant United Nations resolutions, especially of the Security Council, the terms of reference of the Madrid Conference, the road map and the Arab Peace Initiative;

24. *Urges* Member States to expedite the provision of economic, humanitarian and technical assistance to the Palestinian people and the Palestinian Authority during this critical period in order to help to alleviate the serious humanitarian situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, which is critical in the Gaza Strip, to rehabilitate the Palestinian economy and infrastructure and to support the development and strengthening of Palestinian institutions and Palestinian State-building efforts in preparation for independence;

25. *Requests* the Secretary-General to continue his efforts with the parties concerned, and in consultation with the Security Council, towards the attainment of a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine and the promotion of peace in the region and to submit to the General Assembly at its sixty-seventh session a report on these efforts and on developments on this matter.

*69th plenary meeting
30 November 2011*



General Assembly

Distr.: General
28 February 2013

Sixty-seventh session
Agenda item 37

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 30 November 2012

[without reference to a Main Committee (A/67/L.20 and Add.1)]

67/23. Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine

The General Assembly,

Recalling its relevant resolutions, including those adopted at its tenth emergency special session,

Recalling also its resolution 58/292 of 6 May 2004,

Recalling further relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolutions 242 (1967) of 22 November 1967, 338 (1973) of 22 October 1973, 1397 (2002) of 12 March 2002, 1515 (2003) of 19 November 2003, 1544 (2004) of 19 May 2004 and 1850 (2008) of 16 December 2008,

Recalling the affirmation by the Security Council of the vision of a region where two States, Israel and Palestine, live side by side within secure and recognized borders,

Noting with concern that it has been 65 years since the adoption of its resolution 181 (II) of 29 November 1947 and 45 years since the occupation of Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, in 1967,

Having considered the report of the Secretary-General submitted pursuant to the request made in its resolution 66/17 of 30 November 2011,¹

Reaffirming the permanent responsibility of the United Nations with regard to the question of Palestine until the question is resolved in all its aspects in accordance with international law and relevant resolutions,

Recalling the advisory opinion rendered on 9 July 2004 by the International Court of Justice on the legal consequences of the construction of a wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory,² and recalling also its resolutions ES-10/15 of 20 July 2004 and ES-10/17 of 15 December 2006,

¹ A/67/364-S/2012/701.

² See A/ES-10/273 and Corr.1.



Convinced that achieving a just, lasting and comprehensive settlement of the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, is imperative for the attainment of comprehensive and lasting peace and stability in the Middle East,

Stressing that the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples is among the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations,

Reaffirming the principle of the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war,

Recalling its resolution 2625 (XXV) of 24 October 1970,

Reaffirming the illegality of the Israeli settlements in the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem,

Expressing grave concern about the extremely detrimental impact of Israeli settlement policies, decisions and activities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, including on the contiguity, integrity and viability of the Territory and the efforts to resume and advance the peace process and to achieve peace in the Middle East,

Expressing grave concern also about acts of violence, intimidation and provocation by Israeli settlers against Palestinian civilians and properties, including homes, mosques, churches and agricultural lands,

Reaffirming the illegality of Israeli actions aimed at changing the status of Jerusalem, including settlement construction and expansion, home demolitions, evictions of Palestinian residents, excavations in and around religious and historic sites, and all other unilateral measures aimed at altering the character, status and demographic composition of the city and of the Territory as a whole,

Reaffirming also that the construction by Israel, the occupying Power, of a wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including in and around East Jerusalem, and its associated regime are contrary to international law,

Expressing deep concern about the continuing Israeli policy of closures and severe restrictions on the movement of persons and goods, including medical and humanitarian, via the imposition of prolonged closures and severe economic and movement restrictions that in effect amount to a blockade, as well as of checkpoints and a permit regime throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the consequent negative impact on the contiguity of the Territory and the serious socioeconomic and humanitarian situation of the Palestinian people, which is critical in the Gaza Strip, and on the efforts aimed at rehabilitating and developing the damaged Palestinian economy, while taking note of recent developments regarding the situation of access to the Gaza Strip and in the West Bank,

Recalling the mutual recognition between the Government of the State of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization, the representative of the Palestinian people,³ and the need for full compliance with the agreements concluded between the two sides,

Recalling also the endorsement by the Security Council, in resolution 1515 (2003), of the Quartet road map to a permanent two-State solution to the

³ See A/48/486-S/26560, annex.

Israeli-Palestinian conflict⁴ and the call in Council resolution 1850 (2008) for the parties to fulfil their obligations under the road map and to refrain from any steps that could undermine confidence or prejudice the outcome of negotiations, and recalling further in this regard the relevant Quartet statements, including that of 23 September 2011,

Stressing the road map obligation upon Israel to freeze settlement activity, including so-called “natural growth”, and to dismantle all settlement outposts erected since March 2001,

Recalling the Arab Peace Initiative adopted by the Council of the League of Arab States at its fourteenth session, held in Beirut on 27 and 28 March 2002,⁵

Expressing support for the agreed principles for bilateral negotiations, as affirmed by the parties in the Israeli-Palestinian Joint Understanding reached at the international conference held in Annapolis, United States of America, on 27 November 2007, aimed at concluding a peace treaty resolving all outstanding issues, including all core issues, without exception, for the achievement of a just, lasting and peaceful settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and ultimately of the Arab-Israeli conflict as a whole for the realization of a comprehensive peace in the Middle East,

Reiterating support for the convening of an international conference in Moscow, as envisioned by the Security Council in resolution 1850 (2008) and the Quartet statement of 23 September 2011, for the advancement and acceleration of a resumed peace process towards the fulfilment of its stated objectives,

Noting the important contribution to the peace process of the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General to the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Palestinian Authority, including within the framework of the activities of the Quartet,

Noting also the continuing efforts of the Quartet’s Special Representative towards the resumption of the peace process, in particular the efforts to strengthen Palestinian institutions, promote Palestinian economic development and mobilize donor support,

Welcoming the ongoing efforts of the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee for the Coordination of the International Assistance to Palestinians, under the chairmanship of Norway, and noting its recent meeting at United Nations Headquarters on 23 September 2012, at which the donor countries reconfirmed the assessment that the institutions of the Palestinian Authority are above the threshold of a functioning State in the key sectors studied and reaffirmed the necessity of continued and increased donor support for the Palestinian Authority,

Recognizing the efforts being undertaken by the Palestinian Authority, with international support, to rebuild, reform and strengthen its damaged institutions, emphasizing the need to preserve and further develop Palestinian institutions and infrastructure and commending, in this regard, the implementation of the Palestinian Authority’s August 2009 plan for constructing the institutions of an independent Palestinian State within a twenty-four-month period and the ongoing implementation of its National Development Plan, and the significant achievements made, as

⁴ S/2003/529, annex.

⁵ A/56/1026-S/2002/932, annex II, resolution 14/221.

confirmed in recent reports by international institutions, including the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the United Nations, while also expressing concern about the negative impact of the current financial crisis being faced by the Palestinian Authority,

Welcoming the continued efforts and tangible progress made in the security sector by the Palestinian Authority, calling upon the parties to continue cooperation that benefits both Palestinians and Israelis, in particular by promoting security and building confidence, and expressing the hope that such progress will be extended to all major population centres,

Reiterating its concern over the negative developments that have continued to occur in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, including the large number of deaths and injuries, mostly among Palestinian civilians, the construction and expansion of settlements and the wall, acts of violence, vandalism and brutality committed against Palestinian civilians by Israeli settlers in the West Bank, the widespread destruction of public and private Palestinian property, including religious sites, and infrastructure, the internal displacement of civilians and the serious deterioration of the socioeconomic and humanitarian conditions of the Palestinian people,

Expressing grave concern, in particular, over the crisis in the Gaza Strip as a result of the continuing prolonged Israeli closures and severe economic and movement restrictions that in effect amount to a blockade and the continuing negative repercussions of the military operations in the Gaza Strip between December 2008 and January 2009, which caused extensive loss of life and injury, particularly among Palestinian civilians, including children and women, widespread damage and destruction to Palestinian homes, properties, vital infrastructure, public institutions, including hospitals and schools, and United Nations facilities, and internal displacement of civilians,

Stressing the need for the full implementation by all parties of Security Council resolution 1860 (2009) of 8 January 2009 and General Assembly resolution ES-10/18 of 16 January 2009,

Expressing concern over continuing military actions in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including raids and arrest campaigns, and the continued imposition of hundreds of checkpoints and obstacles to movement in and around Palestinian population centres by the Israeli occupying forces, and emphasizing in this regard the need for the implementation by both sides of the Sharm el-Sheikh understandings,

Expressing grave concern about the imprisonment by Israel of thousands of Palestinians, including children, under harsh conditions,

Emphasizing the importance of the safety, protection and well-being of all civilians in the whole Middle East region, and condemning all acts of violence and terror against civilians on both sides, including the firing of rockets,

Expressing the hope for speedy progress towards Palestinian reconciliation for the restoration of Palestinian unity, under the leadership of the President of the Palestinian Authority, Mahmoud Abbas, and consistent with Palestine Liberation Organization commitments, and of the situation in the Gaza Strip to that which existed prior to June 2007, and calling for the continuation of the serious efforts being exerted by Egypt, the League of Arab States and other concerned parties towards the achievement of this aim,

Stressing the urgent need for sustained and active international involvement, including by the Quartet, to support both parties in resuming, advancing and accelerating the peace process negotiations for the achievement of a just, lasting and comprehensive peace settlement, on the basis of United Nations resolutions, the road map and the Arab Peace Initiative,

Noting the Quartet's efforts, and calling upon the parties to resume negotiations with the aim of resolving all final status issues within one year and implementing an agreement between the two sides that ends the occupation which began in 1967 and results in the independence of a democratic, contiguous and viable Palestinian State living side by side in peace and security with Israel and its other neighbours,

Taking note of the application of Palestine for admission to membership in the United Nations, submitted on 23 September 2011,⁶

Acknowledging the efforts being undertaken by civil society to promote a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine,

Recalling the findings by the International Court of Justice, in its advisory opinion, including on the urgent necessity for the United Nations as a whole to redouble its efforts to bring the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which continues to pose a threat to international peace and security, to a speedy conclusion, thereby establishing a just and lasting peace in the region,⁷

Affirming once again the right of all States in the region to live in peace within secure and internationally recognized borders,

1. *Reaffirms* the necessity of achieving a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, in all its aspects, and of intensifying all efforts towards that end, and stresses in this regard the urgency of salvaging the prospects for realizing the two-State solution of Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security within recognized borders, based on the pre-1967 borders;

2. *Also reaffirms* its full support for the Middle East peace process, based on the relevant United Nations resolutions, the terms of reference of the Madrid Conference, including the principle of land for peace, the Arab Peace Initiative adopted by the Council of the League of Arab States at its fourteenth session,⁵ and the Quartet road map to a permanent two-State solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict,⁴ and for the existing agreements between the Israeli and Palestinian sides;

3. *Stresses* the necessity for the establishment of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East, and welcomes in this regard the ongoing efforts of the Quartet and of the League of Arab States;

4. *Encourages* continued serious regional and international efforts to follow up and promote the Arab Peace Initiative, including by the Ministerial Committee formed at the Riyadh summit in March 2007;

5. *Urges* the parties to undertake, with the support of the Quartet and the international community, immediate and concrete steps in follow-up to the Israeli-Palestinian Joint Understanding reached at the international conference held in

⁶ A/66/371-S/2011/592, annex I.

⁷ A/ES-10/273 and Corr.1, advisory opinion, para. 161.

Annapolis, including through the resumption of active and serious bilateral negotiations;

6. *Calls for*, in this regard, the timely convening of an international conference in Moscow, as envisioned by the Security Council in resolution 1850 (2008), for the advancement and acceleration of a resumed peace process;

7. *Calls upon* both parties to act on the basis of international law and their previous agreements and obligations, in particular adherence to the road map, irrespective of reciprocity, in order to create the conditions necessary for the resumption and accelerated advancement of negotiations in the near term;

8. *Calls upon* the parties themselves, with the support of the Quartet and other interested parties, to exert all efforts necessary to halt the deterioration of the situation and to reverse all unilateral and unlawful measures taken on the ground since 28 September 2000;

9. *Calls upon* the parties to observe calm and restraint and to refrain from provocative actions, incitement and inflammatory rhetoric, especially in areas of religious and cultural sensitivity;

10. *Underscores* the need for the parties to take confidence-building measures aimed at improving the situation on the ground, promoting stability and fostering the peace process, including the need for the further release of prisoners following the exchange of prisoners in October and December 2011;

11. *Stresses* the need for the removal of checkpoints and other obstructions to the movement of persons and goods throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the need for respect and preservation of the territorial unity, contiguity and integrity of all of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem;

12. *Also stresses* the need for an immediate and complete cessation of all acts of violence, including military attacks, destruction and acts of terror;

13. *Reiterates its demand* for the full implementation of Security Council resolution 1860 (2009);

14. *Reiterates* the need for the full implementation by both parties of the Agreement on Movement and Access and of the Agreed Principles for the Rafah Crossing, of 15 November 2005, and the need, specifically, to allow for the sustained opening of all crossings into and out of the Gaza Strip for humanitarian supplies, movement and access, as well as for commercial flows and all necessary construction materials, which are essential for alleviating the humanitarian crisis, improving the living conditions of the Palestinian people and promoting the recovery of the Palestinian economy;

15. *Stresses*, in this regard, the urgent necessity for the advancement of reconstruction in the Gaza Strip, including through the completion of numerous suspended projects managed by the United Nations and the accelerated implementation of United Nations-led civilian reconstruction activities;

16. *Calls upon* Israel, the occupying Power, to comply strictly with its obligations under international law, including international humanitarian law, and to cease all of its measures that are contrary to international law and unilateral actions in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, that are aimed at altering the character, status and demographic composition of the Territory, including via the confiscation and de facto annexation of land, and thus at prejudging the final outcome of peace negotiations;

17. *Reiterates its demand* for the complete cessation of all Israeli settlement activities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and in the occupied Syrian Golan, and calls for the full implementation of the relevant Security Council resolutions;

18. *Stresses*, in this regard, the need for Israel forthwith to abide by its road map obligation to freeze all settlement activity, including so-called “natural growth”, and to dismantle settlement outposts erected since March 2001;

19. *Calls for* the cessation of all provocations, including by Israeli settlers, in East Jerusalem, including in and around religious sites;

20. *Demands*, accordingly, that Israel, the occupying Power, comply with its legal obligations under international law, as mentioned in the advisory opinion rendered on 9 July 2004 by the International Court of Justice² and as demanded in General Assembly resolutions ES-10/13 of 21 October 2003 and ES-10/15, and, inter alia, that it immediately cease its construction of the wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and calls upon all States Members of the United Nations to comply with their legal obligations, as mentioned in the advisory opinion;

21. *Reaffirms its commitment*, in accordance with international law, to the two-State solution of Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security within recognized borders, based on the pre-1967 borders;

22. *Stresses* the need for:

(a) The withdrawal of Israel from the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem;

(b) The realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, primarily the right to self-determination and the right to their independent State;

23. *Also stresses* the need for a just resolution of the problem of Palestine refugees in conformity with its resolution 194 (III) of 11 December 1948;

24. *Calls upon* the parties to resume and accelerate direct peace negotiations towards the conclusion of a final peaceful settlement on the basis of relevant United Nations resolutions, especially of the Security Council, the terms of reference of the Madrid Conference, the road map and the Arab Peace Initiative;

25. *Urges* Member States to expedite the provision of economic, humanitarian and technical assistance to the Palestinian people and the Palestinian Authority during this critical period in order to help to alleviate the serious humanitarian situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, which is critical in the Gaza Strip, to rehabilitate the Palestinian economy and infrastructure and to support the development and strengthening of Palestinian institutions and Palestinian State-building efforts in preparation for independence;

26. *Requests* the Secretary-General to continue his efforts with the parties concerned, and in consultation with the Security Council, towards the attainment of a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine and the promotion of peace in the region and to submit to the General Assembly at its sixty-eighth session a report on these efforts and on developments on this matter.

*47th plenary meeting
30 November 2012*



General Assembly

Distr.: General
30 January 2014

Sixty-eighth session
Agenda item 36

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 26 November 2013

[without reference to a Main Committee (A/68/L.15 and Add.1)]

68/15. Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine

The General Assembly,

Recalling its relevant resolutions, including those adopted at its tenth emergency special session,

Recalling also its resolution [58/292](#) of 6 May 2004,

Recalling further relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolutions [242 \(1967\)](#) of 22 November 1967, [338 \(1973\)](#) of 22 October 1973, [1397 \(2002\)](#) of 12 March 2002, [1515 \(2003\)](#) of 19 November 2003, [1544 \(2004\)](#) of 19 May 2004 and [1850 \(2008\)](#) of 16 December 2008,

Recalling the affirmation by the Security Council of the vision of a region where two States, Israel and Palestine, live side by side within secure and recognized borders,

Noting with concern that it has been 66 years since the adoption of its resolution 181 (II) of 29 November 1947 and 46 years since the occupation of Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, in 1967,

Having considered the report of the Secretary-General submitted pursuant to the request made in its resolution [67/23](#) of 30 November 2012,¹

Reaffirming the permanent responsibility of the United Nations with regard to the question of Palestine until the question is resolved in all its aspects in accordance with international law and relevant resolutions,

Recalling the advisory opinion rendered on 9 July 2004 by the International Court of Justice on the legal consequences of the construction of a wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory,² and recalling also its resolutions ES-10/15 of 20 July 2004 and ES-10/17 of 15 December 2006,

¹ A/68/363-S/2013/524.

² See A/ES-10/273 and Corr.1.



Convinced that achieving a just, lasting and comprehensive settlement of the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, is imperative for the attainment of comprehensive and lasting peace and stability in the Middle East,

Stressing that the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples is among the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations,

Reaffirming the principle of the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war,

Recalling its resolution 2625 (XXV) of 24 October 1970,

Reaffirming the illegality of the Israeli settlements in the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem,

Expressing grave concern about the extremely detrimental impact of Israeli settlement policies, decisions and activities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, including on the contiguity, integrity and viability of the Territory and the efforts to advance the peace process and to achieve peace in the Middle East,

Expressing grave concern also about all acts of violence, intimidation and provocation by Israeli settlers against Palestinian civilians and properties, including homes, mosques, churches and agricultural lands, and calling for accountability for the illegal actions perpetrated in this regard,

Reaffirming the illegality of Israeli actions aimed at changing the status of Jerusalem, including settlement construction and expansion, home demolitions, evictions of Palestinian residents, excavations in and around religious and historic sites, and all other unilateral measures aimed at altering the character, status and demographic composition of the city and of the Territory as a whole,

Reaffirming also that the construction by Israel, the occupying Power, of a wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including in and around East Jerusalem, and its associated regime are contrary to international law,

Encouraging all States and international organizations to continue to actively pursue policies to ensure respect for their obligations under international law with regard to all illegal Israeli practices and measures in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, particularly Israeli settlements,

Expressing deep concern about the continuing Israeli policies of closures and severe restrictions on the movement of persons and goods, including medical and humanitarian, via the imposition of prolonged closures and severe economic and movement restrictions that in effect amount to a blockade, as well as of checkpoints and a permit regime throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem,

Expressing deep concern also about the consequent negative impact of such policies on the contiguity of the Territory and the serious socioeconomic and humanitarian situation of the Palestinian people, which is critical in the Gaza Strip, and on the efforts aimed at rehabilitating and developing the damaged Palestinian economy, despite some measures taken by Israel in 2012 and 2013,

Recalling the mutual recognition 20 years ago between the Government of the State of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization, the representative of the Palestinian people,³ and the need for full compliance with the agreements concluded between the two sides,

Recalling also the endorsement by the Security Council, in resolution [1515 \(2003\)](#), of the Quartet road map to a permanent two-State solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict⁴ and the call in Council resolution [1850 \(2008\)](#) for the parties to fulfil their obligations under the road map and to refrain from any steps that could undermine confidence or prejudice the outcome of negotiations, and recalling further in this regard the relevant Quartet statements, including those of 23 September 2011 and 27 September 2013,

Stressing the road map obligation upon Israel to freeze settlement activity, including so-called “natural growth”, and to dismantle all settlement outposts erected since March 2001,

Recalling the Arab Peace Initiative adopted by the Council of the League of Arab States at its fourteenth session, held in Beirut on 27 and 28 March 2002,⁵

Expressing support for the agreed principles for bilateral negotiations, as affirmed by the parties in the Israeli-Palestinian Joint Understanding reached at the international conference held in Annapolis, United States of America, on 27 November 2007, aimed at concluding a peace treaty resolving all outstanding issues, including all core issues, without exception, for the achievement of a just, lasting and peaceful settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and ultimately of the Arab-Israeli conflict as a whole for the realization of a comprehensive peace in the Middle East,

Reiterating support for the convening of an international conference in Moscow, as envisioned by the Security Council in resolution [1850 \(2008\)](#) and the Quartet statement of 23 September 2011, for the advancement and acceleration of a resumed peace process towards the fulfilment of its stated objectives,

Noting the important contribution to the peace process of the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General to the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Palestinian Authority, including within the framework of the activities of the Quartet,

Noting also the continuing efforts of the Quartet’s Special Representative, in particular the efforts to strengthen Palestinian institutions, promote Palestinian economic development and mobilize donor support,

Welcoming the ongoing efforts of the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee for the Coordination of the International Assistance to Palestinians, under the chairmanship of Norway, and noting its recent meeting at United Nations Headquarters on 25 September 2013, at which donor countries reaffirmed the necessity of continued and increased donor support in this critical period,

Recognizing the efforts being undertaken by the Government of the State of Palestine, with international support, to reform, develop and strengthen its institutions, emphasizing the need to preserve and further develop Palestinian

³ See A/48/486-S/26560, annex.

⁴ S/2003/529, annex.

⁵ A/56/1026-S/2002/932, annex II, resolution 14/221.

institutions and infrastructure, and commending in this regard the implementation of the August 2009 plan of the Palestinian Authority for constructing the institutions of an independent Palestinian State and the ongoing implementation of the National Development Plan on governance, economy, social development and infrastructure and the significant achievements made, as confirmed by the positive assessments made by international institutions regarding readiness for statehood, including by the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the United Nations and the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee, while also expressing concern about the negative impact of the current financial crisis being faced by the Government of the State of Palestine,

Welcoming the launch, on 15 August 2013, of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework, which is aimed, inter alia, at enhancing developmental support and assistance to the Palestinian people and strengthening institutional capacity in line with Palestinian national priorities,

Welcoming also the continued efforts and tangible progress made in the Palestinian security sector, calling upon the parties to continue cooperation that benefits both Palestinians and Israelis, in particular by promoting security and building confidence, and expressing the hope that such progress will be extended to all major population centres,

Reiterating its concern over the negative developments that have continued to occur in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, including the large number of deaths and injuries, mostly among Palestinian civilians, the construction and expansion of settlements and the wall, the arbitrary arrest and detention of more Palestinian civilians, the acts of violence, vandalism and brutality committed against Palestinian civilians by Israeli settlers in the West Bank, the widespread destruction of public and private Palestinian property, including religious sites, and infrastructure, the internal forced displacement of civilians and the consequent deterioration of the socioeconomic and humanitarian conditions of the Palestinian people,

Expressing grave concern, in particular, over the continuing crisis in the Gaza Strip as a result of the prolonged Israeli closures and severe economic and movement restrictions that in effect amount to a blockade and the continuing negative repercussions of the military operations in the Gaza Strip in November 2012 and between December 2008 and January 2009, which caused extensive loss of life and injury, particularly among Palestinian civilians, including children and women, widespread damage and destruction to Palestinian homes, properties, vital infrastructure, public institutions, including hospitals and schools, and United Nations facilities, and internal displacement of civilians,

Stressing the need for the full implementation by all parties of Security Council resolution [1860 \(2009\)](#) of 8 January 2009 and General Assembly resolution ES-10/18 of 16 January 2009,

Expressing concern over the continued imposition of hundreds of checkpoints and obstacles to movement in and around Palestinian population centres by the Israeli occupying forces, and emphasizing in this regard the need for the implementation by both sides of the Sharm el-Sheikh understandings,

Expressing grave concern about the imprisonment and detention by Israel of thousands of Palestinians, including children, under harsh conditions,

Emphasizing the importance of the safety, protection and well-being of all civilians in the whole Middle East region, and condemning all acts of violence and terror against civilians on both sides, including the firing of rockets,

Expressing the hope for tangible progress towards Palestinian reconciliation for the restoration of Palestinian unity, under the leadership of the President, Mahmoud Abbas, and consistent with Palestine Liberation Organization commitments, and of the situation in the Gaza Strip to that which existed prior to June 2007, and calling for the continuation of the serious efforts being exerted by Egypt, the League of Arab States and other concerned parties towards the achievement of this aim,

Stressing the urgent need for sustained and active international involvement, including by the Quartet, including through the proposed monthly meetings of its envoys and initiatives to support the parties in building a climate for peace, to assist the parties in advancing and accelerating the peace process negotiations for the achievement of a just, lasting and comprehensive peace settlement that ends the occupation which began in 1967 and results in the independence of a democratic, contiguous and viable State of Palestine living side by side in peace and security with Israel and its other neighbours, on the basis of relevant United Nations resolutions, the road map and the Arab Peace Initiative,

Taking note of the application of Palestine for admission to membership in the United Nations, submitted on 23 September 2011,⁶

Taking note also of its resolution 67/19 of 29 November 2012, by which, *inter alia*, Palestine was accorded non-member observer State status in the United Nations, and taking note of the follow-up report of the Secretary-General,⁷

Acknowledging the efforts being undertaken by civil society to promote a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine,

Recalling the findings by the International Court of Justice, in its advisory opinion, including on the urgent necessity for the United Nations as a whole to redouble its efforts to bring the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which continues to pose a threat to international peace and security, to a speedy conclusion, thereby establishing a just and lasting peace in the region,⁸

Affirming once again the right of all States in the region to live in peace within secure and internationally recognized borders,

1. *Reaffirms* the necessity of achieving a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, in all its aspects, and of intensifying all efforts towards that end, and stresses in this regard the urgency of salvaging the prospects for realizing the two-State solution of Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security within recognized borders, based on the pre-1967 borders;

2. *Reaffirms its full support* for the Middle East peace process and the establishment of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace, based on the relevant United Nations resolutions, the terms of reference of the Madrid Conference, including the principle of land for peace, the Arab Peace Initiative adopted by the Council of the League of Arab States at its fourteenth session,⁵ and the Quartet road map to a permanent two-State solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict,⁴ and for the existing agreements between the Israeli and Palestinian sides;

⁶ A/66/371-S/2011/592, annex I.

⁷ A/67/738.

⁸ A/ES-10/273 and Corr.1, advisory opinion, para. 161.

3. *Welcomes* the resumption, on 29 July 2013, of Israeli-Palestinian negotiations aimed at resolving all core final status issues and concluding a final peace agreement within the agreed nine-month time frame, and expresses appreciation in this regard for the efforts and support of the United States of America, the European Union, the Russian Federation and the United Nations, as the members of the Quartet, and of the League of Arab States and all other concerned States;

4. *Encourages*, in this regard, continued serious regional and international efforts to follow up and promote the Arab Peace Initiative, including by the Ministerial Committee formed at the Riyadh summit in March 2007;

5. *Urges* the parties to undertake, with the support of the Quartet and the international community, immediate and concrete steps in follow-up to the Israeli-Palestinian Joint Understanding reached at the international conference held in Annapolis;

6. *Calls for*, in this regard, the timely convening of an international conference in Moscow, as envisioned by the Security Council in resolution [1850 \(2008\)](#), for the advancement and acceleration of the resumed peace process;

7. *Calls upon* both parties to act on the basis of international law and their previous agreements and obligations, in particular adherence to the road map, irrespective of reciprocity, in order to create the conditions necessary for the advancement of negotiations within the nine-month time frame agreed to at the resumption of negotiations;

8. *Calls upon* the parties themselves, with the support of the Quartet and other interested parties, to exert all efforts necessary to halt the deterioration of the situation, to reverse all unilateral and unlawful measures taken on the ground since 28 September 2000, to take every possible step to promote conditions conducive to the success of the negotiating process and to refrain from actions that undermine trust or prejudge final status issues;

9. *Calls upon* the parties to observe calm and restraint and to refrain from provocative actions, incitement and inflammatory rhetoric, especially in areas of religious and cultural sensitivity, including in East Jerusalem;

10. *Underscores* the need for the parties to take confidence-building measures aimed at improving the situation on the ground, promoting stability and fostering the peace process, including the need for the further release of prisoners, and notes in this regard the exchange of prisoners in October and December 2011 and the release of prisoners by Israel in August and October 2013;

11. *Stresses* the need for the removal of checkpoints and other obstructions to the movement of persons and goods throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the need for respect and preservation of the territorial unity, contiguity and integrity of all of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem;

12. *Also stresses* the need for an immediate and complete cessation of all acts of violence, including military attacks, destruction and acts of terror;

13. *Reiterates its demand* for the full implementation of Security Council resolution [1860 \(2009\)](#);

14. *Reiterates* the need for the full implementation by both parties of the Agreement on Movement and Access and of the Agreed Principles for the Rafah

Crossing, of 15 November 2005, and the need, specifically, to allow for the sustained opening of all crossings into and out of the Gaza Strip for humanitarian supplies, movement and access, as well as for commercial flows and all necessary construction materials, and stresses the urgent need to promote reconstruction, including through the implementation of United Nations-led projects and civilian reconstruction activities, all of which are essential for alleviating the humanitarian crisis, improving the living conditions of the Palestinian people and promoting the recovery of the Palestinian economy;

15. *Calls upon* Israel, the occupying Power, to comply strictly with its obligations under international law, including international humanitarian law, and to cease all of its measures that are contrary to international law and all unilateral actions in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, that are aimed at altering the character, status and demographic composition of the Territory, including via the confiscation and de facto annexation of land, and thus at prejudging the final outcome of peace negotiations;

16. *Reiterates its demand* for the complete cessation of all Israeli settlement activities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and in the occupied Syrian Golan, and calls for the full implementation of the relevant Security Council resolutions;

17. *Stresses*, in this regard, the need for Israel forthwith to abide by its road map obligation to freeze all settlement activity, including so-called “natural growth”, and to dismantle settlement outposts erected since March 2001;

18. *Calls for* the cessation of all provocations, including by Israeli settlers, in East Jerusalem, including in and around religious sites;

19. *Demands*, accordingly, that Israel, the occupying Power, comply with its legal obligations under international law, as mentioned in the advisory opinion rendered on 9 July 2004 by the International Court of Justice² and as demanded in General Assembly resolutions ES-10/13 of 21 October 2003 and ES-10/15, and, inter alia, that it immediately cease its construction of the wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and calls upon all States Members of the United Nations to comply with their legal obligations, as mentioned in the advisory opinion;

20. *Reaffirms its commitment*, in accordance with international law, to the two-State solution of Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security within recognized borders, based on the pre-1967 borders;

21. *Stresses* the need for:

(a) The withdrawal of Israel from the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem;

(b) The realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, primarily the right to self-determination and the right to their independent State;

22. *Also stresses* the need for a just resolution of the problem of Palestine refugees in conformity with its resolution 194 (III) of 11 December 1948;

23. *Calls upon* the parties to continue urgently direct peace negotiations towards the conclusion of a final peaceful settlement on the basis of relevant United Nations resolutions, especially of the Security Council, the terms of reference of the Madrid Conference, the road map and the Arab Peace Initiative;

24. *Urges* Member States to expedite the provision of economic, humanitarian and technical assistance to the Palestinian people and the Government of the State of Palestine during this critical period in order to help to alleviate the serious humanitarian situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, which is critical in the Gaza Strip, to rehabilitate the Palestinian economy and infrastructure and to support the development and strengthening of Palestinian institutions and Palestinian State-building efforts in preparation for independence;

25. *Requests* the Secretary-General to continue his efforts with the parties concerned, and in consultation with the Security Council, towards the attainment of a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine and the promotion of peace in the region and to submit to the General Assembly at its sixty-ninth session a report on these efforts and on developments on this matter.

*58th plenary meeting
26 November 2013*



General Assembly

Distr.: General
12 December 2014

Sixty-ninth session
Agenda item 36

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 25 November 2014

[without reference to a Main Committee (A/69/L.24 and Add.1)]

69/23. Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine

The General Assembly,

Recalling its relevant resolutions, including those adopted at its tenth emergency special session,

Recalling also its resolution 58/292 of 6 May 2004,

Recalling further relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolutions 242 (1967) of 22 November 1967, 338 (1973) of 22 October 1973, 1397 (2002) of 12 March 2002, 1515 (2003) of 19 November 2003, 1544 (2004) of 19 May 2004 and 1850 (2008) of 16 December 2008,

Recalling the affirmation by the Security Council of the vision of a region where two States, Israel and Palestine, live side by side within secure and recognized borders,

Noting with concern that it has been 67 years since the adoption of its resolution 181 (II) of 29 November 1947 and 47 years since the occupation of Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, in 1967,

Having considered the report of the Secretary-General submitted pursuant to the request made in its resolution 68/15 of 26 November 2013,¹

Reaffirming the permanent responsibility of the United Nations with regard to the question of Palestine until the question is resolved in all its aspects in accordance with international law and relevant resolutions,

Recalling the advisory opinion rendered on 9 July 2004 by the International Court of Justice on the legal consequences of the construction of a wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory,² and recalling also its resolutions ES-10/15 of 20 July 2004 and ES-10/17 of 15 December 2006,

Convinced that achieving a just, lasting and comprehensive settlement of the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, is imperative for the attainment of comprehensive and lasting peace and stability in the Middle East,

¹ A/69/371-S/2014/650.

² See A/ES-10/273 and Corr.1.



Stressing that the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples is among the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations,

Reaffirming the principle of the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war,

Reaffirming also the applicability of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949,³ to the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem,

Recalling its resolution 2625 (XXV) of 24 October 1970, and reiterating the importance of maintaining and strengthening international peace founded upon freedom, equality, justice and respect for fundamental human rights and of developing friendly relations among nations irrespective of their political, economic and social systems or the level of their development,

Reaffirming the illegality of the Israeli settlements in the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem,

Expressing grave concern about the extremely detrimental impact of Israeli settlement policies, decisions and activities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, including on the contiguity, integrity and viability of the Territory and the efforts to advance a peaceful settlement in the Middle East,

Expressing grave concern also about all acts of violence, intimidation and provocation by Israeli settlers against Palestinian civilians and properties, including homes, mosques, churches and agricultural lands, and calling for accountability for the illegal actions perpetrated in this regard,

Reaffirming the illegality of Israeli actions aimed at changing the status of Jerusalem, including settlement construction and expansion, home demolitions, evictions of Palestinian residents, excavations in and around religious and historic sites, and all other unilateral measures aimed at altering the character, status and demographic composition of the city and of the Territory as a whole,

Reaffirming also that the construction by Israel, the occupying Power, of a wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including in and around East Jerusalem, and its associated regime are contrary to international law,

Encouraging all States and international organizations to continue to actively pursue policies to ensure respect for their obligations under international law with regard to all illegal Israeli practices and measures in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, particularly Israeli settlements,

Expressing deep concern about the continuing Israeli policies of closures and severe restrictions on the movement of persons and goods, including medical and humanitarian, via the imposition of prolonged closures and severe economic and movement restrictions that in effect amount to a blockade, as well as of checkpoints and a permit regime throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem,

Expressing deep concern also about the consequent negative impact of such policies on the contiguity of the Territory and the serious socioeconomic and humanitarian situation of the Palestinian people, which is a disastrous humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip, and on the efforts aimed at rehabilitating and developing the

³ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 75, No. 973.

damaged Palestinian economy, while taking note of developments regarding the situation of access there, particularly the recent trilateral agreement facilitated by the United Nations in this regard,

Recalling the mutual recognition 21 years ago between the Government of the State of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization, the representative of the Palestinian people,⁴ and the need for full compliance with the agreements concluded between the two sides,

Recalling also the endorsement by the Security Council, in resolution 1515 (2003), of the Quartet road map to a permanent two-State solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict⁵ and the call in Council resolution 1850 (2008) for the parties to fulfil their obligations under the road map and to refrain from any steps that could undermine confidence or prejudice the outcome of negotiations on a final peace settlement,

Stressing the road map obligation upon Israel to freeze settlement activity, including so-called “natural growth”, and to dismantle all settlement outposts erected since March 2001,

Recalling the Arab Peace Initiative adopted by the Council of the League of Arab States at its fourteenth session, held in Beirut on 27 and 28 March 2002,⁶

Urging renewed efforts by the international community aimed at advancing and accelerating the conclusion of a peace treaty to attain without delay an end to the Israeli occupation that began in 1967 by resolving all outstanding issues, including all core issues, without exception, for a just, lasting and peaceful settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, in accordance with the internationally recognized basis of the two-State solution, and ultimately of the Arab-Israeli conflict as a whole for the realization of a comprehensive peace in the Middle East,

Reiterating support for the convening of an international conference in Moscow, as envisioned by the Security Council in resolution 1850 (2008) and the Quartet statement of 23 September 2011, for the advancement and acceleration of the peace efforts towards the fulfilment of its stated objectives,

Noting the important contribution to peace efforts of the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General to the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Palestinian Authority, including within the framework of the activities of the Quartet and with regard to the recent trilateral agreement regarding the Gaza Strip,

Noting also the continuing efforts of the Quartet’s Special Representative, in particular the efforts to strengthen Palestinian institutions, promote Palestinian economic development and mobilize donor support,

Welcoming the ongoing efforts of the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee for the Coordination of the International Assistance to Palestinians, under the chairmanship of Norway, and noting its recent meeting at United Nations Headquarters on 22 September 2014, at which donor countries reaffirmed the necessity of continued and increased donor support in this critical period, in particular for urgently addressing the disastrous humanitarian situation and immense reconstruction and recovery needs in the Gaza Strip,

⁴ See A/48/486-S/26560, annex.

⁵ S/2003/529, annex.

⁶ A/56/1026-S/2002/932, annex II, resolution 14/221.

Recognizing the efforts being undertaken by the Palestinian Government, with international support, to reform, develop and strengthen its institutions, emphasizing the need to preserve and further develop Palestinian institutions and infrastructure, and commending in this regard the ongoing efforts to develop the institutions of an independent Palestinian State, including through the implementation of the Palestinian National Development Plan on governance, economy, social development and infrastructure (2014–2016), including the National Strategic Framework for Development Policies and Interventions in Area C, and the significant achievements made, as confirmed by the positive assessments made by international institutions regarding readiness for statehood, including by the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the United Nations and the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee, while also expressing concern about the negative impact of the current financial crisis being faced by the Palestinian Government,

Recognizing also the positive contribution of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework, which is aimed, inter alia, at enhancing development support and assistance to the Palestinian people and strengthening institutional capacity in line with Palestinian national priorities,

Welcoming the convening of the Cairo International Conference on Palestine: Reconstructing Gaza, on 12 October 2014, and urging the timely and full disbursement of pledges for expediting the provision of humanitarian assistance and the reconstruction process,

Welcoming also the ministerial meetings of the Conference on Cooperation among East Asian Countries for Palestinian Development convened in Tokyo in February 2013 and Jakarta in March 2014 as a forum for the mobilization of political and economic assistance, including via exchanges of expertise and lessons learned, in support of Palestinian development,

Recognizing the continued efforts and tangible progress made in the Palestinian security sector, noting the continued cooperation that benefits both Palestinians and Israelis, in particular by promoting security and building confidence, and expressing the hope that such progress will be extended to all major population centres,

Gravely concerned over the negative developments that have continued to occur in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, including the escalation of violence and any excessive use of force, resulting in a large number of deaths and injuries, mostly among Palestinian civilians, including children and women, the construction and expansion of settlements and the wall, the arbitrary arrest and detention of more Palestinian civilians, the acts of violence, vandalism and brutality committed against Palestinian civilians by Israeli settlers in the West Bank, the widespread destruction of public and private Palestinian property, including religious sites, and infrastructure, the internal forced displacement of civilians, especially among the Bedouin community, and the consequent deterioration of the socioeconomic and humanitarian conditions of the Palestinian people,

Deploring the conflict in and around the Gaza Strip in July and August 2014 and the civilian casualties caused, including the killing and injury of thousands of Palestinian civilians, including children, women and the elderly, and the widespread destruction of thousands of homes and civilian infrastructure, including schools, hospitals, water, sanitation and electricity networks, economic, industrial and agricultural properties, public institutions, religious sites and United Nations

schools and facilities, as well as the internal displacement of hundreds of thousands of civilians and any violations of international law, including humanitarian and human rights law, in this regard,

Expressing grave concern over the disastrous humanitarian situation and socioeconomic conditions in the Gaza Strip as a result of the prolonged Israeli closures and severe economic and movement restrictions that in effect amount to a blockade and the continuing negative repercussions of the military operations in the Gaza Strip in July and August 2014, in November 2012 and between December 2008 and January 2009, particularly as a result of the widespread destruction and trauma inflicted,

Recalling the statement of the President of the Security Council of 28 July 2014,⁷

Stressing the need for calm and restraint by the parties, including by consolidating the ceasefire agreement of 26 August 2014, achieved under the auspices of Egypt, to halt the deterioration of the situation,

Reiterating the need for the full implementation by all parties of Security Council resolution 1860 (2009) of 8 January 2009 and General Assembly resolution ES-10/18 of 16 January 2009,

Stressing that the situation in the Gaza Strip is unsustainable and that a durable ceasefire agreement must lead to a fundamental improvement in the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip, including through the sustained and regular opening of crossing points, and ensure the safety and well-being of civilians on both sides,

Affirming the need to support the Palestinian Government of national consensus in its assumption of full government responsibilities in both the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, in all fields, as well as through its presence at Gaza's crossing points,

Expressing concern over the continued imposition of hundreds of checkpoints and obstacles to movement in and around Palestinian population centres by the Israeli occupying forces, and emphasizing in this regard the need for the implementation by both sides of the Sharm el-Sheikh understandings,

Expressing grave concern about the imprisonment and detention by Israel of thousands of Palestinians, including children, under harsh conditions,

Emphasizing the importance of the safety, protection and well-being of all civilians in the whole Middle East region, and condemning all acts of violence and terror against civilians on both sides, including the firing of rockets,

Stressing the need for measures to be taken to guarantee the safety and protection of the Palestinian civilian population throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory,

Welcoming the formation of the Palestinian Government of national consensus under the leadership of the President, Mahmoud Abbas, consistent with Palestine Liberation Organization commitments and the Quartet principles, and emphasizing the need for respect for and the preservation of the territorial integrity and unity of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem,

⁷ S/PRST/2014/13.

Stressing the urgent need for sustained and active international involvement, including by the Quartet, and initiatives to support the parties in building a climate for peace, to assist the parties in advancing and accelerating the peace process negotiations for the achievement of a just, lasting and comprehensive peace settlement that ends the occupation which began in 1967 and results in the independence of a democratic, contiguous and viable State of Palestine living side by side in peace and security with Israel and its other neighbours, on the basis of relevant United Nations resolutions, the terms of reference of the Madrid Conference, the road map and the Arab Peace Initiative,

Taking note of the application of Palestine for admission to membership in the United Nations, submitted on 23 September 2011,⁸

Taking note also of its resolution 67/19 of 29 November 2012, by which, inter alia, Palestine was accorded non-member observer State status in the United Nations, and taking note of the follow-up report of the Secretary-General,⁹

Noting the accession by Palestine, on 1 April 2014, to several human rights treaties and the core humanitarian law conventions,

Acknowledging the efforts being undertaken by civil society to promote a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine,

Recalling the findings by the International Court of Justice, in its advisory opinion, including on the urgent necessity for the United Nations as a whole to redouble its efforts to bring the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which continues to pose a threat to international peace and security, to a speedy conclusion, thereby establishing a just and lasting peace in the region,¹⁰

Stressing the urgency of achieving without delay an end to the Israeli occupation that began in 1967,

Affirming once again the right of all States in the region to live in peace within secure and internationally recognized borders,

1. *Reaffirms* the necessity of achieving a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, in all its aspects, and of intensifying all efforts towards that end, and stresses in this regard the urgency of salvaging the prospects for realizing the two-State solution of Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security within recognized borders, based on the pre-1967 borders;

2. *Calls for* the intensification of efforts by the parties, including through negotiations, with the support of the international community, towards the conclusion of a final peace settlement;

3. *Stresses* the need for increased and renewed international efforts to achieve a comprehensive, just and lasting peace, based on the relevant United Nations resolutions, the terms of reference of the Madrid Conference, including the principle of land for peace, the Arab Peace Initiative adopted by the Council of the League of Arab States at its fourteenth session,⁶ the Quartet road map to a permanent two-State solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict,⁵ and the existing agreements between the Israeli and Palestinian sides;

⁸ A/66/371-S/2011/592, annex I.

⁹ A/67/738.

¹⁰ A/ES-10/273 and Corr.1, advisory opinion, para. 161.

4. *Also stresses* the need for a resumption of negotiations based on clear parameters and with a defined time frame aimed at expediting the realization of a just, lasting and comprehensive settlement, and in this regard encourages serious efforts by the United States of America, the European Union, the Russian Federation and the United Nations, as members of the Quartet, and by the League of Arab States and all other concerned States;

5. *Encourages* continued serious regional and international efforts to follow up and promote the Arab Peace Initiative, including by the Ministerial Committee formed at the Riyadh summit in March 2007;

6. *Calls for*, in this regard, the timely convening of an international conference in Moscow, as envisioned by the Security Council in resolution 1850 (2008), for the advancement and acceleration of the achievement of a just, lasting and comprehensive peace settlement;

7. *Calls upon* both parties to act responsibly on the basis of international law and their previous agreements and obligations, in particular adherence to the road map, irrespective of reciprocity, in order to create the conditions necessary for the advancement of peace efforts;

8. *Calls upon* the parties themselves, with the support of the Quartet and other interested parties, to exert all efforts necessary to halt the deterioration of the situation, to reverse all unilateral and unlawful measures taken on the ground since 28 September 2000, to take every possible step to promote conditions conducive to the success of peace negotiations and to refrain from actions that undermine trust or prejudice final status issues;

9. *Calls upon* the parties to observe calm and restraint and to refrain from provocative actions, incitement and inflammatory rhetoric, especially in areas of religious and cultural sensitivity, including in East Jerusalem;

10. *Underscores* the need for the parties to take confidence-building measures aimed at improving the situation on the ground, promoting stability, building trust and fostering the peace process, including the need for the further release of prisoners and an end to arbitrary arrests and detentions, and notes in this regard the recent release of prisoners;

11. *Stresses* the need for the removal of checkpoints and other obstructions to the movement of persons and goods throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the need for respect and preservation of the territorial unity, contiguity and integrity of all of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem;

12. *Also stresses* the need for an immediate and complete cessation of all acts of violence, including military attacks, destruction and acts of terror;

13. *Reiterates its demand* for the full implementation of Security Council resolution 1860 (2009);

14. *Reiterates* the need for the full implementation by both parties of the Agreement on Movement and Access and of the Agreed Principles for the Rafah Crossing, of 15 November 2005, and the need, specifically, to allow for the sustained opening of all crossings into and out of the Gaza Strip for humanitarian supplies, movement and access, as well as for commercial flows and all necessary construction materials, and stresses the urgent need to promote reconstruction, including through the implementation of United Nations-led projects and civilian reconstruction activities, all of which are essential for alleviating the disastrous

humanitarian situation, including the impact of the large-scale displacement of civilians in July and August 2014, improving the living conditions of the Palestinian people and promoting the recovery of the Palestinian economy;

15. *Calls upon* Israel, the occupying Power, to comply strictly with its obligations under international law, including international humanitarian law, and to cease all of its measures that are contrary to international law and all unilateral actions in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, that are aimed at altering the character, status and demographic composition of the Territory, including via the confiscation and de facto annexation of land, and thus at prejudging the final outcome of peace negotiations, with a view to achieving without delay an end to the Israeli occupation that began in 1967;

16. *Reiterates its demand* for the complete cessation of all Israeli settlement activities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and in the occupied Syrian Golan, and calls for the full implementation of the relevant Security Council resolutions;

17. *Stresses*, in this regard, the need for Israel forthwith to abide by its road map obligation to freeze all settlement activity, including so-called “natural growth”, and to dismantle settlement outposts erected since March 2001;

18. *Calls for* the cessation of all provocations, including by Israeli settlers, in East Jerusalem, including in and around religious sites;

19. *Demands*, accordingly, that Israel, the occupying Power, comply with its legal obligations under international law, as mentioned in the advisory opinion rendered on 9 July 2004 by the International Court of Justice² and as demanded in General Assembly resolutions ES-10/13 of 21 October 2003 and ES-10/15, and, inter alia, that it immediately cease its construction of the wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and calls upon all States Members of the United Nations to comply with their legal obligations, as mentioned in the advisory opinion;

20. *Reaffirms its commitment*, in accordance with international law, to the two-State solution of Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security within recognized borders, based on the pre-1967 borders;

21. *Stresses* the need for:

(a) The withdrawal of Israel from the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem;

(b) The realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, primarily the right to self-determination and the right to their independent State;

22. *Also stresses* the need for a just resolution of the problem of Palestine refugees in conformity with its resolution 194 (III) of 11 December 1948;

23. *Urges* Member States to expedite the provision of economic, humanitarian and technical assistance to the Palestinian people and the Palestinian Government during this critical period in order to help to alleviate the serious humanitarian situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, which is disastrous in the Gaza Strip, to rehabilitate the Palestinian economy and infrastructure and to support the development and strengthening of Palestinian institutions and Palestinian State-building efforts in preparation for independence;

24. *Requests* the Secretary-General to continue his efforts with the parties concerned, and in consultation with the Security Council, towards the attainment of a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine and the promotion of peace in the region and to submit to the General Assembly at its seventieth session a report on these efforts and on developments on this matter.

*61st plenary meeting
25 November 2014*



General Assembly

Distr.: General
4 December 2015

Seventieth session
Agenda item 38

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 24 November 2015

[without reference to a Main Committee (A/70/L.13 and Add.1)]

70/15. Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine

The General Assembly,

Recalling its relevant resolutions, including those adopted at its tenth emergency special session,

Recalling also its resolution 58/292 of 6 May 2004,

Recalling further relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolutions 242 (1967) of 22 November 1967, 338 (1973) of 22 October 1973, 1397 (2002) of 12 March 2002, 1515 (2003) of 19 November 2003, 1544 (2004) of 19 May 2004 and 1850 (2008) of 16 December 2008,

Recalling the affirmation by the Security Council of the vision of a region where two States, Israel and Palestine, live side by side within secure and recognized borders,

Noting with concern that it has been 68 years since the adoption of its resolution 181 (II) of 29 November 1947 and 48 years since the occupation of Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, in 1967,

Having considered the report of the Secretary-General submitted pursuant to the request made in its resolution 69/23 of 25 November 2014,¹

Reaffirming the permanent responsibility of the United Nations with regard to the question of Palestine until the question is resolved in all its aspects in accordance with international law and relevant resolutions,

Recalling the advisory opinion rendered on 9 July 2004 by the International Court of Justice on the legal consequences of the construction of a wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory,² and recalling also its resolutions ES-10/15 of 20 July 2004 and ES-10/17 of 15 December 2006,

Convinced that achieving a just, lasting and comprehensive settlement of the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, is imperative for the attainment of comprehensive and lasting peace and stability in the Middle East,

¹ A/70/354-S/2015/677.

² See A/ES-10/273 and Corr.1.



Stressing that the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples is among the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations,

Reaffirming the principle of the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war,

Reaffirming also the applicability of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949,³ to the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem,

Recalling its resolution 2625 (XXV) of 24 October 1970, and reiterating the importance of maintaining and strengthening international peace founded upon freedom, equality, justice and respect for fundamental human rights and of developing friendly relations among nations irrespective of their political, economic and social systems or the level of their development,

Reaffirming the illegality of the Israeli settlements in the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem,

Expressing grave concern about the extremely detrimental impact of Israeli settlement policies, decisions and activities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, including on the contiguity, integrity and viability of the Territory, the viability of the two-State solution based on the pre-1967 borders and the efforts to advance a peaceful settlement in the Middle East,

Expressing grave concern also about all acts of violence, intimidation and provocation by Israeli settlers against Palestinian civilians, including children, and properties, including homes, mosques, churches and agricultural lands, condemning acts of terror by several extremist Israeli settlers, and calling for accountability for the illegal actions perpetrated in this regard,

Reaffirming the illegality of Israeli actions aimed at changing the status of Jerusalem, including settlement construction and expansion, home demolitions, evictions of Palestinian residents, excavations in and around religious and historic sites, and all other unilateral measures aimed at altering the character, status and demographic composition of the city and of the Territory as a whole, and demanding their immediate cessation,

Expressing its grave concern, in particular, about tensions, provocations and incitement regarding the holy places of Jerusalem, including the Haram al-Sharif, and urging restraint and respect for the sanctity of the holy sites by all sides,

Reaffirming that the construction by Israel, the occupying Power, of a wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including in and around East Jerusalem, and its associated regime are contrary to international law,

Encouraging all States and international organizations to continue to actively pursue policies to ensure respect for their obligations under international law with regard to all illegal Israeli practices and measures in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, particularly Israeli settlements,

Expressing deep concern about the continuing Israeli policies of closures and severe restrictions on the movement of persons and goods, including medical and humanitarian, via the imposition of prolonged closures and severe economic and

³ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 75, No. 973.

movement restrictions that in effect amount to a blockade, as well as of checkpoints and a permit regime throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem,

Expressing deep concern also about the consequent negative impact of such policies on the contiguity of the Territory and the serious socioeconomic and humanitarian situation of the Palestinian people, which is a disastrous humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip, and on the efforts aimed at rehabilitating and developing the damaged Palestinian economy, while taking note of developments regarding the situation of access there based on the trilateral agreement facilitated by the United Nations in this regard and on the resumption of some trade from Gaza to the West Bank for the first time since 2007, and calling for the full lifting of restrictions,

Recalling the mutual recognition 22 years ago between the Government of the State of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization, the representative of the Palestinian people,⁴ and the need for full compliance with the agreements concluded between the two sides,

Recalling also the endorsement by the Security Council, in resolution 1515 (2003), of the Quartet road map to a permanent two-State solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict⁵ and the call in Council resolution 1850 (2008) for the parties to fulfil their obligations under the road map and to refrain from any steps that could undermine confidence or prejudice the outcome of negotiations on a final peace settlement,

Stressing the road map obligation upon Israel to freeze settlement activity, including so-called “natural growth”, and to dismantle all settlement outposts erected since March 2001,

Recalling the Arab Peace Initiative, adopted by the Council of the League of Arab States at its fourteenth session, held in Beirut on 27 and 28 March 2002,⁶

Urging renewed efforts by the international community aimed at advancing and accelerating the conclusion of a peace treaty to attain without delay an end to the Israeli occupation that began in 1967 by resolving all outstanding issues, including all core issues, without exception, for a just, lasting and peaceful settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, in accordance with the internationally recognized basis of the two-State solution, and ultimately of the Arab-Israeli conflict as a whole for the realization of a comprehensive peace in the Middle East,

Reiterating support for the convening of an international conference in Moscow, as envisioned by the Security Council in resolution 1850 (2008) and the Quartet statement of 23 September 2011, for the advancement and acceleration of the peace efforts towards the fulfilment of its stated objectives,

Noting the important contribution to peace efforts of the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General to the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Palestinian Authority, including within the framework of the activities of the Quartet and with regard to the recent trilateral agreement regarding the Gaza Strip,

Welcoming the ongoing efforts of the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee for the Coordination of the International Assistance to Palestinians, under the chairmanship of Norway, and noting its recent meeting at United Nations Headquarters on

⁴ See A/48/486-S/26560, annex.

⁵ S/2003/529, annex.

⁶ A/56/1026-S/2002/932, annex II, resolution 14/221.

30 September 2015, at which donor countries reaffirmed the necessity of continued and increased donor support in this critical period for urgently addressing the immense humanitarian, reconstruction and recovery needs in the Gaza Strip and furthering Palestinian economic recovery and development,

Recognizing the efforts being undertaken by the Palestinian Government, with international support, to reform, develop and strengthen its institutions and infrastructure, emphasizing the need to preserve and further develop Palestinian institutions and infrastructure, despite the obstacles presented by the ongoing Israeli occupation, and commending in this regard the ongoing efforts to develop the institutions of an independent Palestinian State, including through the implementation of the Palestinian National Development Plan on governance, economy, social development and infrastructure (2014–2016), including the National Strategic Framework for Development Policies and Interventions in Area C, and the significant achievements made, as confirmed by the positive assessments made by international institutions regarding readiness for statehood, including by the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the United Nations and the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee, while also expressing concern about the negative impact of the current instability and financial crisis being faced by the Palestinian Government,

Recognizing also the positive contribution of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework, which is aimed, inter alia, at enhancing development support and assistance to the Palestinian people and strengthening institutional capacity in line with Palestinian national priorities,

Welcoming the convening of the Cairo International Conference on Palestine: Reconstructing Gaza, on 12 October 2014, and urging the timely and full disbursement of pledges for expediting the provision of humanitarian assistance and the reconstruction process,

Welcoming also the ministerial meetings of the Conference on Cooperation among East Asian Countries for Palestinian Development convened in Tokyo in February 2013 and Jakarta in March 2014 as a forum for the mobilization of political and economic assistance, including via exchanges of expertise and lessons learned, in support of Palestinian development,

Recognizing the continued efforts and tangible progress made in the Palestinian security sector, noting the continued cooperation that benefits both Palestinians and Israelis, in particular by promoting security and building confidence, and expressing the hope that such progress will be extended to all major population centres,

Recognizing also that security measures alone cannot remedy the tensions, instability and violence, and calling for full respect for international law, including for the protection of civilian life, as well as the promotion of human security, the de-escalation of the situation, the exercise of restraint, including from provocative actions and rhetoric, and the establishment of a stable environment conducive to the pursuit of peace,

Gravely concerned over the negative developments that have continued to occur in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, including the escalation of violence and any excessive use of force, resulting in a large number of deaths and injuries, mostly among Palestinian civilians, including children and women, the construction and expansion of settlements and the wall, the arbitrary arrest and detention of more Palestinian civilians, the acts of violence, vandalism and brutality committed against Palestinian civilians by Israeli settlers in the West Bank, the widespread destruction of public and private Palestinian property, including

religious sites, and infrastructure and including the demolition of homes, including if carried out as a means of collective punishment, the internal forced displacement of civilians, especially among the Bedouin community, and the consequent deterioration of the socioeconomic and humanitarian conditions of the Palestinian people,

Deploing the conflict in and around the Gaza Strip in July and August 2014 and the civilian casualties caused, including the killing and injury of thousands of Palestinian civilians, including children, women and the elderly, and the widespread destruction of thousands of homes and civilian infrastructure, including schools, hospitals, water, sanitation and electricity networks, economic, industrial and agricultural properties, public institutions, religious sites and United Nations schools and facilities, as well as the internal displacement of hundreds of thousands of civilians and any violations of international law, including humanitarian and human rights law, in this regard,

Taking note of the report and findings of the independent commission of inquiry established pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution S-21/1,⁷ and stressing the need to ensure accountability for all violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law in order to end impunity, ensure justice, deter further violations, protect civilians and promote peace,

Expressing grave concern over the persisting disastrous humanitarian situation and socioeconomic conditions in the Gaza Strip as a result of the prolonged Israeli closures and severe economic and movement restrictions that in effect amount to a blockade and the continuing negative repercussions of the military operations in the Gaza Strip in July and August 2014, in November 2012 and between December 2008 and January 2009, particularly as a result of the widespread destruction and trauma inflicted and delays in reconstruction and recovery,

Recalling the statement of the President of the Security Council of 28 July 2014,⁸

Stressing the need for calm and restraint by the parties, including by consolidating the ceasefire agreement of 26 August 2014, achieved under the auspices of Egypt, to avert the deterioration of the situation,

Reiterating the need for the full implementation by all parties of Security Council resolution 1860 (2009) of 8 January 2009 and General Assembly resolution ES-10/18 of 16 January 2009,

Stressing that the situation in the Gaza Strip is unsustainable and that a durable ceasefire agreement must lead to a fundamental improvement in the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip, including through the sustained and regular opening of crossing points, and ensure the safety and well-being of civilians on both sides,

Expressing concern over the continued imposition of hundreds of checkpoints and obstacles to movement in and around Palestinian population centres by the Israeli occupying forces, and emphasizing in this regard the need for the implementation by both sides of the Sharm el-Sheikh understandings,

⁷ A/HRC/29/52.

⁸ S/PRST/2014/13; see *Resolutions and Decisions of the Security Council, 1 August 2013–31 July 2014* (S/INF/69).

Expressing grave concern about the imprisonment and detention by Israel of thousands of Palestinians, including children, under harsh conditions, and all violations of international humanitarian law and human rights law which have occurred in this regard,

Emphasizing the importance of the safety, protection and well-being of all civilians in the whole Middle East region, and condemning all acts of violence and terror against civilians on both sides, including the firing of rockets,

Stressing the need for measures to be taken to guarantee the safety and protection of the Palestinian civilian population throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory, consistent with the provisions and obligations of international humanitarian law,

Stressing also the need to respect the right of peaceful assembly,

Welcoming the formation of the Palestinian Government of national consensus under the leadership of the President, Mahmoud Abbas, consistent with Palestine Liberation Organization commitments and the Quartet principles, and emphasizing the need for respect for and the preservation of the territorial integrity and unity of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem,

Affirming the need to support the Palestinian Government of national consensus in its assumption of full government responsibilities in both the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, in all fields, as well as through its presence at Gaza's crossing points,

Stressing the urgent need for sustained and active international involvement, including by the Quartet, and welcoming in this regard its statement of 30 September 2015, and for concerted initiatives to support the parties in building a climate for peace, to assist the parties in advancing and accelerating the peace process negotiations for the achievement of a just, lasting and comprehensive peace settlement that ends the occupation which began in 1967 and results in the independence of a democratic, contiguous and viable State of Palestine living side by side in peace and security with Israel and its other neighbours, on the basis of relevant United Nations resolutions, the terms of reference of the Madrid Conference, the road map and the Arab Peace Initiative,

Taking note of the application of Palestine for admission to membership in the United Nations, submitted on 23 September 2011,⁹

Taking note also of its resolution 67/19 of 29 November 2012, by which, inter alia, Palestine was accorded non-member observer State status in the United Nations, and taking note of the follow-up report of the Secretary-General,¹⁰

Noting the accession by Palestine, on 1 April 2014, to several human rights treaties and the core humanitarian law conventions,

Acknowledging the efforts being undertaken by civil society to promote a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine,

Recalling the findings by the International Court of Justice, in its advisory opinion, including on the urgent necessity for the United Nations as a whole to redouble its efforts to bring the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which continues to pose

⁹ A/66/371-S/2011/592, annex I.

¹⁰ A/67/738.

a threat to international peace and security, to a speedy conclusion, thereby establishing a just and lasting peace in the region,¹¹

Stressing the urgency of achieving without delay an end to the Israeli occupation that began in 1967,

Affirming once again the right of all States in the region to live in peace within secure and internationally recognized borders,

1. *Reaffirms* the necessity of achieving a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, in all its aspects, and of intensifying all efforts towards that end, and stresses in this regard the urgency of salvaging the prospects for realizing the two-State solution of Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security within recognized borders, based on the pre-1967 borders;

2. *Calls for* the intensification of efforts by the parties, including through negotiations, with the support of the international community, towards the conclusion of a final peace settlement;

3. *Urges* the undertaking of renewed international efforts to achieve a comprehensive, just and lasting peace, based on the relevant United Nations resolutions, the terms of reference of the Madrid Conference, including the principle of land for peace, the Arab Peace Initiative adopted by the Council of the League of Arab States at its fourteenth session,⁶ the Quartet road map to a permanent two-State solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict,⁵ and the existing agreements between the Israeli and Palestinian sides;

4. *Stresses* the need for a resumption of negotiations based on clear parameters and with a defined time frame aimed at expediting the realization of a just, lasting and comprehensive settlement, and in this regard encourages serious efforts by the United States of America, the European Union, the Russian Federation and the United Nations, as members of the Quartet, and by the League of Arab States and all other concerned States;

5. *Encourages* continued serious regional and international efforts to follow up and promote the Arab Peace Initiative, including by the Ministerial Committee formed at the Riyadh summit in March 2007;

6. *Calls for*, in this regard, the timely convening of an international conference in Moscow, as envisioned by the Security Council in resolution 1850 (2008), for the advancement and acceleration of the achievement of a just, lasting and comprehensive peace settlement;

7. *Calls upon* both parties to act responsibly on the basis of international law and their previous agreements and obligations, in particular adherence to the road map, irrespective of reciprocity, in order to create the conditions necessary for the advancement of peace efforts;

8. *Calls upon* the parties themselves, with the support of the Quartet and other interested parties, to exert all efforts necessary to halt the deterioration of the situation, to reverse all unilateral and unlawful measures taken on the ground since 28 September 2000, to take every possible step to promote conditions conducive to

¹¹ A/ES-10/273 and Corr.1, advisory opinion, para. 161.

the success of peace negotiations and to refrain from actions that undermine trust or prejudice final status issues;

9. *Calls upon* the parties to observe calm and restraint and to refrain from provocative actions, incitement and inflammatory rhetoric, especially in areas of religious and cultural sensitivity, including in East Jerusalem, and calls for respect for the historic status quo at the holy places of Jerusalem, including the Haram al-Sharif, in word and in practice, and for immediate and serious efforts to defuse tensions;

10. *Underscores* the need for the parties to take confidence-building measures aimed at improving the situation on the ground, promoting stability, building trust and fostering the peace process, including an immediate halt to all settlement activities and home demolitions, the undertaking of measures to address settler violence and ensure accountability, the further release of prisoners and an end to arbitrary arrests and detentions;

11. *Stresses* the need for the removal of checkpoints and other obstructions to the movement of persons and goods throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the need for respect and preservation of the territorial unity, contiguity and integrity of all of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem;

12. *Also stresses* the need for an immediate and complete cessation of all acts of violence, including military attacks, destruction and acts of terror;

13. *Reiterates its demand* for the full implementation of Security Council resolution 1860 (2009);

14. *Reiterates* the need for the full implementation by both parties of the Agreement on Movement and Access and of the Agreed Principles for the Rafah Crossing, of 15 November 2005, and the need, specifically, to allow for the sustained opening of all crossings into and out of the Gaza Strip for humanitarian supplies, movement and access, as well as for commercial flows and all necessary construction materials, and stresses the urgent need to promote reconstruction and address the alarming unemployment rate, including among youth, including through the implementation of United Nations-led projects and civilian reconstruction activities, all of which are essential for alleviating the disastrous humanitarian situation, including the impact of the large-scale displacement of civilians in July and August 2014, improving the living conditions of the Palestinian people and promoting the recovery of the Palestinian economy;

15. *Calls upon* Israel, the occupying Power, to comply strictly with its obligations under international law, including international humanitarian law, and to cease all of its measures that are contrary to international law and all unilateral actions in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, that are aimed at altering the character, status and demographic composition of the Territory, including the confiscation and de facto annexation of land, and thus at prejudging the final outcome of peace negotiations, with a view to achieving without delay an end to the Israeli occupation that began in 1967;

16. *Reiterates its demand* for the complete cessation of all Israeli settlement activities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and in the occupied Syrian Golan, and calls for the full implementation of the relevant Security Council resolutions;

17. *Stresses*, in this regard, the need for Israel forthwith to abide by its road map obligation to freeze all settlement activity, including so-called “natural growth”, and to dismantle settlement outposts erected since March 2001;

18. *Calls for* the cessation of all provocations, including by Israeli settlers, in East Jerusalem, including in and around religious sites;

19. *Demands* that Israel, the occupying Power, comply with its legal obligations under international law, as mentioned in the advisory opinion rendered on 9 July 2004 by the International Court of Justice² and as demanded in General Assembly resolutions ES-10/13 of 21 October 2003 and ES-10/15, and, inter alia, that it immediately cease its construction of the wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and calls upon all States Members of the United Nations to comply with their legal obligations, as mentioned in the advisory opinion;

20. *Reaffirms its commitment*, in accordance with international law, to the two-State solution of Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security within recognized borders, based on the pre-1967 borders;

21. *Calls for*:

(a) The withdrawal of Israel from the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem;

(b) The realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, primarily the right to self-determination and the right to their independent State;

22. *Stresses* the need for a just resolution of the problem of Palestine refugees in conformity with its resolution 194 (III) of 11 December 1948;

23. *Urges* Member States to expedite the provision of economic, humanitarian and technical assistance to the Palestinian people and the Palestinian Government during this critical period in order to help to alleviate the serious humanitarian situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, which is disastrous in the Gaza Strip, to rehabilitate the Palestinian economy and infrastructure and to support the development and strengthening of Palestinian institutions and Palestinian State-building efforts in preparation for independence;

24. *Requests* the Secretary-General to continue his efforts with the parties concerned, and in consultation with the Security Council, towards the attainment of a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine and the promotion of peace in the region and to submit to the General Assembly at its seventy-first session a report on these efforts and on developments on this matter.

*64th plenary meeting
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Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 30 November 2016

[without reference to a Main Committee (A/71/L.21 and Add.1)]

71/23. Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine

The General Assembly,

Recalling its relevant resolutions, including those adopted at its tenth emergency special session,

Recalling also its resolution [58/292](#) of 6 May 2004,

Recalling further relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolutions [242 \(1967\)](#) of 22 November 1967, [338 \(1973\)](#) of 22 October 1973, [1397 \(2002\)](#) of 12 March 2002, [1515 \(2003\)](#) of 19 November 2003, [1544 \(2004\)](#) of 19 May 2004 and [1850 \(2008\)](#) of 16 December 2008,

Recalling the affirmation by the Security Council of the vision of a region where two States, Israel and Palestine, live side by side within secure and recognized borders,

Noting with concern that it has been 69 years since the adoption of its resolution 181 (II) of 29 November 1947 and 49 years since the occupation of Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, in 1967,

Having considered the report of the Secretary-General submitted pursuant to the request made in its resolution [70/15](#) of 24 November 2015,¹

Reaffirming the permanent responsibility of the United Nations with regard to the question of Palestine until the question is resolved in all its aspects in accordance with international law and relevant resolutions,

Recalling the advisory opinion rendered on 9 July 2004 by the International Court of Justice on the legal consequences of the construction of a wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory,² and recalling also its resolutions ES-10/15 of 20 July 2004 and ES-10/17 of 15 December 2006,

Convinced that achieving a just, lasting and comprehensive settlement of the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, is imperative for the attainment of comprehensive and lasting peace and stability in the Middle East,

¹ [A/71/359-S/2016/732](#).

² See [A/ES-10/273](#) and Corr.1.



Stressing that the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples is among the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations,

Reaffirming the principle of the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war,

Reaffirming also the applicability of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949,³ to the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem,

Recalling its resolution 2625 (XXV) of 24 October 1970, and reiterating the importance of maintaining and strengthening international peace founded upon freedom, equality, justice and respect for fundamental human rights and of developing friendly relations among nations irrespective of their political, economic and social systems or the level of their development,

Noting with deep regret the onset of the fiftieth year of the Israeli occupation, and stressing the urgent need for efforts to reverse the negative trends on the ground and to restore a political horizon for advancing and accelerating meaningful negotiations aimed at the achievement of a peace agreement that will bring a complete end to the Israeli occupation that began in 1967 and the resolution of all core final status issues, without exception, leading to a peaceful, just, lasting and comprehensive solution of the question of Palestine,

Reaffirming the illegality of the Israeli settlements in the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem,

Expressing grave concern about the extremely detrimental impact of Israeli settlement policies, decisions and activities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, including on the contiguity, integrity and viability of the Territory, the viability of the two-State solution based on the pre-1967 borders and the efforts to advance a peaceful settlement in the Middle East,

Expressing grave concern also about all acts of violence, intimidation and provocation by Israeli settlers against Palestinian civilians, including children, and properties, including homes, mosques, churches and agricultural lands, condemning acts of terror by several extremist Israeli settlers, and calling for accountability for the illegal actions perpetrated in this regard,

Reaffirming the illegality of Israeli actions aimed at changing the status of Jerusalem, including settlement construction and expansion, home demolitions, evictions of Palestinian residents, excavations in and around religious and historic sites, and all other unilateral measures aimed at altering the character, status and demographic composition of the city and of the Territory as a whole, and demanding their immediate cessation,

Expressing its grave concern about tensions, provocations and incitement regarding the holy places of Jerusalem, including the Haram al-Sharif, and urging restraint and respect for the sanctity of the holy sites by all sides,

Reaffirming that the construction by Israel, the occupying Power, of a wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including in and around East Jerusalem, and its associated regime are contrary to international law,

³ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 75, No. 973.

Encouraging all States and international organizations to continue to actively pursue policies to ensure respect for their obligations under international law with regard to all illegal Israeli practices and measures in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, particularly Israeli settlements,

Expressing deep concern about the continuing Israeli policies of closures and severe restrictions on the movement of persons and goods, including medical and humanitarian and economic, via the imposition of prolonged closures and severe economic and movement restrictions that in effect amount to a blockade, as well as of checkpoints and a permit regime throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem,

Expressing deep concern also about the consequent negative impact of such policies on the contiguity of the Territory and the critical socioeconomic and humanitarian situation of the Palestinian people, which remains a disastrous humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip, as well as on the efforts aimed at rehabilitating and developing the damaged Palestinian economy, including reviving the agricultural and productive sectors, while taking note of developments regarding the situation of access there based on the trilateral agreement facilitated by the United Nations in this regard and on the resumption of some trade from Gaza to the West Bank for the first time since 2007, and, while recalling Security Council resolution [1860 \(2009\) of 8 January 2009](#), calling for the full lifting of restrictions on the movement and access of persons and goods, taking into account the Agreement on Movement and Access of November 2005, including exports, which are crucial for social and economic recovery,

Recalling the mutual recognition 23 years ago between the Government of the State of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization, the representative of the Palestinian people,⁴ and stressing the urgent need for efforts to ensure full compliance with the agreements concluded between the two sides,

Recalling also the endorsement by the Security Council, in its resolution [1515 \(2003\)](#), of the Quartet road map to a permanent two-State solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict⁵ and the call in Council resolution [1850 \(2008\)](#) for the parties to fulfil their obligations under the road map and to refrain from any steps that could undermine confidence or prejudice the outcome of negotiations on a final peace settlement,

Stressing the road map obligation upon Israel to freeze settlement activity, including so-called “natural growth”, and to dismantle all settlement outposts erected since March 2001,

Recalling the Arab Peace Initiative, adopted by the Council of the League of Arab States at its fourteenth session, held in Beirut on 27 and 28 March 2002, and stressing its importance in the efforts to achieve a just, lasting and comprehensive peace,⁶

Urging renewed and coordinated efforts by the international community aimed at restoring a political horizon and advancing and accelerating the conclusion of a peace treaty to attain without delay an end to the Israeli occupation that began in 1967 by resolving all outstanding issues, including all core issues, without

⁴ See [A/48/486-S/26560](#), annex.

⁵ [S/2003/529](#), annex.

⁶ [A/56/1026-S/2002/932](#), annex II, resolution [14/221](#).

exception, for a just, lasting and peaceful settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, in accordance with the internationally recognized basis of the two-State solution, and ultimately of the Arab-Israeli conflict as a whole for the realization of a comprehensive peace in the Middle East,

Welcoming, in this regard, the initiative launched by France aimed at mobilizing international support for Palestinian-Israeli peace and convening an international peace conference, the ongoing efforts of the Quartet in the recent period to address the unsustainable situation on the ground and to promote meaningful negotiations and the ongoing regional efforts to advance the Arab Peace Initiative, as well as the respective efforts by Egypt and the Russian Federation,

Taking note of the joint communiqué, issued on 3 June 2016 at the Paris ministerial meeting, reaffirming the commitment to the two-State solution and a just, lasting and comprehensive resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and calling, inter alia, for efforts to support the efforts of the parties to advance the prospects for peace,

Taking note also of the report of the Quartet of 1 July 2016,⁷ and stressing its recommendations as well as its recent statements, including those of 30 September 2015, 23 October 2015, 12 February 2016 and 23 September 2016, in which, inter alia, grave concerns were expressed that current trends on the ground are steadily eroding the two-State solution and entrenching a one-State reality and in which recommendations were made to reverse those trends in order to advance the two-State solution on the ground and create the conditions for successful final status negotiations,

Reiterating support for the convening of an international conference in Moscow, as envisioned by the Security Council in its resolution 1850 (2008) and the Quartet statement of 23 September 2011, for the advancement and acceleration of the peace efforts towards the fulfilment of its stated objectives,

Noting the important contribution to peace efforts of the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General to the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Palestinian Authority, including within the framework of the activities of the Quartet and with regard to the recent trilateral agreement regarding the Gaza Strip,

Welcoming the ongoing efforts of the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee for the Coordination of the International Assistance to Palestinians, under the chairmanship of Norway, and noting its recent meeting at United Nations Headquarters, on 19 September 2016, and the ongoing efforts to generate sufficient donor support in this critical period for urgently addressing the immense humanitarian, reconstruction and recovery needs in the Gaza Strip, bearing in mind the detailed needs assessment and recovery framework for Gaza developed with the support of the United Nations, the World Bank and the European Union, and furthering Palestinian economic recovery and development,

Recognizing the efforts being undertaken by the Palestinian Government, with international support, to reform, develop and strengthen its institutions and infrastructure, emphasizing the need to preserve and further develop Palestinian institutions and infrastructure, despite the obstacles presented by the ongoing Israeli occupation, and commending in this regard the ongoing efforts to develop the

⁷ S/2016/595, annex.

institutions of an independent Palestinian State, including through the implementation of the Palestinian National Policy Agenda: National Priorities, Policies and Policy Interventions (2017–2022),

Expressing concern about the risks posed to the significant achievements made, as confirmed by the positive assessments made by international institutions regarding readiness for statehood, including by the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the United Nations and the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee, owing to the negative impact of the current instability and financial crisis being faced by the Palestinian Government and the continued absence of a credible political horizon,

Recognizing the positive contribution of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework, which is aimed, inter alia, at enhancing development support and assistance to the Palestinian people and strengthening institutional capacity in line with Palestinian national priorities,

Urging the full disbursement of pledges made at the Cairo International Conference on Palestine: Reconstructing Gaza, on 12 October 2014, for expediting the provision of humanitarian assistance and the reconstruction process,

Welcoming the ministerial meetings of the Conference on Cooperation among East Asian Countries for Palestinian Development convened in Tokyo in February 2013 and Jakarta in March 2014 as a forum for the mobilization of political and economic assistance, including via exchanges of expertise and lessons learned, in support of Palestinian development, and encouraging the expansion of such efforts and support in the light of worsening socioeconomic indicators,

Recognizing the continued efforts and tangible progress made in the Palestinian security sector, noting the continued cooperation that benefits both Palestinians and Israelis, in particular by promoting security and building confidence, and expressing the hope that such progress will be extended to all major population centres,

Recognizing also that security measures alone cannot remedy the tensions, instability and violence, and calling for full respect for international law, including for the protection of civilian life, as well as the promotion of human security, the de-escalation of the situation, the exercise of restraint, including from provocative actions and rhetoric, and the establishment of a stable environment conducive to the pursuit of peace,

Gravely concerned over the negative developments that have continued to occur in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, including the escalation of violence and any excessive use of force, resulting in a large number of deaths and injuries, mostly among Palestinian civilians, including children and women, as well as the continued construction and expansion of settlements and the wall, the arbitrary arrest and detention of more Palestinian civilians, the acts of violence, vandalism and brutality committed against Palestinian civilians by Israeli settlers in the West Bank, the widespread destruction of public and private Palestinian property, including religious sites, and infrastructure and the demolition of homes, including if carried out as a means of collective punishment, the internal forced displacement of civilians, especially among the Bedouin community, and the consequent deterioration of the socioeconomic and humanitarian conditions of the Palestinian people,

Deploring the conflict in and around the Gaza Strip in July and August 2014 and the civilian casualties caused, including the killing and injury of thousands of Palestinian civilians, including children, women and the elderly, and the widespread

destruction of thousands of homes and civilian infrastructure, including schools, hospitals, water, sanitation and electricity networks, economic, industrial and agricultural properties, public institutions, religious sites and United Nations schools and facilities, as well as the internal displacement of hundreds of thousands of civilians and any violations of international law, including humanitarian and human rights law, in this regard,

Taking note of the report and findings of the independent commission of inquiry established pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution S-21/1,⁸ and stressing the need to ensure accountability for all violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law in order to end impunity, ensure justice, deter further violations, protect civilians and promote peace,

Expressing grave concern over the persisting disastrous humanitarian situation and socioeconomic conditions in the Gaza Strip as a result of the prolonged Israeli closures and severe economic and movement restrictions that in effect amount to a blockade and the continuing negative repercussions of the military operations in the Gaza Strip in July and August 2014, in November 2012 and between December 2008 and January 2009, particularly as a result of the widespread destruction and trauma inflicted and delays in reconstruction and recovery,

Expressing grave concern also about the lasting consequences of such conflicts on the civilian population and the living conditions in the Gaza Strip, as reflected in numerous reports, including the report of 26 August 2016 of the United Nations country team, entitled, "Gaza: two years after", and stressing that the situation is unsustainable and that urgent efforts are required to reverse the de-development trajectory in Gaza and respond adequately and immediately to the humanitarian needs of the civilian population,

Recalling the statement of the President of the Security Council of 28 July 2014,⁹

Stressing the need for calm and restraint by the parties, including by consolidating the ceasefire agreement of 26 August 2014, achieved under the auspices of Egypt, to avert the deterioration of the situation,

Reiterating the need for the full implementation by all parties of Security Council resolution [1860 \(2009\)](#) and General Assembly resolution ES-10/18 of 16 January 2009,

Stressing that a durable ceasefire agreement must lead to a fundamental improvement in the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip, including through the sustained and regular opening of crossing points, and ensure the safety and well-being of civilians on both sides,

Expressing concern over the continued imposition of hundreds of checkpoints and obstacles to movement in and around Palestinian population centres by the Israeli occupying forces, and emphasizing in this regard the need for the implementation by both sides of the Sharm el-Sheikh understandings,

Expressing grave concern about the imprisonment and detention by Israel of thousands of Palestinians, including children, under harsh conditions, and all

⁸ [A/HRC/29/52](#).

⁹ [S/PRST/2014/13](#); see *Resolutions and Decisions of the Security Council, 1 August 2013–31 July 2014* (S/INF/69).

violations of international humanitarian law and human rights law which have occurred in this regard,

Emphasizing the importance of the safety, protection and well-being of all civilians in the whole Middle East region, and condemning all acts of violence and terror against civilians on both sides, including the firing of rockets,

Stressing the need for measures to be taken to guarantee the safety and protection of the Palestinian civilian population throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory, consistent with the provisions and obligations of international humanitarian law,

Stressing also the need to respect the right of peaceful assembly,

Welcoming the formation of the Palestinian Government of national consensus under the leadership of the President, Mahmoud Abbas, consistent with Palestine Liberation Organization commitments and the Quartet principles, and emphasizing the need for respect for and the preservation of the territorial integrity and unity of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem,

Affirming the need to support the Palestinian Government of national consensus in its assumption of full government responsibilities in both the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, in all fields, as well as through its presence at Gaza's crossing points,

Stressing the urgent need for sustained and active international involvement and for concerted initiatives to support the parties in building a climate for peace, to assist the parties in advancing and accelerating direct peace process negotiations for the achievement of a just, lasting and comprehensive peace settlement that ends the occupation which began in 1967 and results in the independence of a democratic, contiguous and viable State of Palestine living side by side in peace and security with Israel and its other neighbours, on the basis of relevant United Nations resolutions, the terms of reference of the Madrid Conference, the Quartet road map and the Arab Peace Initiative,

Taking note of the application of Palestine for admission to membership in the United Nations, submitted on 23 September 2011,¹⁰

Taking note also of its resolution [67/19](#) of 29 November 2012, by which, inter alia, Palestine was accorded non-member observer State status in the United Nations, and taking note of the follow-up report of the Secretary-General,¹¹

Noting the accession by Palestine, on 1 April 2014, to several human rights treaties and the core humanitarian law conventions,

Acknowledging the efforts being undertaken by civil society to promote a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine,

Recalling the findings by the International Court of Justice, in its advisory opinion, including on the urgent necessity for the United Nations as a whole to redouble its efforts to bring the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which continues to pose a threat to international peace and security, to a speedy conclusion, thereby establishing a just and lasting peace in the region,¹²

¹⁰ [A/66/371-S/2011/592](#), annex I.

¹¹ [A/67/738](#).

¹² [A/ES-10/273](#) and Corr.1, advisory opinion, para. 161.

Stressing the urgency of achieving without delay an end to the Israeli occupation that began in 1967,

Affirming once again the right of all States in the region to live in peace within secure and internationally recognized borders,

1. *Reaffirms* the necessity of achieving a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, in all its aspects, and of intensifying all efforts towards that end, and stresses in this regard the urgency of salvaging the prospects for realizing the two-State solution of Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security within recognized borders, based on the pre-1967 borders, and making tangible progress towards implementing that solution and justly resolving all final status issues;

2. *Calls for* the intensification of efforts by the parties, including through negotiations, with the support of the international community, towards the conclusion of a final peace settlement;

3. *Urges* the undertaking of renewed international efforts to achieve a comprehensive, just and lasting peace, based on the relevant United Nations resolutions, the terms of reference of the Madrid Conference, including the principle of land for peace, the Arab Peace Initiative adopted by the Council of the League of Arab States at its fourteenth session,⁶ the Quartet road map to a permanent two-State solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict,⁵ and the existing agreements between the Israeli and Palestinian sides;

4. *Stresses* the need for a resumption of negotiations based on the long-standing terms of reference and clear parameters and within a defined time frame aimed at expediting the realization of a just, lasting and comprehensive settlement, and in this regard encourages serious efforts by all concerned international and regional partners, including by the United States of America, the European Union, the Russian Federation and the United Nations, as members of the Quartet, and by the League of Arab States;

5. *Commends and encourages* continued serious regional and international efforts to follow up and promote the Arab Peace Initiative, including by the Ministerial Committee formed at the Riyadh summit in March 2007;

6. *Welcomes* the initiative launched by France aimed at mobilizing international support for Palestinian-Israeli peace and convening an international peace conference, the ongoing efforts of the Quartet to address the unsustainable situation on the ground and to promote meaningful negotiations, while stressing its recommendations, and the respective efforts by Egypt and the Russian Federation to promote dialogue and negotiations between the two parties;

7. *Calls for* the timely convening of an international conference in Moscow, as envisioned by the Security Council in its resolution [1850 \(2008\)](#), for the advancement and acceleration of the achievement of a just, lasting and comprehensive peace settlement;

8. *Calls upon* both parties to act responsibly on the basis of international law and their previous agreements and obligations, in both their policies and actions, in order to urgently reverse negative trends on the ground and create the conditions necessary for the launching of a credible political horizon and the advancement of peace efforts;

9. *Calls upon* the parties themselves, with the support of the Quartet and other interested parties, to exert all efforts necessary to halt the deterioration of the

situation, to reverse all unilateral and unlawful measures taken on the ground since 28 September 2000, to take every possible step to promote conditions conducive to the success of peace negotiations and to refrain from actions that undermine trust or prejudice final status issues;

10. *Calls upon* the parties to observe calm and restraint and to refrain from provocative actions, incitement and inflammatory rhetoric, especially in areas of religious and cultural sensitivity, including in East Jerusalem, and calls for respect for the historic status quo at the holy places of Jerusalem, including the Haram al-Sharif, in word and in practice, and for immediate and serious efforts to defuse tensions;

11. *Underscores* the need for the parties to take confidence-building measures aimed at improving the situation on the ground, promoting stability, building trust and fostering the peace process, and stresses the need, in particular, for an immediate halt to all settlement activities and home demolitions, ending violence and incitement and undertaking measures to address settler violence and ensure accountability, and for the further release of prisoners and an end to arbitrary arrests and detentions;

12. *Stresses* the need for the removal of checkpoints and other obstructions to the movement of persons and goods throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the need for respect and preservation of the territorial unity, contiguity and integrity of all of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem;

13. *Also stresses* the need for an immediate and complete cessation of all acts of violence, including military attacks, destruction and acts of terror;

14. *Reiterates its demand* for the full implementation of Security Council resolution [1860 \(2009\)](#);

15. *Reiterates* the need for the full implementation by both parties of the Agreement on Movement and Access and of the Agreed Principles for the Rafah Crossing, of 15 November 2005, and the need, specifically, to allow for the sustained opening of all crossings into and out of the Gaza Strip for humanitarian supplies, movement and access of persons and goods, as well as for commercial flows, including exports, and all necessary construction materials, and stresses the urgent need to promote accelerated and comprehensive reconstruction and to address the alarming unemployment rate, including among youth, including through the implementation of United Nations-led projects, civilian reconstruction activities and job-creation programmes, all of which are essential for alleviating the disastrous humanitarian situation, including the impact of the large-scale displacement of civilians in July and August 2014, improving the living conditions of the Palestinian people and promoting the recovery of the Palestinian economy;

16. *Calls upon* Israel, the occupying Power, to comply strictly with its obligations under international law, including international humanitarian law, and to cease all of its measures that are contrary to international law and all unilateral actions in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, that are aimed at altering the character, status and demographic composition of the Territory, including the confiscation and de facto annexation of land, and thus at prejudging the final outcome of peace negotiations, with a view to achieving without delay an end to the Israeli occupation that began in 1967;

17. *Reiterates its demand* for the complete cessation of all Israeli settlement activities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and in the

occupied Syrian Golan, and calls for the full implementation of the relevant Security Council resolutions and for the consideration of measures of accountability, in accordance with international law, in the case of continued non-compliance, stressing that compliance with and respect for international humanitarian law and international human rights law is a cornerstone for peace and security in the region;

18. *Reiterates*, in this regard, the need for Israel forthwith to abide by its road map obligation to freeze all settlement activity, including so-called “natural growth”, and to dismantle settlement outposts erected since March 2001;

19. *Calls for* the cessation of all provocations, including by Israeli settlers, in East Jerusalem, including in and around religious sites;

20. *Demands* that Israel, the occupying Power, comply with its legal obligations under international law, as mentioned in the advisory opinion rendered on 9 July 2004 by the International Court of Justice² and as demanded in General Assembly resolutions ES-10/13 of 21 October 2003 and ES-10/15, and, inter alia, that it immediately cease its construction of the wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and calls upon all States Members of the United Nations to comply with their legal obligations, as mentioned in the advisory opinion;

21. *Reaffirms its commitment*, in accordance with international law, to the two-State solution of Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security within recognized borders, based on the pre-1967 borders;

22. *Calls for*:

(a) The withdrawal of Israel from the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem;

(b) The realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, primarily the right to self-determination and the right to their independent State;

23. *Stresses* the need for a just resolution of the problem of Palestine refugees in conformity with its resolution 194 (III) of 11 December 1948;

24. *Urges* Member States to expedite the provision of economic, humanitarian and technical assistance to the Palestinian people and the Palestinian Government during this critical period in order to help to alleviate the serious humanitarian situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, which is dire in the Gaza Strip, to rehabilitate the Palestinian economy and infrastructure and to support the development and strengthening of Palestinian institutions and Palestinian State-building efforts in preparation for independence;

25. *Requests* the Secretary-General to continue his efforts with the parties concerned, and in consultation with the Security Council, towards the attainment of a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine and the promotion of peace in the region and to submit to the General Assembly at its seventy-second session a report on these efforts and on developments on this matter.

*50th plenary meeting
30 November 2016*

**Seventy-second session**

Agenda item 38

**Resolution adopted by the General Assembly
on 30 November 2017***[without reference to a Main Committee (A/72/L.16 and A/72/L.16/Add.1)]***72/14. Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine***The General Assembly,**Recalling* its relevant resolutions, including those adopted at its tenth emergency special session,*Recalling also* its resolution [58/292](#) of 6 May 2004,*Recalling further* relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolutions [242 \(1967\)](#) of 22 November 1967, [338 \(1973\)](#) of 22 October 1973, [1397 \(2002\)](#) of 12 March 2002, [1515 \(2003\)](#) of 19 November 2003, [1544 \(2004\)](#) of 19 May 2004, [1850 \(2008\)](#) of 16 December 2008 and [2334 \(2016\)](#) of 23 December 2016,*Recalling* the affirmation by the Security Council of the vision of a region where two States, Israel and Palestine, live side by side within secure and recognized borders,*Expressing its deep concern* that it has been 70 years since the adoption of its resolution 181 (II) of 29 November 1947 and 50 years since the occupation of Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, in 1967, and that a just, lasting and comprehensive solution to the question of Palestine has yet to be achieved,*Having considered* the report of the Secretary-General submitted pursuant to the request made in its resolution [71/23](#) of 30 November 2016,¹*Reaffirming* the permanent responsibility of the United Nations with regard to the question of Palestine until the question is resolved in all its aspects in accordance with international law and relevant resolutions,*Recalling* the advisory opinion rendered on 9 July 2004 by the International Court of Justice on the legal consequences of the construction of a wall in the

¹ [A/72/368-S/2017/741](#).



Occupied Palestinian Territory,² and recalling also its resolutions ES-10/15 of 20 July 2004 and ES-10/17 of 15 December 2006,

Convinced that achieving a just, lasting and comprehensive settlement of the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, is imperative for the attainment of comprehensive and lasting peace and stability in the Middle East,

Stressing that the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples is among the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations,

Reaffirming the principle of the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war,

Reaffirming also the applicability of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949,³ to the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem,

Recalling its resolution 2625 (XXV) of 24 October 1970, and reiterating the importance of maintaining and strengthening international peace founded upon freedom, equality, justice and respect for fundamental human rights and of developing friendly relations among nations irrespective of their political, economic and social systems or the level of their development,

Bearing in mind its resolution 70/1 of 25 September 2015, entitled “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”, in particular Sustainable Development Goal 16,

Stressing the urgent need for efforts to reverse the negative trends on the ground and to restore a political horizon for advancing and accelerating meaningful negotiations aimed at the achievement of a peace agreement that will bring a complete end to the Israeli occupation that began in 1967 and the resolution of all core final status issues, without exception, leading to a peaceful, just, lasting and comprehensive solution of the question of Palestine,

Reaffirming the illegality of the Israeli settlements in the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem,

Expressing grave concern about the extremely detrimental impact of Israeli settlement policies, decisions and activities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, including on the contiguity, integrity and viability of the Territory, the viability of the two-State solution based on the pre-1967 borders and the efforts to advance a peaceful settlement in the Middle East,

Expressing grave concern also about all acts of violence, intimidation and provocation by Israeli settlers against Palestinian civilians, including children, and properties, including homes, mosques, churches and agricultural lands, condemning acts of terror by several extremist Israeli settlers, and calling for accountability for the illegal actions perpetrated in this regard,

Reaffirming the illegality of Israeli actions aimed at changing the status of Jerusalem, including settlement construction and expansion, home demolitions, evictions of Palestinian residents, excavations in and around religious and historic sites, and all other unilateral measures aimed at altering the character, status and demographic composition of the city and of the Territory as a whole, and demanding their immediate cessation,

² See [A/ES-10/273](#) and [A/ES-10/273/Corr.1](#).

³ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 75, No. 973.

Expressing its grave concern about tensions, provocations and incitement regarding the holy places of Jerusalem, including the Haram al-Sharif, and urging restraint and respect for the sanctity of the holy sites by all sides,

Reaffirming that the construction by Israel, the occupying Power, of a wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including in and around East Jerusalem, and its associated regime are contrary to international law,

Encouraging all States and international organizations to continue to actively pursue policies to ensure respect for their obligations under international law with regard to all illegal Israeli practices and measures in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, particularly Israeli settlements,

Expressing deep concern about the continuing Israeli policies of closures and severe restrictions on the movement of persons and goods, including medical and humanitarian and economic, via the imposition of prolonged closures and severe economic and movement restrictions that in effect amount to a blockade, as well as of checkpoints and a permit regime throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem,

Expressing deep concern also about the consequent negative impact of such policies on the contiguity of the Territory and the critical socioeconomic and humanitarian situation of the Palestinian people, which remains a disastrous humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip, as well as on the efforts aimed at rehabilitating and developing the damaged Palestinian economy, including reviving the agricultural and productive sectors, while taking note of developments regarding the situation of access there based on the trilateral agreement facilitated by the United Nations in this regard and on the resumption of some trade from Gaza to the West Bank for the first time since 2007, and, while recalling Security Council resolution [1860 \(2009\)](#) of 8 January 2009, calling for the full lifting of restrictions on the movement and access of persons and goods, taking into account the Agreement on Movement and Access of November 2005, including exports, which are crucial for social and economic recovery,

Recalling the mutual recognition 24 years ago between the Government of the State of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization, the representative of the Palestinian people,⁴ and stressing the urgent need for efforts to ensure full compliance with the agreements concluded between the two sides,

Recalling also the endorsement by the Security Council, in its resolution [1515 \(2003\)](#), of the Quartet road map to a permanent two-State solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict⁵ and the call in Council resolution [1850 \(2008\)](#) for the parties to fulfil their obligations under the road map and to refrain from any steps that could undermine confidence or prejudice the outcome of negotiations on a final peace settlement,

Stressing the road map obligation upon Israel to freeze settlement activity, including so-called “natural growth”, and to dismantle all settlement outposts erected since March 2001,

Underscoring the demand by the Security Council, most recently in its resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#), that Israel immediately and completely cease all settlement activities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and that it fully respect all of its legal obligations in this regard,

⁴ See [A/48/486-S/26560](#), annex.

⁵ [S/2003/529](#), annex.

Recalling the Arab Peace Initiative, adopted by the Council of the League of Arab States at its fourteenth session, held in Beirut on 27 and 28 March 2002,⁶ and stressing its importance in the efforts to achieve a just, lasting and comprehensive peace,

Urging renewed and coordinated efforts by the international community aimed at restoring a political horizon and advancing and accelerating the conclusion of a peace treaty to attain without delay an end to the Israeli occupation that began in 1967 by resolving all outstanding issues, including all core issues, without exception, for a just, lasting and peaceful settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, in accordance with the internationally recognized basis of the two-State solution, and ultimately of the Arab-Israeli conflict as a whole for the realization of a comprehensive peace in the Middle East,

Welcoming, in this regard, the initiative launched by France, and taking note of the joint communiqué of 3 June 2016, aimed at mobilizing international support for Palestinian-Israeli peace and convening an international peace conference, the ongoing efforts of the Quartet in the recent period to address the unsustainable situation on the ground and to promote meaningful negotiations and the ongoing regional efforts to advance the Arab Peace Initiative, as well as the respective efforts by China, Egypt, the Russian Federation and the United States of America,

Taking note of the report of the Quartet of 1 July 2016,⁷ and stressing its recommendations as well as its recent statements, including those of 30 September 2015, 23 October 2015, 12 February 2016 and 23 September 2016, in which, inter alia, grave concerns were expressed that current trends on the ground are steadily eroding the two-State solution and entrenching a one-State reality and in which recommendations were made to reverse those trends in order to advance the two-State solution on the ground and create the conditions for successful final status negotiations,

Reiterating support for the convening of an international conference in Moscow, as envisioned by the Security Council in its resolution 1850 (2008) and the Quartet statement of 23 September 2011, and stressing the importance of multilateral support and engagement for the advancement and acceleration of peace efforts towards the fulfilment of a just, lasting and comprehensive solution to the question of Palestine,

Noting the important contribution to peace efforts of the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General to the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Palestinian Authority, including within the framework of the activities of the Quartet and with regard to the trilateral agreement and recent developments regarding the Gaza Strip,

Welcoming the ongoing efforts of the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee for the Coordination of the International Assistance to Palestinians, under the chairmanship of Norway, and noting its recent meeting at United Nations Headquarters, on 18 September 2017, and the ongoing efforts to generate sufficient donor support in this critical period for urgently addressing the immense humanitarian, reconstruction and recovery needs in the Gaza Strip, bearing in mind the detailed needs assessment and recovery framework for Gaza developed with the support of the United Nations, the World Bank and the European Union, and furthering Palestinian economic recovery and development,

⁶ A/56/1026-S/2002/932, annex II, resolution 14/221.

⁷ S/2016/595, annex.

Recognizing the efforts being undertaken by the Palestinian Government, with international support, to reform, develop and strengthen its institutions and infrastructure, emphasizing the need to preserve and further develop Palestinian institutions and infrastructure, despite the obstacles presented by the ongoing Israeli occupation, and commending in this regard the ongoing efforts to develop the institutions of an independent Palestinian State, including through the implementation of the Palestinian National Policy Agenda: National Priorities, Policies and Policy Interventions (2017–2022),

Expressing concern about the risks posed to the significant achievements made, as confirmed by the positive assessments made by international institutions regarding readiness for statehood, including by the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the United Nations and the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee, owing to the negative impact of the current instability and financial crisis being faced by the Palestinian Government and the continued absence of a credible political horizon,

Recognizing the positive contribution of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework, which is aimed, inter alia, at enhancing development support and assistance to the Palestinian people and strengthening institutional capacity in line with Palestinian national priorities,

Urging the full disbursement of pledges made at the Cairo International Conference on Palestine: Reconstructing Gaza, on 12 October 2014, for expediting the provision of humanitarian assistance and the reconstruction process,

Recalling the ministerial meetings of the Conference on Cooperation among East Asian Countries for Palestinian Development convened in Tokyo in February 2013 and Jakarta in March 2014 as a forum for the mobilization of political and economic assistance, including via exchanges of expertise and lessons learned, in support of Palestinian development, and encouraging the expansion of such efforts and support in the light of worsening socioeconomic indicators,

Recognizing the continued efforts and tangible progress made in the Palestinian security sector, noting the continued cooperation that benefits both Palestinians and Israelis, in particular by promoting security and building confidence, and expressing the hope that such progress will be extended to all major population centres,

Recognizing also that security measures alone cannot remedy the tensions, instability and violence, and calling for full respect for international law, including for the protection of civilian life, as well as for the promotion of human security, the de-escalation of the situation, the exercise of restraint, including from provocative actions and rhetoric, and the establishment of a stable environment conducive to the pursuit of peace,

Gravely concerned over the negative developments that have continued to occur in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, including the escalation of violence and excessive use of force, resulting in a large number of deaths and injuries, mostly among Palestinian civilians, including children and women, as well as the continued construction and expansion of settlements and the wall, the arbitrary arrest and detention of more Palestinian civilians, the acts of violence, vandalism and brutality committed against Palestinian civilians by Israeli settlers in the West Bank, the widespread destruction of public and private Palestinian property, including religious sites, and infrastructure and the demolition of homes, including if carried out as a means of collective punishment, the internal forced displacement of civilians, especially among the Bedouin community, and the consequent deterioration of the socioeconomic and humanitarian conditions of the Palestinian people,

Deploing the continuing, negative repercussions of the conflicts in and around the Gaza Strip, the most recent in July and August 2014, which caused thousands of civilian casualties, the widespread destruction of thousands of homes and vital civilian infrastructure and the internal displacement of hundreds of thousands of civilians, as well as any violations of international law, including humanitarian and human rights law, in this regard, and continued delays in reconstruction and recovery,

Taking note of the report and findings of the independent commission of inquiry established pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution S-21/1,⁸ and stressing the need to ensure accountability for all violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law in order to end impunity, ensure justice, deter further violations, protect civilians and promote peace,

Expressing grave concern over the persisting disastrous humanitarian situation and socioeconomic conditions in the Gaza Strip as a result of the prolonged Israeli closures and severe economic and movement restrictions that in effect amount to a blockade,

Expressing grave concern also about the lasting consequences of such conflicts and measures on the civilian population and the living conditions in the Gaza Strip, as reflected in numerous reports, including the report of 26 August 2016 of the United Nations country team, entitled "Gaza: two years after", and the report of 11 July 2017, entitled "Gaza ten years later", and stressing that the situation is unsustainable and that urgent efforts are required to reverse the de-development trajectory in Gaza and respond adequately and immediately to the immense humanitarian needs of the civilian population,

Recalling the statement of the President of the Security Council of 28 July 2014,⁹

Stressing the need for calm and restraint by the parties, including by consolidating the ceasefire agreement of 26 August 2014, achieved under the auspices of Egypt, to avert the deterioration of the situation,

Reiterating the need for the full implementation by all parties of Security Council resolution 1860 (2009) and General Assembly resolution ES-10/18 of 16 January 2009,

Stressing that a durable ceasefire agreement must lead to a fundamental improvement in the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip, including through the sustained and regular opening of crossing points, and ensure the safety and well-being of civilians on both sides,

Expressing grave concern about the imprisonment and detention by Israel of thousands of Palestinians, including children, under harsh conditions, and all violations of international humanitarian law and human rights law which have occurred in this regard,

Emphasizing the importance of the safety, protection and well-being of all civilians in the whole Middle East region, and condemning all acts of violence and terror against civilians on both sides, including the firing of rockets,

Stressing the need for measures to be taken to guarantee the safety and protection of the Palestinian civilian population throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory, consistent with the provisions and obligations of international humanitarian law,

⁸ A/HRC/29/52.

⁹ S/PRST/2014/13; see *Resolutions and Decisions of the Security Council, 1 August 2013–31 July 2014 (S/INF/69)*.

Stressing also the need to respect the right of peaceful assembly,

Welcoming the formation of the Palestinian Government of national consensus under the leadership of the President, Mahmoud Abbas, consistent with Palestine Liberation Organization commitments and the Quartet principles, and emphasizing the need for respect for and the preservation of the territorial integrity and unity of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem,

Affirming the need to support the Palestinian Government of national consensus in its assumption of full government responsibilities in both the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, in all fields, as well as through its presence at Gaza's crossing points, welcoming in this regard the efforts of Egypt to facilitate and support Palestinian unity, and taking note of the Quartet statement of 28 September 2017,

Stressing the urgent need for sustained and active international involvement and for concerted initiatives to support the parties in building a climate for peace, to assist the parties in advancing and accelerating direct peace process negotiations for the achievement of a just, lasting and comprehensive peace settlement that ends the occupation which began in 1967 and results in the independence of a democratic, contiguous and viable State of Palestine living side by side in peace and security with Israel and its other neighbours, on the basis of relevant United Nations resolutions, the terms of reference of the Madrid Conference, the Quartet road map and the Arab Peace Initiative,

Taking note of the application of Palestine for admission to membership in the United Nations, submitted on 23 September 2011,¹⁰

Taking note also of its resolution 67/19 of 29 November 2012, by which, inter alia, Palestine was accorded non-member observer State status in the United Nations, and taking note of the follow-up report of the Secretary-General,¹¹

Noting the accession by Palestine to several human rights treaties and the core humanitarian law conventions,

Acknowledging the efforts being undertaken by civil society to promote a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine,

Recalling the findings by the International Court of Justice, in its advisory opinion, including on the urgent necessity for the United Nations as a whole to redouble its efforts to bring the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which continues to pose a threat to international peace and security, to a speedy conclusion, thereby establishing a just and lasting peace in the region,¹²

Stressing the urgency of achieving without delay an end to the Israeli occupation that began in 1967,

Affirming once again the right of all States in the region to live in peace within secure and internationally recognized borders,

1. *Reaffirms* the necessity of achieving a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, in all its aspects, and of intensifying all efforts towards that end, and stresses in this regard the urgency of salvaging the prospects for realizing the two-State solution of Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security within recognized borders, based on the pre-1967 borders, and making tangible progress towards implementing that solution and justly resolving all final status issues;

¹⁰ [A/66/371-S/2011/592](#), annex I.

¹¹ [A/67/738](#).

¹² [A/ES-10/273](#) and [A/ES-10/273/Corr.1](#), advisory opinion, para. 161.

2. *Recalls* Security Council resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#) and, inter alia, the call upon all parties to continue, in the interest of the promotion of peace and security, to exert collective efforts to launch credible negotiations on all final status issues in the Middle East peace process and within the time frame specified by the Quartet in its statement of 21 September 2010, and calls for its full implementation;

3. *Calls once more for* the intensification of efforts by the parties, including through negotiations, with the support of the international community, towards the conclusion of a final peace settlement;

4. *Urges* the undertaking of renewed international efforts to achieve a comprehensive, just and lasting peace, based on the relevant United Nations resolutions, the terms of reference of the Madrid Conference, including the principle of land for peace, the Arab Peace Initiative adopted by the Council of the League of Arab States at its fourteenth session,⁶ the Quartet road map to a permanent two-State solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict,⁵ and the existing agreements between the Israeli and Palestinian sides;

5. *Stresses* the need for a resumption of negotiations based on the long-standing terms of reference and clear parameters and within a defined time frame aimed at expediting the realization of a just, lasting and comprehensive settlement, and in this regard encourages serious efforts by all concerned international and regional partners, including by the United States of America, the European Union, the Russian Federation and the United Nations, as members of the Quartet, and by the League of Arab States;

6. *Commends and encourages* continued serious regional and international efforts to follow up and promote the Arab Peace Initiative, including by the Ministerial Committee formed at the Riyadh summit in March 2007;

7. *Welcomes* the initiative launched by France aimed at mobilizing international support for Palestinian-Israeli peace, including the efforts to organize an international peace conference in Paris in January 2017, and the ongoing efforts of the Quartet to address the unsustainable situation on the ground and to promote meaningful negotiations, while stressing its recommendations, and the respective efforts by China, Egypt, the Russian Federation and the United States to promote dialogue and negotiations between the two parties;

8. *Calls for* the timely convening of an international conference in Moscow, as envisioned by the Security Council in its resolution [1850 \(2008\)](#), for the advancement and acceleration of the achievement of a just, lasting and comprehensive peace settlement;

9. *Calls upon* both parties to act responsibly on the basis of international law and their previous agreements and obligations, in both their policies and actions, in order to urgently reverse negative trends on the ground and create the conditions necessary for the launching of a credible political horizon and the advancement of peace efforts;

10. *Calls upon* the parties themselves, with the support of the Quartet and other interested parties, to exert all efforts necessary to halt the deterioration of the situation, to reverse all unilateral and unlawful measures taken on the ground since 28 September 2000 and to refrain from actions that undermine trust or prejudice final status issues;

11. *Calls upon* the parties to observe calm and restraint and to refrain from provocative actions, incitement and inflammatory rhetoric, especially in areas of religious and cultural sensitivity, including in East Jerusalem, and calls for respect

for the historic status quo at the holy places of Jerusalem, including the Haram al-Sharif, in word and in practice, and for immediate and serious efforts to defuse tensions;

12. *Underscores* the need for the parties to take confidence-building measures aimed at improving the situation on the ground, promoting stability, building trust and fostering the peace process, and stresses the need, in particular, for an immediate halt to all settlement activities and home demolitions, ending violence and incitement and undertaking measures to address settler violence and ensure accountability, and for the further release of prisoners and an end to arbitrary arrests and detentions;

13. *Stresses* the need for the removal of checkpoints and other obstructions to the movement of persons and goods throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the need for respect and preservation of the territorial unity, contiguity and integrity of all of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem;

14. *Also stresses* the need for an immediate and complete cessation of all acts of violence, including military attacks, destruction and acts of terror;

15. *Reiterates its demand* for the full implementation of Security Council resolution [1860 \(2009\)](#);

16. *Reiterates* the need for the full implementation by both parties of the Agreement on Movement and Access and of the Agreed Principles for the Rafah Crossing, of 15 November 2005, and the need, specifically, to allow for the sustained opening of all crossings into and out of the Gaza Strip for humanitarian supplies, movement and access of persons and goods, as well as for commercial flows, including exports, and all necessary construction materials, and stresses the urgent need to accelerate comprehensive reconstruction and to address the alarming unemployment rate, including among youth, including through the implementation of United Nations-led projects, civilian reconstruction activities and job-creation programmes, all of which are essential for alleviating the disastrous humanitarian situation, including the impact of the large-scale displacement of civilians in July and August 2014, improving the living conditions of the Palestinian people and promoting the recovery of the Palestinian economy;

17. *Calls upon* Israel, the occupying Power, to comply strictly with its obligations under international law, including international humanitarian law, and to cease all of its measures that are contrary to international law and all unilateral actions in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, that are aimed at altering the character, status and demographic composition of the Territory, including the confiscation and de facto annexation of land, and thus at prejudging the final outcome of peace negotiations, with a view to achieving without delay an end to the Israeli occupation that began in 1967;

18. *Reiterates its demand* for the complete cessation of all Israeli settlement activities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and in the occupied Syrian Golan, and calls for the full implementation of the relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#), and for the consideration of measures of accountability, in accordance with international law, including without limitation in relation to the continued non-compliance with the demands for a complete and immediate cessation of all settlement activities and stressing that compliance with and respect for international humanitarian law and international human rights law is a cornerstone for peace and security in the region;

19. *Underscores* in this regard the affirmation by the Security Council in its resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#) that it will not recognize any changes to the 4 June 1967

lines, including with regard to Jerusalem, other than those agreed by the parties through negotiations, and its call upon States to distinguish in their relevant dealings between the territory of the State of Israel and the territories occupied since 1967, as well as its determination to examine practical ways and means to secure the full implementation of its relevant resolutions;

20. *Reiterates* the need for Israel forthwith to abide by its road map obligation to freeze all settlement activity, including so-called “natural growth”, and to dismantle settlement outposts erected since March 2001;

21. *Calls for* the cessation of all provocations, including by Israeli settlers, in East Jerusalem, including in and around religious sites;

22. *Demands* that Israel, the occupying Power, comply with its legal obligations under international law, as mentioned in the advisory opinion rendered on 9 July 2004 by the International Court of Justice² and as demanded in General Assembly resolutions ES-10/13 of 21 October 2003 and ES-10/15, and, inter alia, that it immediately cease its construction of the wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and calls upon all States Members of the United Nations to comply with their legal obligations, as mentioned in the advisory opinion;

23. *Reaffirms its commitment*, in accordance with international law, to the two-State solution of Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security within recognized borders, based on the pre-1967 borders;

24. *Calls for*:

(a) The withdrawal of Israel from the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem;

(b) The realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, primarily the right to self-determination and the right to their independent State;

25. *Stresses* the need for a just resolution of the problem of Palestine refugees in conformity with its resolution 194 (III) of 11 December 1948;

26. *Urges* Member States to expedite the provision of economic, humanitarian and technical assistance to the Palestinian people and the Palestinian Government during this critical period in order to help to alleviate the serious humanitarian situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, which is dire in the Gaza Strip, to rehabilitate the Palestinian economy and infrastructure and to support the development and strengthening of Palestinian institutions and Palestinian State-building efforts in preparation for independence;

27. *Requests* the Secretary-General to continue his efforts with the parties concerned, and in consultation with the Security Council, including with regard to the reporting required pursuant to resolution 2334 (2016), towards the attainment of a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine and the promotion of peace in the region and to submit to the General Assembly at its seventy-third session a report on these efforts and on developments on this matter.

*60th plenary meeting
30 November 2017*



Seventy-third session
Agenda item 39

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 30 November 2018

[without reference to a Main Committee ([A/73/L.32](#) and [A/73/L.32/Add.1](#))]

73/19. Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine

The General Assembly,

Recalling its relevant resolutions, including those adopted at its tenth emergency special session,

Recalling also its resolution [58/292](#) of 6 May 2004,

Recalling further relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolutions [242 \(1967\)](#) of 22 November 1967, [338 \(1973\)](#) of 22 October 1973, [1397 \(2002\)](#) of 12 March 2002, [1515 \(2003\)](#) of 19 November 2003, [1544 \(2004\)](#) of 19 May 2004, [1850 \(2008\)](#) of 16 December 2008 and [2334 \(2016\)](#) of 23 December 2016,

Recalling the affirmation by the Security Council of the vision of a region where two States, Israel and Palestine, live side by side within secure and recognized borders,

Expressing deep concern that it has been over 70 years since the adoption of its resolution 181 (II) of 29 November 1947 and 51 years since the occupation of Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, in 1967, and that a just, lasting and comprehensive solution to the question of Palestine has yet to be achieved,

Having considered the report of the Secretary-General submitted pursuant to the request made in its resolution [72/14](#) of 30 November 2017,¹

Reaffirming the permanent responsibility of the United Nations with regard to the question of Palestine until the question is resolved in all its aspects in accordance with international law and relevant resolutions,

Recalling the advisory opinion rendered on 9 July 2004 by the International Court of Justice on the legal consequences of the construction of a wall in the

¹ [A/73/346-S/2018/597](#).



Occupied Palestinian Territory,² and recalling also its resolutions ES-10/15 of 20 July 2004 and ES-10/17 of 15 December 2006,

Convinced that achieving a just, lasting and comprehensive settlement of the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, is imperative for the attainment of comprehensive and lasting peace and stability in the Middle East,

Stressing that the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples is among the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations,

Reaffirming the principle of the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war,

Reaffirming also the applicability of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949,³ to the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem,

Recalling its resolution 2625 (XXV) of 24 October 1970, and reiterating the importance of maintaining and strengthening international peace founded upon freedom, equality, justice and respect for fundamental human rights and of developing friendly relations among nations irrespective of their political, economic and social systems or the level of their development,

Bearing in mind its resolution 70/1 of 25 September 2015, entitled “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”, in particular Sustainable Development Goal 16,

Stressing the urgent need for efforts to reverse the negative trends on the ground and to restore a political horizon for advancing and accelerating meaningful negotiations aimed at the achievement of a peace agreement that will bring a complete end to the Israeli occupation that began in 1967 and the resolution of all core final status issues, without exception, leading to a peaceful, just, lasting and comprehensive solution to the question of Palestine,

Reaffirming the illegality of the Israeli settlements in the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem,

Expressing grave concern about the extremely detrimental impact of Israeli settlement policies, decisions and activities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, including on the contiguity, integrity and viability of the Territory, the viability of the two-State solution based on the pre-1967 borders and the efforts to advance a peaceful settlement in the Middle East,

Expressing grave concern also about all acts of violence, intimidation and provocation by Israeli settlers against Palestinian civilians, including children, and properties, including homes, mosques, churches and agricultural lands, condemning acts of terror by several extremist Israeli settlers, and calling for accountability for the illegal actions perpetrated in this regard,

Reaffirming the illegality of Israeli actions aimed at changing the status of Jerusalem, including settlement construction and expansion, home demolitions, evictions of Palestinian residents, excavations in and around religious and historic sites, and all other unilateral measures aimed at altering the character, status and demographic composition of the city and of the Territory as a whole, and demanding their immediate cessation,

² See A/ES-10/273 and A/ES-10/273/Corr.1.

³ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 75, No. 973.

Expressing grave concern about tensions, provocations and incitement regarding the holy places of Jerusalem, including the Haram al-Sharif, and urging restraint and respect for the sanctity of the holy sites by all sides,

Reaffirming that the construction by Israel, the occupying Power, of a wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including in and around East Jerusalem, and its associated regime are contrary to international law,

Encouraging all States and international organizations to continue to actively pursue policies to ensure respect for their obligations under international law with regard to all illegal Israeli practices and measures in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, particularly Israeli settlements,

Expressing deep concern about the continuing Israeli policies of closures and severe restrictions on the movement of persons and goods, including medical and humanitarian and economic, via the imposition of prolonged closures and severe economic and movement restrictions that in effect amount to a blockade, as well as of checkpoints and a permit regime throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem,

Expressing deep concern also about the consequent negative impact of such policies on the contiguity of the Territory and the critical socioeconomic and humanitarian situation of the Palestinian people, which remains a disastrous humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip, as well as on the international efforts and the efforts of the Palestinian Government aimed at rehabilitating and developing the damaged Palestinian economy, including reviving the agricultural and productive sectors, and, while recalling Security Council resolution [1860 \(2009\)](#) of 8 January 2009, calling for the full lifting of restrictions on the movement and access of persons and goods, which are crucial for social and economic recovery,

Recalling the mutual recognition 25 years ago between the Government of the State of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization, the representative of the Palestinian people,⁴ and stressing the urgent need for efforts to ensure full compliance with the agreements concluded between the two sides,

Recalling also the endorsement by the Security Council, in its resolution [1515 \(2003\)](#), of the Quartet road map to a permanent two-State solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict⁵ and the call in Council resolution [1850 \(2008\)](#) for the parties to fulfil their obligations under the road map and to refrain from any steps that could undermine confidence or prejudice the outcome of negotiations on a final peace settlement,

Underscoring the demand by the Security Council, most recently in its resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#), that Israel immediately and completely cease all settlement activities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and that it fully respect all its legal obligations in this regard,

Recalling the Arab Peace Initiative, adopted by the Council of the League of Arab States at its fourteenth session, held in Beirut on 27 and 28 March 2002,⁶ and stressing its importance in the efforts to achieve a just, lasting and comprehensive peace,

Urging renewed and coordinated efforts by the international community aimed at restoring a political horizon and advancing and accelerating the conclusion of a peace treaty to attain without delay an end to the Israeli occupation that began in 1967

⁴ See [A/48/486-S/26560](#), annex.

⁵ [S/2003/529](#), annex.

⁶ [A/56/1026-S/2002/932](#), annex II, resolution 14/221.

by resolving all outstanding issues, including all core issues, without exception, for a just, lasting and peaceful settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, in accordance with the internationally recognized basis of the two-State solution, and ultimately of the Arab-Israeli conflict as a whole for the realization of a comprehensive peace in the Middle East,

Welcoming, in this regard, all regional and international efforts aimed at promoting meaningful negotiations and achieving a two-State solution based on the pre-1967 borders and on the long-standing terms of reference, as called for in Security Council resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#),

Taking note of the report of the Quartet of 1 July 2016,⁷ and stressing its recommendations as well as all its recent statements, in which, inter alia, grave concerns were expressed that current trends on the ground are steadily eroding the two-State solution and entrenching a one-State reality and in which recommendations were made to reverse those trends in order to advance the two-State solution on the ground and create the conditions for successful final status negotiations,

Reiterating its support for the convening of an international conference in Moscow, as envisioned by the Security Council in its resolution [1850 \(2008\)](#) and the Quartet statement of 23 September 2011, and stressing the importance of multilateral support and engagement for the advancement and acceleration of peace efforts towards the fulfilment of a just, lasting and comprehensive solution to the question of Palestine,

Noting the important contribution to peace efforts of the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General to the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Palestinian Authority, including within the framework of the activities of the Quartet and with regard to the trilateral agreement and recent developments regarding the Gaza Strip,

Welcoming the ongoing efforts of the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee for the Coordination of the International Assistance to Palestinians, chaired by Norway, and noting its recent meeting at United Nations Headquarters, on 27 September 2018, and the ongoing efforts to generate sufficient donor support in this critical period for urgently addressing the immense humanitarian, reconstruction and recovery needs in the Gaza Strip, bearing in mind the detailed needs assessment and recovery framework for Gaza developed with the support of the United Nations, the World Bank and the European Union, and furthering Palestinian economic recovery and development,

Recognizing the efforts being undertaken by the Palestinian Government, with international support, to reform, develop and strengthen its institutions and infrastructure, emphasizing the need to preserve and further develop Palestinian institutions and infrastructure, despite the obstacles presented by the ongoing Israeli occupation, and commending in this regard the ongoing efforts to develop the institutions of an independent Palestinian State, including through the implementation of the Palestinian National Policy Agenda: National Priorities, Policies and Policy Interventions (2017–2022),

Expressing concern about the risks posed to the significant achievements made, as confirmed by the positive assessments made by international institutions regarding readiness for statehood, including by the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the United Nations and the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee, owing to the negative impact of the current instability and financial crisis being faced by the Palestinian Government and the continued absence of a credible political horizon,

⁷ [S/2016/595](#), annex.

Recognizing the positive contribution of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework, which is aimed, inter alia, at enhancing development support and assistance to the Palestinian people and strengthening institutional capacity in line with Palestinian national priorities,

Recalling the ministerial meetings of the Conference on Cooperation among East Asian Countries for Palestinian Development convened in Tokyo in February 2013 and Jakarta in March 2014 as a forum for the mobilization of political and economic assistance, including via exchanges of expertise and lessons learned, in support of Palestinian development, and encouraging the expansion of such efforts and support in the light of worsening socioeconomic indicators,

Recognizing the continued efforts and tangible progress made in the Palestinian security sector, noting the continued cooperation that benefits both Palestinians and Israelis, in particular by promoting security and building confidence, and expressing the hope that such progress will be extended to all major population centres,

Recognizing also that security measures alone cannot remedy the tensions, instability and violence, and calling for full respect for international law, including for the protection of civilian life, as well as for the promotion of human security, the de-escalation of the situation, the exercise of restraint, including from provocative actions and rhetoric, and the establishment of a stable environment conducive to the pursuit of peace,

Gravely concerned over the negative developments that have continued to occur in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, including the escalation of violence and excessive use of force, resulting in a large number of deaths and injuries, mostly among Palestinian civilians, including children and women, as well as the continued construction and expansion of settlements and the wall, the arbitrary arrest and detention of Palestinian civilians, the acts of violence, vandalism and brutality committed against Palestinian civilians by Israeli settlers in the West Bank, the widespread destruction of public and private Palestinian property, including religious sites, and infrastructure and the demolition of homes, including if carried out as a means of collective punishment, the internal forced displacement of civilians, especially among the Bedouin community, and the consequent deterioration of the socioeconomic and humanitarian conditions of the Palestinian people,

Deploring the continuing negative repercussions of the conflicts in and around the Gaza Strip and the large number of Palestinian civilian casualties in the recent period, including among children, and any violations of international law, and calling for full respect for the relevant principles of international humanitarian and human rights law, including the principles of legality, distinction, precaution, limitation and proportionality, as well as the need for independent and transparent investigation into the use of force,

Stressing the need to ensure accountability for all violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law in order to end impunity, ensure justice, deter further violations, protect civilians and promote peace,

Emphasizing the importance of the safety, protection and well-being of all civilians in the whole Middle East region, stressing that Israel must respect the right to peaceful protest, and condemning all acts of violence and terror against civilians on both sides, including the firing of rockets by armed groups against Israeli civilian areas, resulting in loss of life and injury,

Deploring any actions that could provoke violence and endanger lives, and calling upon all actors to ensure that protests remain peaceful,

Expressing grave concern over the persisting disastrous humanitarian situation and socioeconomic conditions in the Gaza Strip as a result of the prolonged Israeli closures and severe economic and movement restrictions that in effect amount to a blockade, bearing in mind numerous United Nations agency reports, including the reports of the United Nations country team, and stressing that the situation is unsustainable and that urgent efforts are required to reverse the de-development trajectory in Gaza and respond adequately and immediately to the immense humanitarian needs of the civilian population,

Recalling the statement of the President of the Security Council of 28 July 2014,⁸

Stressing the need for calm and restraint by the parties, including by consolidating the ceasefire agreement of 26 August 2014, achieved under the auspices of Egypt, to avert the deterioration of the situation,

Reiterating the need for the full implementation by all parties of Security Council resolution 1860 (2009) and General Assembly resolution ES-10/18 of 16 January 2009,

Stressing that a durable ceasefire agreement must lead to a fundamental improvement in the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip, including through the sustained and regular opening of crossing points, and ensure the safety and well-being of civilians on both sides,

Expressing grave concern about the imprisonment and detention by Israel of thousands of Palestinians, including children, under harsh conditions, and all violations of international humanitarian law and human rights law that have occurred in this regard,

Emphasizing the importance of the safety, protection and well-being of all civilians in the whole Middle East region, and condemning all acts of violence and terror against civilians on both sides, including the firing of rockets,

Stressing the need for measures to be taken to guarantee the safety and protection of the Palestinian civilian population throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory, consistent with the provisions and obligations of international humanitarian law, and taking note of the report of the Secretary-General on the protection of the Palestinian civilian population,⁹

Stressing also the need to respect the right of peaceful assembly,

Emphasizing the need for respect for and the preservation of the territorial integrity and unity of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem,

Affirming the need to support the Palestinian Government of national consensus, formed consistent with Palestine Liberation Organization commitments and the Quartet principles, in its assumption of full government responsibilities in both the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, in all fields, as well as through its presence at Gaza's crossing points, welcoming in this regard the efforts of Egypt to facilitate and support Palestinian unity, and taking note of the Quartet statement of 28 September 2017,

Stressing the urgent need for sustained and active international involvement and for concerted initiatives to support the parties in building a climate for peace, to assist the parties in advancing and accelerating direct peace process negotiations for the achievement of a just, lasting and comprehensive peace settlement that ends the

⁸ S/PRST/2014/13; see *Resolutions and Decisions of the Security Council, 1 August 2013–31 July 2014 (S/INF/69)*.

⁹ A/ES-10/794.

occupation that began in 1967 and results in the independence of a democratic, contiguous and viable State of Palestine living side by side in peace and security with Israel and its other neighbours, on the basis of relevant United Nations resolutions, the terms of reference of the Madrid Conference, the Quartet road map and the Arab Peace Initiative,

Taking note of the application of Palestine for admission to membership in the United Nations, submitted on 23 September 2011,¹⁰

Taking note also of its resolution 67/19 of 29 November 2012, by which, inter alia, Palestine was accorded non-member observer State status in the United Nations, and taking note further of the follow-up report of the Secretary-General,¹¹

Acknowledging the efforts being undertaken by civil society to promote a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine,

Recalling the findings by the International Court of Justice, in its advisory opinion, including on the urgent necessity for the United Nations as a whole to redouble its efforts to bring the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which continues to pose a threat to international peace and security, to a speedy conclusion, thereby establishing a just and lasting peace in the region,¹²

Stressing the urgency of achieving without delay an end to the Israeli occupation that began in 1967,

Affirming once again the right of all States in the region to live in peace within secure and internationally recognized borders,

1. *Reaffirms* the necessity of achieving a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, in all its aspects, and of intensifying all efforts towards that end, and stresses in this regard the urgency of salvaging the prospects for realizing the two-State solution of Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security within recognized borders, based on the pre-1967 borders, and making tangible progress towards implementing that solution and justly resolving all final status issues;

2. *Calls for* the full implementation of Security Council resolution 2334 (2016), and stresses, inter alia, the call upon all parties to continue, in the interest of the promotion of peace and security, to exert collective efforts to launch credible negotiations on all final status issues in the Middle East peace process and within the time frame specified by the Quartet in its statement of 21 September 2010;

3. *Calls once more for* the intensification of efforts by the parties, including through negotiations, with the support of the international community, towards the conclusion of a final peace settlement;

4. *Urges* in this regard the intensification and acceleration of renewed international and regional diplomatic efforts and support aimed at achieving, without delay, a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East on the basis of the relevant United Nations resolutions, the Madrid terms of reference, including the principle of land for peace, the Arab Peace Initiative,⁶ the Quartet road map⁵ and an end to the Israeli occupation that began in 1967, and underscores in this regard the importance of the ongoing efforts, including by the European Union, the Russian Federation, the United Nations and the United States of America, as members of the

¹⁰ A/66/371-S/2011/592, annex I.

¹¹ A/67/738.

¹² A/ES-10/273 and A/ES-10/273/Corr.1, advisory opinion, para. 161.

Quartet, as well as efforts by the League of Arab States, Egypt, France, China and other concerned States and organizations;

5. *Stresses* the need for a resumption of negotiations based on the long-standing terms of reference and clear parameters and within a defined time frame aimed at expediting the realization of a just, lasting and comprehensive settlement;

6. *Calls for* the timely convening of an international conference in Moscow, as envisioned by the Security Council in its resolution 1850 (2008), for the advancement and acceleration of the achievement of a just, lasting and comprehensive peace settlement;

7. *Calls upon* both parties to act responsibly on the basis of international law and their previous agreements and obligations, in both their policies and actions, in order to, with the support of the Quartet and other interested parties, urgently reverse negative trends, including all measures taken on the ground that are contrary to international law, and create the conditions necessary for the launching of a credible political horizon and the advancement of peace efforts;

8. *Calls upon* Israel, the occupying Power, to comply strictly with its obligations under international law, including international humanitarian law, and to cease all of its measures that are contrary to international law and all unilateral actions in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, that are aimed at altering the character, status and demographic composition of the Territory, including the confiscation and de facto annexation of land, and thus at prejudging the final outcome of peace negotiations, with a view to achieving without delay an end to the Israeli occupation that began in 1967;

9. *Stresses* the need, in particular, for an immediate halt to all actions contrary to international law that undermine trust and prejudice final status issues;

10. *Calls upon* the parties to observe calm and restraint and to refrain from provocative actions, incitement and inflammatory rhetoric, especially in areas of religious and cultural sensitivity, including in East Jerusalem, and calls for respect for the historic status quo at the holy places of Jerusalem, including the Haram al-Sharif, in word and in practice, and for immediate and serious efforts to defuse tensions;

11. *Stresses* the need for an immediate and complete cessation of all acts of violence, including military attacks, destruction and acts of terror;

12. *Underscores* the need for the parties to take confidence-building measures aimed at immediately improving the situation on the ground, promoting stability, building trust and fostering the peace process, and stresses the need, in particular, for an immediate halt to all settlement activities and home demolitions, ending violence and incitement and taking measures to address settler violence and ensure accountability, and for the further release of prisoners and an end to arbitrary arrests and detentions;

13. *Stresses* the need for the removal of checkpoints and other obstructions to the movement of persons and goods throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the need for respect for and preservation of the territorial unity, contiguity and integrity of all the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem;

14. *Reiterates its demand* for the full implementation of Security Council resolution 1860 (2009);

15. *Reiterates* the need for the full implementation by both parties of the Agreement on Movement and Access and of the Agreed Principles for the Rafah Crossing, of 15 November 2005, and the need, specifically, to allow for the sustained

opening of all crossings into and out of the Gaza Strip for humanitarian supplies, movement and access of persons and goods, as well as for commercial flows, including exports, and economic recovery;

16. *Reiterates its demand* for the complete cessation of all Israeli settlement activities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and in the occupied Syrian Golan, calls for the full implementation of the relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolution 2334 (2016), and for the consideration of measures of accountability, in accordance with international law, including without limitation in relation to the continued non-compliance with the demands for a complete and immediate cessation of all settlement activities, and stresses that compliance with and respect for international humanitarian law and international human rights law is a cornerstone of peace and security in the region;

17. *Underscores* in this regard the affirmation by the Security Council in its resolution 2334 (2016) that it will not recognize any changes to the 4 June 1967 lines, including with regard to Jerusalem, other than those agreed by the parties through negotiations, and its call upon States to distinguish in their relevant dealings between the territory of the State of Israel and the territories occupied since 1967, as well as its determination to examine practical ways and means to secure the full implementation of its relevant resolutions;

18. *Reiterates* the need for Israel forthwith to abide by its road map obligation to freeze all settlement activity, including so-called “natural growth”, and to dismantle settlement outposts erected since March 2001;

19. *Calls for* the cessation of all provocations, including by Israeli settlers, in East Jerusalem, including in and around religious sites;

20. *Demands* that Israel, the occupying Power, comply with its legal obligations under international law, as mentioned in the advisory opinion rendered on 9 July 2004 by the International Court of Justice² and as demanded in the relevant General Assembly resolutions;

21. *Reaffirms its commitment*, in accordance with international law, to the two-State solution of Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security within recognized borders, based on the pre-1967 borders;

22. *Calls for*:

(a) The withdrawal of Israel from the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem;

(b) The realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, primarily the right to self-determination and the right to their independent State;

23. *Stresses* the need for a just resolution of the problem of Palestine refugees in conformity with its resolution 194 (III) of 11 December 1948;

24. *Calls upon* all States, consistent with their obligations under the Charter of the United Nations and relevant Security Council resolutions, inter alia:

(a) Not to recognize any changes to the pre-1967 borders, including with regard to Jerusalem, other than those agreed by the parties through negotiations;

(b) To distinguish, in their relevant dealings, between the territory of the State of Israel and the territories occupied since 1967;

(c) Not to render aid or assistance to illegal settlement activities, including not to provide Israel with any assistance to be used specifically in connection with settlements in the occupied territories, in line with Security Council resolution 465 (1980) of 1 March 1980;

25. *Urges* Member States and the United Nations to continue and expedite the provision of economic, humanitarian and technical assistance to the Palestinian people and the Palestinian Government during this critical period in order to help to alleviate the serious humanitarian situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, which is dire in the Gaza Strip, to rehabilitate the Palestinian economy and infrastructure and to support the development and strengthening of Palestinian institutions and Palestinian State-building efforts in preparation for independence;

26. *Requests* the Secretary-General to continue his efforts with the parties concerned, and in consultation with the Security Council, including with regard to the reporting required pursuant to resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#), towards the attainment of a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine and the promotion of peace in the region and to submit to the General Assembly at its seventy-fourth session a report on these efforts and on developments on this matter.

*43rd plenary meeting
30 November 2018*



Seventy-fourth session
Agenda item 35
Question of Palestine

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 3 December 2019

[without reference to a Main Committee ([A/74/L.15](#) and [A/74/L.15/Add.1](#))]

74/11. Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine

The General Assembly,

Recalling its relevant resolutions, including those adopted at its tenth emergency special session,

Recalling also its resolution [73/89](#) of 6 December 2018, entitled “Comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East”,

Recalling further relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolutions [242 \(1967\)](#) of 22 November 1967, [338 \(1973\)](#) of 22 October 1973, [478 \(1980\)](#) of 20 August 1980, [1397 \(2002\)](#) of 12 March 2002, [1515 \(2003\)](#) of 19 November 2003, [1544 \(2004\)](#) of 19 May 2004, [1850 \(2008\)](#) of 16 December 2008 and [2334 \(2016\)](#) of 23 December 2016,

Having considered the report of the Secretary-General submitted pursuant to the request made in its resolution [73/19](#) of 30 November 2018,¹

Recalling its resolution [58/292](#) of 6 May 2004,

Reaffirming the permanent responsibility of the United Nations with regard to the question of Palestine until it is resolved in all its aspects in accordance with international law and relevant resolutions,

Convinced that achieving a just, lasting and comprehensive settlement of the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, is imperative for the attainment of comprehensive and lasting peace and stability in the Middle East,

Stressing that the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples is among the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations,

¹ [A/74/333-S/2019/685](#).



Reaffirming the principle of the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force,

Recalling its resolution 2625 (XXV) of 24 October 1970, and reiterating the importance of maintaining and strengthening international peace founded upon freedom, equality, justice and respect for fundamental human rights and of developing friendly relations among nations irrespective of their political, economic and social systems or the level of their development,

Emphasizing the need for respect for, and the preservation of, the territorial integrity and unity of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem,

Recalling the advisory opinion rendered on 9 July 2004 by the International Court of Justice on the legal consequences of the construction of a wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory,² and recalling also its resolutions ES-10/15 of 20 July 2004 and ES-10/17 of 15 December 2006,

Reaffirming the illegality of Israeli settlement activities and all other unilateral measures aimed at altering the demographic composition, character and status of the City of Jerusalem and of the Occupied Palestinian Territory as a whole, including the wall and its associated regime, and demanding their immediate cessation,

Emphasizing the importance of the safety, protection and well-being of all civilians in the whole Middle East region, and condemning all acts of violence and terror against civilians on all sides,

Calling for full respect for international law, including for the protection of civilian life, as well as for the promotion of human security, the de-escalation of the situation, the exercise of restraint, including from provocative actions and rhetoric, and the establishment of a stable environment conducive to the pursuit of peace,

Stressing the need for measures to be taken to guarantee the safety and protection of the Palestinian civilian population throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory, consistent with the provisions and obligations of international humanitarian law, and taking note of the report of the Secretary-General on the protection of the Palestinian civilian population,³

Stressing also the need to ensure accountability for all violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law in order to end impunity, ensure justice, deter further violations, protect civilians and promote peace,

Recalling the mutual recognition 26 years ago between the Government of the State of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization, the representative of the Palestinian people,⁴ and stressing the urgent need for efforts to ensure full compliance with the agreements concluded between the two sides,

Stressing the need, in particular, for an immediate halt to all actions contrary to international law that undermine trust and prejudice final status issues,

Urging renewed and coordinated efforts by the international community aimed at restoring a political horizon and advancing and accelerating the conclusion of a peace treaty to achieve without delay an end to the Israeli occupation that began in 1967 by resolving all outstanding issues, including all final status issues, without exception, for a just, lasting and peaceful settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian

² See A/ES-10/273 and A/ES-10/273/Corr.1.

³ A/ES-10/794.

⁴ See A/48/486-S/26560, annex.

conflict, in accordance with the internationally recognized basis of the two-State solution, and of the Arab-Israeli conflict, for the realization of a comprehensive peace in the Middle East,

Recognizing the efforts being undertaken by the Palestinian Government, with international support, to reform, develop, strengthen and preserve its institutions and infrastructure, despite the obstacles presented by the ongoing Israeli occupation, commending in this regard the ongoing efforts to develop the institutions of an independent Palestinian State, and stressing the need to promote intra-Palestinian reconciliation,

Expressing concern about the risks posed to the significant achievements made, as confirmed by the positive assessments by the international institutions regarding readiness for statehood, owing to the negative impact of the current instability and financial crisis being faced by the Palestinian Government and the continued absence of a credible political horizon,

Welcoming the ongoing efforts of the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee for the Coordination of the International Assistance to Palestinians, chaired by Norway, and noting its recent meeting at United Nations Headquarters, on 26 September 2019,

Recognizing the positive contribution of the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework, which is aimed, inter alia, at enhancing development support and assistance to the Palestinian people and strengthening institutional capacity in line with Palestinian national priorities,

Welcoming the holding of the meeting of the Conference on Cooperation among East Asian Countries for Palestinian Development in Ramallah and Jericho in July 2019 to support Palestinian efforts towards an independent Palestinian State through the sharing of the experience of East Asian countries in economic development and exploring effective means of cooperation, aimed at contributing to the promotion of Palestinian development, the Middle East peace process and regional stability,

Taking note of the application of Palestine for admission to membership in the United Nations, submitted on 23 September 2011,⁵

Taking note also of its resolution 67/19 of 29 November 2012, by which, inter alia, Palestine was accorded non-member observer State status in the United Nations, and taking note further of the follow-up report of the Secretary-General,⁶

Acknowledging the efforts being undertaken by civil society to promote a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine,

Stressing the urgency of achieving without delay an end to the Israeli occupation that began in 1967,

Affirming once again the right of all States in the region to live in peace within secure and internationally recognized borders,

Recalling the Arab Peace Initiative, adopted by the Council of the League of Arab States at its fourteenth session, held in Beirut on 27 and 28 March 2002,⁷ and stressing its importance in the efforts to achieve a just, lasting and comprehensive peace,

1. *Reiterates its call for* the achievement, without delay, of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East on the basis of the relevant United Nations resolutions, including Security Council resolution 2334 (2016), the Madrid terms of

⁵ A/66/371-S/2011/592, annex I.

⁶ A/67/738.

⁷ A/56/1026-S/2002/932, annex II, resolution 14/221.

reference, including the principle of land for peace, the Arab Peace Initiative⁷ and the Quartet road map,⁸ and an end to the Israeli occupation that began in 1967, including of East Jerusalem, and reaffirms in this regard its unwavering support, in accordance with international law, for the two-State solution of Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security within recognized borders, based on the pre-1967 borders;

2. *Stresses* the need to urgently exert collective efforts to launch credible negotiations on all final status issues in the Middle East peace process based on the long-standing terms of reference and clear parameters and within the time frame specified by the Quartet in its statement of 21 September 2010, and calls once more for the intensification of efforts by the parties, including through meaningful negotiations, with the support of the international community, towards the conclusion of a final just, lasting and comprehensive peace settlement;

3. *Calls for* the timely convening of an international conference in Moscow, as envisioned by the Security Council in its resolution 1850 (2008), for the advancement and acceleration of the achievement of a just, lasting and comprehensive peace settlement;

4. *Stresses* that compliance with and respect for the Charter of the United Nations and international law, including international humanitarian law and international human rights law, is a cornerstone of peace and security in the region;

5. *Calls upon* both parties to act responsibly and in compliance with international law and their previous agreements and obligations, in both their policies and actions, in order to, with the support of the Quartet and other interested parties, urgently reverse negative trends, including all measures taken on the ground that are contrary to international law, and create the conditions necessary for a credible political horizon and the advancement of peace efforts;

6. *Calls upon* Israel, the occupying Power, to comply strictly with its obligations under international law and to cease all of its measures that are contrary to international law, including all unilateral actions in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, that are aimed at altering the demographic composition, character and status of the Territory, and thus at prejudging the final outcome of peace negotiations, and recalls in this regard the principle of the inadmissibility of the acquisition of land by force and therefore the illegality of the annexation of any part of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, which constitutes a breach of international law, undermines the viability of the two-State solution and challenges the prospects for the achievement of a peaceful settlement and of just, lasting and comprehensive peace;

7. *Stresses* the need, in particular, for an immediate halt to all settlement activities, land confiscation and home demolitions, for the pursuit of measures to ensure accountability and for the release of prisoners and an end to arbitrary arrests and detentions;

8. *Also stresses* the need for respect for and preservation of the territorial unity, contiguity and integrity of all the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem;

9. *Further stresses* the need for an immediate and complete cessation of all acts of violence, including military attacks, destruction and acts of terror, as well as all acts of provocation and incitement;

⁸ S/2003/529, annex.

10. *Reaffirms its commitment*, in accordance with international law, to the two-State solution of Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security within recognized borders, based on the pre-1967 borders;

11. *Underscores* in this regard the affirmation by the Security Council in its resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#) of its determination to examine practical ways and means to secure the full implementation of its relevant resolutions;

12. *Calls for*:

(a) The withdrawal of Israel from the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem;

(b) The realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, primarily the right to self-determination and the right to their independent State;

(c) A just resolution of the problem of Palestine refugees in conformity with its resolution [194 \(III\)](#) of 11 December 1948;

13. *Calls upon* all States, consistent with their obligations under the Charter and relevant Security Council resolutions, inter alia:

(a) Not to recognize any changes to the pre-1967 borders, including with regard to Jerusalem, other than those agreed by the parties through negotiations, including by ensuring that agreements with Israel do not imply recognition of Israeli sovereignty over the territories occupied by Israel in 1967;

(b) To distinguish, in their relevant dealings, between the territory of the State of Israel and the territories occupied since 1967;

(c) Not to render aid or assistance to illegal settlement activities, including not to provide Israel with any assistance to be used specifically in connection with settlements in the occupied territories, in line with Security Council resolution [465 \(1980\)](#) of 1 March 1980;

(d) To respect and ensure respect for international law, in all circumstances, including through measures of accountability, consistent with international law;

14. *Urges* all States and the United Nations to continue and expedite the provision of economic, humanitarian and technical assistance to the Palestinian people and the Palestinian Government during this critical period in order to help to alleviate the serious humanitarian situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, which is dire in the Gaza Strip, to rehabilitate the Palestinian economy and infrastructure and to support the development and strengthening of Palestinian institutions and Palestinian State-building efforts in preparation for independence;

15. *Requests* the Secretary-General, including through his Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and Personal Representative to the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Palestinian Authority, to continue his efforts with the parties concerned, and in consultation with the Security Council, including with regard to the reporting required pursuant to resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#), towards the attainment of a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine and the promotion of peace in the region and to submit to the General Assembly at its seventy-fifth session a report on these efforts and on developments on this matter.

*38th plenary meeting
3 December 2019*



Seventy-fifth session
Agenda item 38
Question of Palestine

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 2 December 2020

[without reference to a Main Committee ([A/75/L.34](#) and [A/75/L.34/Add.1](#))]

75/22. Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine

The General Assembly,

Recalling its relevant resolutions, including those adopted at its tenth emergency special session,

Recalling also its resolution [73/89](#) of 6 December 2018, entitled “Comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East”,

Recalling further relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolutions [242 \(1967\)](#) of 22 November 1967, [338 \(1973\)](#) of 22 October 1973, [478 \(1980\)](#) of 20 August 1980, [1397 \(2002\)](#) of 12 March 2002, [1515 \(2003\)](#) of 19 November 2003, [1544 \(2004\)](#) of 19 May 2004, [1850 \(2008\)](#) of 16 December 2008 and [2334 \(2016\)](#) of 23 December 2016,

Having considered the report of the Secretary-General submitted pursuant to the request made in its resolution [74/11](#) of 3 December 2019,¹

Recalling its resolution [58/292](#) of 6 May 2004,

Reaffirming the permanent responsibility of the United Nations with regard to the question of Palestine until it is resolved in all its aspects in accordance with international law and relevant resolutions,

Convinced that achieving a just, lasting and comprehensive settlement of the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, is imperative for the attainment of comprehensive and lasting peace and stability in the Middle East,

Stressing that the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples is among the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations,

¹ [A/75/195-S/2020/834](#).



Reaffirming the principle of the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force,

Recalling its resolution 2625 (XXV) of 24 October 1970, and reiterating the importance of maintaining and strengthening international peace founded upon freedom, equality, justice and respect for fundamental human rights and of developing friendly relations among nations irrespective of their political, economic and social systems or the level of their development,

Emphasizing the need for respect for, and the preservation of, the territorial integrity and unity of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem,

Recalling the advisory opinion rendered on 9 July 2004 by the International Court of Justice on the legal consequences of the construction of a wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory,² and recalling also its resolutions ES-10/15 of 20 July 2004 and ES-10/17 of 15 December 2006,

Reaffirming the illegality of Israeli settlement activities and all other unilateral measures aimed at altering the demographic composition, character and status of the City of Jerusalem and of the Occupied Palestinian Territory as a whole, including the wall and its associated regime, and demanding their immediate cessation,

Emphasizing the importance of the safety, protection and well-being of all civilians in the whole Middle East region, and condemning all acts of violence and terror against civilians on all sides,

Calling for full respect for international law, including for the protection of civilian life, as well as for the promotion of human security, the de-escalation of the situation, the exercise of restraint, including from provocative actions and rhetoric, and the establishment of a stable environment conducive to the pursuit of peace,

Stressing the need for measures to be taken to guarantee the safety and protection of the Palestinian civilian population throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory, consistent with the provisions and obligations of international humanitarian law, and taking note of the report of the Secretary-General on the protection of the Palestinian civilian population,³

Stressing also the need to ensure accountability for all violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law in order to end impunity, ensure justice, deter further violations, protect civilians and promote peace,

Recalling the mutual recognition 27 years ago between the Government of the State of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization, the representative of the Palestinian people,⁴ and stressing the urgent need for efforts to ensure full compliance with the agreements concluded between the two sides,

Stressing the need, in particular, for an immediate halt to all actions contrary to international law that undermine trust and prejudice final status issues,

Urging renewed and coordinated efforts by the international community aimed at restoring a political horizon and advancing and accelerating the conclusion of a peace treaty to achieve without delay an end to the Israeli occupation that began in 1967 by resolving all outstanding issues, including all final status issues, without exception, for a just, lasting and peaceful settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, in accordance with the internationally recognized basis of the two-State solution, and of the Arab-Israeli conflict, for the realization of a comprehensive peace in the Middle East,

² See A/ES-10/273 and A/ES-10/273/Corr.1.

³ A/ES-10/794.

⁴ See A/48/486-S/26560, annex.

Recognizing the efforts being undertaken by the Palestinian Government, with international support, to reform, develop, strengthen and preserve its institutions and infrastructure, despite the obstacles presented by the ongoing Israeli occupation, commending in this regard the ongoing efforts to develop the institutions of an independent Palestinian State, and stressing the need to promote intra-Palestinian reconciliation,

Expressing concern about the risks posed to the significant achievements made, as confirmed by the positive assessments by the international institutions regarding readiness for statehood, owing to the negative impact of the current instability and financial crisis being faced by the Palestinian Government and the continued absence of a credible political horizon,

Welcoming the ongoing efforts of the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee for the Coordination of the International Assistance to Palestinians, chaired by Norway, and noting its recent meeting held virtually on 2 June 2020,

Recognizing the positive contribution of the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework, which is aimed, inter alia, at enhancing development support and assistance to the Palestinian people and strengthening institutional capacity in line with Palestinian national priorities,

Welcoming the holding of the meeting of the Conference on Cooperation among East Asian Countries for Palestinian Development in Ramallah and Jericho in July 2019 to support Palestinian efforts towards an independent Palestinian State through the sharing of the experience of East Asian countries in economic development and exploring effective means of cooperation, aimed at contributing to the promotion of Palestinian development, the Middle East peace process and regional stability,

Taking note of the application of Palestine for admission to membership in the United Nations, submitted on 23 September 2011,⁵

Taking note also of its resolution 67/19 of 29 November 2012, by which, inter alia, Palestine was accorded non-member observer State status in the United Nations, and taking note further of the follow-up report of the Secretary-General,⁶

Acknowledging the efforts being undertaken by civil society to promote a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine,

Stressing the urgency of achieving without delay an end to the Israeli occupation that began in 1967,

Affirming once again the right of all States in the region to live in peace within secure and internationally recognized borders,

Recalling the Arab Peace Initiative, adopted by the Council of the League of Arab States at its fourteenth session, held in Beirut on 27 and 28 March 2002,⁷ and stressing its importance in the efforts to achieve a just, lasting and comprehensive peace,

1. *Reiterates its call for* the achievement, without delay, of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East on the basis of the relevant United Nations resolutions, including Security Council resolution 2334 (2016), the Madrid terms of reference, including the principle of land for peace, the Arab Peace Initiative and the Quartet road map,⁸ and an end to the Israeli occupation that began in 1967, including of East Jerusalem, and reaffirms in this regard its unwavering support, in accordance

⁵ A/66/371-S/2011/592, annex I.

⁶ A/67/738.

⁷ A/56/1026-S/2002/932, annex II, resolution 14/221.

⁸ S/2003/529, annex.

with international law, for the two-State solution of Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security within recognized borders, based on the pre-1967 borders;

2. *Stresses* the need to urgently exert collective efforts to launch credible negotiations on all final status issues in the Middle East peace process based on the long-standing terms of reference and clear parameters and within the time frame specified by the Quartet in its statement of 21 September 2010, and calls once more for the intensification of efforts by the parties, including through meaningful negotiations, with the support of the international community, towards the conclusion of a final just, lasting and comprehensive peace settlement;

3. *Calls for* the timely convening of an international conference in Moscow, as envisioned by the Security Council in its resolution [1850 \(2008\)](#), for the advancement and acceleration of the achievement of a just, lasting and comprehensive peace settlement;

4. *Stresses* that compliance with and respect for the Charter of the United Nations and international law, including international humanitarian law and international human rights law, is a cornerstone of peace and security in the region;

5. *Calls upon* both parties to act responsibly and in compliance with international law and their previous agreements and obligations, in both their policies and actions, in order to, with the support of the Quartet and other interested parties, urgently reverse negative trends, including all measures taken on the ground that are contrary to international law, and create the conditions necessary for a credible political horizon and the advancement of peace efforts;

6. *Calls upon* Israel, the occupying Power, to comply strictly with its obligations under international law and to cease all of its measures that are contrary to international law, including all unilateral actions in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, that are aimed at altering the demographic composition, character and status of the Territory, and thus at prejudging the final outcome of peace negotiations, and recalls in this regard the principle of the inadmissibility of the acquisition of land by force and therefore the illegality of the annexation of any part of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, which constitutes a breach of international law, undermines the viability of the two-State solution and challenges the prospects for the achievement of a peaceful settlement and of just, lasting and comprehensive peace;

7. *Stresses* the need, in particular, for an immediate halt to all settlement activities, land confiscation and home demolitions, for the pursuit of measures to ensure accountability and for the release of prisoners and an end to arbitrary arrests and detentions;

8. *Also stresses* the need for respect for and preservation of the territorial unity, contiguity and integrity of all the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem;

9. *Further stresses* the need for an immediate and complete cessation of all acts of violence, including military attacks, destruction and acts of terror, as well as all acts of provocation and incitement;

10. *Reaffirms its commitment*, in accordance with international law, to the two-State solution of Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security within recognized borders, based on the pre-1967 borders;

11. *Underscores* in this regard the affirmation by the Security Council in its resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#) of its determination to examine practical ways and means to secure the full implementation of its relevant resolutions;

12. *Calls for:*

(a) The withdrawal of Israel from the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem;

(b) The realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, primarily the right to self-determination and the right to their independent State;

(c) A just resolution of the problem of Palestine refugees in conformity with its resolution [194 \(III\)](#) of 11 December 1948;

13. *Calls upon* all States, consistent with their obligations under the Charter and relevant Security Council resolutions, inter alia:

(a) Not to recognize any changes to the pre-1967 borders, including with regard to Jerusalem, other than those agreed by the parties through negotiations, including by ensuring that agreements with Israel do not imply recognition of Israeli sovereignty over the territories occupied by Israel in 1967;

(b) To distinguish, in their relevant dealings, between the territory of the State of Israel and the territories occupied since 1967;

(c) Not to render aid or assistance to illegal settlement activities, including not to provide Israel with any assistance to be used specifically in connection with settlements in the occupied territories, in line with Security Council resolution [465 \(1980\)](#) of 1 March 1980;

(d) To respect and ensure respect for international law, in all circumstances, including through measures of accountability, consistent with international law;

14. *Urges* all States and the United Nations to continue and expedite the provision of economic, humanitarian and technical assistance to the Palestinian people and the Palestinian Government during this critical period in order to help to alleviate the serious humanitarian situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, which is dire in the Gaza Strip, to rehabilitate the Palestinian economy and infrastructure and to support the development and strengthening of Palestinian institutions and Palestinian State-building efforts in preparation for independence;

15. *Requests* the Secretary-General, including through his Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and Personal Representative to the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Palestinian Authority, to continue his efforts with the parties concerned, and in consultation with the Security Council, including with regard to the reporting required pursuant to resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#), towards the attainment of a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine and the promotion of peace in the region and to submit to the General Assembly at its seventy-sixth session a report on these efforts and on developments on this matter.

*35th plenary meeting
2 December 2020*



Seventy-sixth session
Agenda item 39
Question of Palestine

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 1 December 2021

[without reference to a Main Committee ([A/76/L.14](#) and [A/76/L.14/Add.1](#))]

76/10. Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine

The General Assembly,

Recalling its relevant resolutions, including those adopted at its tenth emergency special session,

Recalling also its resolution [73/89](#) of 6 December 2018, entitled “Comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East”,

Recalling further relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolutions [242 \(1967\)](#) of 22 November 1967, [338 \(1973\)](#) of 22 October 1973, [478 \(1980\)](#) of 20 August 1980, [1397 \(2002\)](#) of 12 March 2002, [1515 \(2003\)](#) of 19 November 2003, [1544 \(2004\)](#) of 19 May 2004, [1850 \(2008\)](#) of 16 December 2008 and [2334 \(2016\)](#) of 23 December 2016,

Having considered the report of the Secretary-General submitted pursuant to the request made in its resolution [75/22](#) of 2 December 2020,¹

Recalling its resolution [58/292](#) of 6 May 2004,

Reaffirming the permanent responsibility of the United Nations with regard to the question of Palestine until it is resolved in all its aspects in accordance with international law and relevant resolutions,

Convinced that achieving a just, lasting and comprehensive settlement of the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, is imperative for the attainment of comprehensive and lasting peace and stability in the Middle East,

Stressing that the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples is among the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations,

Reaffirming the principle of the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force,

¹ [A/76/299-S/2021/749](#).



Recalling its resolution 2625 (XXV) of 24 October 1970, and reiterating the importance of maintaining and strengthening international peace founded upon freedom, equality, justice and respect for fundamental human rights and of developing friendly relations among nations irrespective of their political, economic and social systems or the level of their development,

Emphasizing the need for respect for, and the preservation of, the territorial integrity and unity of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem,

Recalling the advisory opinion rendered on 9 July 2004 by the International Court of Justice on the legal consequences of the construction of a wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory,² and recalling also its resolutions ES-10/15 of 20 July 2004 and ES-10/17 of 15 December 2006,

Reaffirming the illegality of Israeli settlement activities and all other unilateral measures aimed at altering the demographic composition, character and status of the City of Jerusalem and of the Occupied Palestinian Territory as a whole, including the wall and its associated regime, demanding their immediate cessation, and condemning any use of force against Palestinian civilians in violation of international law, notably children,

Condemning the firing of rockets against Israeli civilian areas,

Emphasizing the importance of the safety, protection and well-being of all civilians in the whole Middle East region, and condemning all acts of violence and terror against civilians on all sides,

Calling for full respect for international law, including for the protection of civilian life, as well as for the promotion of human security, the de-escalation of the situation, the exercise of restraint, including from provocative actions and rhetoric, and the establishment of a stable environment conducive to the pursuit of peace,

Stressing the need for measures to be taken to guarantee the safety and protection of the Palestinian civilian population throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory, particularly in the Gaza Strip, consistent with the provisions and obligations of international humanitarian law, and taking note of the report of the Secretary-General on the protection of the Palestinian civilian population,³

Stressing also the need to ensure accountability for all violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law in order to end impunity, ensure justice, deter further violations, protect civilians and promote peace,

Calling for the release of the bodies that have not yet been returned to their relatives, in line with international humanitarian law and human rights law, in order to ensure dignified closure in accordance with their religious beliefs and traditions,

Recalling the mutual recognition 27 years ago between the Government of the State of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization, the representative of the Palestinian people,⁴ and stressing the urgent need for efforts to ensure full compliance with the agreements concluded between the two sides,

Stressing the need, in particular, for an immediate halt to all actions contrary to international law that undermine trust and prejudice final status issues,

Urging renewed and coordinated efforts by the international community aimed at restoring a political horizon and advancing and accelerating the conclusion of a peace treaty to achieve without delay an end to the Israeli occupation that began in 1967 by resolving all outstanding issues, including all final status issues, without exception, for

² See A/ES-10/273 and A/ES-10/273/Corr.1.

³ A/ES-10/794.

⁴ See A/48/486-S/26560, annex.

a just, lasting and peaceful settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, in accordance with the internationally recognized basis of the two-State solution, and of the Arab-Israeli conflict, for the realization of a comprehensive peace in the Middle East,

Recognizing the efforts being undertaken by the Palestinian Government, with international support, to reform, develop, strengthen and preserve its institutions and infrastructure, despite the obstacles presented by the ongoing Israeli occupation, commending in this regard the ongoing efforts to develop the institutions of an independent Palestinian State, and stressing the need to promote intra-Palestinian reconciliation,

Expressing concern about the risks posed to the significant achievements made, as confirmed by the positive assessments by the international institutions regarding readiness for statehood, owing to the negative impact of the current instability and financial crisis being faced by the Palestinian Government and the continued absence of a credible political horizon,

Welcoming the ongoing efforts of the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee for the Coordination of the International Assistance to Palestinians, chaired by Norway, and noting its recent meeting held with virtual and physical participation at the ministerial level in Oslo on 17 November 2021,

Recognizing the positive contribution of the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework, which is aimed, inter alia, at enhancing development support and assistance to the Palestinian people and strengthening institutional capacity in line with Palestinian national priorities,

Welcoming the assistance extended by the Conference on Cooperation among East Asian Countries for Palestinian Development, held in Ramallah and Jericho in July 2019, in support of Palestinian efforts towards an independent Palestinian State through the sharing of the experience of East Asian countries in economic development and exploring effective means of cooperation, aimed at contributing to the promotion of Palestinian development, the Middle East peace process and regional stability,

Taking note of the application of Palestine for admission to membership in the United Nations, submitted on 23 September 2011,⁵

Taking note also of its resolution 67/19 of 29 November 2012, by which, inter alia, Palestine was accorded non-member observer State status in the United Nations, and taking note further of the follow-up report of the Secretary-General,⁶

Acknowledging the efforts being undertaken by civil society to promote respect for human rights and a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine, stressing the need for the protection of civil society actors to allow them to conduct their work freely and without fear of attacks and harassment from any party, and rejecting any attack against civil society,

Stressing the urgency of achieving without delay an end to the Israeli occupation that began in 1967,

Affirming once again the right of all States in the region to live in peace within secure and internationally recognized borders,

Recalling the Arab Peace Initiative, adopted by the Council of the League of Arab States at its fourteenth session, held in Beirut on 27 and 28 March 2002,⁷ and stressing its importance in the efforts to achieve a just, lasting and comprehensive peace,

⁵ A/66/371-S/2011/592, annex I.

⁶ A/67/738.

⁷ A/56/1026-S/2002/932, annex II, resolution 14/221.

1. *Reiterates its call for the achievement, without delay, of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East on the basis of the relevant United Nations resolutions, including Security Council resolution 2334 (2016), the Madrid terms of reference, including the principle of land for peace, the Arab Peace Initiative and the Quartet road map,⁸ and an end to the Israeli occupation that began in 1967, including of East Jerusalem, and reaffirms in this regard its unwavering support, in accordance with international law, for the two-State solution of Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security within recognized borders, based on the pre-1967 borders;*

2. *Stresses the need to urgently exert collective efforts to launch credible negotiations on all final status issues in the Middle East peace process based on the long-standing terms of reference and clear parameters and within the time frame specified by the Quartet in its statement of 21 September 2010, and calls once more for the intensification of efforts by the parties, including through meaningful negotiations, with the support of the international community, towards the conclusion of a final just, lasting and comprehensive peace settlement;*

3. *Calls for the timely convening of an international conference in Moscow, as envisioned by the Security Council in its resolution 1850 (2008), for the advancement and acceleration of the achievement of a just, lasting and comprehensive peace settlement;*

4. *Stresses that compliance with and respect for the Charter of the United Nations and international law, including international humanitarian law and international human rights law, is a cornerstone of peace and security in the region;*

5. *Calls upon both parties to act responsibly and in compliance with international law and their previous agreements and obligations, in both their policies and actions, in order to, with the support of the Quartet and other interested parties, urgently reverse negative trends, including all measures taken on the ground that are contrary to international law, and create the conditions necessary for a credible political horizon and the advancement of peace efforts;*

6. *Calls upon Israel, the occupying Power, to comply strictly with its obligations under international law and to cease all of its measures that are contrary to international law, including all unilateral actions in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, that are aimed at altering the demographic composition, character and status of the Territory and thus at prejudging the final outcome of peace negotiations, and recalls in this regard the principle of the inadmissibility of the acquisition of land by force and therefore the illegality of the annexation of any part of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, which constitutes a breach of international law, undermines the viability of the two-State solution and challenges the prospects for the achievement of a peaceful settlement and of just, lasting and comprehensive peace;*

7. *Stresses the need, in particular, for an immediate halt to all settlement activities, land confiscation and home demolitions, for the pursuit of measures to ensure accountability, and for the release of prisoners and an end to arbitrary arrests and detentions;*

8. *Also stresses the need for respect for and preservation of the territorial unity, contiguity and integrity of all the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem;*

9. *Further stresses the need for an immediate and complete cessation of all acts of violence, including military attacks, destruction and acts of terror, as well as all acts of provocation and incitement;*

⁸ S/2003/529, annex.

10. *Reaffirms its commitment*, in accordance with international law, to the two-State solution of Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security within recognized borders, based on the pre-1967 borders;

11. *Underscores* in this regard the affirmation by the Security Council in its resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#) of its determination to examine practical ways and means to secure the full implementation of its relevant resolutions;

12. *Calls for*:

(a) The withdrawal of Israel from the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem;

(b) The realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, primarily the right to self-determination and the right to their independent State;

(c) A just resolution of the problem of Palestine refugees in conformity with its resolution [194 \(III\)](#) of 11 December 1948;

13. *Calls upon* all States, consistent with their obligations under the Charter and relevant Security Council resolutions, inter alia:

(a) Not to recognize any changes to the pre-1967 borders, including with regard to Jerusalem, other than those agreed by the parties through negotiations, including by ensuring that agreements with Israel do not imply recognition of Israeli sovereignty over the territories occupied by Israel in 1967;

(b) To distinguish, in their relevant dealings, between the territory of the State of Israel and the territories occupied since 1967;

(c) Not to render aid or assistance to illegal settlement activities, including not to provide Israel with any assistance to be used specifically in connection with settlements in the occupied territories, in line with Security Council resolution [465 \(1980\)](#) of 1 March 1980;

(d) To respect and ensure respect for international law, in all circumstances, including through measures of accountability, consistent with international law;

14. *Urges* all States and the United Nations to continue and expedite the provision of economic, humanitarian and technical assistance to the Palestinian people and the Palestinian Government during this critical period in order to help to alleviate the serious humanitarian situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, which is dire in the Gaza Strip, to rehabilitate the Palestinian economy and infrastructure and to support the development and strengthening of Palestinian institutions and Palestinian State-building efforts in preparation for independence;

15. *Requests* the Secretary-General, including through his Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and Personal Representative to the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Palestinian Authority, to continue his efforts with the parties concerned, and in consultation with the Security Council, including with regard to the reporting required pursuant to resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#), towards the attainment of a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine and the promotion of peace in the region.

*42nd plenary meeting
1 December 2021*



Seventy-seventh session
Agenda item 33
Question of Palestine

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 30 November 2022

[without reference to a Main Committee (A/77/L.26)]

77/25. Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine

The General Assembly,

Recalling its relevant resolutions, including those adopted at its tenth emergency special session,

Recalling also its resolution [73/89](#) of 6 December 2018, entitled “Comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East”,

Recalling further relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolutions [242 \(1967\)](#) of 22 November 1967, [338 \(1973\)](#) of 22 October 1973, [478 \(1980\)](#) of 20 August 1980, [1397 \(2002\)](#) of 12 March 2002, [1515 \(2003\)](#) of 19 November 2003, [1544 \(2004\)](#) of 19 May 2004, [1850 \(2008\)](#) of 16 December 2008 and [2334 \(2016\)](#) of 23 December 2016,

Having considered the report of the Secretary-General submitted pursuant to the request made in its resolution [76/10](#) of 1 December 2021,

Recalling its resolution [58/292](#) of 6 May 2004,

Reaffirming the permanent responsibility of the United Nations with regard to the question of Palestine until it is resolved in all its aspects in accordance with international law and relevant resolutions,

Convinced that achieving a just, lasting and comprehensive settlement of the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, is imperative for the attainment of comprehensive and lasting peace and stability in the Middle East,

Stressing that the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples is among the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations,

Reaffirming the principle of the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force,



Recalling its resolution 2625 (XXV) of 24 October 1970, and reiterating the importance of maintaining and strengthening international peace founded upon freedom, equality, justice and respect for fundamental human rights and of developing friendly relations among nations irrespective of their political, economic and social systems or the level of their development,

Emphasizing the need for respect for, and the preservation of, the territorial integrity and unity of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem,

Recalling the advisory opinion rendered on 9 July 2004 by the International Court of Justice on the legal consequences of the construction of a wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory,¹ and recalling also its resolutions ES-10/15 of 20 July 2004 and ES-10/17 of 15 December 2006,

Reaffirming the illegality of Israeli settlement activities and all other unilateral measures aimed at altering the demographic composition, character and status of the City of Jerusalem and of the Occupied Palestinian Territory as a whole, including the wall and its associated regime, demanding their immediate cessation, and condemning any use of force against Palestinian civilians in violation of international law, notably children,

Condemning the firing of rockets against Israeli civilian areas,

Emphasizing the importance of the safety, protection and well-being of all civilians in the whole Middle East region, and condemning all acts of violence and terror against civilians on all sides,

Calling for full respect for international law, including for the protection of civilian life, as well as for the promotion of human security, the de-escalation of the situation, the exercise of restraint, including from provocative actions and rhetoric, and the establishment of a stable environment conducive to the pursuit of peace,

Stressing the need for measures to be taken to guarantee the safety and protection of the Palestinian civilian population throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory, particularly in the Gaza Strip, consistent with the provisions and obligations of international humanitarian law, and taking note of the report of the Secretary-General on the protection of the Palestinian civilian population,²

Stressing also the need to ensure accountability for all violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law in order to end impunity, ensure justice, deter further violations, protect civilians and promote peace,

Calling for the release of the bodies that have not yet been returned to their relatives, in line with international humanitarian law and human rights law, in order to ensure dignified closure in accordance with their religious beliefs and traditions,

Recalling the mutual recognition 30 years ago between the Government of the State of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization, the representative of the Palestinian people,³ and stressing the urgent need for efforts to ensure full compliance with the agreements concluded between the two sides,

Stressing the need, in particular, for an immediate halt to all actions contrary to international law that undermine trust and prejudice final status issues,

Urging renewed and coordinated efforts by the international community aimed at restoring a political horizon and advancing and accelerating the conclusion of a peace treaty to achieve without delay an end to the Israeli occupation that began in 1967 by

¹ See A/ES-10/273 and A/ES-10/273/Corr.1.

² A/ES-10/794.

³ See A/48/486-S/26560, annex.

resolving all outstanding issues, including all final status issues, without exception, for a just, lasting and peaceful settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, in accordance with the internationally recognized basis of the two-State solution, and of the Arab-Israeli conflict, for the realization of a comprehensive peace in the Middle East,

Recognizing the efforts being undertaken by the Palestinian Government, with international support, to reform, develop, strengthen and preserve its institutions and infrastructure, despite the obstacles presented by the ongoing Israeli occupation, commending in this regard the ongoing efforts to develop the institutions of an independent Palestinian State, and stressing the need to promote intra-Palestinian reconciliation,

Expressing concern about the risks posed to the significant achievements made, as confirmed by the positive assessments by the international institutions regarding readiness for statehood, owing to the negative impact of the current instability and financial crisis being faced by the Palestinian Government and the continued absence of a credible political horizon,

Welcoming the ongoing efforts of the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee for the Coordination of the International Assistance to Palestinians, chaired by Norway, and noting its recent meeting held at the ministerial level in New York on 22 September 2022,

Recognizing the positive contribution of the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework, which is aimed, inter alia, at enhancing development support and assistance to the Palestinian people and strengthening institutional capacity in line with Palestinian national priorities,

Welcoming the assistance extended by the Conference on Cooperation among East Asian Countries for Palestinian Development, held in Ramallah and Jericho in July 2019, in support of Palestinian efforts towards an independent Palestinian State through the sharing of the experience of East Asian countries in economic development and exploring effective means of cooperation, aimed at contributing to the promotion of Palestinian development, the Middle East peace process and regional stability,

Taking note of the application of Palestine for admission to membership in the United Nations, submitted on 23 September 2011,⁴

Taking note also of its resolution 67/19 of 29 November 2012, by which, inter alia, Palestine was accorded non-member observer State status in the United Nations, and taking note further of the follow-up report of the Secretary-General,⁵

Acknowledging the efforts being undertaken by civil society to promote respect for human rights and a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine, stressing the need for the protection of civil society actors to allow them to conduct their work freely and without fear of attacks and harassment from any party, and rejecting any attack against civil society,

Stressing the urgency of achieving without delay an end to the Israeli occupation that began in 1967,

Affirming once again the right of all States in the region to live in peace within secure and internationally recognized borders,

Recalling the Arab Peace Initiative, adopted by the Council of the League of Arab States at its fourteenth session, held in Beirut on 27 and 28 March 2002,⁶ and stressing its importance in the efforts to achieve a just, lasting and comprehensive peace,

⁴ [A/66/371-S/2011/592](#), annex I.

⁵ [A/67/738](#).

⁶ [A/56/1026-S/2002/932](#), annex II, resolution 14/221.

1. *Reiterates its call for the achievement, without delay, of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East on the basis of the relevant United Nations resolutions, including Security Council resolution 2334 (2016), the Madrid terms of reference, including the principle of land for peace, the Arab Peace Initiative and the Quartet road map,⁷ and an end to the Israeli occupation that began in 1967, including of East Jerusalem, and reaffirms in this regard its unwavering support, in accordance with international law, for the two-State solution of Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security within recognized borders, based on the pre-1967 borders;*

2. *Stresses the need to urgently exert collective efforts to launch credible negotiations on all final status issues in the Middle East peace process based on the long-standing terms of reference and clear parameters and within the time frame specified by the Quartet in its statement of 21 September 2010, and calls once more for the intensification of efforts by the parties, including through meaningful negotiations, with the support of the international community, towards the conclusion of a final just, lasting and comprehensive peace settlement;*

3. *Calls for the timely convening of an international conference in Moscow, as envisioned by the Security Council in its resolution 1850 (2008), for the advancement and acceleration of the achievement of a just, lasting and comprehensive peace settlement;*

4. *Stresses that compliance with and respect for the Charter of the United Nations and international law, including international humanitarian law and international human rights law, is a cornerstone of peace and security in the region;*

5. *Calls upon both parties to act responsibly and in compliance with international law and their previous agreements and obligations, in both their policies and actions, in order to, with the support of the Quartet and other interested parties, urgently reverse negative trends, including all measures taken on the ground that are contrary to international law, and create the conditions necessary for a credible political horizon and the advancement of peace efforts;*

6. *Calls upon Israel, the occupying Power, to comply strictly with its obligations under international law and to cease all of its measures that are contrary to international law, including all unilateral actions in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, that are aimed at altering the demographic composition, character and status of the Territory and thus at prejudging the final outcome of peace negotiations, and recalls in this regard the principle of the inadmissibility of the acquisition of land by force and therefore the illegality of the annexation of any part of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, which constitutes a breach of international law, undermines the viability of the two-State solution and challenges the prospects for the achievement of a peaceful settlement and of just, lasting and comprehensive peace;*

7. *Stresses the need, in particular, for an immediate halt to all settlement activities, land confiscation and home demolitions, for the pursuit of measures to ensure accountability, and for the release of prisoners and an end to arbitrary arrests and detentions;*

8. *Also stresses the need for respect for and preservation of the territorial unity, contiguity and integrity of all the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem;*

9. *Further stresses the need for an immediate and complete cessation of all acts of violence, including military attacks, destruction and acts of terror, as well as all acts of provocation and incitement;*

⁷ S/2003/529, annex.

10. *Reaffirms its commitment*, in accordance with international law, to the two-State solution of Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security within recognized borders, based on the pre-1967 borders;
11. *Underscores* in this regard the affirmation by the Security Council in its resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#) of its determination to examine practical ways and means to secure the full implementation of its relevant resolutions;
12. *Calls for*:
 - (a) The withdrawal of Israel from the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem;
 - (b) The realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, primarily the right to self-determination and the right to their independent State;
 - (c) A just resolution of the problem of Palestine refugees in conformity with its resolution [194 \(III\)](#) of 11 December 1948;
13. *Calls upon* all States, consistent with their obligations under the Charter and relevant Security Council resolutions, inter alia:
 - (a) Not to recognize any changes to the pre-1967 borders, including with regard to Jerusalem, other than those agreed by the parties through negotiations, including by ensuring that agreements with Israel do not imply recognition of Israeli sovereignty over the territories occupied by Israel in 1967;
 - (b) To distinguish, in their relevant dealings, between the territory of the State of Israel and the territories occupied since 1967;
 - (c) Not to render aid or assistance to illegal settlement activities, including not to provide Israel with any assistance to be used specifically in connection with settlements in the occupied territories, in line with Security Council resolution [465 \(1980\)](#) of 1 March 1980;
 - (d) To respect and ensure respect for international law, in all circumstances, including through measures of accountability, consistent with international law;
14. *Urges* all States and the United Nations to continue and expedite the provision of economic, humanitarian and technical assistance to the Palestinian people and the Palestinian Government during this critical period in order to help to alleviate the serious humanitarian situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, which is dire in the Gaza Strip, to rehabilitate the Palestinian economy and infrastructure and to support the development and strengthening of Palestinian institutions and Palestinian State-building efforts in preparation for independence;
15. *Requests* the Secretary-General, including through his Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and Personal Representative to the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Palestinian Authority, to continue his efforts with the parties concerned, and in consultation with the Security Council, including with regard to the reporting required pursuant to resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#), towards the attainment of a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine and the promotion of peace in the region.

*42nd plenary meeting
30 November 2022*



Seventy-ninth session
Agenda item 35
Question of Palestine

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 3 December 2024

[without reference to a Main Committee (A/79/L.23)]

79/81. Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine

The General Assembly,

Recalling its relevant resolutions, including those adopted at its tenth emergency special session,

Recalling also its resolution 73/89 of 6 December 2018, entitled “Comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East”,

Recalling further relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolutions 242 (1967) of 22 November 1967, 338 (1973) of 22 October 1973, 478 (1980) of 20 August 1980, 1397 (2002) of 12 March 2002, 1515 (2003) of 19 November 2003, 1544 (2004) of 19 May 2004, 1850 (2008) of 16 December 2008 and 2334 (2016) of 23 December 2016,

Having considered the report of the Secretary-General submitted pursuant to the request made in its resolution 77/25 of 30 November 2022,

Recalling its resolution 58/292 of 6 May 2004,

Reaffirming the permanent responsibility of the United Nations with regard to the question of Palestine until it is resolved in all its aspects in accordance with international law and relevant resolutions,

Convinced that achieving a just, lasting and comprehensive settlement of the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, is imperative for the attainment of comprehensive and lasting peace and stability in the Middle East,

Stressing that the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples is among the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations,

Reaffirming the principle of the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force,



Recalling its resolution [2625 \(XXV\)](#) of 24 October 1970, and reiterating the importance of maintaining and strengthening international peace founded upon freedom, equality, justice and respect for fundamental human rights and of developing friendly relations among nations irrespective of their political, economic and social systems or the level of their development,

Emphasizing the need for respect for, and the preservation of, the territorial integrity and unity of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem,

Recalling in this regard the advisory opinion rendered on 19 July 2024 by the International Court of Justice on the legal consequences arising from Israel's policies and practices in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and from the illegality of Israel's continued presence in the Occupied Palestinian Territory,¹ and the Court's conclusion that Israel, as the occupying Power, has the obligation not to impede the Palestinian people from exercising its right to self-determination, including its right to an independent and sovereign State, over the entirety of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, living side by side, in peace and security with Israel, within secure and recognized borders, and that it is for all States, while respecting the Charter of the United Nations and international law, to ensure that any impediment resulting from the illegal presence of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory to the exercise of the Palestinian people of its right to self-determination is brought to an end,

Recalling also the advisory opinion rendered on 9 July 2004 by the International Court of Justice on the legal consequences of the construction of a wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory,² and recalling also its resolutions [ES-10/15](#) of 20 July 2004 and [ES-10/17](#) of 15 December 2006,

Reaffirming the illegality of Israeli settlement activities and all other unilateral measures aimed at altering the demographic composition, character and status of the City of Jerusalem and of the Occupied Palestinian Territory as a whole, including the wall and its associated regime, demanding their immediate cessation, and condemning any use of force against Palestinian civilians in violation of international law, notably children,

Condemning the firing of rockets against Israeli civilian areas,

Emphasizing the importance of the safety, protection and well-being of all civilians in the whole Middle East region, and condemning all acts of violence and terror against civilians on all sides,

Calling for full respect for international law, including for the protection of civilian life, as well as for the promotion of human security, the de-escalation of the situation, the exercise of restraint, including from provocative actions and rhetoric, and the establishment of a stable environment conducive to the pursuit of peace,

Stressing the need for measures to be taken to guarantee the safety and protection of the Palestinian civilian population throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory, particularly in the Gaza Strip, consistent with the provisions and obligations of international humanitarian law, and taking note of the report of the Secretary-General on the protection of the Palestinian civilian population,³

Stressing also the need to ensure accountability for all violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law in order to end impunity, ensure justice, deter further violations, protect civilians and promote peace,

¹ [A/78/968](#).

² See [A/ES-10/273](#) and [A/ES-10/273/Corr.1](#).

³ [A/ES-10/794](#).

Calling for the release of the bodies that have not yet been returned to their relatives, in line with international humanitarian law and human rights law, in order to ensure dignified closure in accordance with their religious beliefs and traditions,

Recalling the mutual recognition 31 years ago between the Government of the State of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization, the representative of the Palestinian people,⁴ and stressing the urgent need for efforts to ensure full compliance with the agreements concluded between the two sides,

Stressing the need, in particular, for an immediate halt to all actions contrary to international law that undermine trust and prejudice final status issues,

Urging renewed and coordinated efforts by the international community aimed at restoring a political horizon and advancing and accelerating the conclusion of a peace treaty to achieve without delay an end to the Israeli occupation that began in 1967 by resolving all outstanding issues, including all final status issues, without exception, for a just, lasting and peaceful settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, in accordance with the internationally recognized basis of the two-State solution, and of the Arab-Israeli conflict, for the realization of a comprehensive peace in the Middle East,

Recognizing the efforts being undertaken by the Palestinian Government, with international support, to reform, develop, strengthen and preserve its institutions and infrastructure, despite the obstacles presented by the ongoing Israeli occupation, commending in this regard the ongoing efforts to develop the institutions of an independent Palestinian State, and stressing the need to promote intra-Palestinian reconciliation,

Expressing concern about the risks posed to the significant achievements made, as confirmed by the positive assessments by the international institutions regarding readiness for statehood, owing to the negative impact of the current instability and financial crisis being faced by the Palestinian Government and the continued absence of a credible political horizon,

Welcoming the ongoing efforts of the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee for the Coordination of the International Assistance to Palestinians, chaired by Norway, and noting its recent meeting held at the ministerial level in New York on 26 September 2024,

Recognizing the positive contribution of the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework, which is aimed, inter alia, at enhancing development support and assistance to the Palestinian people and strengthening institutional capacity in line with Palestinian national priorities,

Welcoming the assistance extended by the Conference on Cooperation among East Asian Countries for Palestinian Development, held in Ramallah and Jericho in July 2019, in support of Palestinian efforts towards an independent Palestinian State through the sharing of the experience of East Asian countries in economic development and exploring effective means of cooperation, aimed at contributing to the promotion of Palestinian development, the Middle East peace process and regional stability,

Taking note of the application of Palestine for admission to membership in the United Nations, submitted on 23 September 2011,⁵ and the vote of the Security Council on 18 April 2024,⁶ and taking note also of its resolution [ES-10/23](#) of 10 May

⁴ See [A/48/486-S/26560](#), annex.

⁵ [A/66/371-S/2011/592](#), annex I.

⁶ See [S/PV.9609](#).

2024, by which, inter alia, it recommended that the Security Council reconsider the matter favourably,

Taking note also of its resolution 67/19 of 29 November 2012, by which, inter alia, Palestine was accorded non-member observer State status in the United Nations, and taking note further of the follow-up report of the Secretary-General,⁷

Acknowledging the efforts being undertaken by civil society to promote respect for human rights and a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine, stressing the need for the protection of civil society actors to allow them to conduct their work freely and without fear of attacks and harassment from any party, and rejecting any attack against civil society,

Stressing the urgency of achieving without delay an end to the Israeli occupation that began in 1967,

Affirming once again the right of all States in the region to live in peace within secure and internationally recognized borders,

Recalling the Arab Peace Initiative, adopted by the Council of the League of Arab States at its fourteenth session, held in Beirut on 27 and 28 March 2002,⁸ and stressing its importance in the efforts to achieve a just, lasting and comprehensive peace,

1. *Reiterates its call* for the achievement, without delay, of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East on the basis of the relevant United Nations resolutions, including Security Council resolution 2334 (2016), the Madrid terms of reference, including the principle of land for peace, and the Arab Peace Initiative, and an end to the Israeli occupation that began in 1967, including of East Jerusalem, and reaffirms in this regard its unwavering support, in accordance with international law, for the two-State solution of Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security within recognized borders, based on the pre-1967 borders;

2. *Welcomes* the launch on 27 September 2024, during the high-level week of the General Assembly and upon the initiative of Saudi Arabia, Norway and the European Union, of the Global Alliance for the Implementation of the Two-State Solution and its first meeting, held in Riyadh on 30 and 31 October 2024, and also welcomes the High-level International Conference for the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Implementation of the Two-State Solution, to be held in June 2025;

3. *Stresses* the need to urgently exert collective efforts to launch credible negotiations on all final status issues in the Middle East peace process based on the long-standing terms of reference and clear parameters and within the time frame specified by the Quartet in its statement of 21 September 2010, and calls once more for the intensification of efforts by the parties, including through meaningful negotiations, with the support of the international community, towards the conclusion of a final just, lasting and comprehensive peace settlement;

4. *Calls for* the timely convening of an international conference in Moscow, as envisioned by the Security Council in its resolution 1850 (2008), for the advancement and acceleration of the achievement of a just, lasting and comprehensive peace settlement;

⁷ A/67/738.

⁸ A/56/1026-S/2002/932, annex II, resolution 14/221.

5. *Stresses* that compliance with and respect for the Charter of the United Nations and international law, including international humanitarian law and international human rights law, is a cornerstone of peace and security in the region;

6. *Calls upon* both parties to act responsibly and in compliance with international law and their previous agreements and obligations, in both their policies and actions, in order to, with the support of the Quartet and other international and regional partners, urgently reverse negative trends, including all measures taken on the ground that are contrary to international law, and create the conditions necessary for a credible political horizon and the advancement of peace efforts;

7. *Demands* that Israel, the occupying Power, comply strictly with its obligations under international law, including as reflected in the advisory opinion of the International Court of 19 July 2024, including to bring an end to its unlawful presence in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, as rapidly as possible, to cease immediately all new settlement activities and to evacuate all settlers from the Occupied Palestinian Territory, and to put an end to its unlawful acts, including by repealing all legislation and measures creating or maintaining the unlawful situation, inter alia, those which discriminate against the Palestinian people, as well as all measures aimed at modifying the demographic composition of any parts of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem;

8. *Rejects* any attempt at demographic or territorial change in the Gaza Strip, including any actions that reduce the territory of Gaza, stresses that the Gaza Strip constitutes an integral part of the Palestinian territory occupied in 1967, and reaffirms the vision of the two-State solution, with the Gaza Strip as part of the Palestinian State;

9. *Recalls* the principle of the inadmissibility of the acquisition of land by force and therefore the illegality of the annexation of any part of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, which constitutes a breach of international law, undermines the viability of the two-State solution and challenges the prospects for the achievement of a peaceful settlement and of just, lasting and comprehensive peace;

10. *Stresses* the need, in particular, for an immediate halt to all settlement activities, land confiscation and home demolitions, for the pursuit of measures to ensure accountability, and for the release of prisoners and an end to arbitrary arrests and detentions;

11. *Also stresses* the need for respect for and preservation of the territorial unity, contiguity and integrity of all the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem;

12. *Further stresses* the need for an immediate and complete cessation of all acts of violence, including military attacks, destruction and acts of terror, as well as all acts of provocation and incitement;

13. *Reaffirms its commitment*, in accordance with international law, to the two-State solution of Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security within recognized borders, based on the pre-1967 borders;

14. *Underscores* in this regard the affirmation by the Security Council in its resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#) of its determination to examine practical ways and means to secure the full implementation of its relevant resolutions;

15. *Calls for*:

(a) The withdrawal of Israel from the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem;

(b) The realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, primarily the right to self-determination and the right to their independent State;

(c) A just resolution of the problem of Palestine refugees in conformity with its resolution 194 (III) of 11 December 1948;

16. *Calls upon* all States, consistent with their obligations under the Charter and relevant Security Council resolutions, inter alia:

(a) Not to recognize any changes to the pre-1967 borders, including with regard to Jerusalem, other than those agreed by the parties through negotiations, including by ensuring that agreements with Israel do not imply recognition of Israeli sovereignty over the territories occupied by Israel in 1967;

(b) To distinguish, in their relevant dealings, between the territory of the State of Israel and the territories occupied since 1967;

(c) Not to render aid or assistance to illegal settlement activities, including not to provide Israel with any assistance to be used specifically in connection with settlements in the occupied territories, in line with Security Council resolution 465 (1980) of 1 March 1980;

(d) To respect and ensure respect for international law, in all circumstances, including through measures of accountability, consistent with international law;

17. *Recalls* its decision to convene during the seventy-ninth session of the General Assembly an international conference under the auspices of the Assembly for the implementation of the United Nations resolutions pertaining to the question of Palestine and the two-State solution for the achievement of a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East, and, considering paragraph 2 of the present resolution, decides to adopt the modalities set out in the annex to the present resolution for the convening of this international conference;

18. *Urges* all States and the United Nations to continue and expedite the provision of economic, humanitarian and technical assistance to the Palestinian people and the Palestinian Government during this critical period in order to help to alleviate the serious humanitarian situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, which is catastrophic in the Gaza Strip, to rehabilitate the Palestinian economy and infrastructure and to support the development and strengthening of Palestinian institutions and Palestinian State-building efforts in preparation for independence;

19. *Recalls* the conclusion of the International Court of Justice, in its advisory opinion of 19 July 2024, that Israel is under an obligation to provide full reparation for the damage caused by its internationally wrongful acts to all natural or legal persons concerned;

20. *Requests* the Secretary-General, including through his Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and Personal Representative to the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Palestinian Authority, to continue his efforts with the parties concerned, and in consultation with the Security Council, including with regard to the reporting required pursuant to resolution 2334 (2016), towards the attainment of a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine and the promotion of peace in the region.

*46th plenary meeting
3 December 2024*

Annex**Modalities for the High-level International Conference for the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Implementation of the Two-State Solution**

1. The High-level International Conference (hereinafter “the Conference”) will be aimed at advancing the implementation of the United Nations resolutions pertaining to the question of Palestine and the two-State solution for the achievement of a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East.
2. The Conference shall be entitled “High-level International Conference for the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Implementation of the Two-State Solution”.
3. The Conference will be held in June 2025, in New York, preceded by one or more preparatory meetings, as needed.
4. The Conference will adopt an action-oriented outcome document entitled “Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine and implementation of the two-State solution”, to urgently chart an irreversible pathway towards the peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine and the implementation of the two-State solution.
5. The Conference will have:
 - (a) An opening segment on the first day of the plenary meetings, which will include, inter alia, statements from the President of the General Assembly, the Secretary-General and the Co-Chairs of the Conference;
 - (b) A closing segment on the second day of the plenary meetings.
6. All States are encouraged to be represented at the highest possible level and to make statements in plenary of up to five minutes.
7. Entities having received a standing invitation to participate as observers in the work of the General Assembly are invited to participate in the Conference and to make statements in plenary of up to five minutes.
8. The United Nations system, including the relevant funds, programmes, specialized agencies and regional commissions, as well as the Bretton Woods institutions, are invited to participate in the Conference and to make statements in the thematic round tables.
9. France and Saudi Arabia shall be appointed as Co-Chairs of the Conference.
10. The Co-Chairs are requested to facilitate open, transparent and inclusive intergovernmental consultations on the preparatory process of the Conference, and the intergovernmental preparatory process of the Conference shall consist of:
 - (a) Negotiations to conclude the outcome document with adequate time for the negotiating sessions;
 - (b) Determination of the topics and organization of the thematic round tables and designation by the Co-Chairs of the Conference of Co-Chairs for the thematic round tables;
 - (c) Preparatory discussions for the thematic round tables, in coordination with the designated Co-Chairs of the round tables.
11. The Secretary-General is requested to provide adequate support to the organization of and preparations for the Conference.

12. The Conference shall be webcast, and the President of the General Assembly and the Secretary-General are encouraged to give the highest visibility to the Conference, including during its preparation, through all relevant media platforms and information and communications technologies.



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GENERAL ASSEMBLY
Thirty-ninth session
Item 33 of the preliminary list*
QUESTION OF PALESTINE

SECURITY COUNCIL
Thirty-ninth year

Report of the Secretary-General

(in pursuance of General Assembly resolution 38/58 C)

1. The present report is submitted in pursuance of resolution 38/58 C on the question of the convening of an international peace conference on the Middle East, which was adopted by the General Assembly at its thirty-eighth session, on 13 December 1983.
2. On 5 January 1984, the Secretary-General addressed a letter to the President of the Security Council on this matter; this letter, including the text of resolution 38/58 C which was appended to it, is reproduced in annex I. On 30 January, the President of the Security Council for the month of January, Mr. Javier Chamorro Mora, sent an interim reply to the Secretary-General (annex II). On 27 February, the President of the Security Council for the month of February, Mr. S. Shah Nawaz, sent a further reply setting forth the results of his and his predecessor's consultations with the members of the Council on the matter raised by the Secretary-General (annex III).
3. Following consultations with the Security Council, on 9 March 1984, the Secretary-General addressed letters to the Governments and authorities specified in paragraph 3 of his letter of 5 January (see annex I) to ascertain their views on all issues relevant to the organization and convening of the proposed conference, including the question of identification of participants.

* A/39/50.

A/39/130
S/16409
English
Page 2

4. The Governments and authorities mentioned above were requested to communicate their views on the subject to the Secretary-General as soon as possible, preferably no later than 30 April 1984. Upon receipt of their replies, the Secretary-General will consider how best to proceed in regard to the implementation of General Assembly resolution 38/58 C. All relevant information will be included at a later stage in an addendum which the Secretary-General will issue to the present interim report.

Annex I

LETTER DATED 5 JANUARY 1984 FROM THE SECRETARY-GENERAL
TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to refer to resolution 38/58 C which was adopted by the General Assembly at its thirty-eighth session on 13 December 1983 on the question of the convening of an international peace conference on the Middle East. The text of the resolution is attached for easy reference.

In paragraphs 5 and 6 of the resolution, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General, in consultation with the Security Council, urgently to undertake preparatory measures to convene the conference and invited the Security Council to facilitate the organization of the conference. In paragraph 7, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report on his efforts no later than 15 March 1984.

The first problem to be settled would be that of the participation in the proposed conference. Bearing in mind the provisions of paragraph 4 of the resolution, the following Governments and authorities could be invited to participate in the conference:

- (a) The fifteen members of the Security Council, namely, China, Egypt, France, India, Malta, the Netherlands, Nicaragua, Pakistan, Peru, the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the United Kingdom, the United States of America, Upper Volta and Zimbabwe;
- (b) The Governments which are directly involved in the Arab-Israeli conflict and which are not members of the Security Council, namely, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic;
- (c) The Palestine Liberation Organization.

It would be my intention, as a first indispensable step towards the organization and convening of the proposed conference, to address letters to the Permanent Representatives of the above-mentioned Governments and to the Permanent Observer of the Palestine Liberation Organization to the United Nations in which I would draw their attention to General Assembly resolution 38/58 C, inform them of the list of participants as agreed in consultation with the Security Council and request their participation in the conference in accordance with the provisions of the above-mentioned General Assembly resolution. I would ask each of them to give me a reply by 1 March 1984 in order that I may report to the General Assembly and the Security Council no later than 15 March 1984. I would also indicate in the letters that I am making this approach after consultation with the Security Council.

If the members of the Security Council agree with the above plan of action, I shall proceed accordingly. I would be grateful if you would bring this matter to the urgent attention of the members of the Security Council.

(Signed) Javier PEREZ DE CUELLAR

/...

Appendix

GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 38/58 C

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 36/120 C of 10 December 1981, in which it decided to convene, under the auspices of the United Nations, an International Conference on the Question of Palestine on the basis of its resolution ES-7/2 of 29 July 1980,

Recalling also its resolution 37/86 C of 10 December 1982 in which it, inter alia, reiterated the responsibility of the United Nations to strive for a lasting peace in the Middle East through a just solution of the problem of Palestine,

Having considered the report of the International Conference on the Question of Palestine, held at Geneva from 29 August to 7 September 1983, 1/

Convinced that the Conference, in having adopted by acclamation the Geneva Declaration on Palestine 2/ and the Programme of Action for the Achievement of Palestinian Rights, 3/ made an important and positive contribution to the attainment of a comprehensive, just and durable peace in the Middle East through a just solution to the problem of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict,

Conscious of the importance of the time factor in achieving a just solution to the problem of Palestine,

1. Takes note with satisfaction of the report of the International Conference on the Question of Palestine;

2. Endorses the Geneva Declaration on Palestine, adopted by acclamation on 7 September 1983;

3. Welcomes and endorses the call for convening an International Peace Conference on the Middle East in conformity with the following guidelines:

(a) The attainment by the Palestinian people of its legitimate inalienable rights, including the right to return, the right to self-determination and the right to establish its own independent State in Palestine;

(b) The right of the Palestine Liberation Organization, the representative of the Palestinian people, to participate on an equal footing with other parties in all efforts, deliberations and conferences on the Middle East;

1/ A/CONF.114/42.

2/ Ibid., chap. I, sect. A.

3/ Ibid., chap. I, sect. B.

(c) The need to put an end to Israel's occupation of the Arab territories, in accordance with the principle of the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force, and, consequently, the need to secure Israeli withdrawal from the territories occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem;

(d) The need to oppose and reject such Israeli policies and practices in the occupied territories, including Jerusalem, and any de facto situation created by Israel as are contrary to international law and relevant United Nations resolutions, particularly the establishment of settlements, as these policies and practices constitute major obstacles to the achievement of peace in the Middle East;

(e) The need to reaffirm as null and void all legislative and administrative measures and actions taken by Israel, the occupying Power, which have altered or purported to alter the character and status of the Holy City of Jerusalem, including the expropriation of land and property situated thereon, and in particular the so-called "Basic Law" on Jerusalem and the proclamation of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel;

(f) The right of all States in the region to existence within secure and internationally recognized boundaries, with justice and security for all the people, the sine qua non of which is the recognition and attainment of the legitimate, inalienable rights of the Palestinian people as stated in subparagraph (a) above;

4. Invites all parties to the Arab-Israeli conflict, including the Palestine Liberation Organization, as well as the United States of America, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and other concerned States, to participate in the International Peace Conference on the Middle East on an equal footing and with equal rights;

5. Requests the Secretary-General, in consultation with the Security Council, urgently to undertake preparatory measures to convene the Conference;

6. Invites the Security Council to facilitate the organization of the Conference;

7. Also requests the Secretary-General to report on his efforts no later than 15 March 1984;

8. Decides to consider at its thirty-ninth session the report of the Secretary-General on the Conference.

95th plenary meeting
13 December 1983

/...

A/39/130
S/16409
English
Page 6

Annex II

LETTER DATED 30 JANUARY 1984 FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE
SECURITY COUNCIL TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

I have the honour to inform you that I have drawn to the attention of the members of the Security Council your letter dated 5 January 1984, concerning General Assembly resolution 38/58 C of 13 December 1983 on the question of the convening of an International Peace Conference on the Middle East. I have the honour to inform you also that it will be necessary to hold further consultations on this question.

(Signed) Javier CHAMORRO MORA

/...

Annex III

LETTER DATED 27 FEBRUARY 1984 FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE
SECURITY COUNCIL TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

1. I have the honour to refer to your letter of 5 January 1984 in regard to resolution 38/58 C adopted by the General Assembly at its thirty-eighth session on 13 December 1983 on the question of the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East.
2. Your Excellency would recall that in his letter of 30 January 1984, the President of the Security Council for the month of January had informed you of the need for more consultations in regard to this matter. I have carried forward the process and completed my consultations with all the members of the Security Council, as requested by Your Excellency.
3. Only one member of the Security Council has conveyed its views in writing to the President of the Council. A copy of the letter is attached. The other members of the Security Council chose to convey their views to me orally during my individual consultations with them.
4. The views expressed by the members of the Security Council were reflective of their varying positions regarding the merits of the proposed Conference, without infringing upon the Secretary-General's freedom to continue consultations on the subject in any manner he deemed appropriate, not excluding addressing of letters to the governments and authorities specified in paragraph 3 of your letter. These letters would be issued for the purpose of consulting the addressees on all issues relevant to the organization and convening of the proposed Conference but would not constitute invitations to them to participate in a Conference. The question of identification of participants would be one of the subjects for the consultations.
5. I hope that this letter will facilitate Your Excellency's carrying out the mandate entrusted to you by General Assembly resolution 38/58 C.

(Signed) S. SHAH NAWAZ

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Appendix

LETTER DATED 13 JANUARY 1984 FROM THE PERMANENT
REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

My Government has considered carefully the letter of 5 January that the Secretary-General addressed to you on the question of convening an International Peace Conference on the Middle East. The Secretary-General seeks the agreement of the members of the Security Council on the course of action which he proposes for organizing such a conference.

As you know, the United States voted against General Assembly resolution 38/58 C which endorsed the holding of this conference. We had earlier opposed the International Conference on the Question of Palestine held in Geneva last summer, from which the idea of a Middle East peace conference originated.

The United States believes firmly that the only path to peace in the Middle East lies in a process of negotiations among the parties based on Security Council resolutions 242 and 338, a process that the United States has sought vigorously and consistently to encourage, particularly in the Camp David Accords and in President Reagan's initiative of 1 September 1982. Holding an international conference as recommended by the General Assembly would only hinder this process. It would predictably become a forum for propagandistic and extreme positions, and in the context proposed by the General Assembly and further articulated by the Secretary-General it would very likely yield a one-sided outcome not acceptable to one or more of the parties and therefore inoperable. The net result would be to diminish the prestige of the United Nations as the sponsor of the conference and delay the day when peace will come to the troubled Middle East.

The United States will continue to focus its energies on the task of promoting face-to-face negotiations among the parties directly concerned with the Arab-Israeli dispute. We remain hopeful that this course will bring a just and lasting settlement in the region at the earliest possible time.

You are authorized to inform the Secretary-General of the above views of my Government. The United States considers the recommendation of a Middle East Peace Conference in General Assembly resolution 38/58 C to be ill-considered and harmful. We would regret any decision using the authority of the United Nations for this purpose, or the use of United Nations personnel and financial resources. The United States has no intention of participating in such a conference or in any preparatory activities for it.

(Signed) Jeane J. KIRKPATRICK



General Assembly Security Council

Distr.
GENERAL

A/39/130/Add.1
S/16409/Add.1
13 September 1984

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

GENERAL ASSEMBLY
Thirty-ninth session
Item 33 of the provisional agenda*
QUESTION OF PALESTINE

SECURITY COUNCIL
Thirty-ninth year

Report of the Secretary-General

(in pursuance of General Assembly resolution 38/58 C)

Addendum

1. As indicated in the report of 13 March 1984 (A/39/130-S/16409), following consultations with the Security Council, on 9 March 1984, the Secretary-General addressed letters to 19 Governments and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) to ascertain their views on all issues relevant to the organization and convening of an international peace conference in the Middle East as called for in General Assembly resolution 38/58 C, including the identification of participants. The 19 Governments are the 15 members of the Security Council and the parties directly concerned in the Middle East conflict which are not members of the Security Council.

2. The replies of 18 of the Governments consulted have been circulated as General Assembly and Security Council documents, at their request, as follows:

	<u>Document symbol</u>
Burkina Faso (formerly Upper Volta)	A/39/216-S/16509
China	A/39/217-S/16510
Egypt	A/39/219-S/16512 and Corr.1
France	A/39/218-S/16511

* A/39/150.

	<u>Document symbol</u>
India	A/39/227-S/16523
Israel	A/39/214-S/16507
Jordan	A/39/238-S/16543
Lebanon	A/39/275-S/16584
Malta	A/39/231-S/16527
Netherlands	A/39/208-S/16503
Nicaragua	A/39/259-S/16565
Pakistan	A/39/224-S/16517
Peru	A/39/225-S/16518
Syrian Arab Republic	A/39/416-S/16708
Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic	A/39/235-S/16533
Union of Soviet Socialist Republics	A/39/222-S/16516
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	A/39/202-S/16494
Zimbabwe	A/39/255-S/16557

In her reply, the Permanent Representative of the United States of America reaffirmed the position of her Government as set forth in her letter dated 13 January 1984 to the President of the Security Council (A/39/130-S/16409, annex III, appendix). The reply of PLO is reproduced in the annex to the present report.

3. On 31 July 1984, the Chargé d'Affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General a letter enclosing the text of a document dated 29 July 1984 and entitled "Proposals by the Soviet Union on a Middle East settlement" which also deals with the question of the organization and convening of an international peace conference on the Middle East (A/39/368-S/16685).

4. From the replies received and the discussions held with the Governments and authorities concerned, it is evident that the convening of the proposed conference would require, in the first place, the agreement in principle of the parties directly concerned to participate in the conference, and also that of the two States specifically mentioned in General Assembly resolution 38/58 C, namely the United States and the USSR. Once such agreement exists, further consideration

/...

could more constructively be given to finalizing other related issues, such as the full list of participants, the date of the conference and an agenda acceptable to all concerned. At present, however, it is clear from the replies of the Governments of Israel (A/39/214-S/16507) and the United States of America (A/39/130-S/16409, annex III, appendix) that they are not prepared to participate in the proposed conference.

5. The Secretary-General shall continue to follow this question closely and shall keep Member States informed of any further developments.

ANNEX

Letter dated 27 April 1984 from the Permanent Observer of the
Palestine Liberation Organization to the Secretary-General

I am instructed by Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization to refer to your letter of 9 March 1984, concerning United Nations General Assembly resolution 38/58 C on the question of the convening of an International Peace Conference on the Middle East. It should be recalled that resolution 38/58 C has endorsed almost unanimously the call for convening an International Peace Conference on the Middle East. The resolution has also endorsed the guidelines for such a Conference (para. 3). Furthermore, the resolution has specified the parties to the Arab-Israeli conflict, including the Palestine Liberation Organization.

We wish to refer to your letter dated 5 January 1984, addressed to the President of the Security Council and we wish to thank you for having taken that initiative. We fully agree with you that the Governments which are directly involved in the Arab-Israeli conflict are Israel, Jordan, Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic, and that the Palestine Liberation Organization is also an "authority" which is directly involved in the conflict. However, we do not understand where the provision for the agreement with the plan of action should be sought from the Council. Resolution 38/58 C only calls for consultation with the Security Council so that the Secretary-General may undertake preparatory measures to convene the Conference.

Be that as it may, we completely disagree with the view expressed by the distinguished representative of the Government of the United States of America which considered the "holding of an international Conference as recommended by the General Assembly would only hinder" the path to peace. It is clear that the Government of the United States explicitly plans to undermine and foreclose the option to a process within the framework of the United Nations. It may be recalled that the General Assembly, in its resolution 34/65 B adopted on 29 November 1979, "declared that the Camp David accords and other agreements have no validity in so far as they purport to determine the future of the Palestinian people and of the Palestinian territories occupied by Israel since 1967". President Reagan's initiative of 1 September 1982 precludes the exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination and to the establishment of an independent, sovereign Palestinian State. Furthermore, it ignores completely the provisions of numerous Security Council resolutions calling for the withdrawal of Israel from all the territories occupied since 1967. The spirit of the letter of the representative of the Government of the United States of America indicates clearly that that permanent member of the Security Council rejects any process leading to a peaceful settlement.

The Palestine Liberation Organization trusts that the Secretary-General will maintain his contacts and endeavours with the aim that a Peace Conference be held within the framework of the United Nations. It might be of help if His Excellency, will consider a visit to the area to conduct on the spot contacts with the parties

/...

to the Arab-Israeli conflict and make a personal assessment of the gravity of the situation and the urgency for convening such a Peace Conference.

I would like to recall that in his statement before the International Conference on the Question of Palestine, held at Geneva from 29 August to 7 September 1983, Chairman Arafat said the following:

"In this context, we wish to suggest to you the following ideas:

"(a) The Middle East is a very important and vital region with regard to the establishment of peace since it has a direct effect on the international situation as a whole. Consequently, that region must remain free from the monopoly of any one power in the world, and free from balkanization and the threat of internal and external explosion;

"(b) The question of Palestine originated and developed as a result of international conflicts before and after the First and Second World Wars and international, political complications deriving from the changing and conflicting positions and balances of power in the world. Hence, the responsibility for the recovery of the rights of the Palestinian people is a wholly international responsibility within the framework of international legitimacy;

"(c) The Fez Summit resolutions constitute a unique opportunity for the achievement of the minimum degree of justice required. This opportunity for peace in the region, presented jointly by the Arab leaders at the Summit Conference, should not be wasted;

"(d) The exercise by the people of Palestine of their right to return, self-determination and national independence is the only basis for any peace based on justice in the Middle East;

"(e) Failure to deter the Zionist military aggressive mentality and the continuation of unlimited United States support for this barbaric military machine contradict any advocacy of international peace;

"(f) In the light of these principles we are struggling for peace and reject the American-Israeli policies calling upon us to capitulate;

"(g) In the light of these principles we welcome all peace initiatives based on the recognition of the rights of our people. We are ready to co-operate with all forces, and primarily the United Nations and its agencies, within the framework of international legitimacy and their resolutions concerning the question of Palestine. In this connection, we are calling for an international conference, under the auspices of the United Nations, in which the two super-Powers would participate with the rest of the parties concerned, on the basis of the United Nations resolutions relating to the question of Palestine."

(Signed) Zuhdi Labib TERZI



General Assembly Security Council

Distr.
GENERAL

A/40/168
S/17014
11 March 1985

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

GENERAL ASSEMBLY
Fortieth session
Items 33 and 38 of the preliminary list*
QUESTION OF PALESTINE
THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST

SECURITY COUNCIL
Fortieth year

Report of the Secretary-General

1. The present report is submitted in pursuance of resolution 39/49 D on the question of the convening of an international peace conference on the Middle East, which was adopted by the General Assembly at its thirty-ninth session, on 11 December 1984. The operative part of that resolution read as follows:

"The General Assembly

"...

"1. Takes note of the reports of the Secretary-General; 1/

"2. Reaffirms its endorsement of the call for convening the International Peace Conference on the Middle East in conformity with the provisions of General Assembly resolution 38/58 C;

"3. Expresses its regret at the negative response of the two Governments and calls upon them to reconsider their position towards the Conference;

"4. Urges all Governments to make additional constructive efforts and to strengthen their political will in order to convene the Conference without delay and for the achievement of its peaceful objectives;

* A/40/50 and Corr.1.

1/ A/39/130-S/16409 and Add.1.

"5. Requests the Secretary-General, in consultation with the Security Council, to continue his efforts with a view to convening the Conference and to report thereon to the General Assembly not later than 15 March 1985;

"6. Decides to consider at its fortieth session the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the present resolution."

2. In pursuance of that request, on 8 January 1985 the Secretary-General addressed the following letter to the President of the Security Council:

"I have the honour to refer to resolution 39/49 D, which was adopted by the General Assembly at its thirty-ninth session, on 11 December 1984, on the question of the convening of an international peace conference on the Middle East. The text of the resolution is attached. [See para. 1 above.]

"As you know, this question was first raised by the General Assembly at its thirty-eighth session, when it adopted resolution 38/58 C of 13 December 1983. The activities which I undertook in pursuance of that resolution, including my consultations with the Security Council, are described in my reports of 13 March and 13 September 1984 to the General Assembly and the Security Council (A/39/130-S/16409 and Add.1).

"It is also relevant to mention that in my report of 26 October 1984 on the situation in the Middle East (A/39/600-S/16792, paras. 40-49), I reviewed my efforts relating to the proposed conference and the difficulties encountered and commented on a possible approach to a Middle East peace conference that could be organized in the context of the search for a comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

"After considering my reports of 13 March and 13 September 1984, the General Assembly adopted resolution 39/49 D, in which it 'requests the Secretary-General, in consultation with the Security Council, to continue his efforts with a view to convening the conference and to report thereon to the General Assembly not later than 15 March 1985'.

"Bearing in mind the efforts made last year and the difficulties experienced, I feel that as a first step I should seek the views of the Security Council on the action to be taken for the implementation of General Assembly resolution 39/49 D. In the light of my reporting responsibility under that resolution, I hope that the views of the Security Council can be conveyed to me not later than 1 March 1985.

"I should be grateful if you would bring this matter to the attention of the Security Council."

3. On 26 February 1985, the President of the Security Council sent the following reply:

"I have the honour to refer to your letter of 8 January 1985, on the question of the convening of an international peace conference on the Middle East, in which you had indicated that you felt it necessary to start by requesting the views of the Security Council regarding the action to be taken for the implementation of General Assembly resolution 39/49 D of 11 December 1984.

"You had also recalled the activities you had undertaken in 1984 of which you gave an account in your reports of 13 March, 13 September and 26 October 1984 to the General Assembly and the Security Council, and noted the difficulties experienced.

"Acting on your request that the matter be drawn to the attention of the Security Council, the President of the Council for the month of January consulted the members of the Council in order to obtain and communicate their views to you by 1 March 1985 as requested. Having received the approval of the members of the Security Council during consultations held on 15 January, he had bilateral talks with each member of the Council during the following days. As President of the Council for the month of February, I have carried forward the process and completed my consultations with all members of the Security Council.

"It is clear from these consultations that almost all members are in favour of the principle of holding such a conference. Many of these members feel that it should be convened as early as possible; some others consider that the conditions that would make it possible to convene such a conference have not been met as yet.

"In this context, members of the Council invite the Secretary-General to continue consultations on the subject in any manner he deems appropriate in the light of General Assembly resolution 39/49 D."

4. The Secretary-General has taken note of the views conveyed to him by the President of the Security Council. He intends to pursue consultations on the subject and will inform the General Assembly and the Security Council of any new developments.



General Assembly Security Council

Distr.
GENERAL

A/41/215 ✓

S/17916

14 March 1986

ENGLISH

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH/FRENCH

GENERAL ASSEMBLY
Forty-first session
Items 35 and 37 of the preliminary list*
QUESTION OF PALESTINE
THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST

SECURITY COUNCIL
Forty-first year

Report of the Secretary-General

1. The present report is submitted in pursuance of resolution 40/96 D on the question of the convening of an international peace conference on the Middle East, which was adopted by the General Assembly at its fortieth session, on 12 December 1985. The operative part of that resolution read as follows:

"The General Assembly

"...

"1. Takes note with appreciation of the reports of the Secretary-General; 1/

"2. Reaffirms again its endorsement of the call for convening the International Peace Conference on the Middle East in conformity with the provisions of its resolution 38/58 C;

"3. Stresses the urgent need for additional constructive efforts by all Governments in order to convene the Conference without further delay and for the achievement of its peaceful objectives;

"4. Determines that the question of Palestine is the root-cause of the Arab-Israeli conflict in the Middle East;

* A/41/50/Rev.1.

1/ A/40/168-S/17014 and A/40/779-S/17581 and Corr.1.

"5. Calls upon the Governments of Israel and the United States of America to reconsider their positions towards the attainment of peace in the Middle East through the convening of the Conference;

"6. Requests the Secretary-General, in consultation with the Security Council, to continue his efforts with a view to convening the Conference and to report thereon to the General Assembly not later than 15 March 1986;

"7. Decides to consider at its forty-first session the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the present resolution."

2. In pursuance of the request contained in paragraph 6 of the above resolution, on 21 January 1986 the Secretary-General addressed the following letter to the President of the Security Council:

"I have the honour to refer to resolution 40/96 D, which was adopted by the General Assembly at its fortieth session on 12 December 1985, concerning the question of the convening of an international peace conference on the Middle East. The text of the resolution is attached.

"As you are aware, this question was first raised by the General Assembly at its thirty-eighth session when it adopted resolution 38/58 C on 13 December 1983 and subsequently at its thirty-ninth session when it adopted resolution 39/49 D of 11 December 1984.

"In pursuance of those resolutions, and after consultations with the Security Council, I reported to the General Assembly in March and September 1984 (A/39/130-S/16409 and Add.1) and in March 1985 (A/40/168-S/17014). As you will recall, the Council invited me to continue consultations on the subject, in any manner I deemed appropriate in light of the General Assembly resolution. Accordingly, I pursued my contacts and reported on them to the General Assembly and Security Council on 22 October 1985 (A/40/779-S/17581, paras. 30-42). In the concluding part of that report I stated, inter alia, that 'In the contacts I have had with leaders of the parties concerned during the past weeks, I have gained the impression that they are fully conscious of the urgency of finding an agreed settlement of this most complex problem and of the dangers that further delay could entail for their region and beyond. I have also noted that although their respective positions on the basic issues have remained far apart, there have been some signs of flexibility as regards the negotiating process. I continue to believe that it would be possible to work out a generally acceptable procedure which would enable the parties to embark on a negotiating process if a determined effort were made by all concerned with the full support of other Governments in a position to help. I strongly feel that, despite the existing difficulties, a new and determined effort should be made to explore and to use the various possibilities of the United Nations machinery appropriately to promote progress in the peace process in the Middle East.'

"At its fortieth session, the General Assembly, after considering the above-mentioned reports, adopted resolution 40/96 D in which it reaffirmed

again its endorsement of the call for convening the international peace conference on the Middle East, stressed the urgent need for additional constructive efforts by all Governments in order to convene the conference without further delay and for the achievement of its peaceful objectives, called upon the Governments of Israel and the United States of America to reconsider their positions towards the attainment of peace in the Middle East through the convening of the conference, and requested the Secretary-General, in consultation with the Security Council, to continue his efforts with a view to convening the conference.

"In light of the debate of the General Assembly on the above resolution and other available information, I believe that the obstacles which have so far prevented the convening of the international peace conference on the Middle East as called for by the General Assembly still exist. However, I also believe that the observations contained in my report of 22 October 1985, which are recalled above, remain valid.

"Bearing in mind the efforts made during the past two years towards the convening of an international peace conference and the difficulties experienced and in light of paragraph 6 of General Assembly resolution 40/96 D, I feel it essential to consult the Security Council once again on this matter. I hope that the views of the Council can be conveyed to me by 1 March 1986 since I have been requested to report on this matter to the General Assembly not later than 15 March."

3. On 28 February 1986, the President of the Security Council sent the following reply:

"I have the honour to refer to your letter of 21 January 1986, concerning the question of the convening of an international peace conference on the Middle East, by which you sought to consult the Security Council on this question once again, taking into account the relevant provisions of General Assembly resolution 40/96 D of 12 December 1985.

"You recalled the efforts you have continued to make, which you described, in particular in your report of 22 October 1985 to the General Assembly and the Security Council, and the obstacles which continue to prevent the convening of the conference.

"In accordance with your desire to be informed, before 1 March 1986, of the views of the members of the Security Council on this question, I have undertaken the necessary consultations in this regard.

"Members remain concerned by the situation in the Middle East. It is clear from these consultations that almost all members are in favour of the principle of holding such a conference. The majority of these members feel that it should be convened as early as possible. Others consider that the conditions for the success of this conference do not yet exist and feel that new efforts should be made in this respect.

A/41/215

S/17916

English

Page 4

"In this context, members of the Council invite the Secretary-General to continue his efforts and consultations on the subject in the light of General Assembly resolution 40/96 D."

4. The Secretary-General intends to pursue his efforts in the light of General Assembly resolution 40/96 D and the views expressed by the members of the Security Council. He will keep the General Assembly and the Security Council informed of any new developments in this regard.


General Assembly Security Council

 Distr.
GENERAL

 A/42/277
S/18849
7 May 1987
ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

GENERAL ASSEMBLY
Forty-second session
Items 38 and 39 of the preliminary list*
QUESTION OF PALESTINE
THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST

SECURITY COUNCIL
Forty-second year

Report of the Secretary-General

1. The present report is submitted in accordance with General Assembly resolution 41/43 D of 2 December 1986 on the question of convening an international peace conference on the Middle East. The operative part of the resolution reads as follows:

"The General Assembly,

"...

"1. Takes note with appreciation of the reports of the Secretary-General;

"2. Determines that the question of Palestine is the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict in the Middle East;

"3. Reaffirms once again its endorsement of the call for convening the International Peace Conference on the Middle East in conformity with the provisions of the resolution 38/58 C;

"4. Stresses the urgent need for additional concrete and constructive efforts by all Governments in order to convene the Conference without further delay;

* A/42/50.

"5. Endorses the call for setting up a preparatory committee, within the framework of the Security Council, with the participation of the permanent members of the Council, to take the necessary action to convene the Conference;

"6. Requests the Secretary-General, in consultation with the Security Council, to continue his efforts with a view to convening the Conference and to report thereon to the General Assembly not later than 15 May 1987;

"7. Decides to consider at its forty-second session the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the present resolution."

2. In accordance with the request contained in paragraph 6 of the resolution, consultations were held with the members of the Security Council individually during the period from February to May 1987. The purpose of these consultations was to determine their views on the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East as called for by the General Assembly. The consultations also addressed the question of how such a conference should be prepared, with special reference to the proposal for setting up a preparatory committee, endorsed in paragraph 5 of the resolution.

3. All members of the Security Council were concerned about the Middle East problem, and all expressed support for a continuation of the Secretary-General's efforts to bring about a just and lasting peace in the Middle East. Moreover, in contrast with the experience of recent years, none of the Council members opposed in principle the idea of an international conference under United Nations auspices. It was clear, however, that wide differences still existed regarding the form that a conference should take. It was also generally agreed that the positions of the parties themselves remained far apart on a number of issues of procedure and of substance but that in recent months there had been indications of greater flexibility in attitudes towards the negotiating process and that this should be encouraged.

4. The members of the Council also agreed that a conference would have to be carefully prepared, but opinions were divided on the proposal for the establishment of a formal preparatory committee. Some members of the Council favoured early establishment of such a committee; others opposed the proposal or felt that further consultations would be required on this question and that the views of the parties themselves would be of especial importance in this context.

5. A first round of consultations was also held with representatives of the parties, namely the Member States directly concerned - Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, and the Syrian Arab Republic - and the Palestine Liberation Organization. These consultations, which were held in New York during March and April, were exploratory, with the objective of ascertaining the positions of the parties on the convening of the International Conference and of seeking their views as to how it should be prepared. All the parties showed interest in a settlement of the conflict in the Middle East, and some viewed it as a matter of great urgency. Again, views differed both on the form the Conference should take and on how it should be prepared, but there appeared to be a general readiness to consider options for an acceptable negotiating formula.

OBSERVATIONS

6. While it is apparent from this first round of consultations that at present, sufficient agreement does not exist to permit the convening of the International Conference as called for in resolution 41/43 D, I am determined to continue my efforts to establish a process that will lead to a just and lasting peace in the Middle East. I am encouraged by the increased interest on the part of the international community in the idea of a conference that would be convened under United Nations auspices on a basis acceptable to all. I am also encouraged by the indications of greater flexibility on this issue amongst the parties, since obviously their views are of crucial importance in this matter. At the same time, it is evident that very deep differences remain between the parties, and I do not underestimate the difficulties involved in resolving those differences and in creating agreement on procedures that will permit effective negotiations to the satisfaction of all concerned. To this end, I intend, in the months to come, to intensify my contacts with the parties, in order to try to find ways of bridging the gaps between them.

7. Ever since I was first appointed Secretary-General, I have been strongly committed to the search for a comprehensive settlement of the Middle East problem and I have been exploring ways of achieving such a settlement. Since I last reported on this subject to the General Assembly and the Security Council (A/41/768-S/18427), I have had the opportunity to meet a number of leaders from the region, all of whom have encouraged me to make a special effort to promote the start of a negotiating process that would lead to a just and durable peace in the region. If these efforts are to prove successful, they will need the full support and understanding not only of the parties but also of the Security Council, with whose members I will continue to consult. I am convinced that it is my responsibility as Secretary-General to strengthen the resolve of those who seek a peaceful solution.

8. I will keep the General Assembly and Security Council fully informed of my continuing efforts to make progress towards a just and lasting peace in the Middle East.



General Assembly Security Council

Distr.
GENERAL

A/43/272 ✓

S/19719

31 March 1988

ENGLISH

ORIGINAL: ARABIC/ENGLISH

GENERAL ASSEMBLY
Forty-third session
Items 37 and 40 of the preliminary list*
QUESTION OF PALESTINE
THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST

SECURITY COUNCIL
Forty-third year

Report of the Secretary-General

1. The present report is submitted in accordance with General Assembly resolution 42/66 D of 2 December 1987 on the question of convening an international peace conference on the Middle East. The operative part of the resolution reads as follows:

"The General Assembly,

"...

"1. Takes note of the reports of the Secretary-General; 1/

"2. Noting with satisfaction the ever-increasing international consensus in favour of the early convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, as reflected in the statements made during the debate;

"3. Determines once again that the question of Palestine is the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict in the Middle East;

"4. Reaffirms once again its endorsement of the call for convening the Conference in conformity with the provisions of resolution 38/58 C, particularly the guidelines and participation determined therein;

1/ A/42/277-S/18849 and A/42/714-S/19249.

* A/43/50.

"5. Reiterates its endorsement of the call for setting up a preparatory committee, within the framework of the Security Council, with the participation of the permanent members of the Council, to take the necessary action to convene the Conference;

"6. Stresses once again the urgent need for additional concrete and constructive efforts by all Governments in order to convene the Conference without further delay;

"7. Requests the Secretary-General, in consultation with the Security Council, to continue his efforts with a view to convening the Conference and to report thereon to the General Assembly not later than 31 March 1988;

"8. Decides to consider at its forty-third session the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the present resolution."

2. On 10 March 1988, the Secretary-General, in pursuance of the request contained in paragraph 7 of the above resolution, addressed the following letter to the President of the Security Council:

"I have the honour to refer to resolution 42/66 D, which was adopted by the General Assembly on 2 December 1987, concerning the question of the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East in conformity with the provisions of General Assembly resolution 38/58 C. The text of the resolution 42/66 D is enclosed.

"As you are aware, this question was first raised at the General Assembly's thirty-eighth session, when resolution 38/58 C was adopted, and has since been the subject of annual resolutions by the Assembly and of annual reports by the Secretary-General, following consultation with the Security Council.

"Paragraph 7 of resolution 42/66 D requests the Secretary-General, in consultation with the Security Council, to continue his efforts with a view to convening the Conference and to report thereon to the General Assembly not later than 31 March 1988.

"My own consultations with the parties and with others concerned suggest that the obstacles that have so far prevented the convening of the International Peace Conference envisaged by resolution 38/58 C continue to exist. However, I again feel it essential to consult the Security Council, through its President, before preparing my report to the General Assembly. I should accordingly be grateful, Mr. President, if the views of the members of the Council on the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East in conformity with resolution 38/58 C could be conveyed to me by 25 March."

3. On 25 March 1988, the President of the Security Council sent the following reply:

"I have the honour to refer to your letter of 10 March 1988 concerning the question of the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East by which you sought to consult the Security Council on this question once again, taking into account the relevant provisions of General Assembly resolution 42/66 E of 2 December 1987.

"In accordance with your desire to be informed by 25 March of the views of the members of the Security Council on this question, I have undertaken the necessary consultations in this regard.

"The members of the Security Council are deeply concerned at the lack of substantive progress in the solution of the crisis in the Middle East, which is one of the most serious sources of instability in the world.

"The consultations that I carried out have shown that the members of the Security Council are convinced that the latest developments in the Middle East, particularly the situation in the occupied territories, call for urgent action to resolve the underlying problem through a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement, including a solution to the Palestinian problem in all its aspects.

"In this connection, all members of the Security Council are in agreement that it is desirable to convene an International Conference on the Middle East.

"Almost all members of the Security Council declared their support for an early convening of a substantive International Conference under the auspices of the United Nations, with participation of all parties concerned and of the five permanent members of the Security Council. They expressed readiness to make all efforts to help overcome remaining obstacles to the convening of such a Conference.

"Most of those members reiterated their support for General Assembly resolution 38/58 C, in which it is, inter alia, stated that one of the main objectives of such a Conference should be the attainment by the Palestinian people of its legitimate inalienable rights, including the right to return, the right to self-determination and the right to establish its own independent State in Palestine. They stressed that the Palestine Liberation Organization should have the status of a full-fledged participant in this Conference.

"Some members, however, while expressing continuing reservations concerning resolution 38/58 C as a basis for an International Conference, reaffirmed the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, with all that this implies, as well as the right to existence and to security of all States in the region, including Israel.

"One member of the Security Council was of the opinion that it is not possible to make progress nor to find a peaceful solution to the problem on the basis of resolution 38/58 C, which it regards as one-sided and unbalanced. That member pointed to a peace initiative currently under way that would involve an International Conference convened by the Secretary-General of the United Nations. That Conference would include permanent members of the

Security Council, as well as Israel and its interested Arab neighbours. The member pointed out that such a Conference should bring about prompt direct negotiations between Israel and its Arab neighbours and should not have the right to veto the results of direct negotiations or to impose solutions.

"All but one member of the Council invite the Secretary-General to continue his efforts and consultations on the subject in connection with General Assembly resolution 42/66 D."

4. On 9 March 1988, the Secretary-General addressed a note verbale to the Permanent Representatives of Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic, and to the Permanent Observer of the Palestine Liberation Organization. The note drew attention to the report requested of the Secretary-General in General Assembly resolution 42/66 D, and asked for an up-to-date statement concerning their respective positions on the convening of the International Conference on the Middle East in conformity with resolution 38/58 C. Their replies are reproduced below:

Egypt

"The Permanent Mission of the Arab Republic of Egypt ... with reference to the Secretary-General's note dated 9 March 1988 concerning the convening of an international peace conference on the Middle East, has the honour to inform him that the Government of the Arab Republic of Egypt supports the implementation of resolutions 42/66 D and 38/58 C concerning the convening of such a conference and expresses the hope that the Secretary-General of the United Nations will continue to intensify his efforts towards the implementation of these two resolutions."

Israel

"In reference to the Secretary-General's note of 9 March 1988 regarding General Assembly resolution 42/66 D adopted on 2 December 1987, Israel voted against this resolution and those mentioned in the first preambular paragraph thereof.

"Israel has consistently objected to these General Assembly resolutions, as the International Conference proposed in resolution 38/58 C clearly contradicts the principle of direct negotiations between Israel and its neighbours and Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), which are not even mentioned therein.

"In this context, it is pointed out that Israel does not recognize the 'PLO' as a partner to peace negotiations, particularly in view of that organization's declared negation of the State of Israel.

"In addition, Israel objects to the proposal of a preparatory committee with the participation of the permanent members of the Security Council, which would have any authority to determine the agenda and procedure of negotiations between Israel and its neighbours, and convene a conference that could impose solutions.

"The objection of Israel to the international conference proposed in resolution 42/66 D and its preceding resolutions, does not contradict Israel's desire to conduct direct negotiations with its neighbours within an international framework agreeable to the sides involved in those direct negotiations."

Jordan

"The Permanent Representative of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan ... with reference to his note dated 9 March 1988 concerning the convening of the International Conference, has the honour to inform him that the position of the Jordanian Government on this matter is as follows:

"Jordan supports the convening of an international peace conference on the Middle East under the auspices of the United Nations, and at the invitation of the Secretary-General, with the participation of the five permanent members of the Security Council and the parties concerned, including the Palestine Liberation Organization.

"This Conference should be convened on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people."

Lebanon

"With reference to your letter dated 9 March 1988 and further to my letter issued as an official document under symbol A/39/275-S/16584 of 25 May 1984, I have the honour to confirm below the official position of principle of the Lebanese Government concerning the convening of an international peace conference on the Middle East:

"First. Lebanon approves the principle of convening the International Peace Conference on the Middle East to find a just, comprehensive and lasting solution to the question of the Middle East, as called for in the relevant United Nations resolutions. Lebanon is prepared to participate in the above-mentioned Conference, as it informed you officially on 24 May 1985 (see above-mentioned document).

"Second. This does not mean that Lebanon approves the linking of the solution of its case to the solution of the question of the Middle East, because it believes that its case requires separate and urgent treatment in view of its persistence and its destructive impact on Lebanon's political, economic and social structure, as was stated in the address by Prime Minister Rashid Karami in the United Nations General Assembly on 5 October 1984.

"Third. Lebanon's consent to participate in the International Conference stems from the fact that it is a State concerned with the Arab-Israeli conflict and the fact that there are more than half a million Palestinian refugees in its territory, whose fate will be determined at the above-mentioned Conference, and from a desire to participate in the discussion of issues that it considers to be of direct or indirect concern to it.

"Fourth. In this regard, Lebanon confirms its rejection of the idea of settling the Palestinians in its territory. Its support for the right of peoples to self-determination calls, from the outset, for recognition of the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and to the establishment of its own State on its own land, as called for by the resolutions of the United Nations General Assembly on this subject.

"Fifth. Lebanon does not consider that a regional problem (a territorial problem with any State whatsoever) is open to discussion or negotiation. Its boundaries are fixed and internationally recognized, and it adheres firmly to its right to full sovereignty and independence.

"The question of Israeli occupation and the Israeli practices in the south should be dealt with from the angle of the implementation of the will of the international community as represented in Security Council resolutions 425 (1978), 508 (1982) and 509 (1982), which demanded that Israel withdraw fully and unconditionally from Lebanese territory, that the United Nations forces be enabled to discharge their mandate fully and be deployed to the internationally recognized boundaries, that international peace and security be established, and that assistance be rendered to the Government in exercising its right to extend its authority and sovereignty over its territory and consequently, transform the south into a region of peace and security.

"Sixth. Lebanon reaffirms its commitment to the 1949 armistice agreement, which is still in force, as confirmed in successive relevant resolutions of the Security Council (and which remains in force until such time as it is replaced by another text and a just, comprehensive and lasting solution is found to the Arab-Israeli conflict)."

Syrian Arab Republic

"... I have the honour to transmit a reply to your letter dated 9 March 1988 concerning the question of convening an international conference on the Middle East, as follows:

"The Syrian Arab Republic supported General Assembly resolution 38/58 C on the convening of an International Conference, as indicated in its letter dated 20 August 1984 addressed to you and distributed in document A/39/416-S/16708, and has supported General Assembly resolutions, the most recent being resolutions 42/66 D of 2 December 1987 and 42/209 A of 11 December 1987.

"The Syrian Arab Republic once again reaffirms the need to continue efforts in favour of convening the International Conference, with the participation of all the parties to the conflict, including the Palestine Liberation Organization and the permanent members of the Security Council, provided that the Conference is effective and has competence, and that it does not provide a cover for partial, piecemeal agreements, with a view to achieving a just and comprehensive peace based on the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and its resolutions relating to the Arab-Israeli conflict, and on the basis of:

"Achievement of a complete Israeli withdrawal from all the occupied Arab territories, including Jerusalem;

"Guarantee of the inalienable national rights of the Palestinian Arab people, including the right to return to its homeland, the right to self-determination and the right to establish its own independent and sovereign State in its national territory."

Palestine Liberation Organization

"With reference to your letter dated 9 March 1988 concerning the praiseworthy efforts to convene the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, I have the honour to communicate to you the position of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO).

"Since the adoption by the United Nations General Assembly at its thirty-eighth session of resolution 38/58 C, the PLO has manifested its full readiness to participate effectively and constructively in efforts aimed at establishing a just peace in the Middle East based on international legality as reflected in United Nations resolutions.

"Since the adoption of that resolution by the General Assembly at its thirty-eighth session, the PLO has been in constant touch with the Secretariat and with the States that support the establishment of peace in the Middle East with a view to moving the political process towards the convening of the International Conference. Mr. Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization and Commander-in-Chief of the Forces of the Palestinian Revolution, in international forums and on international occasions, has repeatedly reaffirmed the PLO's support for and adherence to the resolution on the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East. The most recent occasion at which the support of the PLO for such a step was declared was at the United Nations Office at Geneva, at which Mr. Yasser Arafat spoke before the Commission on Human Rights on 19 February 1988.

"The PLO reaffirms that it seeks the convening of an effective International Peace Conference on the Middle East under United Nations auspices and with the participation of the five permanent members of the Security Council and all the Parties concerned, including the PLO, the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, on an equal footing with the other parties, with a view to the realization of the national rights of the Palestinian people, including the right to return, the right to self-determination and the right to establish its own independent State, with Jerusalem as its capital.

"In the view of the PLO, international legality provides a sound political basis for such a conference: in other words, United Nations resolutions on the question of Palestine as an indivisible whole, comprising resolutions of the General Assembly and of the Security Council, including Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 605 (1987).

"In the context of the discussions concerning the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, we should draw attention to what is taking place in the occupied Palestinian territories and to the position that the PLO requested that the United Nations should adopt, namely, the protection of our people by the United Nations from the campaigns of savage repression unleashed by the Israeli occupation forces against our people in the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem. We also wish to point out that the PLO requested that, in the light of what is happening and of the crimes being perpetrated against our people, the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem be placed under the aegis of the United Nations for a short transitional period and that the Israeli forces be withdrawn from all occupied Palestinian and Arab territories, including Arab Jerusalem (we refer here to Security Council resolution 605 (1987)), until our people are enabled, during that period and under United Nations supervision, to achieve self-determination. These two steps are essential for the protection of our people, so as to create a suitable climate for the International Conference, which will lay the foundations for a just and lasting peace in the region, in accordance with international legality and the resolutions of the United Nations."

5. It is again clear from the communications set out above that sufficient agreement does not exist, either amongst the parties directly concerned or within the Security Council, to permit the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East as called for in resolution 42/66 D. Meanwhile, the recent and continuing events in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip have dramatically highlighted the urgent need for the negotiation, in a manner acceptable to all the parties directly concerned, of a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict. The Secretary-General's views about the basis of such a settlement and about how it should be negotiated remain those expressed in the closing paragraphs of the report he submitted to the Security Council on 21 January 1988 (S/19443) in accordance with Security Council resolution 605 (1987).



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GENERAL ASSEMBLY
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QUESTION OF PALESTINE
THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST

SECURITY COUNCIL
Forty-fourth year

Report of the Secretary-General

1. The present report is submitted in accordance with General Assembly resolution 43/176 of 15 December 1988 on the question of convening the International Peace Conference on the Middle East. The operative part of the resolution reads as follows:

"The General Assembly,

"...

"1. Affirms the urgent need to achieve a just and comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict, the core of which is the question of Palestine;

"2. Calls for the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, under the auspices of the United Nations, with the participation of all parties of the conflict, including the Palestine Liberation Organization, on an equal footing, and the five permanent members of the Security Council, based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) of 22 November 1967 and 338 (1973) of 22 October 1973 and the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people, primarily the right to self-determination;

"3. Affirms the following principles for the achievement of comprehensive peace:

"(a) The withdrawal of Israel from the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, and from the other occupied Arab territories;

"(b) Guaranteeing arrangements for security of all States in the region, including those named in resolution 181 (II) of 29 November 1947, within secure and internationally recognized boundaries;

"(c) Resolving the problem of the Palestine refugees in conformity with General Assembly resolution 194 (III) of 11 December 1948, and subsequent relevant resolutions;

"(d) Dismantling the Israeli settlements in the territories occupied since 1967;

"(e) Guaranteeing freedom of access to Holy Places, religious buildings and sites;

"4. Notes the expressed desire and endeavours to place the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, under the supervision of the United Nations for a limited period, as part of the peace process;

"5. Requests the Security Council to consider measures needed to convene the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, including the establishment of a preparatory committee, and to consider guarantees for security measures agreed upon by the Conference for all States in the region;

"6. Requests the Secretary-General to continue his efforts with the parties concerned, and in consultation with the Security Council, to facilitate the convening of the Conference, and to submit progress reports on developments in this matter."

2. On 2 October 1989, the Secretary-General, in pursuance of the request contained in paragraph 6 of the above resolution, addressed the following letter to the President of the Security Council:

"I have the honour to refer to resolution 43/176, adopted by the General Assembly on 15 December 1988, at its forty-third session, concerning the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East. The text of the resolution is enclosed.

"Under operative paragraph 6 of resolution 43/176, I am requested to continue my efforts with the parties concerned, and in consultation with the Security Council, to facilitate the convening of the Conference, and to submit progress reports on developments in this matter. In order to be assisted in the preparation of my report, I would be grateful if the views of the Security Council on the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East could be conveyed to me by 30 October."

3. On 7 November 1989, the President of the Security Council sent the following reply:

"I have the honour to refer to your letter of 2 October 1989 concerning the question of the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, by which you informed me of your desire to consult the Security Council once again, taking into account the relevant provisions of General Assembly resolution 43/176 of 15 December 1988.

"In accordance with your desire to be informed of the views of the members of the Security Council on this question, my predecessor and I have undertaken the necessary consultations.

"While members of the Council have noted with appreciation some positive steps and initiatives undertaken in the past year, they remain preoccupied by the continuing lack of progress in achieving peace in the Middle East and by the increasingly serious situation in the occupied territories. They are therefore convinced that efforts must be continued on an urgent basis to achieve a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the situation in the Middle East, particularly a solution to the Palestinian problem in all its aspects. They reaffirmed their support for an active peace process in which all relevant parties would participate, leading to a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the region and they invite the Secretary-General to pursue his efforts and consultations in respect of the convening of an International Peace Conference on the Middle East.

"Most members of the Council stressed that the Conference should be convened on the basis of General Assembly resolution 43/176, for which they expressed their support, and in which it, inter alia, called for the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, under the auspices of the United Nations, with the participation of all parties to the conflict, including the Palestine Liberation Organization, on an equal footing, and the five permanent members of the Security Council, based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) of 22 November 1967 and 338 (1973) of 22 October 1973 and the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people, primarily the right to self-determination. They further stressed that any settlement should affirm and guarantee the right of all States in the region, including Israel, to exist within secure and internationally recognized boundaries and should also reaffirm and guarantee the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, including the right to establish their own State.

"Several members of the Council indicated that the Security Council should begin urgent consideration of the situation in the Middle East with a view to reaching early agreement, in particular on the establishment of a preparatory committee for an International Peace Conference on the Middle East. Some other members indicated that the parties directly concerned must reach agreement on the exact form of a Conference, which should not prejudge the outcome of the negotiations.

"One member of the Council indicated it could not support the convening of an International Peace Conference in accordance with the formula contained in resolution 43/176 as this resolution failed to address the centrality of

direct negotiations among the parties and purported to determine in advance the outcome of issues which must be resolved in the course of negotiations. In the view of this member, a properly structured Conference could, at an appropriate time, facilitate direct negotiations. This member, however, considers that the time is not right to convene an international conference."

4. In a note verbale to the parties concerned, dated 21 September 1989, the Secretary-General sought the positions, respectively, of the Governments of Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic, and of the Palestine Liberation Organization, in regard to the International Peace Conference on the Middle East as called for in General Assembly resolution 43/176. The replies are reproduced below:

Note from the Permanent Representative of Egypt

"The Permanent Mission of the Arab Republic of Egypt ... with reference to the Secretary-General's note dated 21 September 1989 which referred to General Assembly resolution 43/176 and requested the views of the Government of Egypt on the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East ... has the honour to convey the following:

"1. The Government of the Arab Republic of Egypt shares the views of the Secretary-General that the present state of affairs 'is one that causes ... grave concern'.

"2. It also agrees with the Secretary-General that despite the fact that recent months have seen tangible progress towards the settlement of many of the major conflicts which beset the world, these positive winds of change have not yet reached the Arab-Israeli conflict.

"3. It is therefore an agreed view that the need is urgent to establish a process acceptable to all for negotiations of a just, lasting, and comprehensive settlement.

"4. The Government of the Arab Republic of Egypt welcomes the statement by the Secretary-General and his observations that he will continue to work for that end.

"5. On the question of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, the Government of Egypt firmly considers the convening of the said conference to be the goal of the peace process which would provide for a just, lasting and comprehensive settlement of the problem of the Middle East.

"6. The International Conference should be convened along the following lines:

"1. Under the auspices of the United Nations.

- "2. The terms of reference should be Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), as well as the national political rights of the Palestinian people.
- "3. The goal is to achieve a negotiated comprehensive peaceful settlement of the Palestinian problem in all its aspects as well as other related problems, also to ensure the achievement of a just and lasting peace in the Middle East.
- "4. The active participation of all parties concerned and/or involved, on an equal footing, including the Palestine Liberation Organization, the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.
- "5. The participation as well of the five permanent members of the Security Council.
- "6. The Government of the Arab Republic of Egypt wishes to underline the continuing relevance of the principles affirmed by paragraph 3 of General Assembly resolution 43/176, namely:
 - "a. The withdrawal from the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, and from the other occupied Arab territories;
 - "b. Guaranteeing arrangements for security of all States in the region, including those named in resolution 181 (II) of 29 November 1947;
 - "c. Resolving the problem of the Palestine refugees in conformity with General Assembly resolution 194 (III) of 11 December 1948, and subsequent relevant resolutions;
 - "d. Dismantling the Israeli settlements in the territories occupied since 1967;
 - "e. Guaranteeing freedom of access to holy places, religious buildings and sites."

Note from the Acting Permanent Representative of Israel

"The Acting Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations ... has the honour to refer to (the Secretary-General's) note verbale dated 21 September 1989 regarding General Assembly resolution 43/176 of 15 December 1988, concerning the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East.

"Israel has voted consistently against the General Assembly resolutions which called for the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East.

"General Assembly resolution 43/176, while including a reference to Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), also affirms in its operative paragraph 3 to a series of principles which prejudice and subvert the possible outcome of peace negotiations and the very principles contained in Security Council resolutions 242 and 338. Moreover, it calls for the participation in the International Conference of the PLO, a terrorist organization dedicated to the destruction of Israel which cannot be considered a partner to peace negotiations.

"Israel has long advocated direct negotiations as the most promising framework to advance the peace process in the Middle East. General Assembly resolution 43/176 proposes an International Conference that is designed to substitute for - rather than support - direct negotiations. Characteristically, the verb 'negotiate', or any of its derivatives, is not to be found in the resolution.

"Israel shares the Secretary-General's observation made in his report on the situation in the Middle East (A/43/867 of 28 November 1988) that 'in the prevailing circumstances it is insufficient to concentrate solely on procedural matters' and that there is a 'fundamental importance of devising an effective negotiating process that can secure the interests of both Israelis and Arabs and enable them to live in peace with each other'.

"In seeking to advance the peace process the Government of Israel adopted on 14 May 1989 a peace initiative 'which deals with the continuation of the peace process; the termination of the state of war with the Arab States; a solution for the Arabs of Judea, Samaria and the Gaza District; peace with Jordan; and a resolution of the problem of the residents of the refugee camps in Judea, Samaria and the Gaza District' (A/44/282 of 17 May 1989).

"General Assembly resolution 43/176 offers no viable alternative to Israel's peace initiative and support for it can only prejudice ongoing efforts to advance peace in the Middle East."

Note from the Permanent Representative of Jordan

"With reference to (the Secretary-General's) letter of 21 September 1979 concerning the question of the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East in accordance with the provisions of General Assembly resolution 43/176, I have the honour to transmit to you the position of the Government of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan on the matter, as follows:

"1. In keeping with its position that a political solution is a possible and feasible option for ending the Arab-Israeli conflict, at the core of which is the question of Palestine, Jordan has constantly urged the need for the

convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East. Moreover, Jordan for its part naturally supports the call of the General Assembly for the convening of such a conference since it was among the first proponents of the original idea and since it has endeavoured to promote it in various forums and on various occasions. His Majesty the King was involved in a remarkable effort in that connection when the Arab Summit, meeting at Amman from 8 to 11 November 1987, decided that the convening of the International Conference was the appropriate framework for the achievement of a peaceful, just, comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East. Accordingly, Jordan's position in support of the convening of the Conference has been based on a conviction that such an international forum would encourage all the parties concerned to reach a binding settlement through direct negotiations.

"2. All aspects of the Conference are, of course, interlinked and of great import, whether they relate to procedural or substantive matters. The most salient of those aspects are, however, those relating to representation at the Conference, the designation of the parties that are to participate in it and its terms of reference, as well as the necessary preparations to ensure agreement on these and other aspects.

"3. With regard to participation in the work of the Conference, Jordan's attitude is in keeping with the Arab position and the international consensus, both of which Jordan shared in forming by proclaiming the need for all parties concerned to participate, including the Palestine Liberation Organization, the sole representative of the Palestinian people, on equal footing, and the five States permanent members of the Security Council, as bearing special responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.

"4. The basis for the Conference is represented by Security Council resolution 242 (1967), which lays down the principle of the restitution of the occupied Palestinian and other Arab territories in return for peace, and Council resolution 338 (1973), which stipulates that the international arena is an appropriate framework for a political settlement among the parties to the conflict in the Middle East. It is acknowledged that that would lead to securing the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people, including its right to self-determination on its national soil as the essence of peace and a future guarantee of peace.

"5. There is no need to reaffirm the fact that this principle represents the crux of any possible settlement in the Middle East which would meet with international consensus and support.

"6. With regard to the terms of reference of the Conference, Jordan believes that they should chiefly include, inter alia, the voicing of opinions and the provision of advice and the necessary direction for the achievement of the required reconciliation of the various viewpoints in order to ensure sustained progress in the work of the Conference and constructive and positive interaction among the parties so as to attain the basic goal, namely to achieve and guarantee a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement. We do

not, however, deem it judicious that the terms of reference of the Conference should be limited to mediation and oversight alone or that the benefits to be derived from according it arbitral powers and perhaps, in case of need, powers of decision, should be excluded.

"7. Finally, in order to overcome the difficulties affecting the peace process and facilitate the convening of the Conference, Jordan supports all the efforts made, including the valuable efforts of the Secretary-General, to expedite the convening of such a conference in order to halt the suffering of the Palestinian people in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip and to ward off the dangers of tension and eruption which threaten the Middle East region as a whole at a time when the international community is turning towards détente and coexistence."

Note from the Acting Permanent Representative of Lebanon

"With reference to your letter of 21 September 1989, I have the honour to convey to you hereunder the official position of principle of the Lebanese Government on the convening of an International Peace Conference on the Middle East.

"1. Lebanon agrees in principle to the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East with a view to seeking a just, comprehensive and lasting solution to the Middle East problem in accordance with the provisions of the resolutions of the United Nations on the matter. It is prepared to participate in the said Conference, as previously communicated to you officially on 24 May 1984.

"2. This does not mean that Lebanon would agree to the linkage of the solution of its own problem with that of the Middle East issue, since it considers that its own problem requires to be addressed separately and expeditiously in view of its urgent character and its devastating impact on its political, economic and social structure.

"3. Lebanon's readiness to participate in the International Peace Conference stems from its being one of the States involved in the Arab-Israeli conflict, from the fact that there are in its territory more than half a million Palestine refugees whose fate would be decided by the said Conference and from its desire to participate in the discussion of issues that it deems to be of direct or indirect interest and concern to it.

"4. Lebanon takes this opportunity to reaffirm its rejection of the idea that Palestinians should be settled in its territory and, on the basis of its support for the right of peoples to self-determination, calls for the recognition of the right of the Palestinian people to exercise self-determination and to establish its State on its own soil in accordance with the provisions of the resolutions of the United Nations General Assembly in that connection.

"5. Lebanon does not consider that it has a regional problem (a problem of territory with any State whatever) that is to be discussed or negotiated. It has fixed and internationally recognized frontiers, and it adheres to its right to full sovereignty and independence.

"The question of the Israeli occupation and of Israeli practices in the South should be addressed from the point of view of acceding to the will of the international community as represented by Security Council resolutions 425 (1978), 508 (1982), and 509 (1982), which call for full and unconditional Israeli withdrawal from Lebanese territory, by enabling the United Nations forces to implement their mandate in full by deploying up to the internationally recognized borders, by consolidating international peace and security and by assisting the Government to exercise its right to extend its authority and sovereignty over its territory and, consequently, to transform the South into a zone of security and peace.

"6. Lebanon reaffirms its commitment to the Armistice Agreement of 1949, which remains in force, as affirmed by the successive Security Council resolutions of relevance, until such time as it is replaced by another instrument with the establishment of a just and comprehensive solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict."

Note from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic

"The Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic ... has the honour to transmit the following reply of the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic to (the Secretary-General's) note dated 21 September 1989 on the convening of an international conference on the Middle East:

"The Syrian Arab Republic supported General Assembly resolution 38/58 C on the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, as indicated in its letter addressed to you and distributed in document A/43/272 of 31 March 1988, and supported General Assembly resolutions 42/66 D of 2 December 1987 and 42/209 A of 11 December 1987.

"The Syrian Arab Republic once again emphasizes the need to continue efforts for the convening of the International Conference with the participation of all parties to the conflict, including the Palestine Liberation Organization, and the permanent members of the Security Council with a view to achieving a just and comprehensive peace based on the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and its resolutions relating to the Arab-Israeli conflict, and also based on:

"Achievement of a complete Israeli withdrawal from all the occupied Arab territories, including Jerusalem;

"Guarantee of the inalienable national rights of the Palestinian Arab people in accordance with United Nations resolutions."

Note from the Permanent Observer of Palestine

"The Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations ... has the honour to refer to the memorandum of 21 September 1989 regarding the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East pursuant to General Assembly resolution 43/176 of 15 December 1988.

"President Yasser Arafat has instructed us to respond recalling that the said resolution was adopted almost unanimously with only two negative votes namely Israel and the United States. He also wishes to note that it is of significance that the ninth summit Conference of the Heads of State or Government of the non-aligned countries has unanimously endorsed the call for the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East and stressed the urgent need to convene the Conference.

"President Arafat, further, wishes to take this opportunity to stress that in all endeavours and contacts concerning the achievement of a comprehensive and just solution, Palestine insists that all such endeavours for peace must be carried out under the auspices of the United Nations, and on the basis of the principles of the Charter and the relevant resolution 43/176.

"In the meantime, President Arafat wishes to remind Your Excellency and, through you, the international community of the plight and suffering of the Palestinian people under Israeli occupation and the responsibility to provide international protection and assistance to them.

"President Arafat wishes to express his great appreciation to the Secretary-General for his efforts to expedite the convening of the Conference and to reassure him of our support and cooperation in pursuing those efforts and in particular, in the efforts with the permanent members of the Security Council and others."

* * *

Observations

5. It is clear from the communications set out above that sufficient agreement does not exist, either within the Security Council or among the parties to the conflict, to permit the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East as called for in resolution 43/176. This is particularly unfortunate since the resolution, which was adopted by the General Assembly in Geneva following an important debate on the question of Palestine and which welcomed the outcome of the Extraordinary Session of the Palestine National Council held in Algiers in November 1988, received much wider support than earlier resolutions concerning an international conference. The vote in favour of Assembly resolution 43/176 reflected the commitment of the international community to the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, with the participation of all

parties to the conflict, including the Palestine Liberation Organization, on an equal footing, and the five permanent members of the Security Council, based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people, primarily the right to self-determination.

6. When I last reported to the General Assembly on the prospects of convening an International Peace Conference on the Middle East (A/43/691-S/20219 of 30 September 1988), I drew attention to the fact that all the members of the Security Council believed that it was desirable to convene an international conference and that it was at least possible to identify in the views of the parties agreement that there should be an international framework for the negotiation of a just and lasting settlement. The Security Council has again invited me to pursue my efforts and consultations in respect of the convening of an International Peace Conference on the Middle East, and I shall do so. But, in light of the positions stated above, I cannot fail to note that there is still a lack of unanimity which inhibits the attaining of this objective.

7. Having said that, I fully share the concern of the Security Council which, while taking note of the positive steps and initiatives undertaken in the past year, remains preoccupied by the continuing lack of progress in achieving peace in the Middle East and by the increasingly serious situation in the occupied territories. Moreover, I am deeply worried by the fact that time is passing and that opportunities that have emerged in the past 12 months might slip away. I therefore welcome efforts that seek to pursue these opportunities in the hope that they will lead to an effective negotiating process. It remains my view that such a process will be meaningful only if it involves all the parties concerned and aims at a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, including self-determination. Given the gravity of the situation and of the urgent need for progress, I shall spare no effort in carrying out the responsibilities entrusted to me by the General Assembly and the Security Council in this regard.



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QUESTION OF PALESTINE
THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST

SECURITY COUNCIL
Forty-fifth year

Report of the Secretary-General

1. The present report is submitted in accordance with General Assembly resolution 44/42 of 6 December 1989 on the question of convening the International Peace Conference on the Middle East. The operative part of the resolution reads as follows:

"The General Assembly,

"...

"1. Reaffirms the urgent need to achieve a just and comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict, the core of which is the question of Palestine;

"2. Calls once again for the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, under the auspices of the United Nations, with the participation of all parties to the conflict, including the Palestine Liberation Organization, on an equal footing, and the five permanent members of the Security Council, based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) of 22 November 1967 and 338 (1973) of 22 October 1973 and the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people, primarily the right to self-determination;

"3. Reaffirms the following principles for the achievement of comprehensive peace:

"(a) The withdrawal of Israel from the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, and from the other occupied Arab territories;

"(b) Guaranteeing arrangements for security of all States in the region, including those named in resolution 181 (II) of 29 November 1947, within secure and internationally recognized boundaries;

"(c) Resolving the problem of the Palestine refugees in conformity with General Assembly resolution 194 (III) of 11 December 1948, and subsequent relevant resolutions;

"(d) Dismantling the Israeli settlements in the territories occupied since 1967;

"(e) Guaranteeing freedom of access to Holy Places, religious buildings and sites;

"4. Notes the expressed desire and endeavours to place the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, under the supervision of the United Nations for a limited period, as part of the peace process;

"5. Once again invites the Security Council to consider measures needed to convene the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, including the establishment of a preparatory committee, and to consider guarantees for security measures agreed upon by the Conference for all States in the region;

"6. Requests the Secretary-General to continue his efforts with the parties concerned, and in consultation with the Security Council, to facilitate the convening of the Conference, and to submit progress reports on developments in this matter".

2. On 28 August 1990, the Secretary-General, in pursuance of the request contained in paragraph 6 of the above-mentioned resolution, addressed the following letter to the President of the Security Council:

"I have the honour to refer to resolution 44/42, adopted by the General Assembly on 6 December 1989, at its forty-fourth session, concerning the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East. The text of the resolution is enclosed.

"Under operative paragraph 6 of resolution 44/42, I am requested to continue my efforts with the parties concerned, and in consultation with the Security Council, to facilitate the convening of the Conference, and to submit progress reports on developments in this matter. In order to be assisted in the preparation of my report, I would be grateful if the views of the Security Council on the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East could be conveyed to me by 30 September 1990."

3. On 22 October 1990, the President of the Security Council sent the following reply:

"I have the honour to refer to your letter of 28 August 1990 concerning the question of the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, by which you informed me of your desire to consult the Security Council once again, taking into account the relevant provisions of General Assembly resolution 44/42 of 6 December 1989.

"In accordance with your desire to be informed of the views of the members of the Security Council of this question, I have undertaken the necessary consultations.

"The members of the Security Council remain deeply preoccupied by the lack of progress in achieving peace in the Middle East and by the increasingly serious situation facing the occupied territories and their inhabitants. The prolonged delay in the settlement of the Middle East problem poses a grave threat to peace and security in the region as well as in the world. They note also that the situation in the region is aggravated by the presence of a high level of armaments in many Middle Eastern countries.

"The members of the Security Council are therefore convinced that efforts must be continued on an urgent basis to achieve a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the situation in the Middle East, particularly a solution to the Palestinian problem in all its aspects. In this regard several members outlined the necessity to step up efforts to convene an International Peace Conference on the Middle East under the aegis of the United Nations. These members of the Security Council request the Secretary-General to pursue his efforts and consultations in respect of the convening of an International Conference on the Middle East.

"These same members of the Council stressed that the Conference should be convened on the basis of General Assembly resolution 44/42, for which they expressed their support. The Assembly, inter alia, called for the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, under the auspices of the United Nations, with the participation of all parties to the conflict, including the Palestine Liberation Organization, on an equal footing, and the five permanent members of the Security Council, based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) of 22 November 1967 and 338 (1973) of 22 October 1973 and the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people, primarily the right to self-determination. They further stressed that any settlement should affirm and guarantee the right of all States in the region, including Israel, to exist within secure and internationally recognized boundaries and should also reaffirm and guarantee the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, including the right to establish their own state.

"Several members of the Council indicated that the Security Council should begin urgent consideration of the situation in the Middle East with a view to reaching early agreement, in particular on the establishment of a preparatory committee for an International Peace Conference on the Middle

East. Some other members indicated that the parties directly concerned must reach agreement on the exact form of a Conference, which should not prejudice the outcome of the negotiations.

"One member of the Council indicated it could not support the convening of an International Peace Conference in accordance with the formula contained in resolution 44/42 as this resolution failed to address the centrality of direct negotiations among the parties and purported to determine in advance the outcome of issues which must be resolved in the course of negotiations. In the view of this member, a properly structured Conference could, at an appropriate time, facilitate direct negotiations. This member, however, considers that the time is not right to convene an international conference.

"Several members of the Council observed that the spirit of co-operation demonstrated recently over Iran/Iraq, Cambodia and Iraq/Kuwait had renewed faith in the United Nations ability to fulfil its duties in the maintenance of international peace and security. These members stressed their determination that the Council should be seen to be just and fair to all and that time and consequence should not be allowed to affect the upholding of the rule of law. These members of the Council therefore, believe the opportunity should be taken to renew efforts to resolve the Middle East problem, particularly the Palestinian question."

4. In a note verbale to the parties concerned, dated 19 July 1990, the Secretary-General sought the positions of the Governments of Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, and the Syrian Arab Republic, respectively, and of the Palestine Liberation Organization, in regard to the International Peace Conference on the Middle East as called for in General Assembly resolution 44/42. The replies are reproduced below:

Note dated 30 October 1990 from the Permanent Mission of the Arab Republic of Egypt

"The Permanent Mission of the Arab Republic of Egypt to the United Nations ... with reference to the Secretary-General's note dated 19 July 1990, which referred to General Assembly resolution No. 44/42 and requested the views of the Government of Egypt on the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, has the honour to convey that the position of the Government of Egypt on this issue remains the same as that explained in the note from the Permanent Representative of Egypt to the Secretary-General No. 265/89 dated 18 October 1989, the text of which is contained in document A/44/731, dated 16 November 1989."

Note dated 27 September 1990 from the Acting Permanent Representative of Israel

"The Acting Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations ... has the honour to refer to [the Secretary-General's] note verbale dated 19 July 1990, regarding General Assembly resolution 44/42 of 6 December 1989, concerning the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East.

"Israel has voted consistently against the General Assembly resolutions which called for the convening of an International Peace Conference on the Middle East.

"General Assembly resolution 44/42, while including a reference to Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), also affirms in its operative paragraph 3 a series of principles which prejudge and subvert the possible outcome of peace negotiations and the very principles contained in Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). Moreover, it calls for the participation in the International Conference of the PLO, a terrorist organization dedicated to the destruction of Israel which cannot be considered a partner to peace negotiations.

"Israel has long advocated direct negotiations as the most promising framework to advance the peace process in the Middle East. General Assembly resolution 44/42 proposes an International Peace Conference that is designed to substitute - rather than support - direct negotiations. Characteristically, the verb 'negotiate' or any of its derivatives, are not to be found in the resolution.

"Israel shares the observation reiterated by the Secretary-General in his report on the situation in the Middle East (A/44/737-S/20971 of 22 November 1989) that 'a thorough review of the peace process' is needed, 'with a view to adopting a pragmatic approach that would take fully into account the concerns and security interests of all the parties'.

"In seeking to advance the peace process the Government of Israel adopted on 14 May 1989 a peace initiative 'which deals with the continuation of the peace process; the termination of the state of war with the Arab States; a solution for the Arabs of Judea, Samaria and the Gaza district; peace with Jordan and a resolution of the problem of the residents of the refugee camps in Judea, Samaria and the Gaza district' (A/44/282 of 17 May 1989).

"General Assembly resolution 44/42 offers no viable alternative to Israel's peace initiative and support for it can only prejudice ongoing efforts to advance peace in the Middle East."

Note dated 3 October 1990 from the Permanent Representative of Jordan

"The Permanent Representative of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan to the United Nations ... with reference to the Secretary-General's note of 19 July 1990 on the question of convening the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, has the honour to state that Jordan's position with regard to that question has already been conveyed in its previous notes addressed to the Secretary-General on the matter, most recently notes MY/7/539 of 29 March 1988 and MY/7/1707 of 16 October 1989. That position can be stated as follows:

"1. Jordan supports the convening of an International Peace Conference on the Middle East under the auspices of the United Nations, at the invitation of the Secretary-General and with the participation of the five States permanent members of the Security Council and of the parties concerned, including the Palestine Liberation Organization.

"2. The Conference should be held on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people."

Note dated 25 September 1990 from the Permanent Representative of Lebanon

"With reference to your letters of 19 and 25 July 1990 pertaining to General Assembly resolutions 44/40 and 44/42, and further to the letter from the Mission circulated in document A/39/275-S/16584 of 25 May 1984, I have the honour to convey to you hereunder the official position of principle of the Lebanese Government on the question of Palestine and on the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East:

"1. Lebanon agrees in principle to the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East with a view to finding a just, comprehensive and lasting solution to the Middle East issue in accordance with the provisions of the relevant United Nations resolutions on the matter. It is prepared to participate in that Conference, as it notified you officially in the aforementioned letter of 25 May 1984 and in subsequent letters on the same matter.

"2. This does not mean that Lebanon agrees that a solution to its own issue should be linked with the Middle East issue. It considers that its own issue requires to be addressed separately and in an urgent manner in view of its pressing nature and its destructive impact on the country's political, economic and social structure, as stated in the address of Prime Minister Rashid Karami to the United Nations General Assembly on 5 October 1984.

"3. Lebanon's consent to participate in the International Peace Conference stems from the fact that it is one of the States involved in the Arab-Israeli conflict by virtue of the presence of more than half a million Palestinian refugees in its territory whose destiny will be decided by that Conference, and it seeks to participate in the discussion of issues that are of concern and interest to it either directly or indirectly.

"4. In the circumstances, Lebanon affirms its rejection of the notion that the Palestinians should be settled in its territory and, on the basis of its support for the right of peoples to self-determination, calls for recognition of the right of the Palestinian people to decide its own destiny and to establish a State on its own soil in accordance with the provisions of the resolutions of the United Nations General Assembly in this regard.

"5. Lebanon does not consider that it has a territorial problem, that is to say a problem regarding territory with any State whatever, that is open to discussion or negotiations. Its boundaries are established and internationally recognized, and it is committed to its right to full sovereignty and independence. The question of Israeli occupation and Israeli practices in southern Lebanon should be addressed by giving effect to the will of the international community as expressed in Security Council resolutions 425 (1978), 508 (1982) and 509 (1982), which call for the full and unconditional withdrawal of Israel from Lebanese territory, by enabling the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon to carry out in full the task entrusted to it by deploying up to the internationally recognized boundaries and ensuring international peace and security, by assisting the Government to exercise its right to extend its authority and sovereignty over all of its territory and by then transforming the South into a zone of peace.

"6. Lebanon reaffirms its commitment to the General Armistice Agreement of 1949 which remains in force, as affirmed by the successive Security Council resolutions of relevance, as long as it is not replaced by another agreement and as long as a just, comprehensive and lasting solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict is not found."

Note dated 5 September 1990 from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic

"The Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations ... has the honour to transmit below the reply of the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic to [the Secretary-General's] note dated 19 July 1990, concerning the implementation of General Assembly resolution 44/42 of 6 December 1989, concerning the Question of Palestine.

"We are striving for peace in our region through the creation of just and lasting solutions to the crises that are increasing the tension there. Accordingly, the Syrian Arab Republic is striving for a just and comprehensive solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict on the basis of United Nations resolutions and through an International Peace Conference, already convened in 1973 under the auspices of the United Nations and with the participation of the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. We believe that this Conference's resumption of its work could form a suitable opportunity for the achievement of a just and stable peace."

Note dated 11 September 1990 from the Permanent Observer of Palestine

"With reference to your note dated 19 July 1990 addressed to us, we have the honour to transmit to you herewith the reply of His Excellency Mr. Yasser Arafat, President of the State of Palestine and Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization:

'I thank you for your note in which you solicit our views on the measures set forth in General Assembly resolution 44/42, and I should like to assure you of our gratitude for the follow-up action you have taken on that resolution. I express to you the hope that the States concerned will have replied in a positive manner with a view to co-operating with the United Nations and with you personally in the implementation of the principles set forth in the resolution. You are well aware that the compliance of the parties concerned with those provisions would encourage respect for international law, adherence to international legitimacy and support for the United Nations and its organs.

'In my statement of 29 August 1990 to the Seventh United Nations International NGO Meeting on the Question of Palestine at Geneva, I stated that the Gulf crisis had demonstrated in a clear and decisive manner the vistas for which the United Nations could strive with a view to the implementation of its resolutions relating to the question of Palestine or any other issue. This is clear and obvious given the visible dispatch and zeal displayed by the United States of America in stirring the Security Council to act and to adopt resolutions and in its insistence on the implementation of those resolutions with extraordinary speed. I do not wish to speak here of the Gulf crisis. I have informed you of our initiative in this connection on a previous occasion, and I spoke of it at length in my aforementioned address. I here wish only to refer to the mode of action that the United Nations or any of its organs might adopt for the implementation of the resolutions relating to the question of Palestine. Those resolutions are many, and dozens of them have been adopted by consensus of the 15 members of the Security Council, by an overwhelming majority in the United Nations General Assembly or without a vote.

'With regard to the principles, provisions and arrangements set forth in General Assembly resolution 44/42, I should like to refer to the fact that I indicated our position in this regard in my statement to the Security Council at Geneva in September 1990, to our meeting with you at the United Nations Office at Geneva, and to my message to the International NGO Meeting at Geneva in August 1990. I should like to inform you that the Palestine Liberation Organization supports the principles, provisions and arrangements set forth in that resolution and that it views them as the appropriate mechanism for imparting a strong forward impetus to the peace process in the Middle East. The principles in question can bring about a just and lasting peace in the region since they have it in view to end the Israeli occupation of the occupied territory of the State of Palestine and to eliminate the suffering of our people by securing its protection so as to enable the States of the region, including those named in resolution 181 (II), to live in security and peace. Accordingly, we view the convening of the International Conference as the best mechanism for achieving a just peace in the region. We are most hopeful that you will be able to convene the preparatory committee for that purpose in the very near future.

'In this context, I should like to convey to you our regret that the Security Council has not yet acted in response to the request of the General Assembly relating to the convening of the International Peace Conference in the Middle East on the basis of General Assembly recommendations which secured 151 votes. Furthermore, the members of the Security Council, and in particular its five permanent members, have agreed upon and adopted an encouraging and unified stand with regard to the resolution of other regional conflicts such as, merely by way of example, those in Afghanistan and Cambodia. We are most hopeful that such international concord in the Security Council will extend to embrace the question of Palestine so that the Council can consider measures needed to convene the International Peace Conference on the Middle East and the provision of the necessary guarantees for the achievement of a peaceful and just solution on the basis of the relevant United Nations resolutions and of their implementation with an earnestness similar to that with which the Council implements other resolutions.'

* * *

Observations

5. It is clear from the communications set out above that sufficient agreement does not exist, either within the Security Council, or amongst the parties to the conflict, to permit the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East as called for in resolution 44/42, which like 43/176 before it, was adopted with much wider support than earlier General Assembly resolutions concerning an international conference. It is, in essence, a reaffirmation by the international community of the urgent need to achieve a just and comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict. This sense of urgency is underscored by the members of the Security Council who, as indicated in the President's letter to me of 22 October 1990, remain deeply preoccupied by the lack of progress in achieving peace in the Middle East and by the increasingly serious situation facing the occupied territories and their inhabitants. I fully share the view of the Council that a prolonged delay in the settlement of the Middle East problem poses a grave threat to peace and security in the region as well as the world, and that the situation in the region is aggravated by the presence of a high level of armaments in many Middle Eastern countries.

6. It is thus encouraging to note that there is unanimity within the Security Council that efforts must be continued on an urgent basis to achieve a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the situation in the Middle East, particularly a solution of the Palestinian problem in all its aspects. That said, I must add that I am deeply concerned by the absence, at present, of any diplomatic process aimed at overcoming the obstacles to an effective negotiating process in the Middle East. Regrettably, since my last report to the General Assembly on this subject, bilateral efforts to promote a dialogue between Israelis and Palestinians have reached an impasse. As for the parties themselves, while it is possible to identify in each of their notes to me a willingness to achieve a settlement through negotiations, it is evident that there is a divergence of views as to the framework

and the context within which such negotiations should take place. It is worth noting, in this connection, that the positions of the parties with respect to an international conference have evolved in recent years.

7. For my part, I continue to believe that a negotiating process will only be effective if it involves all the parties concerned, including the Palestine Liberation Organization, and aims at a just and lasting settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and the legitimate political rights of the Palestinian people, including self-determination. Given the grave dangers in the region that are evident to all, I cannot reiterate too strongly the need to revive efforts aimed at ensuring a just and lasting settlement of a conflict that, for decades, has been a source of continuing instability and has brought immense suffering to Arabs and Israelis alike.



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Forty-sixth session

Agenda items 33 and 35

QUESTION OF PALESTINE

THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST

SECURITY COUNCIL

Forty-sixth year

Report of the Secretary-General

1. The present report is submitted in accordance with General Assembly resolution 45/68 of 6 December 1990 on the question of convening the International Peace Conference on the Middle East. The operative part of the resolution reads as follows:

"The General Assembly,

"...

"1. Reaffirms the urgent need to achieve a just and comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict, the core of which is the question of Palestine;

"2. Calls once again for the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, under the auspices of the United Nations, with the participation of all parties to the conflict, including the Palestine Liberation Organization, on an equal footing, and the five permanent members of the Security Council, based on Council resolutions 242 (1967) of 22 November 1967 and 338 (1973) of 22 October 1973 and the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people, primarily the right to self-determination;

"3. Reaffirms the following principles for the achievement of comprehensive peace:

"(a) The withdrawal of Israel from the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, and from the other occupied Arab territories;

"(b) Guaranteeing arrangements for security of all States in the region, including those named in resolution 181 (II) of 29 November 1947, within secure and internationally recognized boundaries;

"(c) Resolving the problem of the Palestine refugees in conformity with General Assembly resolution 194 (III) of 11 December 1948, and subsequent relevant resolutions;

"(d) Dismantling the Israeli settlements in the territories occupied since 1967;

"(e) Guaranteeing freedom of access to Holy Places, religious buildings and sites;

"4. Notes the expressed desire and endeavours to place the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, under the supervision of the United Nations for a limited period, as part of the peace process;

"5. Once again invites the Security Council to consider measures needed to convene the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, including the establishment of a preparatory committee, and to consider guarantees for security measures agreed upon by the Conference for all States in the region;

"6. Requests the Secretary-General to continue his efforts with the parties concerned, and in consultation with the Security Council, to facilitate the convening of the Conference, and to submit progress reports on developments in this matter."

2. On 26 June 1991, the Secretary-General, in pursuance of the request contained in paragraph 6 of the above-mentioned resolution, addressed the following letter to the President of the Security Council:

"I have the honour to refer to resolution 45/68 concerning the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, which the General Assembly adopted at its forty-fifth session, on 6 December 1990, and the text of which is attached.

"Paragraph 6 of the resolution requests me to continue my efforts with the parties concerned, and in consultation with the Security Council, to facilitate the convening of the Conference and to submit progress reports on developments in this matter. I should be grateful if the Security Council would assist me in the drafting of such a report by communicating to me, before 15 August 1991, its views on the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East."

3. As at 8 November 1991, no reply has been received from the Security Council.

4. In a note verbale to the parties concerned, dated 27 June 1991, the Secretary-General sought the positions of the Governments of Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic, and of the Palestine Liberation Organization, in regard to the International Peace Conference on the Middle East as called for in General Assembly resolution 45/68. As at 8 November 1991, the following replies had been received:

Note dated 7 October 1991 from the Permanent Representative of Israel

"The Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations presents his compliments to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and has the honour to refer to his note verbale dated 27 June 1991, regarding General Assembly resolution 45/68 of 6 December 1990, concerning the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East.

"Israel has voted consistently against the General Assembly resolutions which called for the convening of an International Peace Conference on the Middle East.

"Israel has long advocated direct negotiations as the only promising framework to advance the peace process in the Middle East. General Assembly resolution 45/68 proposes an International Peace Conference that is designed to subvert - rather than support - direct negotiations. Characteristically, the verb 'negotiate' or any of its derivatives, are not to be found in the resolution.

"Indeed, Israel is currently engaged in a process that will hopefully result in direct negotiations between Israel and its Arab neighbours. In calling for an international conference, then, resolution 45/68 is entirely irrelevant and detached from reality. Support for this resolution only exemplifies inattentiveness to the positive political developments taking place outside the halls of the United Nations.

"Moreover, General Assembly resolution 45/68, while including a reference to Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), also affirms in its operative paragraph 3 a series of principles which prejudice and subvert the possible outcome of peace negotiations and the very principles contained in Security Council resolutions 242 and 338. It also calls for the participation in the international conference of the PLO, a terrorist organization which cannot be considered a partner to peace negotiations."

Note dated 26 August 1991 from the Permanent Mission of Lebanon

"The Permanent Mission of Lebanon to the United Nations presents its compliments to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and, with reference to his Note 45/68-EOSG 3840 of 27 June 1991, has the honor to transmit Lebanon's position regarding the 'International Peace Conference on the Middle East' as adopted by the Lebanese Council of Ministers in its meeting on 23 July 1991.

"On the basis of Lebanon's commitment to Arab causes, particularly the cause of the Palestinian people and its right to self-determination and to return to its territory, and the liberation of all occupied Arab territories and the attainment of a just peace in the region,

"Affirming the general Arab position with regard to the convening of an International Conference to establish peace,

"Inasmuch as a large number of Palestinians have settled in Lebanese territory,

"Bearing in mind that the Israeli occupation of Lebanese territory took place in 1978 and later and that it was decided to put an end to that occupation on the basis of Security Council resolution 425 (1978), which is the subject of an international consensus and needs only to be fully implemented,

"On the basis of Lebanon's commitment to international legitimacy, its institutions and the principles on which it is based and to the resolutions arising from it, particularly concerning its rejection of any violation of the territorial integrity or full territorial sovereignty of any State, and asserting the firm Lebanese position which is aimed at resolving the issue of Lebanese occupation separately from the issue of the Middle East,

"On the basis of all these constant factors, the Council of Ministers has decided as follows:

"1. To support the efforts being made for the convening of an International Conference to resolve the Middle East issue and the establishment of a just and comprehensive peace in the region;

"2. To agree in principle to attend the conference and to affirm that Lebanon, while concerned for the cause of peace in the region, for the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination in its national territory and for the liberation of all the occupied Arab territories, is concerned, in the first instance, for the total liberation of its own territory;

"3. That the attendance of Lebanon at the International Conference would by no means imply that there is any link between resolving the issue of Lebanon and resolving that of the Middle East;

"4. To reject absolutely any attempt to settle the Palestinians in Lebanese territory;

"5. That the solution to the problem of the Israeli occupation of Lebanese territory lies in the implementation of Security Council resolution 425 (1978), which calls for the withdrawal of occupying Israeli forces, unreservedly and unconditionally, from Lebanese territory to internationally recognized boundaries and enabling the State of Lebanon to exercise full de facto authority over all Lebanese territory;

"6. To confirm the application of the Armistice Agreement of 1949 and adherence to all its provisions."

Observations

5. As Member States are certainly aware, a number of important developments have taken place since the General Assembly adopted resolution 45/66 on 6 December 1990. In this connection, it should be noted in particular that a negotiating process involving the parties to the Arab-Israeli conflict has recently been launched following the convening of a peace conference on the Middle East, held in Madrid from 30 October to 1 November 1991, under the co-sponsorship of the Soviet Union and the United States.



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Forty-sixth session
Agenda items 33 and 35
QUESTION OF PALESTINE
THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST

SECURITY COUNCIL
Forty-sixth year

Report of the Secretary-General

Corrigendum

Paragraph 4 [reply from the Permanent Mission of Lebanon]

The fourth paragraph should read

"Inasmuch as a large number of Palestinians are living in Lebanese territory,"



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GENERAL ASSEMBLY
Forty-seventh session
Agenda items 30 and 35
QUESTION OF PALESTINE
SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST

SECURITY COUNCIL
Forty-seventh year

Report of the Secretary-General

1. The present report is submitted in accordance with General Assembly resolution 46/75 of 11 December 1991 on the question of convening an International Peace Conference on the Middle East. The operative part of the resolution reads as follows:

"The General Assembly,

"...

"1. Reaffirms the urgent need to achieve a just and comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict, the core of which is the question of Palestine;

"2. Considers that the convening of an International Peace Conference on the Middle East, under the auspices of the United Nations, with the participation of all parties to the conflict, including the Palestine Liberation Organization, on an equal footing, and the five permanent members of the Security Council, based on Council resolutions 242 (1967) of 22 November 1967 and 338 (1973) of 22 October 1973 and the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people, primarily the right to self-determination, would contribute to the promotion of peace in the region;

"3. Reaffirms the following principles for the achievement of comprehensive peace:

"(a) The withdrawal of Israel from the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, and from the other occupied Arab territories;

"(b) Guaranteeing arrangements for security of all States in the region, including those named in resolution 181 (II) of 29 November 1947, within secure and internationally recognized boundaries;

"(c) Resolving the problem of the Palestine refugees in conformity with General Assembly resolution 194 (III) of 11 December 1948, and subsequent relevant resolutions;

"(d) Dismantling the Israeli settlements in the territories occupied since 1967;

"(e) Guaranteeing freedom of access to Holy Places, religious buildings and sites;

"4. Welcomes the convening at Madrid, on 30 October 1991, of the Peace Conference on the Middle East, which constitutes a significant step towards the establishment of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the region;

"5. Notes the expressed desire and endeavours to place the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, under the supervision of the United Nations for a transitional period, as part of the peace process;

"6. Requests the Secretary-General to continue his efforts with the parties concerned, and in consultation with the Security Council, for the promotion of peace in the region, and to submit progress reports on developments in this matter."

2. On 28 October 1992, the Secretary-General, in pursuance of the request contained in paragraph 6 of the above-mentioned resolution, addressed the following letter to the President of the Security Council:

"I have the honour to refer to resolution 46/75 entitled 'International Peace Conference on the Middle East', which the General Assembly adopted at its forty-sixth session, on 11 December 1991, and the text of which is attached.

"Paragraph 6 of the resolution requests me to continue my efforts with the parties concerned, and in consultation with the Security Council, for the promotion of peace in the region, and to submit progress reports on developments in this matter. I should be grateful if the Security Council would convey to me its views as soon as possible."

3. As at 20 November 1992, no reply has been received from the Security Council.

4. In a note verbale to the parties concerned, dated 13 October 1992, the Secretary-General sought the positions of the Governments of Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic, and of the Palestine Liberation

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Organization, in regard to the International Peace Conference on the Middle East as called for in General Assembly resolution 46/75. As at 20 November 1992, the following replies had been received:

Note dated 9 November 1992 from the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations

"The Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations presents his compliments to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and has the honour to refer to his note verbale dated 13 October 1992 regarding General Assembly resolution 46/75 of 11 December 1991 entitled 'International Peace Conference on the Middle East'.

"Israel has consistently voted against General Assembly resolutions that called for the convening of an International Peace Conference on the Middle East.

"Israel has long advocated direct negotiations as the only framework to advance peace in the Middle East. General Assembly resolution 46/75 proposes an International Peace Conference that is designed to serve as a substitute for direct negotiations. Characteristically, the verb 'negotiate' or any of its derivatives, are not to be found in the resolution.

"Israel is currently engaged in direct, face-to-face negotiations with its neighbours in bilateral and multilateral frameworks. Indeed, the United Nations itself is now a participant in the multilateral talks. Thus, in calling for an International Peace Conference, resolution 46/75 is clearly detached from reality and anachronistic. Support for this resolution only exemplifies inattentiveness to the positive political developments taking place outside the halls of the United Nations.

"Resolution 46/75 calls for the participation in the international conference of the PLO, a terrorist organization which cannot be considered a partner to peace negotiations.

"Moreover, resolution 46/75, while including a reference to Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), also affirms in operative paragraph 3 a series of principles which prejudice the possible outcome of peace negotiations and the very principles contained in Security Council resolutions 242 and 338.

"In addition, the resolution contains inherent inconsistencies. On the one hand, resolution 46/75 welcomes the convening of the Madrid Peace Conference, which initiated the current peace process. On the other hand, resolution 46/75 reaffirms principles, such as those in operative paragraph 3, which stand in opposition to any genuine notion of peace. Thus, resolution 46/75 clearly contradicts itself."

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Note dated 16 November 1992 from the Permanent Mission of Lebanon to the United Nations

"Lebanon,

"In conformity with its commitment to Arab causes, and particularly to the cause of the Palestinian people, including the right of that people to achieve self-determination and to return to its land, to the liberation of all the occupied Arab territories and to the establishment of a just peace in the region,

"Pursuant to the general Arab position concerning the convening of an International Peace Conference, having regard to the fact that a large number of Palestinians are residing in Lebanese territory, and bearing in mind the fact that Lebanese territory was occupied by Israel in and subsequent to 1978 and that such occupation was due to be terminated under the terms of Security Council resolution 425 (1978), a resolution which was the subject of international consensus, demanding nothing short of implementation in full,

"In conformity with Lebanon's commitment to international law and to the institutions and principles on which such law and the decisions taken thereunder are based, and in particular to the rejection of any violation of any State's territorial integrity and full exercise of sovereignty over such territory, and in affirmation of Lebanon's determination to resolve the Lebanese occupation problem separately from the Middle East problem,

"Has decided to establish the following principles:

"1. It supports efforts to convene the International Conference with a view to resolving the Middle East problem and to establishing a comprehensive, just peace in the region;

"2. It agrees in principle to attend the Conference and to affirm that Lebanon, while having an interest in the cause of peace in the region, in the right of the Palestinian people to achieve self-determination in its national territory and in the liberation of all the occupied Arab territories, is primarily interested in the liberation of all its territory;

"3. Lebanon's attendance of the International Conference must in no way be taken as implying a link between a resolution of its problem and a resolution of the Middle East problem;

"4. It categorically rejects any attempt to settle the Palestinians in Lebanese territory;

"5. The problem posed by Israel's occupation of Lebanese territory must be solved through implementation of Security Council resolution

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425 (1978), which calls for an unconditional withdrawal of the Israeli occupation forces from Lebanese territory to internationally recognized boundaries and urges assistance to the Government of Lebanon in exercising its full and effective authority throughout Lebanese territory;

"6. It stresses implementation of the 1949 General Armistice Agreement and adherence to all its provisions.

"Lebanon's participation in the current peace talks in Washington comes in response to the letter of invitation addressed to it by the Conference's sponsors and in accordance with the letter of assurances to it from the United States of America, which states the need for full implementation of Security Council resolution 425 (1978) on a basis of strict respect for Lebanon's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized boundaries.

"Lebanon wishes to affirm the need for United Nations involvement in the peace process and for the Organization's assumption of a greater, more effective and more participatory role in that process.

"The procrastination and debilitating conditions stipulated by Israel from time to time, and particularly its unwillingness to state its agreement to implement Security Council resolution 425 (1978) with Lebanon, serve only to delay and impede the present peace process.

"Lebanon believes it is essential to make tangible progress in the bilateral talks, which lie at the heart of the process; these address the political issue which, as is well known, without any doubt constitutes the basis of the Arab-Israeli conflict."

Note dated 19 November 1992 from the Permanent Mission of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations

"In considering General Assembly resolution 46/75 of 11 December 1991, the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic notes with regret that the principles affirmed by the General Assembly with a view to achieving a comprehensive peace in the Middle East region have not yet been realized for the following reasons:

"1. The refusal of Israel to withdraw from the Arab territories which it occupied in 1967, including the Syrian Golan and Jerusalem;

"2. Israel persistently continues to establish settlements in all the Arab territories occupied since 1967;

"3. The Israeli occupation authorities in the occupied Arab territories have failed to halt their repressive and arbitrary practices against the population in the occupied Arab territories;

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"4. Contrary to the wish of the General Assembly set forth in General Assembly resolution 38/58 C, Israel continues to hinder international efforts aimed at bringing a just and comprehensive peace to the Middle East region by the convening of an International Peace Conference on the Middle East.

"By contrast, the Syrian Arab Republic has endeavoured to continue its sincere efforts aimed at establishing a just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East region based on the implementation of United Nations resolutions, particularly Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). Accordingly, it responded to the initiative of the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics by participating in the Madrid Peace Conference and resolutely working in a responsible manner to ensure its success.

"The Syrian Arab Republic believes that the General Assembly should reaffirm the need for continued international efforts to achieve a just and comprehensive peace based on the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and United Nations resolutions concerning the Arab-Israeli conflict in such a way as to secure Israel's full withdrawal from all the occupied Arab territories and guarantee the national rights of the Palestinian people in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions.

"Syria wishes to draw attention to the fact that its agreement to the above-mentioned United States proposals does not - in the event of the parties failing to reach agreement - affect its commitment to the United Nations resolution which calls for the convening of an International Peace Conference on the Middle East, or to any other United Nations resolution on the Arab-Israeli conflict and the question of Palestine."

Note dated 3 November 1992 from the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations

"The Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations presents his compliments to His Excellency, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, and has the honour to refer to his note verbale, dated 13 October 1992, regarding General Assembly resolution 46/75, entitled 'International Peace Conference on the Middle East', and seeks to convey the position of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization, which retains the power and responsibilities of the Provisional Government of Palestine, on this matter.

"The Palestine Liberation Organization notes that the idea of convening an International Peace Conference in accordance with General Assembly resolutions, the latest of which was resolution 46/75, has received support from the overwhelming majority of Member States of the United Nations. The Palestine Liberation Organization still believes that this idea represents the best and most effective way to achieve

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peace in the Middle East and regrets that such a conference has not yet materialized due to the disagreement of two parties. On the other hand, it is known that a peace process under the sponsorship of the United States of America and the Russian Federation is currently under way. The Palestine Liberation Organization supported the process and authorized Palestinian participation in it. Unfortunately, a full year has elapsed since the convening of the Madrid Peace Conference without the achievement of any tangible results.

"The Palestine Liberation Organization still supports the current peace process and hopes that it will effectively lead to a comprehensive peace in the region. Concurrently, it calls for a more active United Nations role in the process as well as in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem. The Palestine Liberation Organization also believes that the principles for the realization of a comprehensive peace, reaffirmed in General Assembly resolution 46/75, remain valid, and asserts that any final settlement must embody these principles. Furthermore, the Palestine Liberation Organization believes that due to the complexity and interrelatedness of issues pertaining to the question of Palestine and the situation in the Middle East, an International Peace Conference in accordance with General Assembly resolutions must, at a certain stage, be convened.

"The Palestine Liberation Organization reaffirms in principle the lasting responsibility of the United Nations vis-à-vis the question of Palestine, until it is resolved in all its aspects, as well as the responsibility of the United Nations towards the building of a comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East."

Observations

5. It is clear from the communications set out above that sufficient agreement does not exist to permit the convening of an International Peace Conference on the Middle East as outlined in paragraph 2 of resolution 46/75.

6. Furthermore, it is important to note that the negotiations launched at the Madrid Peace Conference - which itself was welcomed in resolution 46/75 as a significant step towards the establishment of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the region - have continued throughout the past year. The process has recently been widened to include the United Nations as a full participant in the multilateral working groups on regional issues. On 20 November 1992, I appointed Ambassador Chinmaya Gharekhan of India as my Special Representative to the multilateral talks.



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GENERAL ASSEMBLY
Forty-eighth session
Agenda items 34 and 35
THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST
QUESTION OF PALESTINE

SECURITY COUNCIL
Forty-eighth year

Report of the Secretary-General

1. The present report is submitted in accordance with General Assembly resolution 47/64 D of 11 December 1992 on the question of Palestine. The operative part of the resolution reads as follows:

"The General Assembly,

"...

"1. Reaffirms the urgent need to achieve a just and comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict, the core of which is the question of Palestine;

"2. Welcomes the ongoing peace process, which started at Madrid, and expresses the hope that it will lead to the establishment of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the region;

"3. Expresses the need for the United Nations to play a more active and expanded role in the current peace process;

"4. Considers that the convening, at a certain stage, of an International Peace Conference in the Middle East, under the auspices of the United Nations, with the participation of all parties to the conflict, including the Palestine Liberation Organization, on an equal footing, and the five permanent members of the Security Council, based on Council resolutions 242 (1967) of 22 November 1967 and 338 (1973) of 22 October 1973 and the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people, primarily the right to self-determination, would contribute to the promotion of peace in the region;

"5. Reaffirms the following principles for the achievement of comprehensive peace:

"(a) The withdrawal of Israel from the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, and from the other occupied Arab territories;

"(b) Guaranteeing arrangements for peace and security of all States in the region, including those named in resolution 181 (II) of 29 November 1947, within secure and internationally recognized boundaries;

"(c) Resolving the problem of the Palestine refugees in conformity with General Assembly resolution 194 (III) of 11 December 1948, and subsequent relevant resolutions;

"(d) Dismantling the Israeli settlements in the territories occupied since 1967;

"(e) Guaranteeing freedom of access to Holy Places, religious buildings and sites;

"6. Notes the expressed desire and endeavours to place the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, under the supervision of the United Nations for a transitional period or, alternatively, to provide international protection for the Palestinian people there, as part of the peace process;

"7. Requests the Secretary-General to continue his efforts with the parties concerned, and in consultation with the Security Council, for the promotion of peace in the region, and to submit progress reports on developments in this matter."

2. On 15 September 1993, the Secretary-General, pursuant to the request contained in paragraph 7 of resolution 47/64 D, addressed the following letter to the President of the Security Council:

"I have the honour to refer to resolution 47/64 D, which the General Assembly adopted on 11 December 1992, at its forty-seventh session, under the agenda item 'Question of Palestine', the text of which is attached.

"Paragraph 7 of the resolution requests me to continue my efforts with the parties concerned, and in consultation with the Security Council, for the promotion of peace in the region, and to submit progress reports on development in this matter. I should be grateful if the Security Council would convey to me its views no later than 15 October 1993."

3. As at 1 November 1993, no reply had been received from the Security Council.

4. In a note verbale dated 14 September 1993 to the parties concerned, the Secretary-General sought the positions of the Governments of Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic, and of the Palestine Liberation Organization, with regard to any steps taken by them to implement the relevant provisions of the resolution. As at 1 November 1993, the following replies had been received:

Note verbale dated 12 October 1993 from the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

"The Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations presents his compliments to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and has the honour to refer to the Secretary-General's note of 14 September 1993 concerning resolution 47/64 D, adopted by the General Assembly on 11 December 1992.

"Israel has long advocated direct negotiations as the only framework to advance peace in the Middle East. The negotiations presently taking place in the framework of the Madrid peace process and the recent achievements with regard to the Israeli-Palestinian and the Israeli-Jordanian talks vindicate this approach. Resolution 47/64 D, on the other hand, runs counter to this principle of direct negotiations. This resolution, while referring to Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), also offers, in paragraph 5, a series of principles that prejudice and even predetermine the outcome of the negotiations. This is contrary to any notion of genuine negotiations.

"This resolution is outdated and out of touch with reality. For these reasons, Israel continues to oppose it and believes that it should not be adopted again at the forty-eighth session of the General Assembly."

Note verbale dated 21 October 1993 from the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

"The Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations presents his compliments to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and has the honour to refer to the note verbale, dated 14 September 1993, regarding General Assembly resolution 47/64 D, and seeks to convey the position of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization, which retains the powers and responsibilities of the Provisional Government of Palestine, on this matter.

"In paragraph 2 of resolution 47/64 D, the General Assembly 'welcomes the ongoing peace process, which started at Madrid, and expresses the hope that it will lead to the establishment of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the region'.

"The most significant development emanating from that peace process has been the recent signing at Washington, D.C., on 13 September 1993, of the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements, including its Annexes and Agreed Minutes, by the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Government of the State of Israel and by the United States of America and the Russian Federation, as the co-sponsors of the peace process [A/48/486-S/26560, annex]. That agreement and the mutual recognition by the two sides constitute a very important and positive development and step towards the establishment of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East.

"According to the agreement, negotiations on the final settlement, which include several crucial elements, have been postponed and will commence as soon as possible, but not later than the beginning of the third year of the interim period. The most crucial elements to be negotiated include the final status of Jerusalem, the illegal settlements, the rights of the Palestinian refugees and borders. A necessity for the smooth proceeding of the process is the achievement of similar progress on other tracks of the peace process between the concerned Arab States and Israel.

"Paragraph 3 of General Assembly resolution 47/64 D 'expresses the need for the United Nations to play a more active and expanded role in the current peace process'. The Palestine Liberation Organization strongly stresses this need and calls for the full engagement of the United Nations in the peace process, as well as in the provision of assistance to the Palestinian people in their efforts to build their new life and own authority and to effectively implement the Declaration of Principles.

"In paragraph 5 of the same resolution, the General Assembly reaffirmed the principles for the achievement of comprehensive peace. The Palestine Liberation Organization strongly believes that it is the duty of the international community to maintain its position of principle with regard to the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and the elements of the final settlement. It is therefore the position of the Palestine Liberation Organization that the Assembly should take it upon itself to reaffirm once more the principles for the achievement of comprehensive peace in the Middle East. The principle of the permanent responsibility of the United Nations towards the question of Palestine, until the question is actually resolved in all its aspects, is worth emphasizing in this regard.

"Finally, the Palestine Liberation Organization would like to underscore the request made by the General Assembly in paragraph 7 for 'the Secretary-General to continue his efforts with the parties concerned, and in consultation with the Security Council, for the promotion of peace in the region, and to submit progress reports on developments in this matter'. The Palestine Liberation Organization stands ready to cooperate fully with the Secretary-General to carry out those efforts in an effective and successful manner."

Observations

5. The United Nations has always supported a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement in the Middle East based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), and taking into account the legitimate political rights of the Palestinian people, including the right to self-determination.

6. In this connection, I have welcomed the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements (A/48/486-S/26560, annex) signed by the Government of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization on 13 September 1993. It is to be hoped that that agreement will lead to a comprehensive peace in the region, acceptable to all the parties concerned.

7. The United Nations stands ready to lend its full support to the peace process. In this connection, the Organization has, over the past year, participated actively in the multilateral working groups established in the framework established at the Madrid Conference in 1991. Furthermore, to help sustain the momentum of the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations and in an effort to support the implementation of the Declaration of Principles, the United Nations has begun to enhance its economic and social assistance to the West Bank and Gaza. Those efforts will intensify in the months ahead.



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THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST
QUESTION OF PALESTINE

SECURITY COUNCIL
Forty-ninth year

Report of the Secretary-General

1. The present report is submitted in accordance with General Assembly resolution 48/158 D of 20 December 1993 on the question of Palestine. The operative part of the resolution reads as follows:

"The General Assembly,

"...

"1. Reaffirms the need to achieve a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, in all its aspects;

"2. Expresses its support for the ongoing peace process, which began in Madrid, and the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements, and expresses the hope that the process will lead to the establishment of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East;

"3. Stresses the need for the United Nations to play a more active and expanded role in the current peace process and in the implementation of the Declaration of Principles;

"4. Urges Member States to provide economic and technical assistance to the Palestinian people;

"5. Also stresses the upcoming negotiations on the final settlement, and reaffirms the following principles for the achievement of a final settlement and comprehensive peace:

"(a) The realization of the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people, primarily the right to self-determination;

"(b) The withdrawal of Israel from the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, and from the other occupied Arab territories;

"(c) Guaranteeing arrangements for peace and security of all States in the region, including those named in resolution 181 (II) of 29 November 1947, within secure and internationally recognized boundaries;

"(d) Resolving the problem of the Palestine refugees in conformity with General Assembly resolution 194 (III) of 11 December 1948, and subsequent relevant resolutions;

"(e) Resolving the problem of the Israeli settlements, which are illegal and an obstacle to peace, in conformity with relevant United Nations resolutions;

"(f) Guaranteeing freedom of access to Holy Places and religious buildings and sites;

"6. Requests the Secretary-General to continue his efforts with the parties concerned, and in consultation with the Security Council, for the promotion of peace in the region and to submit progress reports on developments in this matter."

2. On 10 August 1994, the Secretary-General, pursuant to the request contained in paragraph 6 of the resolution, addressed the following letter to the President of the Security Council:

"I have the honour to refer to resolution 48/158 D, which the General Assembly adopted on 20 December 1993, at its forty-eighth session, under the agenda item entitled 'Question of Palestine'.

"Paragraph 6 of the resolution 'requests the Secretary-General to continue his efforts with the parties concerned, and in consultation with the Security Council, for the promotion of peace in the region and to submit progress reports on developments in this matter'.

"In order to fulfil my reporting responsibilities under this resolution, I should be grateful if you would be so kind as to convey to me the views of the Security Council by 15 September 1994."

3. As of 17 October 1994, no reply had been received from the Security Council.

4. In a note verbale dated 18 August 1994 to the parties concerned, the Secretary-General sought the positions of the Governments of Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic, and of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), with regard to any steps taken by them to implement the

relevant provisions of the resolution. As at 17 October 1994, the following replies had been received.

Note verbale dated 30 September 1994 from the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

"The Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations presents his compliments to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and has the honour to refer to his note verbale dated 18 August 1994 regarding General Assembly resolution 48/158 D, entitled 'Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine', and seeks to convey the position of the Executive Committee of the PLO, which retains the powers and responsibilities of the provisional Government of Palestine, on this matter.

"The co-sponsors of General Assembly resolution 48/158 D, while retaining essential elements, introduced important changes in comparison with previous years. The resolution provides support for the peace process and a more active and expanded role for the United Nations in this process. It also provides the basis for the just settlement of the question of Palestine by the end of the process. As such, the resolution should provide a more acceptable basis for all parties to work on these important issues.

"In paragraph 2 of resolution 48/158 D, the General Assembly 'expresses its support for the ongoing peace process, which began in Madrid, and the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements, 1/ and expresses the hope that the process will lead to the establishment of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East'.

"Since that resolution, further positive developments on the Palestinian-Israeli track of the peace process have taken place, in particular the signing on 4 May 1994 in Cairo of the first implementation agreement of the Declaration of Principles, namely the Agreement on the Gaza Strip and the Jericho Area. 2/ Other secondary agreements on early empowerment were also reached, and the two parties recently declared their intentions to negotiate the second implementation agreement on the elections, which is of central importance to the Palestinian side, and also on the extension of the self-government arrangements to the rest of the West Bank.

"There have been delays in the implementation of the Declaration of Principles and there has also been some lack of compliance with the provisions of the agreement reached, such as the absence until now of the safe passages between Gaza and Jericho. The Palestinian side, nevertheless, hopes for positive progression of the situation, and wishes to stress the importance of the full implementation of the Declaration of Principles within the agreed time-frame. The same period has also witnessed positive developments on the Jordanian-Israeli track, and it is imperative to have similar progress on the Syrian-Israeli track, as well as the Lebanese-Israeli track, for advancement towards a comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East.

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"Paragraph 3 of the same resolution 'stresses the need for the United Nations to play a more active and expanded role in the current peace process and in the implementation of the Declaration of Principles'. The PLO welcomes the progress made in this regard, particularly in the field of providing economic, social and other assistance to the Palestinian people. The creation of a coordinating mechanism for United Nations activities throughout the occupied territory, through the appointment of the United Nations Special Coordinator, at the under-secretary-general level, is a welcome development. The PLO hopes, however, that the United Nations will be more involved in the peace process itself. In this regard, the participation of the United Nations in the steering committee of the multilateral working groups would be a normal step forward. In general, the Palestinian side believes that there is a need for broader acceptance of the United Nations in order for it to play its natural role in the historic search for peace in the Middle East. It is worth mentioning that the Security Council played a very useful role, and directly contributed to the peace process, when the Council adopted its resolution 904 (1994). The PLO seeks the full implementation of the said resolution and further involvement of the Security Council.

"In paragraph 5, while stressing the upcoming negotiations on the final settlement, the General Assembly reaffirmed the principles for the achievement of a final settlement and comprehensive peace. The PLO strongly believes that the international community and the General Assembly should always uphold the Charter of the United Nations, international law, international humanitarian law and the validity of Security Council resolutions. As such, the General Assembly has to uphold its positions related to the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, and it should maintain its positions related to the elements of the final settlement (final status issues), where Israel has already created illegal, de facto situations, until negotiations on those issues take place and conclude in the second stage of the peace process and the final settlement is effectively achieved.

"Finally, the PLO, as it did in previous years, would like to underscore the request made by the General Assembly in resolution 48/158 D for the Secretary-General to continue his efforts with the parties concerned, and in consultation with the Security Council, for the promotion of peace in the region and to submit progress reports on developments in this matter. The PLO stands ready to cooperate fully with the Secretary-General to carry out those efforts in an effective and successful manner and, in the light of the changes made and the new language of the resolution, it expects the other parties to do the same."

Note verbale dated 3 October 1994 from the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

"The Permanent Representative of Israel wishes to recall that Israel voted against resolution 48/158 D. This position remains unchanged. Israel has long advocated the principle of direct negotiations without preconditions as the only way to achieve genuine peace in the Middle East.

The recent achievements in the framework of the peace process vindicate this approach.

"The peace process begun at Madrid is based upon the above-mentioned principle. Within the framework of the peace process, Israel and the PLO signed the Declaration of Principles on 13 September 1993, and the subsequent Agreement on the Gaza Strip and the Jericho Area on 4 May 1994, and Israel and Jordan signed the Washington Declaration on 25 July 1994.

"Resolution 48/158 D stands in contradiction to the principle of direct negotiations without preconditions, which is the agreed basis of the ongoing peace process. Moreover, paragraph 5 of the resolution is intended to predetermine the outcome of the negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians as well as the negotiations on the other bilateral tracks of the peace process. Such predetermination is contrary to any notion of genuine negotiations.

"In the light of the above, the Permanent Representative of Israel believes that this resolution should not be adopted again."

Observations

5. Since the signing by the Government of Israel and the PLO of the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements, 1/ the peace process has achieved important results on the road to a peaceful settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict. The Agreement on the Gaza Strip and the Jericho Area, 2/ signed in Cairo on 4 May 1994, and the subsequent launching of early empowerment, represent important steps forward in the implementation of the Declaration of Principles. The signing of the peace treaty between Israel and Jordan on 26 October 1994 is a historic achievement that will hopefully generate further momentum in the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations, and encourage progress in the Israeli-Lebanese and Israeli-Syrian tracks of the peace process.

6. The United Nations warmly welcomes these developments. During the past year, I have continued to follow the bilateral negotiations between the parties concerned and have maintained close contacts with them as well as the co-sponsors of the peace process. It is my fervent hope that the discussions between Israel and the PLO will steadily progress through the transitional period, achieving agreement on the interim arrangements and permanent status issues outlined in the Declaration of Principles. Such steps will be important in establishing a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East, based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973).

7. Over the past year, the United Nations has significantly enlarged its programmes of economic, social and other assistance to the occupied territories in order to support the implementation of the Declaration of Principles, and to promote peace in the region as a whole. It has also continued to participate actively in the multilateral negotiations on Middle East regional issues. With a view to ensuring effective coordination and intensification of the United Nations assistance, I appointed in June 1994 Ambassador Terje Rod Larsen of

Norway as Special Coordinator in the occupied territories. His efforts have focused primarily on Gaza.

8. As I have stated on numerous occasions, the United Nations is prepared to undertake any role that would be helpful to the parties in advancing the peace process. The Organization has been involved in the Middle East - through its resolutions, through its peace-keeping operations, through its programmes of economic and social assistance and through the good offices of the Secretary-General - for nearly five decades. It has acquired great experience in the area. For my part, I remain at the disposal of the parties concerned, and will assist them upon request. I will also make every effort to ensure that the United Nations system contributes its utmost in the fields of economic and social development, which will be essential in building peace throughout the region.

Notes

1/ A/48/486-S/26560.

2/ A/49/180-S/1994/727.



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QUESTION OF PALESTINE
THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST

SECURITY COUNCIL
Fiftieth year

Report of the Secretary-General

1. The present report is submitted in accordance with General Assembly resolution 49/62 D of 14 December 1994 on the question of Palestine.
2. On 1 September 1995, the Secretary-General, pursuant to the request contained in paragraph 8 of that resolution, addressed the following letter to the President of the Security Council:

"I have the honour to refer to resolution 49/62 D, which the General Assembly adopted on 14 December 1994, at its forty-ninth session, under the agenda item 'Question of Palestine'.

"Paragraph 8 of the resolution requests the Secretary-General to continue his efforts with the parties concerned, and in consultation with the Security Council, for the promotion of peace in the region and to submit progress reports on developments in this matter.

"In order to fulfil my reporting responsibilities under this resolution, I should be grateful if you would be so kind as to convey to me the views of the Security Council by 29 September 1995."

3. On 25 September 1995, the following reply was received from the Security Council:

"The Security Council continues to be determined to provide the necessary backing to the Middle East peace process, giving full support to its achievement, including the Declaration of Principles of 13 September 1993, as well as the subsequent Implementation Agreements.

"The Council believes that the parties should be further encouraged to adhere to and fully implement the provisions of the Agreements reached."

4. In a note verbale dated 31 August 1995 to the parties concerned, the Secretary-General sought the positions of the Governments of Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic, as well as the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), regarding any steps taken by them to implement the relevant provisions of the resolution. As at 18 October 1995, the following replies had been received.

Note verbale dated 11 September 1995 from the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

"The Permanent Representative of Israel wishes to recall that Israel voted against resolution 49/62 D. Its position remains unchanged. Israel has long advocated direct negotiations without preconditions, freely agreed upon by all parties concerned as the only framework to advance peace in the Middle East.

"The peace process begun at Madrid is based upon this principle. Within the framework of the peace process, Israel and the PLO signed the Declaration of Principles on 13 September 1993 (A/48/486-S/26560, annex), the subsequent Agreement on the Gaza Strip and the Jericho area on 4 May 1994 (A/49/180-S/1994/727, annex) and the Agreement on Preparatory Transfer of Powers and Responsibility on 25 August 1994. Additionally, Israel and Jordan signed a treaty of peace on 26 October 1994 (A/50/73-S/1995/83). Furthermore, bilateral and multilateral negotiations between Israel and its neighbours continue, and Israel looks forward to progress on all tracks of the peace process.

"Resolution 49/62 D stands in direct contradiction to the above-mentioned principle, which is the agreed basis of the ongoing peace process. Moreover, paragraph 5 of the resolution is intended to predetermine the outcome of the final status talks agreed upon by Israel and the PLO in the Declaration of Principles, as well as the results of the negotiations on the other tracks. This attempt is contrary to any notion of genuine negotiations."

Note verbale dated 16 October 1995 from the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

"The Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations seeks to convey the position of the Palestinian leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Palestinian National Authority on this matter.

"The sponsors of General Assembly resolution 49/62 D, while retaining essential principles, introduced important changes to accommodate the positions of some Member States. As a result, the resolution received overwhelming support from Members of the Assembly. The resolution provides support for the peace process and a more active and expanded role for the United Nations in this process. It also provides the basis for the just

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settlement of the question of Palestine by the end of the process. As such, the resolution should serve as an acceptable basis for all parties to work on these important issues.

"In paragraph 2 of resolution 49/62 D, the General Assembly expressed its support for the ongoing peace process, which began in Madrid, and the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements (A/48/486-S/26560, annex), as well as subsequent implementation agreements, and expressed the hope that the process would lead to the establishment of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East.

"Since that resolution, further positive developments on the Palestinian-Israeli track of the peace process have taken place, in particular the signing, on 28 September 1995 in Washington, D.C., of the second implementation agreement of the Declaration of Principles, namely, the Interim Agreement on the West Bank and Gaza Strip, which provides, inter alia, for the extension of the self-government arrangements to the rest of the West Bank and the holding of general and democratic Palestinian elections.

"During the past year there have been various delays in the implementation of the Declaration of Principles and there has also been some lack of compliance with the provisions of the agreement reached. The two sides, however, have recently indicated their firm commitment to implementing the interim agreement of 28 September 1995 in good faith, fully and according to the agreed timetable. They also reaffirmed their intention to enter into the final status negotiations according to the relevant provisions of the Declaration of Principles.

"While in the seventh preambular paragraph of resolution 49/62 D the General Assembly affirmed the illegality of the Israeli settlements in the territory occupied since 1967 and of Israeli actions aimed at changing the status of Jerusalem, in paragraphs 4 and 5, it stressed the need for the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, primarily the right to self-determination and the withdrawal of Israel from the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967 and also stressed the need for resolving the problem of the Palestine refugees in conformity with its resolution 194 (III) of 11 December 1948.

"The Palestine side strongly believes that the international community and the General Assembly should always uphold the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, international law, international humanitarian law and the validity of Security Council resolutions. As such, the General Assembly has to uphold its positions related to the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, and it should maintain its positions related to the elements of the final settlement (final status issues), where Israel has already created illegal, de facto situations, until negotiations on those issues take place and conclude in the second stage of the peace process and the final settlement is effectively achieved.

"In paragraph 7 of the same resolution the General Assembly emphasized the importance for the United Nations to play a more active and expanded

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role in the current peace process and in the implementation of the Declaration of Principles. The Palestine side welcomes the progress made in this regard, especially in the field of providing economic, social and other assistance to the Palestinian people. It welcomes in particular the work of the United Nations Special Coordinator in the Occupied Territories in the field of coordinating United Nations, as well as international, assistance to the Palestinian people. It also welcomes the steps taken to move the headquarters of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) to the territory under the Palestinian Authority, while affirming the continuation of the valuable and important work of UNRWA in other fields of operation outside of these areas.

"The Palestinian side hopes, however, that the United Nations will be more involved in the peace process itself. In this regard, the participation of the United Nations in the steering committee of the multilateral working groups would be a normal step forward. Another step would be the participation of the United Nations in the supervision of the upcoming Palestinian elections. In general, the Palestinian side believes that there is a need for broader acceptance of the United Nations in order for it to play its natural, positive role in the historic search for peace in the Middle East. Further involvement of the Security Council would also be a very important element in the interest of the peace process.

"Finally, the Palestinian side, as it did in previous years, would like to underscore the request made by the General Assembly in resolution 49/62 D for the Secretary-General to continue his efforts with the parties concerned, and in consultation with the Security Council, for the promotion of peace in the region and to submit progress reports on developments in this matter. The Palestinian side stands ready to cooperate fully with the Secretary-General to carry out those efforts in an effective and successful manner and, in the light of the changes made and the new language of the resolution, it expects the other parties to do the same."

Observations

5. The past year has seen important progress in the Middle East peace process. The Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, which was signed on 28 September 1995, represented a significant step forward in the implementation of the Declaration of Principles (A/48/486-S/26560, annex). It provided a solid basis for the realization of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, a goal that has long been sought by the United Nations. I earnestly hope that the resolve and dedication to peace shown by Israeli and Palestinian leaders will continue to guide them through the transitional stage until a permanent settlement is reached on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973).

6. I hope that these developments, together with the ongoing implementation of the Israeli-Jordanian peace accord, will generate momentum for progress on the Israeli-Syrian and Israeli-Lebanese tracks of the Middle East peace talks,

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leading to a comprehensive, just and lasting solution of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

7. The United Nations will continue to support the peace process, politically and economically, in order to reinforce what has been achieved in the course of negotiations and help build the foundations for a new post-conflict Middle East. It already participates actively in the multilateral negotiations on regional economic, security, environment, water and refugee issues. The United Nations agencies and programmes are doing their utmost to assist the Palestinian people in Gaza and the West Bank. The United Nations Special Coordinator, Mr. Terje Rod Larsen of Norway, and his Office have been instrumental in supporting and facilitating these activities, which are playing an important role in building peace. In the transitional period, he will continue to serve as a focal point for United Nations economic, social and other assistance to the Palestinians throughout the occupied territories.



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SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST
QUESTION OF PALESTINE

SECURITY COUNCIL
Fifty-first year

Report of the Secretary-General

1. The present report is submitted in accordance with General Assembly resolution 50/84 D of 15 December 1995 on the peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine.
2. On 30 August 1996, the Secretary-General, pursuant to the request contained in paragraph 8 of that resolution, addressed the following letter to the President of the Security Council:

"I have the honour to refer to resolution 50/84 D, which the General Assembly adopted on 15 December 1995, at its fiftieth session, under the item 'Question of Palestine'.

"Paragraph 8 of the resolution requests the Secretary-General to continue his efforts with the parties concerned, and in consultation with the Security Council, for the promotion of peace in the region and to submit progress reports on developments in this matter.

"In order to fulfil my reporting responsibilities under this resolution, I should be grateful if you would kindly convey to me the views of the Security Council by 30 September 1996."

3. On 4 October 1996, the following reply was received from the Security Council:

"The members of the Security Council are gravely concerned about the recent developments and clashes resulting in deaths and injuries in Jerusalem and the areas of Ramallah, Bethlehem, Nablus and the Gaza Strip.

"The members of the Council stress the necessity for the concerned parties to pursue negotiations and to fulfil their obligations under the agreements achieved. The members of the Council continue to be determined to provide the needed backing to the Middle East peace process, giving full support to the agreements achieved as well as to the timely implementation of those agreements."

4. In a note verbale dated 30 August 1996 to the parties concerned, the Secretary-General sought the positions of the Governments of Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic, as well as the Palestine Liberation Organization, regarding any steps taken by them to implement the relevant provisions of the resolution. As at 22 October 1996, the following replies had been received:

Note verbale dated 30 September 1996 from the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

"The Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations seeks to convey the position of the Palestinian leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Palestinian National Authority on this matter.

"Resolution 50/84 D was adopted in the General Assembly by an overwhelming majority (143-3-3), a reflection of the strong convictions of the international community with regard to the content of the resolution. The resolution recalls several principles of international law and the Charter of the United Nations. It provides support for the peace process and a more active and expanded role for the United Nations in this process. It also provides the basis for the just settlement of the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, by the end of the process. As such, the resolution should serve as an acceptable basis for all parties to work on these important issues.

"In paragraph 2 of resolution 50/84 D, the General Assembly once again expressed its full support for the ongoing peace process, which began in Madrid, and the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements, as well as the subsequent implementation agreements, and expressed the hope that the process would lead to the establishment of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East.

"Since the adoption of that resolution, some additional positive developments on the Palestinian-Israeli track of the peace process have taken place, in particular the redeployment of the Israeli army from major cities in the West Bank, with the exception of Al-Khalil (Hebron), and the holding of the Palestinian general election for the President of the Palestinian National Authority and the Palestinian Legislative Council. Unfortunately, several negative developments followed, including the assassination of Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, tragic bomb attacks against Israeli civilians, the

imposition of an almost continuous Israeli siege of the Palestinian territory and the postponement of the redeployment from Al-Khalil.

"Since the new Israeli Government of Prime Minister Netanyahu took office, there has been further deterioration in both the situation on the ground and the status of the peace process. The Israeli Government has adopted guidelines which contradict the letter and spirit of the two binding agreements signed with the Palestine Liberation Organization, namely the Declaration of Principles of 1993 and the Interim Agreement on the West Bank and Gaza Strip of 1995. The Israeli Government has made it clear that the timetables agreed upon will not be respected and it persists with dangerous violations of the agreements, such as the continued siege of the Palestinian territory and intentional delays in redeployment from Al-Khalil, as well as ongoing attempts to create new facts with regard to occupied East Jerusalem. The Government has also resumed colonial settlement activities in the occupied territory, which violate the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 and could reverse the peace process as a whole.

"In addition to the above-mentioned, on 24 September 1996, the Israeli Government opened an entrance to a tunnel in the vicinity of Al-Aqsa Mosque in occupied East Jerusalem, which led to tragic events resulting in a high number of casualties among Palestinian civilians caused by the Israeli army and police, including more than 50 killed and over 1,000 injured. Clashes also took place between Palestinian police and the Israeli army. The situation remains a very tense and dangerous one at this stage.

"In the seventh preambular paragraph of resolution 50/84 D, the General Assembly affirmed the illegality of the Israeli settlements in the territory occupied since 1967 and of Israeli actions aimed at changing the status of Jerusalem. That position acquires increasing importance in the light of the resumption of Israeli settler colonialism. Further, the Assembly, in paragraphs 4 and 5, stressed the need for the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, primarily the right to self-determination, and the withdrawal of Israel from the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, and also stressed the need for resolving the problem of the Palestine refugees in conformity with its resolution 194 (III) of 11 December 1948.

"The Palestinian side believes that paragraphs 4 and 5 are of great importance and it strongly believes that the international community, represented by the General Assembly, should always uphold the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, international law, international humanitarian law and the validity of the Security Council resolutions. As such, the General Assembly has to uphold its position related to the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, and it should maintain its position related to the elements of the final settlement (final status issues), where Israel has already created illegal, de facto situations, until negotiations on those

issues take place and conclude in the second stage of the peace process and the final settlement is effectively achieved.

"In paragraph 7 of the resolution, the General Assembly emphasized the importance for the United Nations to play a more active and expanded role in the current peace process and in the implementation of the Declaration of Principles. The Palestinian side welcomes the progress made in this regard, especially in the fields of providing economic, social and other assistance to the Palestinian people. It welcomes in particular the work of the United Nations Special Coordinator in the Occupied Territories in the field of coordinating United Nations and international assistance to the Palestinian people. It also welcomes the moving of the headquarters of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) to Gaza City and affirms the need for the continuation of the valuable and important work of UNRWA in other fields of operation outside the occupied Palestinian territory and the continuation of all field offices, including the field office in Jerusalem. Unfortunately, the United Nations did not participate in the observation of the Palestinian elections as called for in paragraph 7.

"The Palestinian side hopes that the United Nations will be involved in keeping the peace process alive and in assisting in the achievement of serious progress in the process. Involvement of the Security Council would also be a very important factor in the interest of the peace process.

"Indeed, the Security Council did contribute in salvaging the peace process by responding to the most recent events in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, by adopting resolution 1073 (1996) on 28 September 1996. We recall that the Council did similarly contribute positively after the massacre in Al-Khalil (Hebron) in Al-Ibrahimi Mosque by adopting resolution 904 (1994).

"The Palestinian side, as it did in previous years, would like to underscore the request made by the General Assembly in resolution 50/84 D for the Secretary-General to continue his efforts with the parties concerned, and in consultation with the Security Council, for the promotion of peace in the region and to submit progress reports on developments in this matter.

"Finally, the Palestinian side believes that for the peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine to be achieved through the continued success of the current Middle East peace process, it is necessary to respect the basis upon which the process was initiated, namely the principle of the return of land for peace and the implementation of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). It is equally important for the parties to comply with the agreements reached and to implement those agreements in good faith and without delay. The international community, especially the

co-sponsors of the peace process, have a great responsibility in this regard."

Note verbale dated 30 September 1996 from the Permanent Representative of Egypt to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

"The adoption of this resolution in the General Assembly by an overwhelming majority constituted an indication of the strong commitment of the international community toward its contents. The resolution has encompassed several important principles of the Middle East process, namely in its reference to the Madrid Conference and the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements, as well as the relevant United Nations resolutions and the principles of international law. Egypt fully supports these principles and works tirelessly to bring the concerned parties towards a final settlement of the question of Palestine.

"The new Government that took office in Israel in May 1996 has, so far, adopted and implemented policies which were in clear contradiction to the letter and spirit of the above-mentioned principles, such as:

- (a) Delaying the implementation of the agreed upon troop withdrawal and redeployment from Al-Khalil (Hebron) and zones R and C as determined by the agreement dated September 1995;
- (b) Attempting to establish new facts that would change the situation on the ground in occupied East Jerusalem;
- (c) Resuming settlement activities in the occupied territories;
- (d) Delaying the holding of negotiations on issues of final settlement (final status issues).

"Many promises were made concerning the commitment of the Israeli Government to the principles of peace, as mentioned in resolution 50/84 D, yet the whole international community witnessed a complete stalemate in the peace negotiations as well as the adoption and implementation by that Government of policies that could reverse the peace process as a whole.

"Egypt opposes these policies and wishes to express its deep concern over the future of the Middle East peace process. The Government of Israel should fully respect and promptly implement the agreements reached in order to bridge the existing gap of mistrust and relaunch the peace process.

"Resolution 50/84 D (para. 7) emphasizes the importance of a more expanded role of the United Nations in the peace process. Egypt welcomes any progress in this regard, in particular in socio-economic fields as well as any assistance to the Palestinian people. The indispensable role of UNRWA in assisting the Palestinian people should

be strengthened and the agency should dispose of adequate financial resources to fulfil this role."

Observations

5. During the past year, the Middle East peace process has been challenged by a series of tragic incidents, by the urgency of translating the signed agreements into peace and security for all and by the need to find solutions to outstanding issues acceptable to the parties concerned.

6. In accordance with the Interim Agreement of 28 September 1995 between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization, Israeli troops were withdrawn from the major West Bank cities, with the exception of Hebron, paving the way for the holding of the first Palestinian general election on 20 January 1996. Negotiations on a permanent status were formally launched in May 1996, raising hopes that tangible results would soon follow. However, these promising developments were compromised by a series of acts of violence in Israel, such as the bomb attacks of February and March 1996 by extremists. These acts of violence have had a negative effect on the peace talks, while the prolonged closure of the occupied territories imposed by Israel to prevent further terrorist attacks has severely affected the Palestinian economy and resulted in an increased level of unemployment.

7. The absence of progress in the peace process in the second half of this year caused frustration and disappointment. These in turn have led, to the Secretary-General's deep regret and concern, to the tragic events of September 1996 in Jerusalem, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, which threatened to unravel the negotiating process and brought about a crisis of confidence between its parties, namely the Israelis and the Palestinians. In response to those events, the Security Council adopted resolution 1073 (1996) on 28 September 1996.

8. A few days later, on 2 October 1996, the Prime Minister of Israel and the Chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organization took the reassuring decision to resume negotiations aimed at solving outstanding issues and implementing the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements (A/48/486-S/26560, annex).

9. It was expected from the outset of the negotiation process that the road to peace would not be easy. However, the only alternative to that process is a return to instability, endemic violence, regional tensions and uncertain economic prospects. This imposes on all the participants in the peace talks a duty to listen to reason and to show the determination and flexibility needed to carry out the negotiations in earnest, in accordance with the principles agreed at the Madrid Peace Conference of 1991 and other agreements already reached, until a permanent settlement is achieved on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). In addition, it is clear that for the Middle East peace process to produce truly comprehensive and lasting results, progress must be made also on the Israeli-Syrian and Israeli-Lebanese tracks of negotiation.

10. For its part, the United Nations will continue to support the peace process and to respond in an integrated way to the economic, social and other needs of the population in the West Bank and Gaza. The coordinated approach to the delivery of assistance to the Palestinians implemented by the then United Nations Special Coordinator, Mr. Terje Roed Larsen, has proved effective, particularly in times of crisis. The relocation of the headquarters of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees from Vienna to Gaza City has resulted in closer contact between the Agency and the Palestine refugees and helped to create additional jobs in Gaza. However, economic and social conditions in the West Bank and Gaza remain dire and it is to be hoped that ways will be found to improve them in the near future, including by further easing and eventual lifting of the closure.

11. Following the departure of Mr. Larsen, who returned in October 1996 to Norway to join the new Government there, the Secretary-General has asked the Commissioner-General of UNRWA, Mr. Peter Hansen, to assume temporarily the functions of United Nations Special Coordinator in the Occupied Territories. The Secretary-General would like to thank Mr. Larsen for his valuable work in the service of the United Nations and the parties.



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QUESTION OF PALESTINE
THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST

SECURITY COUNCIL
Fifty-second year

Report of the Secretary-General

1. The present report is submitted in accordance with General Assembly resolution 51/26 of 4 December 1996 on the question of Palestine.
2. On 9 September 1997, the Secretary-General, pursuant to the request contained in paragraph 9 of resolution 51/26, addressed the following letter to the President of the Security Council:

"I have the honour to refer to resolution 51/26, which the General Assembly adopted on 4 December 1996, at its fifty-first session, under the agenda item entitled 'Question of Palestine'.

"In paragraph 9 of the resolution the General Assembly requests the Secretary-General to continue his efforts with the parties concerned, and in consultation with the Security Council, for the promotion of peace in the region and to submit progress reports on developments in this matter.

"In order to fulfil my reporting responsibilities under this resolution, I should be grateful if you would kindly convey to me the views of the Security Council by 6 October 1997."

3. On 18 September 1997, the following reply was received from the Security Council:

"The Security Council is gravely concerned about the recent developments in the Occupied Territories and the region.

"The Council calls upon the concerned parties to pursue the negotiations and to fulfil their obligations under the Agreements achieved. The Council continues to be determined to provide the needed backing to the

Middle East peace process, giving full support to the Agreements achieved as well as to the timely implementation of those Agreements."

4. In a note verbale dated 9 September 1997 to the parties concerned, the Secretary-General sought the positions of the Governments of Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic, as well as the Palestine Liberation Organization, regarding any steps taken by them to implement the relevant provisions of the resolution. As at 23 October 1997, the following replies had been received:

Note verbale dated 6 October 1997 from the Permanent Representative of Egypt to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

"The adoption of resolution 51/26 in the General Assembly by an overwhelming majority constituted a reaffirmation of the strong commitment of the international community toward its content. The resolution has stressed several important principles pertaining to peace in the Middle East as well as the relevant United Nations resolutions and the principles of international law. Egypt fully supports those principles and will continue to work diligently with the parties with a view to reaching a final settlement of the question of Palestine through the achievement of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.

"Since the adoption of the above-mentioned resolution on 4 December 1996, the Middle East peace process has regrettably witnessed a series of setbacks, mostly owing to the lack of commitment of the Israeli Government toward the achievement of the ultimate goal of establishing comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East.

"While in paragraph 3 of the resolution the General Assembly stresses the necessity for the immediate and scrupulous implementation of the agreements reached between the parties, the international community has been, and continues to be, seized with a multitude of illegal unilateral actions by Israel that are in clear violation of the agreements reached. Those actions include attempts to alter the status and demographic composition of Jerusalem, the unprecedented increase in settlement activities throughout the occupied territory of the West Bank and Jerusalem, as well as the continued delay in implementing fully the provisions of the transitional agreement (with the exception of the part related to Al-Khalil).

"In that context, the ongoing construction of a new Israeli settlement in Jabal Abu Ghneim to the south of Occupied East Jerusalem has been of particular concern to the international community, as manifested in a number of General Assembly resolutions in both regular and extraordinary sessions. This act constitutes one of the major illegal unilateral measures undertaken by Israel with the aim of preempting the outcome of the final status negotiations. Egypt, as well as the whole international community, opposed this act and called for its halt and reversal. Regrettably, Israel, in blatant challenge to and contempt for the will of the international community, is still carrying on with the construction in Jabal Abu Ghneim.

"With regard to paragraph 8 of the resolution, concerning the importance for the United Nations to play a more active and expanded role in the current peace process, Egypt welcomes progress in this regard, in particular in socio-economic fields and other assistance to the Palestinian people. Egypt stresses the need to maintain the indispensable role of UNRWA in assisting the Palestinian refugees, and believes that the Agency should dispose of the necessary financial resources in order to fulfil this vital role.

"Egypt is of the view that, for the achievement of the peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine, it is crucial that the Israeli Government adhere to the basic principles upon which the Middle East peace process was started, namely, Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and the principle of exchanging land for peace. Egypt is also of the view that Israel should commit itself to implementing the provisions of all agreements reached in good faith and without delay, in particular the withdrawal of its troops from areas B and C of the occupied West Bank. Achieving significant progress in the peace process must be based on refraining from undertaking unilateral measures that undermine the trust between the parties and make the final status negotiations nearly senseless. The international community represented by the United Nations should assume its responsibility in upholding these principles and ensuring respect for them."

Note verbale dated 13 October 1997 from the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

"General Assembly resolution 51/26 was adopted by an overwhelming majority (152-2-4), a reflection of the strong convictions of the international community with regard to the content of the resolution. The resolution recalls several principles of international law and the Charter of the United Nations, provides support for the peace process and implementation of the agreements reached and also provides the basis for the just settlement of the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict. The resolution also emphasizes the importance of a more active and expanded role for the United Nations in this process. As such, the resolution should serve as an acceptable basis for all parties to work on these important issues.

"In paragraph 2 of resolution 51/26, the General Assembly once again expresses its full support for the ongoing peace process, which began in Madrid, and the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements of 1993, as well as the subsequent implementation agreements, including the Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip of 1995, and expresses the hope that the process will lead to the establishment of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East. In paragraph 3, the Assembly stresses the necessity for the immediate and scrupulous implementation of the agreements reached between the parties and the commencement of the negotiations on the final settlement.

"Since the adoption of resolution 51/26, the Middle East peace process has unfortunately deteriorated critically owing to the policies and actions of the Israeli Government, which appear to aim at burying the existing agreements between the parties. The transitional agreement has not been implemented, with the exception of the part related to Al-Khalil (Hebron), the negotiations on the final settlement have not been started and the economic and living conditions of the Palestinian people have dramatically deteriorated. Several tragic bombing attacks in West Jerusalem have also contributed to the exacerbation of the situation.

"As indicated in our note to the Secretary-General with regard to this resolution during the fifty-first session, the Israeli Government, since taking office, has adopted guidelines contradicting the letter and spirit of the agreements reached, made it clear that the timetable agreed upon would not be respected, resumed colonial settlement activities in the occupied territory and opened a tunnel in the vicinity of the Al-Aqsa Mosque in Occupied East Jerusalem. Since then, the Israeli Government has not closed the above-mentioned tunnel, in flagrant violation of Security Council resolution 1073 (1996), and has continued with, and even intensified, its colonial settlement activities, including the building of a new settlement in Jabal Abu Ghneim to the south of Occupied East Jerusalem. The Government has continued its drive to Judaize Jerusalem and to change its status and demographic composition.

"In the seventh preambular paragraph of resolution 51/26, the General Assembly affirmed the illegality of the Israeli settlements in the territory occupied since 1967 and of Israeli actions aimed at changing the status of Jerusalem. Further, the Assembly, in paragraphs 5 and 6, stressed the need for the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, primarily the right to self-determination and the withdrawal of Israel from the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, and the need for resolving the problem of the Palestine refugees in conformity with its resolution 194 (III) of 11 December 1948.

"The Palestinian side believes that the seventh preambular paragraph and paragraphs 5 and 6 are of great importance as they reflect established positions of the international community consistent with international law. The Palestinian side believes that the international community, represented by the General Assembly, should always uphold the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, international law, international humanitarian law and the validity of Security Council resolutions. As such, the Assembly has to uphold its positions in relation to the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, and it should maintain its positions related to the elements of the final settlement (final status issues), including Jerusalem, settlements and refugees, with regard to which Israel has already created illegal de facto situations, until negotiations on those issues take place and the final settlement is effectively achieved.

"In paragraph 8 of the same resolution, the General Assembly emphasizes the importance for the United Nations to play a more active and expanded role in the current peace process and in the implementation of the Declaration of Principles. The Palestinian side welcomes the progress made

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in this regard, especially in the fields of providing economic, social and other assistance to the Palestinian people. It welcomes in particular the work of the United Nations Special Coordinator in the Occupied Territories in the field of coordinating United Nations, as well as international, assistance to the Palestinian people. It also welcomes the transfer of the headquarters of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) to Gaza City and the presence of the Commissioner-General and his important contribution. It affirms the need for the continuation of the valuable and important work of UNRWA in other fields of operation outside the Occupied Palestinian Territory as well as the continuation of all field offices, including the field office in Jerusalem.

"The Palestinian side hopes that the United Nations will be involved in bringing the peace process back on track and in keeping it alive and in assisting in the achievement of serious progress in this regard. The involvement of the Security Council would also be a very important factor in the interest of the peace process. Indeed, the Council has contributed to the salvaging of the peace process by responding to some recent events in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem, by adopting resolution 1073 (1996) of 28 September 1996 and before that by adopting resolution 904 (1994) of 18 March 1994 on the massacre in the Ibrahimi Mosque in Al-Khalil.

"Unfortunately, the Council was twice prevented from playing the same positive role and from discharging its responsibilities for the maintenance of peace and security as a result of the two vetoes exercised by the United States of America on 7 and 21 March 1997 on two draft resolutions dealing with the illegal Israeli settlement in Jabal Abu Ghneim. The two vetoes led to the convening of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly on illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory. The convening of the emergency special session indicated the determination of the membership of the United Nations to remain engaged and to adhere to the Charter of the United Nations and international law and to protect the Middle East peace process.

"The Palestinian side reiterates its appreciation to the Secretary-General for his substantial and accurate report presented pursuant to resolution ES-10/2 and, as it has in previous years, would like to underscore the request made by the General Assembly in resolution 51/26 for the Secretary-General to continue his efforts with the parties concerned, and in consultation with the Security Council, for the promotion of peace in the region and to submit progress reports on developments in this regard.

"Finally, the Palestinian side believes that for the peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine to be achieved through the current Middle East peace process, it is necessary to respect the basis upon which the process was initiated, namely, the principle of the return of land for peace and the implementation of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). It is equally important for the parties to comply with the agreements reached and to implement those agreements in good faith and

without delay. Furthermore, all actions that violate international law, relevant Security Council resolutions and those agreements must be ceased completely. The international community, especially the co-sponsors of the peace process, have a great responsibility in this regard."

OBSERVATIONS

5. The stagnation of the Middle East peace process during the past year is disappointing. After prolonged and difficult talks, the protocol concerning the redeployment in Hebron, concluded on 17 January 1997, inspired the hope that confidence and mutual trust between Palestinians and Israelis would increase and create a positive environment for subsequent negotiations that could be successful. Regrettably, the start by Israel of construction of a settlement in Jabal Abu Ghneim/Har Homa to the south of East Jerusalem thwarted that positive trend and led to a dangerous and lengthy stalemate. Since then, I have submitted two reports (A/ES-10/6-S/1997/494 and Corr.1 and Add.1 and A/ES-10/6-S/1997/798 and Add.1) in this regard at the request of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, which addressed Israeli actions.

6. I have been appalled by the horrifying terrorist bombings in Israel, which took the lives of innocent people. These despicable acts of terror have further shaken the confidence between Israelis and Palestinians and deepened the crisis in the peace talks. Terrorism, whatever its motivation, can never be justified and I condemn it unreservedly. It is the enemy of the Middle East peace negotiations that hold the expectations of millions. Violence of this kind can never advance any cause. I welcome and fully support measures being taken to combat terrorism. Enhancing the role of the United Nations in that regard is a part of my programme for reform.

7. The parties to the peace process bear responsibility for settling the Arab-Israeli conflict in a just and comprehensive manner in accordance with Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). The people of the Middle East have a right to live in peace, security and mutual respect and dignity. Attempts to avoid implementing in full and on time the agreements signed since 1993 or to undermine them can only postpone the fulfilment of those aspirations and weaken the peace process.

8. It is my earnest belief that both sides - Palestinians and Israelis - should do everything possible so that mutual trust is restored, peace negotiations are revitalized and steady progress is ensured through the transitional period, leading to a permanent settlement as envisaged by the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements (A/48/486-S/26560, annex). Courage, determination and commitment should guide the parties along that path. To that end, Israel should refrain from unilateral actions that have the effect of pre-empting the outcome of the talks and the Palestinian Authority should spare no effort in fighting terrorism effectively. I hope that the resumption of high-level meetings this autumn and the committee talks on outstanding issues will create momentum to get the Israeli-Palestinian talks back on track. Progress on the Israel-Syria and Israel-Lebanon tracks of

negotiations is also essential for achieving a comprehensive and durable peace in the region.

9. The United Nations will continue to support the peace process, politically and through the provision of economic and social assistance to the Palestinian people facilitated by the United Nations Special Coordinator in the Occupied Territories. Improving living conditions in the West Bank and Gaza is imperative for creating a favourable atmosphere for the peace process on the ground. In that connection, it is important that UNRWA be put on a sound financial footing so that the downgrading in its services to the Palestinian refugees can be avoided.



**General Assembly
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QUESTION OF PALESTINE
THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST

SECURITY COUNCIL
Fifty-third year

Report of the Secretary-General

1. The present report is submitted in accordance with General Assembly resolution 52/52 of 9 December 1997 on the peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine.

2. On 25 August 1998, the Secretary-General, pursuant to the request contained in paragraph 9 of the above-mentioned resolution, addressed the following letter to the President of the Security Council:

"I have the honour to refer to resolution 52/52, which the General Assembly adopted on 9 December 1997, at its fifty-second session, under the agenda item 'Question of Palestine'.

"In paragraph 9 of the resolution, the General Assembly 'requests the Secretary-General to continue his efforts with the parties concerned and, in consultation with the Security Council, for the promotion of peace in the region and to submit progress reports on developments in this matter'.

"In order to fulfil my reporting responsibilities under this resolution, I should be grateful if you would kindly convey to me the views of the Security Council by 30 September 1998."

3. On 22 September 1998, the following reply was received from the Security Council:

"The Security Council remains gravely concerned about developments in the occupied territories and the region.

"Recalling the statement by the President of the Council of 13 July 1998 (S/PRST/1998/21), the Security Council continues to be determined to keep developments under review, and to provide the needed

backing to the Middle East peace process, giving full support to the agreements achieved as well as to the timely implementation of those agreements.

"The Council calls upon the concerned parties to pursue the negotiations and to fulfil their obligations under the agreements achieved, so that progress can be made towards a just, lasting and comprehensive peace based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) of 22 November 1967 and 338 (1973) of 22 October 1973."

4. In a note verbale dated 31 August 1998 to the parties concerned, the Secretary-General sought the positions of the Governments of Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic, as well as the Palestine Liberation Organization, regarding any steps taken by them to implement the relevant provisions of the resolution. As of 30 October 1998, the following reply had been received:

Note verbale dated 9 October 1998 from the Permanent
Observer of Palestine to the United Nations addressed
to the Secretary-General

"General Assembly resolution 52/52 is the main political resolution on the Palestinian issue, and it was adopted by an overwhelming majority (155-2-3), a reflection of the strong convictions of the international community with regard to the content of the resolution. As stated in the note verbale dated 13 October 1997 from the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (see A/52/581-S/1997/866, para. 4), the resolution recalls several principles of international law and the Charter of the United Nations, provides support for the peace process and implementation of the agreements reached and also provides the basis for the just settlement of the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict. The resolution emphasizes as well the importance of a more active and expanded role for the United Nations in this process. As such, the resolution should serve as an acceptable basis for all parties to work on these important issues.

"In operative paragraph 2 of resolution 52/52, the General Assembly once again 'expresses its full support for the ongoing peace process, which began in Madrid, and the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements of 1993, as well as the subsequent implementation agreements, including the Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement on the West Bank and Gaza Strip of 1995, and expresses the hope that the process will lead to the establishment of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East'. In operative paragraph 3, the Assembly 'stresses the necessity for commitment to the principle of land for peace and the implementation of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), which form the basis of the Middle East peace process, and the need for the immediate and scrupulous implementation of the agreements reached between the parties, including the redeployment of the Israeli forces from the West Bank and the commencement of the negotiations on the final settlement.'

"Since the adoption of resolution 52/52, the deadlock in the Middle East peace process has continued. No progress has been made with regard to the implementation of the agreements reached; the situation on the ground, including the economic and living conditions of the Palestinian people, has continued to deteriorate; and tension has increased in the region as a whole, all as a result of the policies and practices of the Israeli Government. It is noteworthy that several letters of complaint regarding those policies and practices were sent by the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations during the past year to the Secretary-General, the President of Security Council and the President of the General Assembly.

"In fact, the Israeli Government, since taking office, has adopted guidelines contradicting the letter and spirit of the agreements reached, made it clear that the timetable agreed upon would not be respected, resumed colonial settlement activities in the occupied territory and opened a tunnel in the vicinity of Al-Aqsa Mosque in Occupied East Jerusalem. The Israeli Government did not close that tunnel, in flagrant violation of Security Council resolution 1073 (1996) of 28 September 1996, and has continued with, and even intensified, its colonial settlement activities, including the building of a new settlement in Jabal Abu Ghneim to the south of Occupied East Jerusalem, and attempted to build a settlement in Ras al-Amud. From the above, it is clear that the Government has continued its drive to Judaize Jerusalem and to change its status and demographic composition. In this regard, the Israeli Government recently announced the creation of an 'umbrella municipality' which would expand the borders of Jerusalem and extend the administrative powers of the illegal municipality over nearby towns in Israel, as well as over some Jewish settlements in the occupied West Bank.

"In the eighth preambular paragraph of resolution 52/52, the General Assembly affirmed 'the illegality of the Israeli settlements in the territory occupied since 1967 and of Israeli actions aimed at changing the status of Jerusalem'. Furthermore, the Assembly, in operative paragraphs 5 and 6 of the same resolution, stressed the need for 'the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, primarily the right to self-determination', and 'the withdrawal of Israel from the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967', and also stressed the need for 'resolving the problem of the Palestine refugees in conformity with its resolution 194 (III) of 11 December 1948'.

"The Palestinian side believes that the eighth preambular paragraph and operative paragraphs 5 and 6 of General Assembly resolution 52/52 are of great importance, as they reflect established positions of the international community consistent with international law. The Palestinian side believes that the international community, represented by the Assembly, should always uphold the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, international law, international humanitarian law and the validity of Security Council resolutions. As such, the Assembly has to uphold its positions related to the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, and it should maintain its positions related to the elements of the final settlement (final status issues), including Jerusalem, settlements and

refugees. It should be affirmed that illegal Israeli actions in these fields and their results remain illegal regardless of the passage of time.

"Operative paragraph 8 of the same resolution, 'emphasizes the importance for the United Nations to play a more active and expanded role in the current peace process and in the implementation of the Declaration of Principles'. The Palestinian side welcomes the progress made in this regard, especially in the fields of providing economic, social and other assistance to the Palestinian people. It welcomes in particular the work of the United Nations Special Coordinator in the Occupied Territories in the field of coordinating United Nations, as well as international, assistance to the Palestinian people. It welcomes as well the work done by the Commissioner-General and the staff of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), including the work of UNRWA's headquarters in Gaza City. It affirms the significance of UNRWA in other fields of operation outside of the Occupied Palestinian Territory as well as the continuation of all field offices, including the field office in Jerusalem.

"The Palestinian side hopes that the United Nations will contribute to the efforts being undertaken to salvage the peace process and to bring it back on track. The involvement of the Security Council would also be a very important factor in the interest of the peace process. Indeed, the Council has contributed to the salvaging of the peace process by responding to some serious events in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem, by adopting resolution 1073 (1996) of 28 September 1996 and before that by adopting resolution 904 (1994) of 18 March 1994 on the Al-Khalil (Hebron) massacre in the Al-Ibrahimi Mosque. After the adoption of General Assembly resolution 52/52, on 30 June 1998, the President of the Council made a statement on behalf of the Council (S/PRST/1998/21) on the situation in the occupied Arab territories.

"It is to be recalled that, unfortunately, the Council was twice prevented from playing the same positive role and from discharging its responsibilities for the maintenance of peace and security, as a result of the two vetoes exercised by the United States of America on 7 and 21 March 1997 on two draft resolutions dealing with the illegal Israeli settlement in Jabal Abu Ghneim. The two vetoes led to the convening of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly to discuss illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory. The emergency special session produced extremely important resolutions, including Assembly resolution ES-10/5 of 17 March 1998, which will be subject to further serious follow-up by the session, including by the convening of a conference of the High Contracting Parties to the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, on measures to enforce the Convention in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem, and the rest of the Arab territories occupied since 1967.

"The Palestinian side reiterates the expression of its appreciation to the Secretary-General for his substantial and accurate report presented pursuant to General Assembly resolution ES-10/2 of 25 April 1997 and, as it

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has done in previous years, would like to underscore the request made by the Assembly in resolution 52/52 for the Secretary-General to continue his efforts with the parties concerned, and in consultation with the Security Council, for the promotion of peace in the region and to submit progress reports on developments in that regard. It is worth noting that during the past year, the Secretary-General visited the Occupied Palestinian Territory and the region, where he had a first-hand opportunity to experience the extremely difficult conditions of the Palestinian people.

"Finally, the Palestinian side believes that for the peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine to be achieved through the current Middle East peace process, it is necessary to respect the mutual recognition between the two sides and the basis upon which the process was initiated, namely, the principle of the return of land for peace and the implementation of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) of 22 November 1967 and 338 (1973) of 22 October 1973. It is equally important for the parties to comply with the agreements reached and to implement those agreements in good faith and without delay. Furthermore, all actions that violate international law, relevant Security Council resolutions and those agreements must cease completely. The international community, especially the co-sponsors of the peace process, has a great responsibility in this regard.

"It should also be recalled that under the same agenda item, Question of Palestine, the General Assembly, at its fifty-second session, adopted resolution 52/250 of 7 July 1998, entitled 'Participation of Palestine in the work of the United Nations'. In this regard, the legal, political and practical significance of that resolution is emphasized."

OBSERVATIONS

5. The signing of the Wye River memorandum by the Government of Israel and the Palestinian Liberation Organization is a promising development. This agreement complements and adds details to the accords that the parties concluded in the past and, more importantly, paves the way to permanent status negotiations. I would like to take this opportunity to commend the dedication, courage and tireless efforts of all participants in the Wye Plantation meetings.

6. It is to be hoped that the Wye agreement will bring to an end the delays and unilateral actions that have hampered progress in the Middle East peace process for far too long. The primary obligations of the Palestinians and Israelis are clear: respectively, to take all legal measures to combat violence and terrorism, and to carry out, on time, further redeployments in the West Bank as laid down in the agreement. It is imperative that the good will demonstrated at Wye Plantation be translated into scrupulous implementation of the commitments made by both sides, thereby rebuilding confidence and raising new hope for peace, stability and security for all in the region.

7. That the Wye agreement offers economic opportunities for the Palestinian people is also to be welcomed. Such opportunities are essential if peace in the Middle East is to prosper. The United Nations system will continue to support

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progress in the Israeli-Palestinian talks and to provide economic, social and other assistance to the occupied territories.

8. It is to be hoped that advances in the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations will create favourable momentum for the resumption of the Israel-Syrian Arab Republic and Israel-Lebanon talks. This will be essential for the settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 425 (1978) of 19 March 1978.



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THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST
QUESTION OF PALESTINE

SECURITY COUNCIL
Fifty-fourth year

Report of the Secretary-General

1. The present report is submitted in accordance with General Assembly resolution 53/42 of 2 December 1998 on the peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine.
2. On 2 August 1999, the Secretary-General, pursuant to the request contained in paragraph 9 of the above-mentioned resolution, addressed the following letter to the President of the Security Council:

"I have the honour to refer to resolution 53/42, which the General Assembly adopted on 2 December 1998, at its fifty-third session, under the agenda item 'Question of Palestine'.

"In paragraph 9 of the resolution, the General Assembly 'requests the Secretary-General to continue his efforts with the parties concerned, and in consultation with the Security Council, for the promotion of peace in the region and to submit progress reports on developments in this matter'.

"In order to fulfil my reporting responsibilities under this resolution, I should be grateful if you would kindly convey to me the views of the Security Council by 30 September 1999."

3. On 6 October 1999, the following reply was received from the Security Council:

"The members of the Security Council view with interest the recent developments in the Middle East region.

"The members of the Security Council welcome the signing of the Sharm El-Sheikh Memorandum between Israel and the Palestine Liberation

Organization as an important step forward in the Middle East peace process. They express their belief that the new agreement opens the way for a just, lasting and comprehensive peace within a reasonable time frame in the entire region, based on all relevant Security Council resolutions, in particular 242 (1967) of 22 November 1967 and 338 (1973) of 22 October 1973. They condemn vigorously all acts of terrorism and violence in the region. They call upon all parties to implement in full their commitments under existing agreements and to refrain from actions that pre-empt the negotiations and worsen both the political and the economic situation in the Palestinian territories, and to abide scrupulously by their obligations under international law.

"The members of the Security Council continue to be determined to keep developments under review and to provide the necessary backing, giving full support to the agreements reached, as well as to the timely and speedy implementation of those agreements."

4. In a note verbale dated 28 July 1999 to the parties concerned, the Secretary-General sought the positions of the Governments of Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic, as well as the Palestine Liberation Organization, regarding any steps taken by them to implement the relevant provisions of the resolution. As of 6 October 1999, the following replies had been received:

Note verbale dated 31 August 1999 from the Permanent Representative of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

"Jordan has always believed that it is important and indeed essential to achieve a just, comprehensive and lasting peace that will ensure that Arab rights are restored and secured in accordance with resolutions that have the force of international law, the principle of land for peace and the relevant resolutions of the Security Council, particularly its resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 425 (1978), so as to achieve security, stability and development for all the States of the region and for their peoples.

"Jordan is pursuing its ongoing endeavour to implement the provisions of the Jordanian-Israeli Treaty of Peace signed in 1994 and the agreements to which it gave rise, and it has given them effect with a view to perpetuating and reinforcing the state of peace between the two sides.

"His Majesty King Hussein Bin Talal (may God rest his soul) played an active and prominent role in the successful conclusion of the Wye River Memorandum by the Palestinian and Israeli sides. Jordan, which believes and understands that the question of Palestine represents the essence and core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, has made good use of its relations and contacts with all the parties in order to advance the negotiating process on the Palestinian-Israeli track.

"Under the leadership of His Majesty King Abdullah II Bin Hussein and the Jordanian Government, the country is continuing its efforts in its contacts and meetings with the regional and international parties concerned to advance the peace process on all tracks, believing as it does in the inclusive character of any solution that will achieve a just, comprehensive and lasting peace, bring security and stability to the region and secure prosperity for its peoples.

"Jordan is of the view that the outcome of the recent Israeli elections and the assumption of office by the new Government constitute a plebiscite in which Israeli society voted in favour of peace. The new Israeli Government is urged to take decisive steps to honour the agreements and commitments that have been entered into and, in particular, to implement the Wye River Memorandum of October 1998 and to resume the negotiations on the Syrian and Lebanese tracks from the point at which they were suspended. Jordan stresses the importance of the historic opportunity that presents itself for the achievement of peace. It must not be allowed to slip away."

Note verbale dated 29 September 1999 from the Permanent
Observer of Palestine to the United Nations addressed
to the Secretary-General

"General Assembly resolution 53/42 is the main political resolution on the Palestinian issue, and it was adopted by an overwhelming majority (154-2-3), a reflection of the strong convictions of the international community with regard to the content of the resolution. In addition, similar texts have been adopted by the Assembly over the past few years by overwhelming majorities, reflecting an established position by the international community in this regard. As stated in my note verbale of 9 October 1998 (A/52/652-S/1998/1050), the resolution recalls several principles of international law and the Charter of the United Nations, provides support for the peace process and implementation of the agreements reached and also provides the basis for the just settlement of the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict. The resolution emphasizes as well the importance of a more active and expanded role for the United Nations in this process. As such, the resolution should serve as an acceptable basis for all parties to work on these important issues.

"In preambular paragraph 8 of resolution 53/42, the General Assembly affirmed 'the illegality of the Israeli settlements in the territory occupied since 1967 and of Israeli actions aimed at changing the status of Jerusalem'. Over the past year, such illegal activities have continued, particularly in Jabal Abu Ghneim to the south of Occupied East Jerusalem in Ras al-Amud, in addition to other colonial settlement activities and measures throughout the Palestinian territory. The General Assembly responded by reconvening the tenth emergency special session on 5 February 1999 and adopting resolution ES-10/6 on 9 February 1999. The international community responded as well by convening a Conference of the High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention on Measures to Enforce the Convention in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including

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Jerusalem. This marked the first time in the history of the Geneva Conventions that a conference was convened to consider a specific case of violations of the Fourth Geneva Convention. In that Conference, the High Contracting Parties 'reaffirmed the applicability of the Fourth Geneva Convention to the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem', and 'reiterated the need for full respect for the provisions of the said Convention in that Territory'. The Conference adjourned 'on the understanding that it will convene again in the light of consultations on the development of the humanitarian situation in the field'.

"In paragraph 2 of resolution 53/42, the General Assembly once again expresses its full support for the ongoing peace process which began in Madrid and the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements of 1993, as well as the subsequent implementation agreements, including the Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement on the West Bank and Gaza Strip of 1995, and expresses the hope that the process will lead to the establishment of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East'. In paragraph 3, the Assembly stresses the necessity for commitment to the principle of land for peace and the implementation of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), which form the basis of the Middle East peace process, and the need for the immediate and scrupulous implementation of the agreements reached between the parties, including the redeployment of the Israeli forces from the West Bank and the commencement of the negotiations on the final settlement.

"Since the adoption of resolution 53/42, the deadlock in the Middle East peace process has continued for most of the past year. Little progress was made with regard to the implementation of the agreements reached; the situation on the ground, including the economic and living conditions of the Palestinian people, continued to deteriorate; and tension increased in the region as a whole, all as a result of the policies and practices of the Israeli Government. Several letters of complaint regarding those policies and practices were conveyed by the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations during the past year to the Secretary-General, the President of Security Council and the President of the General Assembly.

"Recently, however, with the new Israeli Government, the two parties succeeded in reaching the Sharm el-Sheikh Memorandum. The Memorandum addresses such issues as further redeployment of Israel from the Occupied Palestinian Territory, the release of prisoners, and the implementation of overdue prior commitments between the two sides, as well as the timetable for permanent status negotiations. Initial steps in implementation of the Sharm el-Sheikh Memorandum have already begun. Moreover, the parties agreed to reach the final settlement within a year from the signing of the Sharm el-Sheikh Memorandum, which is September 2000.

"In paragraphs 5 and 6, the Assembly stressed once more the need for 'the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, primarily the right to self-determination'; and 'the withdrawal of Israel from the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967'; and also stressed the

need for 'resolving the problem of the Palestine refugees in conformity with its resolution 194 (III) of 11 December 1948'.

"The Palestinian side believes that paragraphs 5 and 6 are of great importance, as they reflect established positions of the international community consistent with international law. The Palestinian side believes that the international community, represented by the General Assembly, should always uphold the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, international law, international humanitarian law and the validity of Security Council resolutions. As such, the General Assembly has to uphold its positions related to the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, and it should maintain its positions related to the elements of the final settlement (permanent status issues), including Jerusalem, settlements and refugees. It should be affirmed that illegal Israeli actions in these fields and their results remain illegal, regardless of the passage of time.

"Paragraph 8 of the same resolution, 'emphasizes the importance for the United Nations to play a more active and expanded role in the current peace process and in the implementation of the Declaration of Principles'. The Palestinian side welcomes the progress made in this regard, especially in the fields of providing economic, social and other assistance to the Palestinian people. It welcomes in particular the work of the Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator in the Occupied Territories in the field of coordinating United Nations and international assistance to the Palestinian people. In this regard, it wishes to extend its thanks and appreciation to the outgoing Special Coordinator, Mr. Chinmaya R. Gharekhan. It also welcomes the appointment of Mr. Terje Roed-Larsen as the new United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General to the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Palestinian Authority, the scope of whose work has clearly broadened, as reflected in the new title. The Palestinian side welcomes as well the work done by the Commissioner-General, Mr. Peter Hansen, and the staff of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), including the work of UNRWA's headquarters in Gaza City. It affirms the need for the continuation of the valuable and important work of UNRWA in other fields of operation outside of the Occupied Palestinian Territory and in the maintenance of all field offices, including the field office in Jerusalem.

"The Palestinian side hopes that the United Nations will contribute to the efforts being undertaken to help push the peace process forward. The involvement of the Security Council would also be a very important factor in the interest of the peace process. Indeed, the Security Council has contributed to the salvaging of the peace process by responding to some serious events in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem, by adopting resolution 1073 (1996) of 28 September 1996 and, before that, by adopting resolution 904 (1994) on the massacre in Al-Khalil (Hebron) in Al-Ibrahimi Mosque. On 30 June 1998, the President of the Security Council issued a statement (S/PRST/1998/21) on the situation in the occupied Arab territories. Since the adoption of resolution 53/42, the Council has taken no action in that regard.

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"The Palestinian side would like to underscore the request made by the General Assembly in resolution 53/42 for the Secretary-General to continue his efforts with the parties concerned, and in consultation with the Security Council, for the promotion of peace in the region and to submit progress reports on developments in this regard.

"Finally, the Palestinian side believes that for the peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine to be achieved through the current Middle East peace process, it is necessary to respect the mutual recognition between the two sides and the basis upon which the process was initiated - namely, the principle of the return of land for peace and the implementation of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). It is equally important for the parties to comply with the agreements reached and to implement those agreements in good faith and without delay. Furthermore, all actions that violate international law, relevant Security Council resolutions and those agreements must cease completely. The international community, especially the co-sponsors of the peace process, has a great responsibility in this regard. There is an international consensus that the final settlement should be concluded sometime between May and September 2000. The Palestinian side believes that the Millennium Summit should represent a deadline for reaching this. The Palestinian side is determined to meet this deadline and strongly believes that Palestine must participate as a Member State in that Millennium Summit."

Observations

5. The signing in Cairo of the Sharm el-Sheikh Memorandum on 4 September 1999 by the Government of the State of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization brings with it cautious optimism that the Middle East peace process has been brought back on track. The new agreement contains a timeline for implementation of all the commitments the two sides have made since the signing in Washington, D.C. on 13 September 1993 of the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements. It also states that the two sides have reaffirmed their understanding that the negotiations on the Permanent Status will lead to the implementation of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and that they have agreed to conclude a comprehensive agreement on all Permanent Status issues within one year from the resumption of those negotiations - i.e., by September 2000. While the issues that remain to be resolved are difficult - and there are those who may seek to hinder progress in resolving them - five decades of conflict and unease must at last be brought to an end so that all may envisage the time when a new generation of Israelis and Palestinians will be born into conditions of peace and stability.

6. As the General Assembly has underscored on many occasions, achieving a final and peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, is imperative for the attainment of a comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East. It is to be hoped that progress on the Israeli-Palestinian track will lead soon to movement on the Syrian and Lebanese tracks so that peace, security and stability may be achieved for all peoples in the region on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 425 (1978) and the principle of land for peace.

7. Given the recent encouraging developments in the Middle East peace process, I have appointed Mr. Terje Roed-Larsen of Norway as the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and my Personal Representative to the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Palestinian Authority. His presence on the ground will help to ensure that United Nations support to the peace process is fully integrated and coordinated, particularly in the area of development assistance.

8. May I take this opportunity to pay tribute to Mr. Chinmaya R. Gharekhan, who completed his assignment as my Special Representative to the multilateral talks on Middle East peace and United Nations Special Coordinator in the Occupied Territories on 30 September 1999.



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The situation in the Middle East
Question of Palestine

Security Council
Fifty-fifth year

Report of the Secretary-General*

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted in pursuance of General Assembly resolution 54/42 of 1 December 1999 on the peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine.

2. On 7 August 2000, the Secretary-General, pursuant to the request contained in paragraph 9 of the above-mentioned resolution, addressed the following letter to the President of the Security Council:

“I have the honour to refer to resolution 54/42, which the General Assembly adopted on 1 December 1999, at its fifty-fourth session, under the agenda item ‘Question of Palestine’.

“In paragraph 9 of the resolution, the General Assembly *requests* the Secretary-General to continue his efforts with the parties concerned, and in consultation with the Security Council, for the promotion of peace in the region and to submit progress reports on developments in this matter’.

“In order to fulfil my reporting responsibilities under this resolution, I should be

grateful if you would kindly convey to me the views of the Security Council by 29 September 2000.”

3. On 29 September 2000 the following reply was received from the Security Council:

“The members of the Security Council are following with interest the developments of the situation in the Middle East.

“They welcomed the participation of the Israelis and Palestinians in the final status negotiations which were held at Camp David in July. These talks represented an important phase in the Middle East peace process. They have no doubt but that the efforts being made to smooth the differences will help bring about a just, durable and comprehensive peace, based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) of 22 November 1967 and 338 (1973) of 22 October 1973. They strongly condemn all acts of terrorism and violence in the region. They urge all parties to fully respect the commitments they have assumed under existing agreements and to refrain from any activities that might jeopardize the success of the talks and aggravate the political and economic situation in the Palestinian territories, and to acquit themselves scrupulously of their obligations under international law.

* In accordance with General Assembly resolution 54/248, section C, paragraph 1, the present report is being submitted on 22 November 2000 so as to include as much updated information as possible.

“The members of the Security Council are more than ever determined to follow the ongoing process and to provide it with the necessary support. In that connection, they fully endorse the agreements already concluded and would like to see them promptly implemented.”

4. In a note verbale dated 9 August 2000 to the parties concerned, the Secretary-General sought the positions of the Governments of Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic, as well as the Palestine Liberation Organization, regarding any steps taken by them to implement the relevant provisions of the resolution. As at 16 November 2000, the following replies had been received:

**Note verbale dated 11 September 2000
from the Permanent Representative of Israel
to the United Nations addressed to the
Secretary-General**

“As the Secretary-General is aware, Israel voted against this resolution, as well as against similar resolutions adopted by the General Assembly in previous sessions. At this particularly sensitive time in the Middle East peace process, Israel wishes to put on record, once again, its position on this matter. This response should not be construed in any way as an acceptance of the legitimacy of these resolutions.

“Israel views the aforementioned General Assembly resolution not only as being unbalanced, but also as an undue interference in matters which lie at the very core of the bilateral negotiations currently under way between Israel and the Palestinians. As stated in the letter of invitation to the Madrid Peace Conference of October 1991 and reaffirmed in repeated legal undertakings, most recently in the Trilateral Statement (25 July 2000) issued at the conclusion of the Camp David Peace Summit, the Middle East peace process is predicated upon direct bilateral negotiations between the parties concerned. Both Israeli and Palestinian leaders have agreed that ‘their differences will be resolved only by good-faith negotiations’.

“The one-sided approach reflected in the resolution threatens to prejudice the outcome of this process, impede the progress of Israeli and

Palestinian negotiators and undermine the prospects of achieving a just and lasting peace settlement. A comprehensive solution to the conflicts in the Middle East can only be based upon directly negotiated and mutually agreed solutions.

“Israel expresses its hope that the General Assembly will, in respect of the negotiations currently under way, offer its unwavering and impartial support for the peace process. This is especially important now, when the parties have made significant advances towards, and appear to be on the cusp of reaching, a final settlement.”

**Note verbale dated 7 November 2000 from the
Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United
Nations addressed to the Secretary-General**

“General Assembly resolution 54/42 is the main political resolution on the Palestinian issue, and it was adopted by an overwhelming majority (149-3-2), a reflection of the strong convictions of the international community with regard to the content of the resolution. In addition, a similar text has been adopted by the Assembly over the past few years by overwhelming majorities, reflecting an established position of the international community. As stated in the Palestinian note of the fifty-fourth session, the resolution recalls several principles of international law and the Charter of the United Nations, provides support for the peace process and implementation of the agreements reached and also provides the basis for the just settlement of the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict. The resolution emphasizes as well the importance of a more active and expanded role for the United Nations in this process. As such, the resolution should serve as an acceptable basis for all parties to work on these important issues.

“Despite the agreement on the Sharm el-Sheikh Memorandum of 4 September 1999, which included an agreement on the implementation of a number of overdue prior commitments and an extension for the achievement of the final settlement between the two sides until 13 September 2000, Israel failed once again to implement most of the overdue provisions and commitments agreed upon in

Sharm el-Sheikh, including the third redeployment of its occupying forces, the release of Palestinian prisoners and the return of Palestinian displaced persons, and failed also to adhere to the agreed timetable.

“The optimistic expectations for a positive change in the status of the peace process in the Middle East and the conclusion of a final settlement between the Palestinian and Israeli sides have not been fulfilled. Unfortunately, we have witnessed a dramatic deterioration of the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem, to an unprecedented level of aggression against the Palestinian people, including the use by the Israeli occupying forces of rockets fired from helicopter gunships, tanks, anti-tank missiles and the enforcement of a total military blockade around Palestinian towns and cities. The continued Israeli aggression against the Palestinian people has resulted in the killing of more than 160 Palestinians, as of 7 November 2000, and the injury of more than 3,000 people. One third of the Palestinians killed and injured have been children under the age of 18 years. In addition, there has been extensive destruction to the property and livelihood of the Palestinian people.

“The recent tragic events, which began on 28 September 2000, started with the mal-intentioned visit of the infamous Ariel Sharon to Al-Haram Al-Sharif, the first *qiblah* and the third of the holy sites of Islam, in Occupied East Jerusalem and then what followed the next day when the Israeli occupying forces stormed Al-Haram Al-Sharif and attacked the innocent worshippers. The Palestinian people saw all of this as a flagrant aggression against their holy places and as a prelude to other steps aimed at undermining their rights and possibly establishing other illegal realities by the occupying Power in Occupied East Jerusalem. In confronting this, the Palestinian people have expressed their rejection of these acts and their rejection of the occupation and their determination to defend their Islamic and Christian holy places and the Arab nature of East Jerusalem as well as their determination to achieve their natural rights, including the establishment of their independent State with Jerusalem as its capital.

“In response to the Palestinian protests, Israel, the occupying Power, has used its huge war machine to launch a bloody campaign of repression against our people, including a number of wilful killings and wilfully causing numerous serious injuries and great pain for Palestinian civilians. These Israeli actions and measures constitute grave and serious breaches of the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War of 1949, and some of these acts even constitute war crimes according to the Convention.

“The Security Council has dealt with the bloody events in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem, with great seriousness. A large number of Member States, through their participation in the debate of the Council, added more importance and seriousness to the work of the Council. Following the debate of the Security Council, resolution 1322 (2000) of 7 October 2000 was adopted despite the numerous difficulties it faced. Resolution 1322 (2000) deplored the provocation carried out at Al-Haram Al-Sharif in Jerusalem on 28 September 2000 and the subsequent violence throughout the territories occupied by Israel since 1967, which have resulted in many Palestinian deaths and injuries. It also condemned acts of violence, especially the excessive use of force against Palestinians, and called for the immediate cessation of violence and for the establishment of a mechanism for a speedy and objective inquiry into the tragic events with the aim of preventing their repetition. The resolution also invited the Secretary-General to continue to follow the situation and to keep the Council informed.

“Despite the adoption of the resolution, however, the situation on the ground did not change and Israel, the occupying Power, did not comply with any of the provisions of the resolution. Instead, what followed was the dangerous Israeli escalation of its military campaign, including the shelling of some Palestinian locations in Ramallah and Gaza, which took place on 12 October and which were tantamount to a declaration of war against the Palestinian people.

“The Security Council was once again called upon to adopt an immediate resolution to

end the escalation and prevent the region as a whole from plunging into a widespread confrontation. Unfortunately, a permanent member of the Security Council declared inside the Council and outside the United Nations that it would use its right to veto any resolution regardless of its content. This clearly prevented the Security Council from exercising its responsibility and from taking any action. At that point, the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly resumed in accordance with the 'uniting for peace' formula to consider this dangerous situation and the 'illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory'. Resolution ES-10/7 was adopted by the tenth emergency special session on 20 October 2000. The resolution, inter alia, stresses the urgent need for providing protection for the Palestinian civilians in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, condemns acts of violence, especially the excessive use of force by the Israeli forces against Palestinian civilians, calls for the reversal of all measures taken since 28 September 2000, and calls for the prevention of illegal acts of violence by Israeli settlers. The resolution supports also the establishment of a mechanism of inquiry into the tragic events as well as the efforts of the Secretary-General, including his efforts for the establishment of the committee of inquiry.

"In this context, we welcome the participation of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Kofi Annan, representing this international Organization in the Sharm el-Sheikh Summit, as well as all his efforts exerted during his visit to the region. We hope that this will lead to the effective participation of the United Nations in the mechanism of inquiry into what has happened, which was called for by Security Council resolution 1322 (2000) and agreed upon by the parties in Sharm el-Sheikh. We believe that the speedy establishment of this committee and its immediate work will have an effective impact on bringing an end to the situation created during the latest tragic events.

"It also remains indispensable for Israel, the occupying Power, to abide by and implement United Nations resolutions and agreements reached between the two sides, including the

Sharm el-Sheikh understandings, in order for the situation to calm down and for negotiations to be resumed on the final status issues.

"In conclusion, the many principles and components of the important resolution entitled 'Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine', including principles of international law and the Charter of the United Nations, remain valid and essential in the search for a just and lasting solution to the decades-long question of Palestine. Respect for and adherence to such principles will surely assist the parties in arriving at a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine."

II. Observations

5. At the Camp David Summit hosted by President Clinton last July, the quest for a lasting peace between Israel and the Palestinians reached a crucial stage. Though an overall agreement was not reached, for the first time the most difficult issues were seriously addressed. In a trilateral statement at the conclusion of the Summit the parties pledged to continue their efforts to conclude an agreement on all permanent status issues as soon as possible, to avoid violence and not to take unilateral actions.

6. However, subsequently, as is well known, the situation in the Middle East has become critical. Following a visit of the Leader of the Opposition in Israel, Ariel Sharon, to the Temple Mount/Haram al-Sharif in Jerusalem on 28 September, a new wave of protests and violence erupted in the occupied Palestinian territory and Israel in which so far more than 230 people, the vast majority of them Palestinians, have been killed and many others suffered injuries. Confrontations continue to mount and mutual mistrust is growing. This tragic situation has made abundantly clear to all sides that the cause of peace can only be damaged by excessive use of force, indiscriminate violence or terror.

7. The present crisis holds the potential for further escalation, with dangerous consequences for the entire region. It is therefore imperative that all efforts be made to curtail the current wave of violence and resume the peace process. The Israelis and the Palestinians know well that they have to live side by side with each other and must reconcile their

differences through dialogue and cooperation. The question is how to respond to the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people to personal dignity and national independence and to the legitimate security concerns of the Government of Israel.

8. This grave new situation in the Middle East has recently been the subject of extensive debates at the United Nations, and resulted in the adoption of resolution 1322 (2000) by the Security Council on 7 October 2000, and of resolution ES-10/7 by the General Assembly at its resumed tenth emergency special session on 20 October 2000. Also, on 19 October 2000, the Commission on Human Rights in Geneva, meeting at a special session, adopted a resolution on the current human rights situation of the Palestinian people.

9. In view of the escalation of tensions in the Middle East, I visited the region in October to explore urgent means to end the current cycle of violence and to revive the peace process. Over a period of 10 days, I had a series of meetings with Prime Minister Barak and President Arafat as well as with many other regional and international leaders.

10. On 16 and 17 October 2000, Presidents Mubarak and Clinton jointly chaired a Summit meeting in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, which was attended also by King Abdullah II of Jordan, Prime Minister Barak, President Arafat, Javier Solana of the European Union, and myself. The Summit produced understandings in three vital areas: on security cooperation and other measures to end the current confrontation, on a committee of fact-finding to inquire into the recent tragic events and how to prevent their recurrence, and on renewing the peace process. I briefed the Security Council and the General Assembly on 20 October on the outcome of the Summit and of my visit to the region.

11. On 7 November, as a follow-up to the Sharm el-Sheikh Summit, President Clinton announced the membership of the Fact-Finding Committee which was developed with the parties and in consultation with me. The committee is expected to provide an independent and objective review of the current crisis with the goal of preventing its recurrence. On 9 November, I met with the chairman of the committee, former United States Senator George Mitchell, and urged him to begin the committee's work as soon as possible.

12. I am concerned that the other understandings of the Sharm el-Sheikh Summit, set out in paragraph 10

above, remain unimplemented. I continue to follow developments closely and remain in touch with the parties and other international leaders. I believe that full and good-faith implementation by both sides of the understandings reached at Sharm el-Sheikh is vital to restore calm and to create the right atmosphere for the resumption of the peace talks. In my view there is no alternative to a return to the negotiating table. The two sides will in the end have to negotiate a peaceful settlement. The international community should continue its efforts to help them resolve the present crisis and to put the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations back on track.

13. On 12 and 13 November, I participated in the Summit of the Organization of the Islamic Conference in Doha, Qatar. The current crisis in the Middle East, in particular the ongoing violence, was a major topic of my discussions with Heads of State and Foreign Ministers. All of them expressed grave concern at the situation and many deplored the excessive use of force by Israel.

14. The present crisis has led to a serious deterioration of the humanitarian and economic situation in the occupied Palestinian territory. In order to improve the coordination of the United Nations humanitarian assistance to the Palestinians, a task force has been established chaired by the United Nations Special Coordinator in Gaza. Also, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), which has continued to deliver a wide range of basic services to the Palestine refugees despite severe financial constraints, has recently launched an urgent appeal for \$39 million to fund a three-month contingency plan to buy food and medical supplies.

15. As the General Assembly has underscored on many occasions, achieving a final and peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, is imperative for the attainment of a comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East. It is to be hoped that there will also be movement soon on the Syrian and Lebanese tracks so that peace, security and stability may be achieved for all peoples in the region on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973).

16. For its part, the United Nations will continue to support the resumption of the peace process and to respond in an integrated way to the economic, social,

humanitarian and other needs of the population in the West Bank and Gaza. I call upon the international community to provide the necessary resources in support of the United Nations programmes to address the deteriorating economic and humanitarian situation of the Palestinian people.

17. I should like to pay special tribute to Terje Roed-Larsen, United Nations Special Coordinator. Mr. Roed-Larsen gave me invaluable assistance during my recent peacemaking efforts in the region and will continue his important mission in the region.



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Question of Palestine

The situation in the Middle East

Report of the Secretary-General*

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted in pursuance of General Assembly resolution 55/55 of 1 December 2000 on the peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine.

2. On 19 July 2001, the Secretary-General, pursuant to the request contained in paragraph 9 of the above-mentioned resolution, addressed the following letter to the President of the Security Council:

“I have the honour to refer to resolution 55/55, which the General Assembly adopted on 1 December 2000, at its fifty-fifth session, under the agenda item entitled ‘Question of Palestine’.

“In paragraph 9 of the resolution, the General Assembly ‘request[ed] the Secretary-General to continue his efforts with the parties concerned, and in consultation with the Security Council, for the promotion of peace in the region and to submit progress reports on developments in this matter’.

“In order to fulfil my reporting responsibilities under this resolution, I should be grateful if you kindly convey to me the views of the Security Council by 28 September 2001.”

3. On 28 September 2001, the following reply was received from the Security Council:

“The members of the Security Council are following with grave concern the tragic deterioration of the situation in the Middle East. They strongly condemn all acts of terrorism and violence and urge the parties to apprehend and punish the perpetrators. They call for the immediate cessation of violence and for the resumption of political dialogue towards the aim of achieving a just, lasting and comprehensive settlement between the Israeli and Palestinian sides. They urge all parties to fully respect the commitments they have assumed under existing agreements. They urge all parties to scrupulously abide by their legal obligations and responsibilities under international law, in particular humanitarian law.

“In resolution 1322 (2000), adopted on 7 October 2000, the members of the Security Council expressed their deep concern at the tragic events that had led to numerous deaths and injuries, mostly among Palestinians. They reaffirmed that a just and lasting solution to the Arab and Israeli conflict must be based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) of 22 November 1967 and 338 (1973) of 22 October 1973, through an active negotiating process. They called for the immediate resumption of negotiations within the Middle East peace process on its agreed basis with the aim of achieving an early

* The present report has been submitted after the established deadline in order to include as much updated information as possible.



final settlement between Israeli and Palestinian sides and urged the two sides to cooperate in those efforts. They reaffirmed the need for full respect by all of all of the Holy Places and condemned any behaviour to the contrary. They called for the immediate cessation of violence, and for all necessary steps to be taken to ensure that violence ceased and that new provocative actions were avoided.

“They also welcomed the publication of the Mitchell Committee report in May 2001. They fully supported all its recommendations and called upon the parties immediately to begin the steps required to implement the recommendations, including those on confidence-building measures. Many also expressed their belief that a third-party monitoring, accepted by both parties, would serve their interest in implementing the report.

“The members of the Security Council are more than ever determined to follow the ongoing efforts towards a just, lasting and comprehensive final settlement between the Israeli and Palestinian sides and to provide it with the necessary support. In that connection, they express their full backing to all efforts, in particular the work of the Secretary-General and his special envoy in the region, to bring violence to an end, resume political dialogue, rebuild confidence and advance the prospects for a just and lasting peace. In this respect, they declare their full support for the recent contacts between the parties at a high level.”

4. In notes verbales dated 18 and 24 July 2001 to the parties concerned, the Secretary-General sought the positions of the Governments of Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic, as well as the Palestine Liberation Organization, regarding any steps taken by them to implement the relevant provisions of the resolution. As at 15 November 2001, the following replies had been received:

Note verbale dated 26 September 2001 from the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

“As the Secretary-General is aware, Israel voted against this resolution, as well as against similar resolutions adopted by the General Assembly in previous sessions. In the light of the

urgent need to bring an end to all acts of violence and terrorism in the region and to return to the agreed negotiating process, Israel wishes to put on record, once again, its position on this matter.

“Israel views the aforementioned General Assembly resolution not only as being unbalanced, but also as an undue interference in matters which the parties have agreed to resolve within the context of direct bilateral negotiations.

“The current violence in the region is a result of a Palestinian decision to abandon peace negotiations and pursue their goals through violence and terrorism. The one-sided approach reflected in the resolution, which seeks to dictate the outcome of the negotiating process, effectively rewards violence at a time when the Palestinian side should be compelled to renounce all acts of violence and terrorism and return to the path of peaceful dialogue.”

Note verbale dated 17 October 2001 from the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

“General Assembly resolution 55/55 is the main political resolution regarding the question of Palestine, and it was adopted during the fifty-fifth session by an overwhelming majority (149-2-3), reflecting the firm convictions of the international community with regard to the content and meaning of the resolution. The Assembly has adopted a similar text in recent years also by overwhelming majorities, conveying a long-established position by the international community on the issue. This resolution recalls several principles of international law and of the Charter of the United Nations, provides support for the peace process and for implementation of the agreements reached and also sets forth the basis for the just settlement of the question of Palestine, which is indeed the crux of the Arab-Israeli conflict. The resolution emphasizes as well the importance of a more active and expanded role for the United Nations in this process. In sum, the resolution should serve as an acceptable basis for all parties to address and resolve these important issues.

“In addition to the reaffirmation of principles regarding the question, resolution 55/55 addresses the deterioration of the situation

on the ground in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem, and the difficulties facing the Middle East peace process. In the resolution, the General Assembly expresses its deep concern over the tragic events in Occupied East Jerusalem and the Occupied Palestinian Territory since 28 September 2000. Moreover, it calls upon the concerned parties, the co-sponsors of the peace process and other interested parties, as well as the entire international community, to exert all the necessary efforts and initiatives to immediately reverse all measures taken on the ground since 28 September 2000, in implementation of the Sharm el-Sheikh understandings and to ensure a successful and speedy conclusion of the peace process. However, the situation on the ground has continued to deteriorate due to the refusal of the Israeli side to implement the understandings and its failure to adhere to prior agreements reached between the two sides and to implement overdue positions in this regard.

“The dramatic decline of the situation on the ground over the past year has been characterized by an excessive and indiscriminate use of force by the Israeli occupying forces against Palestinian civilians, including children. The bloody military campaign waged by the occupying Power has resulted in the killing of more than 680 Palestinians as of the date of this note. Many of these killings have been wilful killings and targeted assassinations. Further, more than 25,000 Palestinians have been injured, many severely and permanently disabled. The Israeli occupying forces have also caused extensive destruction to Palestinian land, homes and infrastructure. In addition, Israel, the occupying Power, has imposed severe restrictions on the movement of persons and goods into and out of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, causing vast destruction to the already fragile Palestinian economy. The actions taken by the occupying Power in the course of its bloody military campaign constitute grave breaches of the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 1949, and thus qualify as war crimes. Further, the occupying Power has also committed actions of State terrorism and other serious violations of international law.

“The actions and measures taken by Israel, the occupying Power, have also violated relevant resolutions of the United Nations, including of the Security Council. In its resolution 1322 (2000) of 7 October 2000, the Council deplored the provocation carried out at Al-Haram Al-Sharif in Jerusalem on 28 September 2000 and the subsequent violence throughout the territories occupied by Israel since 1967, which resulted in many Palestinian deaths and injuries. It also condemned acts of violence, especially the excessive use of force against Palestinians, and called for the immediate cessation of violence and for the establishment of a mechanism for a speedy and objective inquiry into the tragic events with the aim of preventing their repetition. The Council also invited the Secretary-General to continue to follow the situation and keep it informed.

“Israel, the occupying Power, did not comply with any of the provisions of the resolution. Rather it escalated its military campaign against the Palestinian people and continued with its military blockade, siege and even shelling of Palestinian towns and cities using tanks, helicopter gunships and fighter jets. In the light of this escalation and due to the inability of the Security Council to take action to bring an end to the escalation of this dangerous situation, the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly resumed to consider the situation. The Assembly adopted resolution ES-10/7 on 20 October 2000, in which, inter alia, it stressed the urgent need for providing protection for the Palestinian civilians in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, condemned acts of violence, especially the excessive use of force by the Israeli forces against Palestinian civilians, called for the reversal of all measures taken since 28 September 2000, and called for the prevention of acts of violence by Israeli settlers. The Assembly also supported the establishment of a mechanism of inquiry into the events, as well as the efforts of the Secretary-General, including his efforts for the establishment of a commission of inquiry.

“The Fact-Finding Committee established was formed by the United States of America, in consultation with the two sides as well as the Secretary-General, in accordance with the understanding reached at the Summit of Sharm

el-Sheikh. The Committee was established to determine what had happened since 28 September 2000 and how to avoid it from recurring in the future. The Sharm el-Sheikh Fact-Finding Committee presented its report, which came to be known as the Mitchell report, to the President of the United States on 30 April 2001. The report was also shared with the Secretary-General and the Palestinian and Israeli sides.

“The Israeli Government never wholeheartedly endorsed or accepted the recommendations contained in the report of the Fact-Finding Committee, especially that which called for a cessation of all Israeli settlement activity. In fact, Israel resisted any efforts by all parties that aimed at the full and speedy implementation of the recommendations. The Palestinian side, on the other hand, endorsed the Mitchell report and even proposed a high-level meeting for the participants of the Sharm el-Sheikh Summit to consider the Fact-Finding Committee’s report and the implementation of its recommendations. The Palestinian side considers the report to be an important platform for guiding the necessary actions for ending the tragic situation and reviving the Middle East peace process.

“Palestine expresses its appreciation for the important role played by the Secretary-General in this regard. Palestine welcomed his participation in the Sharm el-Sheikh Summit of 17 October 2000, as well as the efforts he exerted during his visit to the region. The Secretary-General’s participation, on behalf of the United Nations, has been essential for reaffirming the important role of the Organization in the efforts to end the deterioration of the situation on the ground and to resume the peace process negotiations towards a final settlement. Unlike the constructive role undertaken by the Secretary-General, the Security Council unfortunately failed to follow up resolution 1322 (2000), especially with regard to the establishment of an observer force to bring calm to the situation on the ground and prevent its further deterioration.

“As noted, the past year since the adoption of resolution 55/55 has witnessed the severe deterioration of the situation on the ground in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem, which has seriously damaged the peace process and

threatened the stability of the region as a whole. Recently, however, several important players on the international level have been sending encouraging signals, creating an almost unanimous position in support of the Palestinian State and intensifying the efforts to revive the peace process and bring it to a successful conclusion. What are needed now are not only serious efforts to implement the Mitchell report’s recommendations, but also a new dynamism to ensure the achievement of a final settlement in a speedy manner. The United Nations could and should be of great assistance in this regard.

“In this connection, it should be reaffirmed that the many principles and components of the important resolution entitled ‘Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine’, including principles of international law and the Charter of the United Nations, remain valid and essential in the search for a just and lasting solution to the decades-long question of Palestine. Respect for and adherence to such principles will ensure the success of the parties in arriving at a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine.”

II. Observations

5. It is a matter of grave concern that the present Israeli-Palestinian crisis has entered its second year with an escalation of violence, while the peace process remains stalled despite many international efforts to revive it. Tensions have increased constantly in the past year, which has been marked by a vicious cycle of violence and retaliation. In fact, we are dealing with the worst crisis in the Middle East since the 1993 Oslo Agreement.
6. In view of the seriousness of the situation, I have devoted a great deal of personal attention to this issue. I have maintained close and regular contacts with the parties and other leaders in the region and the international community to find a way forward. In my previous report on the question of Palestine (A/55/639-S/2000/1113), I informed the members of the General Assembly and the Security Council of the Summit meeting in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, which was jointly chaired by Presidents Mubarak and Clinton on 16 and 17 October 2000.
7. Since the outbreak of the current Palestinian intifada at the end of September 2000, over 900 people

have been killed and many thousands have been injured, the vast majority of them Palestinians. I have repeatedly expressed concern that Israel's response to the violence has included a disproportionate use of military force and incursions into the areas under full Palestinian authority. I have condemned the practice of so-called "targeted assassinations" and attacks on civilians by settler groups. I have also strongly condemned acts of violence or terror from whatever quarter, especially indiscriminate suicide bombing attacks against Israelis by Palestinian groups, and called upon the Palestinian Authority to make a maximum effort to control violence. These tragic developments have greatly increased mutual distrust, hardened the positions of the two sides and strengthened extremist elements.

8. Since the beginning of the intifada, the level of poverty, misery and suffering among the Palestinians has increased dramatically. I have repeatedly called upon Israel to end the closures and economic blockade.

9. Over the past year, the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question, has been the subject of extensive consultations and debates in the Security Council. Members of the Council held private meetings with Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization and President of the Palestinian Authority, on 10 November 2000, with the Ministerial Committee of the Organization of the Islamic Conference on 27 November 2000 and with Shimon Peres, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Israel on 14 March 2001. On 7 October 2000, the Security Council adopted resolution 1322 (2000).

10. On 20 December 2000, on the basis of the Camp David understandings and subsequent talks, President Clinton presented to the parties a plan outlining a set of proposals ("parameters") for a final-status agreement. Both sides accepted those parameters with reservations. The plan was presented to the Israeli and Palestinian delegations at the resumed talks held in Washington from 19 to 23 December. In a further effort to reach an agreement before the prime ministerial elections in Israel, senior Israeli and Palestinian negotiators held talks in Taba, Egypt, from 21 to 27 January 2001. In a joint statement, the two sides declared that they had never been closer to reaching an agreement. Substantial progress was achieved in each of the issues discussed: refugees, security, borders and Jerusalem. However,

given the circumstances and time constraints, it proved impossible to reach a final understanding on all issues.

11. As the parties remained deadlocked, further international efforts were made to revive the political process leading to a solution. In March, a serious discussion was generated by a joint Egyptian-Jordanian non-paper proposing steps to end the current crisis and to restart negotiations. It should be recalled in this connection that, prior to the submission of the paper, new circumstances had evolved, including the establishment of a national unity Government in Israel, headed by Prime Minister Ariel Sharon. The new Israeli Government declared that it would honour previous diplomatic agreements approved by the Knesset, but it would not conduct negotiations while the violence continued.

12. On 27 and 28 March 2001, I took part in the Summit of the League of Arab States in Amman. The crisis in the Middle East was a major topic of my discussions with heads of State and Foreign Ministers at the meeting. In my statement to the Summit I stressed that the international community and the Arab world had the right to criticize Israel for its continued occupation of Palestinian and Syrian territory, and for its excessively harsh response to the intifada. But I argued that those points could be made more effectively if many Israelis did not believe that their existence was under threat: Israel had a right, enshrined in numerous United Nations resolutions, to exist in safety within internationally recognized borders. I emphasized that what was needed was movement towards an agreement that responded both to the legitimate desire of the Palestinians for national independence, and to the legitimate claims of the Israelis to recognition and security.

13. The report of the Sharm el-Sheikh Fact-Finding Committee, known as the Mitchell report, which was released at the end of April, provided a viable basis for a return to the negotiating table, and I fully endorsed its recommendations. The Committee recommended a number of steps to end the violence by implementing an unconditional ceasefire and resuming security cooperation, rebuilding confidence by establishing a meaningful "cooling-off period" and implementing additional confidence-building measures, including a freeze by Israel of all settlement activity, to be followed by the resumption of negotiations. The report was accepted by both parties and widely acknowledged at the international level as a good basis to break the impasse. As a follow-up to the report, the parties reached agreement upon a ceasefire on 13 June 2001,

which was brokered by director of central intelligence George Tenet. I visited the region from 12 to 18 June 2001 to encourage the parties to consolidate the ceasefire and move towards full implementation of the Mitchell report.

14. It was encouraging that Foreign Minister Shimon Peres and President Yasser Arafat met on 26 September 2001 and agreed to resume full security cooperation and to exert maximum efforts to sustain the ceasefire. The meeting was made possible due in no small measure to painstaking international efforts, in particular involving the United States, the Russian Federation, the European Union and the United Nations, with the full support of Jordan and Egypt. The level of violent incidents declined and Israel took several positive steps, including the lifting of some internal closures. There were also significant statements by Member States, including the United States, envisioning the creation of a Palestinian State provided that Israel's right to exist was respected, which offered a new and important stimulus in the search for a lasting political solution.

15. Unfortunately, this progress was sharply disrupted when Israeli cabinet minister Rehavam Zeevi was assassinated on 17 October 2001 by gunmen belonging to the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine. I strongly condemned this terrorist act and called upon all parties to exercise maximum restraint. Following the assassination, Israeli forces launched a major incursion into Palestinian-controlled areas. The United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General to the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Palestinian Authority worked very closely with the representatives of the United States, the Russian Federation, the European Union and other countries in the region to de-escalate this dangerous situation. In this regard, the "Quartet" issued a joint statement on 25 October 2001, which was strongly supported in a statement to the press, also on 25 October 2001, by the President of the Security Council. It has also been supported by several Member States in their discussions with the parties.

16. On 11 November 2001, I met in New York with Secretary of State Colin Powell of the United States, Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov of the Russian Federation and the High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy of the European Union, Javier Solana. The "Quartet" welcomed President George Bush's

statement to the General Assembly on the Middle East of 10 November 2001, in which he pledged to work towards the day when two States, Israel and Palestine, would live peacefully together within secure and recognized borders, as called for by Security Council resolutions. The "Quartet" encouraged their representatives in the field to continue working together to help the Israelis and the Palestinians find a way to resolve the current crisis in their relations.

17. The Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the five permanent members of the Security Council met with me on 12 November 2001 and issued a statement (see A/56/613-S/2001/1066, annex) strongly encouraging Israelis and Palestinians to take the necessary security, economic and political steps to move from confrontation to the resumption of a political process. The Ministers reiterated their condemnation of acts of terror and violence and their conviction that the only solution to the Israeli-Palestinian problem is through dialogue and negotiations. They called upon Israel to withdraw from all areas into which it had made incursions and to ensure greater restraint by the Israeli Defence Forces. They also called upon the Palestinian Authority to take all possible steps to put an end to violence. In that regard, they urged the parties to implement the Tenet plan and the recommendations of the Mitchell report, which the parties had accepted, as quickly as possible. The Ministers called upon the parties to create an environment in which the negotiations based upon Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and the Madrid principles could resume.

18. I continue to believe that only a package solution based on the Mitchell report, including security and economic aspects but also a political component, can halt the cycle of violence, restore calm and create the right atmosphere for the resumption of sustainable peace talks. There is no alternative to a return to the negotiating table and to a peaceful settlement. However, the mutual distrust between the parties has reached such a level that without constant third-party involvement and encouragement they may not be able to break out of the current impasse. Therefore, at this critical juncture it is imperative to accelerate joint efforts with a view to generating new momentum towards a peaceful solution of the ongoing crisis.

19. The confrontation has had a devastating impact on the humanitarian and economic situation in the occupied Palestinian territory. Severe closures and

blockades have resulted in large-scale losses to the Palestinian economy, wiping out more than three years of growth and increasing dramatically the level of unemployment and poverty. The fiscal situation of the Palestinian Authority remains fragile. The drop in domestic tax revenue and the continued withholding of Palestinian tax revenues by Israeli authorities has led to a significant budget deficit in 2001. Generous support from the Arab States, as well as the European Union and Norway, have eased the crisis this year. However, new efforts will be urgently needed. Therefore, a well-coordinated and concerted international relief and assistance effort is essential to address the most pressing needs and gradually improve living conditions. Urgent measures are also needed to remove the restrictions placed on the movement of staff and goods related to the delivery of humanitarian assistance. The United Nations remains at the forefront of efforts to alleviate the severe social and economic hardships of the Palestinian people. The Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator, as well as the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and many other bodies continue their work in the region, adjusting the focus of their activities as required by the current humanitarian emergency. I should like to use this occasion to call once again upon the international donor community to provide adequate funding to UNRWA so that it can continue to deliver the necessary services to the Palestinian refugees. Donor assistance is especially vital at a time when the humanitarian situation is so critical.

20. As the General Assembly has underscored on many occasions, achieving a final and peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine, the core issue of the Arab-Israeli conflict, is imperative for the attainment of a comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East. I hope that there will also be movement on the Syrian and Lebanese tracks so that peace, security and stability may be achieved for all peoples in the region on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973).

21. For its part, the United Nations will continue to support the resumption of the peace process and to respond in a coherent and integrated way to the economic, social, humanitarian and other needs of the population in the West Bank and Gaza. I call upon the international community to provide the necessary resources in support of the United Nations programmes

to address the deteriorating economic and humanitarian situation of the Palestinian people.

22. I should like to pay special tribute to Terje Roed-Larsen, United Nations Special Coordinator and my Personal Representative, and to the staff of the Office of the Special Coordinator, as well as to the staff of UNRWA and other United Nations agencies, all of whom have rendered sterling service while working under increasingly demanding and difficult circumstances.

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Fifty-seventh year**Question of Palestine****The situation in the Middle East****Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine****Report of the Secretary-General****Summary*

The present report is submitted in accordance with General Assembly resolution 56/36 of 3 December 2001 on the peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine. It contains replies received from the President of the Security Council and the concerned parties to notes verbales sent by the Secretary-General pursuant to the request contained in paragraph 9 of the resolution. The report also contains the observations of the Secretary-General on the current state of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and on international efforts to revive the peace process with a view to achieving a peaceful solution.

* The present report has been submitted after the established deadline in order to include as much updated information as possible.

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 56/36 of 3 December 2001 on the peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine.

2. On 8 August 2002, pursuant to the request contained in paragraph 9 of the above-mentioned resolution, the Secretary-General addressed the following letter to the President of the Security Council:

“I have the honour to refer to resolution 56/36, which the General Assembly adopted on 3 December 2001, at its fifty-sixth session, under the agenda item ‘Question of Palestine’.

“Paragraph 9 of the resolution ‘requests the Secretary-General to continue his efforts with the parties concerned, and in consultation with the Security Council, for the promotion of peace in the region and to submit progress reports on developments in this matter’.

“In order to fulfil my reporting responsibilities under this resolution, I should be grateful if you would kindly convey to me the views of the Security Council by 30 September 2002.”

3. On 30 September 2002 the following reply was received from the Security Council:

“The members of the Security Council have continued to follow with grave concern the tragic deterioration of the situation in the Middle East. They discussed the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question, with growing frequency during this period. Several open debates were held for all Member States to express their views. At the beginning of 2002, Council members agreed to begin regular monthly informal briefings on the situation. The aim was to keep members up to date with developments in the region and to ensure a more regular exchange of views, including with the Secretary-General.

“On 12 March, the Council adopted resolution 1397 (2002), which for the first time affirmed the Council’s vision of a region where two States, Israel and Palestine, live side by side within secure and recognized borders. This resolution, along with Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and the Arab Peace Initiative, initiated by Crown Prince Abdullah of Saudi Arabia and adopted by the Arab Summit in March 2002, have become widely accepted as the foundation for a just, lasting and comprehensive solution of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Implementation of these concepts, however, has remained fraught with difficulties and plagued by continuing violence on the ground.

“As the violence escalated in early 2002, the Council adopted four resolutions (resolutions 1402 (2002), 1403 (2002), 1405 (2002), and most recently 1435 (2002)) and agreed Presidential Statements in April and July 2002. The Council’s principal demands were an immediate ceasefire, withdrawal of Israeli troops from Palestinian cities, including Ramallah, cessation of all acts of violence, including all acts of terror, provocation, incitement and destruction, cooperation with the special envoys of the United States of America, the Russian Federation, the United Nations and the

European Union ('the Quartet') and others and the implementation of the Tenet and Mitchell plans. In its resolution 1403 (2002), the Council demanded the implementation of resolution 1402 (2002) without delay. The Council (in its resolution 1405 (2002)) expressed its concern at the dire humanitarian situation of the Palestinian population, in particular reports from the Jenin refugee camp following operations by Israeli forces. It welcomed the initiative of the Secretary-General to develop accurate information on what happened in the Jenin refugee camp through a fact-finding team. However, the Secretary-General had to disband his fact-finding team after less than two weeks in the face of Israeli difficulties with the deployment of the team. Council members regretted that development but continued to support fully the efforts of the Secretary-General in that regard. In its resolution 1435 (2002), the Security Council expressed grave concern at the reoccupation of the headquarters of the President of the Palestinian Authority in the city of Ramallah that took place on 19 September 2002, demanding its immediate end. It also demanded that Israel immediately cease measures in and around Ramallah, including the destruction of the Palestinian civilian and security infrastructure, and demanded the expeditious withdrawal of the Israeli occupying forces from Palestinian cities. The Council called on the Palestinian Authority to meet its expressed commitment to ensure that those responsible for terrorist acts are brought to justice by it. In resolution 1435 (2002), the Council condemned all terrorist attacks against any civilians and reiterated the need for respect in all circumstances of international humanitarian law. It also reiterated its demand for the complete cessation of all acts of violence. Finally, the Council expressed its full support for the efforts of the Quartet and called upon the Government of Israel, the Palestinian Authority and all States in the region to cooperate with those efforts, and recognized in that context the continuing importance of the initiative endorsed at the Arab League Beirut Summit."

4. In a note verbale dated 27 June 2002 to the parties concerned, the Secretary-General sought the positions of the Governments of Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic, as well as that of the Palestine Liberation Organization, regarding any steps taken by them to implement the relevant provisions of the resolution. As at 15 November 2002, the following replies had been received.

Note verbale dated 15 August 2002 from the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

"As the Secretary-General is aware, Israel voted against this resolution and similar resolutions adopted by the General Assembly in previous sessions. In the light of the urgent need to bring an end to all acts of violence and terrorism in the region and to return to the agreed negotiating process, Israel wishes to put on record, once again, its position on this matter.

"Israel views the aforementioned General Assembly resolution not only as unbalanced, but also as undue interference in matters which the parties have agreed to resolve within the context of direct bilateral negotiations.

“The current violence in the region is a result of a Palestinian decision to abandon peace negotiations and pursue their goals through violence and terrorism. The one-sided approach reflected in the resolution, which seeks to dictate the outcome of the negotiating process, effectively rewards violence at a time when the Palestinian side should be compelled to renounce all acts of violence and terrorism and return to the path of peaceful dialogue.”

Note verbale dated 3 October 2002 from the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

“General Assembly resolution 56/36, which is the main political resolution regarding the question of Palestine, was adopted by the General Assembly at its fifty-sixth session by an overwhelming majority (131-6-20), reflecting long-established convictions and positions of the international community on this important issue. In resolution 56/36, the Assembly recalls several principles of international law and the Charter of the United Nations, including, inter alia, the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples and the principle of inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force. In the resolution, the Assembly also expresses its full support for the peace process and sets forth the basis for a just settlement of the question of Palestine. Further, the Assembly emphasizes the permanent responsibility of the United Nations with regard to the question of Palestine until it is resolved in all its aspects and emphasizes the importance of a more active and expanded role for the Organization in the peace process.

“In addition to the reaffirmation of principles, the General Assembly addresses in resolution 56/36 the serious deterioration of the situation on the ground in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem, and the difficulties facing the Middle East peace process. In this regard, the Assembly expresses its deep concern over the tragic events that have taken place in Occupied East Jerusalem and the Occupied Palestinian Territory since 28 September 2000, resulting in a high number of deaths and injuries, mostly among Palestinian civilians. Deep concern is also expressed over the continued imposition of closures and restrictions by Israel on the Occupied Palestinian Territory and the Israeli incursions into Palestinian-controlled areas and actions against Palestinian institutions.

“Furthermore, in resolution 56/36, the General Assembly, inter alia, calls upon the concerned parties, the co-sponsors of the peace process and other interested parties, as well as the entire international community, to exert all efforts and initiatives necessary to immediately reverse all measures taken on the ground since 28 September 2000 and to ensure a speedy resumption of the peace process. Regrettably, the peace process has not resumed as the Israeli side has continued to refuse to adhere to understandings and agreements reached between the two sides and to implement overdue provisions. Moreover, during this time, the Israeli occupying forces have only continued to carry out daily military actions against the Palestinian people and the Palestinian leadership, including against the President of the Palestinian Authority. This Israeli military campaign intensified in particular in March 2002, leading to the reoccupation of Palestinian cities, the destruction of most of the institutions of the Palestinian Authority, and almost a return to the

situation before the peace process. Overwhelmingly, the actions taken by the occupying forces in the course of this bloody military campaign have constituted grave breaches of the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949. Indeed, the Israeli occupying forces have committed countless war crimes, State terrorism and systematic human rights violations against the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem. As a result, the situation on the ground has continued to gravely deteriorate.

“The dramatic and tragic decline of the situation since last year has been characterized by an escalation of the excessive and indiscriminate use of force by the Israeli occupying forces against the Palestinian people, including children, women and men. Throughout this time, the Israeli occupying forces continued to launch attacks in Palestinian cities, towns and refugee camps, using all forms of heavy weaponry, including tanks, helicopter gunships and warplanes. Since 28 September 2000, and as of the date of this note, the Israeli occupying forces have killed more than 1,830 Palestinians. Many of the killings committed in the past year by the occupying forces have been wilful killings and targeted extrajudiciary executions. In addition, more than 35,000 Palestinians have been injured, many critically and many suffering permanent disabilities. The occupying forces have also abducted and detained thousands of Palestinians, particularly males, throughout this period.

“At the same time, the Israeli occupying forces have caused vast destruction to Palestinian homes, land and vital infrastructure. Thousands of homes have been damaged or completely demolished, leaving thousands of Palestinians homeless. Countless agricultural fields have been laid to ruin by the occupying forces and hundreds of thousands of productive trees have been uprooted. Public buildings, facilities and institutions have been destroyed, water and electricity networks have been damaged and disrupted, and hundreds of roads have been bulldozed or razed. In addition, the occupying forces have even inflicted damage on United Nations property, particularly facilities and buildings of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) in the area. Moreover, Israel, the occupying Power, has continued to impose severe restrictions on the movement of persons and goods, including humanitarian and medical aid and personnel, into and out of the Occupied Palestinian Territory. This military siege being imposed and the constant, and frequently round-the-clock, curfews have further devastated the difficult socio-economic conditions of the Palestinian people. Indeed, they have caused the total disruption and virtual collapse of the economic, social, health, educational and cultural life of the Palestinian people, who for many months now have been facing a dire humanitarian crisis.

“The actions and measures taken by Israel, the occupying Power, have, as noted, violated international humanitarian law and they have also violated relevant resolutions of the United Nations, including those of the Security Council. Since the adoption of General Assembly resolution 56/36, the Security Council has adopted five resolutions on the matter, namely resolution 1397 (2002) of 12 March 2002, resolution 1402 (2002) of 30 March 2002, resolution 1403 (2002) of 4 April 2002, resolution 1405 (2002) of 19 April 2002, and resolution 1435 (2002) of 24 September 2002. In addition, the

General Assembly resumed its tenth emergency special session, on illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, in December 2001 and in May 2002, adopting three resolutions in total, namely resolutions ES-10/8 and ES-10/9 of 20 December 2001 and ES-10/10 of 7 May 2002. Israel, the occupying Power, has not fully complied with any of those resolutions, further exacerbating the already grave situation.

“The provisions of the above-mentioned resolutions of the Security Council and of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, if complied with and implemented, would, both then and now, have certainly contributed to a calming of the situation on the ground, with many lives saved, as well as to a resumption of peace negotiations between the two sides. In this regard, the Palestinian side has repeatedly expressed its support for those resolutions and expressed readiness to adhere to the provisions of the resolutions. A review of the provisions of the above-mentioned Security Council resolutions is pertinent to illustrate how it is Israeli non-compliance that has prevented the full implementation of those resolutions and has perpetuated the cycle of tragic violence on the ground.

“In resolution 1397 (2002), the Security Council affirmed, for the first time, the Council’s vision of a region in which two States, Israel and Palestine, live side by side within secure and recognized borders. It is important here to note that this resolution, along with Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and the Arab Peace Initiative initiated by Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah and adopted by the Council of the League of Arab States at its summit held in Beirut in March 2002, have become widely accepted as the basis for a just, lasting and comprehensive solution for the Arab-Israeli conflict, the core of which is the question of Palestine.

“As the violence continued to escalate in late March 2002 and thereafter, the Security Council adopted the other four resolutions mentioned above in addition to issuing two presidential statements in April (S/PRST/2002/9) and July 2002 (S/PRST/2002/20). In resolution 1402 (2002), adopted in response to the reoccupation of Palestinian cities, the Council called for an immediate ceasefire; the withdrawal of Israeli occupying forces from Palestinian cities, including Ramallah; a cessation of all acts of violence; and cooperation with efforts to implement the Tenet security work plan and the Mitchell Committee recommendations. As indicated in our note last year, Israel resisted all efforts to implement those recommendations and even took positions undermining them. In the process, Israel managed to bury the Mitchell recommendations, thus destroying yet another international attempt to end the cycle of violence and to extricate the parties from the current situation. Security Council resolution 1403 (2002) followed, with the Council demanding the implementation without delay of resolution 1402 (2002), which is still without results on the ground. Actually, Israel, the occupying Power, has publicly rejected both resolutions and continues to this date with its reoccupation of Palestinian cities.

“With the continued deterioration of the situation on the ground, and the intensification of attacks by the occupying forces, especially in the Jenin refugee camp in April 2002, the Security Council convened once again and

adopted resolution 1405 (2002), expressing its concern at the dire humanitarian situation of the Palestinian population, in particular reports from the Jenin refugee camp of an unknown number of deaths and destruction. The Council also welcomed the initiative of the Secretary-General to develop accurate information regarding the events in the Jenin refugee camp through a fact-finding team. However, the Secretary-General, had to disband the team in the face of Israeli refusal to cooperate with him in the implementation of resolution 1405 (2002). Pursuant to the request made by the General Assembly in its resolution ES-10/10 of 7 May 2002, the Secretary-General presented a report (A/ES-10/186), drawing upon the available resources and information, on the events that had taken place in Jenin and in other Palestinian cities.

“The Palestinian side took the necessary steps in response to the Secretary-General’s request to provide information relevant to the implementation of resolution ES-10/10. A detailed Palestinian report was submitted to the Secretary-General to assist in the development of an accurate assessment of the atrocities and serious violations of international law committed by the Israeli occupying forces against the Palestinian people. The Israeli side, however, refused to cooperate with the Secretary-General and submitted no response or information in that regard. Although the Secretary-General did present a report on the matter, the issue has not been closed, as a full investigation was not possible owing to Israel’s intransigence. The international community should continue to condemn the atrocities and war crimes committed in the Jenin refugee camp as well as the Israeli prevention of a full investigation, in addition to condemning other Israeli atrocities committed in other Palestinian cities.

“Most recently, in resolution 1435 (2002), the Security Council expressed its grave concern at the reoccupation of the headquarters of the President of the Palestinian Authority in Ramallah that took place in September 2002, demanding its immediate end. It also demanded that Israel immediately cease measures in and around Ramallah, including the destruction of Palestinian civilian and security infrastructure, and demanded as well the expeditious withdrawal of the Israeli occupying forces from Palestinian cities. Furthermore, the Council condemned all terrorist attacks against any civilians and reiterated the need to respect international humanitarian law in all circumstances. It also reiterated its demand for the complete cessation of all acts of violence. Finally, in resolution 1435 (2002), the Council expressed its full support for the efforts of the Quartet and called upon the Government of Israel, the Palestinian Authority and all States in the region to cooperate with those efforts. Israel, the occupying Power, as a result of international pressure, has indeed ended its siege of the headquarters of the President of the Palestinian Authority. While that was a step in the right direction, all provisions of the resolution must be implemented.

“The Palestinian side has repeatedly expressed its readiness to cooperate with the efforts of the Quartet and other concerned parties and continues to do so, especially with regard to efforts for the full implementation of resolution 1435 (2002). In general, the efforts of the Quartet must be renewed and intensified in the face of the ongoing decline of the situation on the ground, with the consequent negative impact on the stability and security of the region, and the grave humanitarian crisis being faced by the Palestinian people.

Simultaneously, serious efforts must be undertaken, as stressed in resolution 56/36, towards the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, primarily the right to self-determination and the right to establish an independent State. This can only be fully achieved with the withdrawal of Israel from the Palestinian territory it has illegally occupied since 1967.

“Palestine expresses its appreciation for the role being played by the United Nations in this regard, including the efforts and important role of the Secretary-General. In particular, Palestine expresses its support for the Secretary-General’s calls for the political, security and economic issues to be dealt with in tandem. Palestine stresses the necessity for a comprehensive approach, which would also mean spelling out the form of the final settlement in advance while reaching agreement on specific steps leading to it. In addition, Palestine expresses its strong support for the proposal made by the Secretary-General before the Security Council, on 18 April 2002, for the deployment of a robust and credible multinational force to help end the cycle of violence and establish a secure environment in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, conducive to the resumption of normal economic activity by the Palestinian people, the unimpeded delivery of humanitarian and development assistance and the implementation of prior commitments and agreements between the two sides, thereby creating favourable conditions for the resumption of political negotiations towards a final settlement.”

Note verbale dated 23 July 2002 from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

“The Syrian Arab Republic has repeatedly affirmed that the establishment of a just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East must be based on the implementation of the relevant United Nations resolutions, namely Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and on the principle of land for peace which was the basis on which the peace process was launched in Madrid in 1991.

“The Syrian Arab Republic affirms that the case of Palestine is at the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict and that it is therefore essential to achieve a just settlement based on the resolutions of the United Nations, the establishment of an independent Palestinian State with its capital in Jerusalem, guaranteeing the right of the Palestinian people to return and their right to self-determination on the basis of the principle of the equal rights of peoples, which is one of the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, and the resolution of the problem of the Palestinian refugees in accordance with General Assembly resolution 194 (III) of 11 December 1948.

“The establishment of a just and comprehensive peace in the region requires Israel, the occupying Power, to withdraw from all the Arab territories it occupied in 1967 to the line of 4 June, including Jerusalem and the Syrian Golan, and also from the remaining occupied Lebanese territories, to guarantee the exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, foremost among them being the right to self-determination and the right to establish an independent State on the soil of its homeland with Jerusalem as its capital.

This requires Israel to cease its hostile and expansionist policies that are subversive of peace and to defer to international legitimacy and renounce its policy of hegemonism, the building of settlements and the confiscation of land, thereby ensuring the establishment of a just and comprehensive peace in the region.”

II. Observations

5. Over the past year, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has deteriorated further, eroding many of the achievements of the peace process. The ongoing cycle of violence and retaliation has further inflamed political tensions and caused a significant death toll on both sides. The international community, united in its support for the vision of two States living side by side in peace and security, has continued to develop initiatives aimed at stopping the violence and bringing the parties back to the negotiating table.

6. Since the outbreak of the intifada at the end of September 2000, more than 1,800 Palestinians have been killed and some 25,000 injured. On the Israeli side, more than 600 people have been killed and over 4,000 injured. I have urged both sides to live up to their obligations under international humanitarian law to ensure the protection of civilians. Illegitimate or illegal means cannot be justified by reference to legitimate objectives — whether they be an end to occupation and statehood for Palestinians or security for Israelis. Beyond the question of legality, surely we need no further reminder of the ultimate futility of the present course than the hundreds of deaths, thousands of injuries and tens of thousands of grieving families and friends of the victims of this conflict. The parties are on a path leading to further pain and suffering — a path that will bring neither closer to achieving its stated goals.

7. The situation reached a particularly dangerous point at the end of March 2002, following a Palestinian suicide bomb attack in the Israeli city of Netanya. After that terrorist attack, which left 28 persons dead and 140 injured, the Israel Defence Forces (IDF) launched a massive military operation in the West Bank, leading to the reoccupation of cities under full Palestinian control (Area A). That operation, called “Defensive Shield” by Israel, inflicted severe damage on the Palestinian security and civilian infrastructure and created a humanitarian and human rights crisis. To address the sharpening trend towards greater violence and the attendant consequences for both sides, in April 2002 I proposed the deployment of a multinational force to help provide security for Israeli and Palestinian civilians, and to promote an environment conducive to the resumption of negotiations. This proposal remains on the table.

8. The Israeli incursion into the Jenin refugee camp in April led to allegations of human rights abuses and violations of international humanitarian law. Following consultations with, inter alia, members of the Security Council and the Government of Israel, I offered to send an impartial fact-finding team to compile an accurate account of what had occurred. In resolution 1405 (2002), the Security Council unanimously accepted that offer, and I then named a team headed by former President Martti Ahtisaari of Finland. Israel subsequently raised objections to the implementation of resolution 1405 (2002) that were fundamental in nature and which effectively precluded the team’s visit to the region. With great regret, I found

it necessary to disband the team. In May 2002, the General Assembly at its resumed emergency special session requested me to submit a report on the events in Jenin and other Palestinian cities on the basis of available resources and information. My report (A/ES-10/186) was issued on 30 July 2002.

9. A particularly worrying trend was the rapid expansion of Israeli settlements in the West Bank, including those around East Jerusalem, despite repeated international calls for a freeze on all such activity and an end to land confiscations. These settlements, and the road networks that serve them, are enveloping East Jerusalem, cutting it off from other Palestinian areas in the West Bank, which would be split into two. Other new settlement projects would bisect the northern West Bank and encircle both Bethlehem and Hebron to the south. Such settlement activity is illegal under international law and should be halted.

10. The escalating confrontation has had a devastating impact on the humanitarian and economic situation in the occupied Palestinian territory. The Palestinian economy has virtually ceased to function in some areas, owing largely to the Israeli policy of curfews and closures. More and more people are living below the poverty line. In August, I sent Ms. Catherine Bertini to the region, as my Personal Humanitarian Envoy, to review humanitarian needs in the light of recent developments. As Ms. Bertini noted in her report, this is not a "traditional" humanitarian crisis. It is inextricably linked to the conflict and to the measures imposed by Israel in response to terrorist and other attacks: closures, curfews and tight restrictions on the movement of goods and people. On 17 September 2002, the Quartet reviewed the recommendations contained in Ms. Bertini's report and urged the parties to recognize and act upon their respective responsibilities. In particular, it urged Israel to take measures to improve the lives of Palestinians, by, inter alia, allowing the resumption of normal economic activity, facilitating the movement of goods, people and essential services and lifting curfews and closures. In addition, the members of the Quartet agreed that Israel must ensure full, safe and unfettered access for international and humanitarian personnel.

11. The growing humanitarian needs of the Palestinian population must be met. At the same time, in doing so the international community should not lessen its efforts to revive a sustainable peace process. It cannot be overemphasized that there is no military solution to this conflict. The realization of legitimate Palestinian national aspirations and genuine security for Israel can only be achieved through compromise and a negotiated settlement. The road map being set out by the Quartet offers a way forward (see para. 14 below).

12. Over the past year, the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question, has been the subject of extensive consultations and debates in the Security Council. Since January 2002, regular briefings have been held in order to update the Council on the latest developments in the Middle East. Five new resolutions were adopted by the Security Council, in particular resolution 1397 (2002), affirming the Council's vision of a region where two States, Israel and Palestine, would live side by side within secure and recognized borders. This vision of a two-State solution has gained universal support in the international community.

13. It is a matter of particular regret to me that so little remains of the mutual trust that had been so painstakingly built between the parties. Regular and consistent third-party involvement and encouragement is needed to help them find a way out of the current vicious cycle of destruction. To this end, I personally and my

representatives in the region have continued to devote a great deal of attention to this issue. I have maintained close and regular contacts with the parties and other leaders in the region and the international community to try to find a way forward.

14. As part of this effort, the United Nations, the United States, the Russian Federation and the European Union came together to form a new coordinating mechanism for international peace efforts known as the Quartet. The Quartet met for the first time at the principals' level at United Nations Headquarters in New York in November 2001. At a principals' meeting in Madrid in April 2002, the Quartet called for a three-pronged approach to address comprehensively security, economic and political concerns. In May 2002, in Washington, D.C., the Quartet announced its intention to work with the parties to hold an international peace conference focused on attaining the two-State goal set forth in Security Council resolution 1397 (2002). In July 2002, in New York, the Quartet agreed to pursue the following goals: two democratic States living side by side in peace and security; a complete and lasting halt to violence and terrorism; an end to the occupation that began in 1967; a halt to settlements; reform of the Palestinian Authority's security and civilian institutions; the holding of Palestinian elections; and the conclusion of permanent settlement negotiations on the outstanding issues within three years. In September 2002, the Quartet agreed on a three-year, three-phase implementation road map to achieve a comprehensive settlement. Progress would be based on compliance with specific performance benchmarks to be monitored and assessed by the Quartet. The details of that road map are being worked out. In this context, I am very encouraged by the growing involvement of the parties and neighbouring Arab States in a direct dialogue with the Quartet.

15. In March 2002, the Summit of the League of Arab States unanimously adopted — as the Arab Peace Initiative — the plan proposed by Crown Prince Abdullah bin Abdul Aziz of Saudi Arabia calling for full Israeli withdrawal from all the Arab territories occupied since June 1967 and for Israel's acceptance of an independent Palestinian State with East Jerusalem as its capital, in return for the establishment of normal relations with the Arab countries in the context of a comprehensive peace with Israel. This initiative introduced a new and important element in the search for a lasting political solution: the collective political commitment of the Arab world to long-term peace with Israel. The Arab Peace Initiative will remain a crucial element in future peace efforts.

16. As the General Assembly has underscored on many occasions, the achievement of a final and peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine — the core issue of the Arab-Israeli conflict — is imperative for the attainment of a comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East. I hope that there will also be movement on the Syrian and Lebanese tracks so that peace, security and stability will be achieved for all people in the region on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). It is my considered view that our common vision for a truly comprehensive peace can only be realized if all concerned, namely the parties, the key regional players, and the wider international community, live up to their respective responsibilities and work together to make it possible.

17. For its part, the United Nations will continue to support the resumption of a meaningful peace process and will remain at the forefront of efforts to alleviate the severe economic and social hardships of the Palestinian people. I call on the international community to provide the necessary resources in support of United

Nations programmes to address the deteriorating economic and humanitarian situation of the Palestinian people, and especially to provide adequate funding for UNRWA so that it can continue to deliver the necessary services to Palestinian refugees. Donor assistance is especially crucial at a time when the humanitarian situation is so critical.

18. I should like to pay special tribute to Terje Roed-Larsen, United Nations Special Coordinator and my Personal Representative, and to the staff of the Office of the Special Coordinator, as well as to Peter Hansen, Commissioner-General of UNRWA and the staff of that Agency and all other United Nations agencies, who have rendered sterling service while working under the most demanding and difficult circumstances.

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Fifty-eighth year**The situation in the Middle East****Question of Palestine****Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine****Report of the Secretary-General****Summary*

The present report is submitted in accordance with General Assembly resolution 57/110 of 3 December 2002. It contains replies received from the President of the Security Council and the concerned parties to the notes verbales sent by the Secretary-General pursuant to the request contained in paragraph 10 of the resolution. The report also contains the observations of the Secretary-General on the current state of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and on international efforts to revive the peace process with a view to achieving a peaceful solution.

* The present report was submitted after the established deadline in order to include as much updated information as possible.

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 57/110 of 3 December 2002.

2. On 17 June 2003, pursuant to the request contained in paragraph 10 of the above-mentioned resolution, I addressed the following letter to the President of the Security Council:

“I have the honour to refer to resolution 57/110, which the General Assembly adopted on 3 December 2002, at its fifty-seventh session, under the agenda item ‘Question of Palestine’.

“Paragraph 10 of the resolution requests the Secretary-General to continue his efforts with the parties concerned, and in consultation with the Security Council, towards the attainment of a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine and the promotion of peace in the region and to submit a report on these efforts and on developments on this matter.

“In order to fulfil my reporting responsibilities under this resolution, I should be grateful if you kindly convey to me the views of the Security Council by 31 July 2003.”

3. On 31 July 2003 the following reply was received from the Security Council:

“The Security Council continues to discuss the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question on a regular basis, in particular with monthly briefings from the Secretary-General, the UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Terje Roed-Larsen, or senior Secretariat staff. In September 2002 the ‘Quartet’ agreed that there was a need for a performance-based Road Map to a permanent two-State solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

“Shortly after this meeting, following a further increase in violence and terrorist acts, Israeli reoccupation of Palestinian cities and restrictions placed on Palestinians and the resulting impact on their humanitarian situation, the Council had an open meeting and subsequently adopted resolution 1435 (2002) of 24 September 2002. In that resolution the Council reiterated its demand for the complete cessation of all acts of violence. It demanded that Israel cease measures in and around Ramallah and withdraw its occupying forces from Palestinian cities and return them to positions held prior to September 2000. The Council called on the Palestinian Authority to meet its commitment to bring to justice those responsible for terrorist acts.

“The Council was not able to agree on a draft resolution on 20 December 2002, tabled following the death of several UN employees working in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip and the destruction of a WFP [World Food Programme] warehouse.

“The Council continues to follow the work of the ‘Quartet’, whose Road Map was officially handed over to the parties on 30 April 2003. In June 2003 the Council Presidency reiterated the support for the Road Map and the Quartet’s efforts in a statement to the press. The Council continues to discuss the situation in the Middle East monthly, with regular reports from the Secretariat, the latest on 17 July 2003.

“During all these efforts, the Security Council continues to support a comprehensive and just settlement in the Middle East based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 1397 (2002), the foundations of the Madrid Conference, the principle of land for peace, agreements previously reached by the Parties, and the initiatives of Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah endorsed at the Beirut Arab League Summit.”

4. In notes verbales dated 16 and 19 June 2003 to the parties concerned, I sought the positions of the Governments of Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic, as well as the Palestine Liberation Organization, regarding any steps taken by them to implement the relevant provisions of the resolution. As at 17 September 2003, the following replies had been received:

Note verbale dated 25 July 2003 from the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

“As the Secretary-General is aware, Israel voted against this resolution, as well as against similar resolutions adopted by the General Assembly in previous sessions. In light of the urgent need to bring an end to all acts of violence and terrorism in the region and to further the agreed negotiating process, Israel wishes to put on record, once again, its position on this matter.

“Israel views the aforementioned General Assembly resolution not only as unbalanced, but also as an undue interference in matters which the parties have agreed to resolve within the context of direct bilateral negotiations.

“The violence in the region has been a result of a Palestinian decision to abandon peace negotiations and pursue their goals through violence and terrorism. The one-sided approach reflected in the resolution, which seeks to dictate the outcome of the negotiating process, effectively rewards violence at a time when the Palestinian side should discontinue all acts of violence and terrorism and boldly pursue the path of peaceful dialogue.

“The time to put an end to such biased UN resolutions is long overdue, requiring immediate and serious consideration by the Secretary-General. These one-sided resolutions are not only out of touch with reality and anachronistic, they are counterproductive to the very spirit of peace. Rather than promoting a vision which recognizes the rights and obligations of both sides, these resolutions obscure the efforts of the parties to achieve a negotiated outcome, at a moment when encouraging changes in the Middle East region have opened a critical window of opportunity in the peace process.”

Note verbale dated 4 August 2003 from the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

“As reflected in the voting results, resolution 57/110 actually garnered more support from the Assembly during the 57th session. The resolution was adopted by the General Assembly by an overwhelming majority (160-4-3), reaffirming long-established convictions and positions of the international

community on this important issue. Resolution 57/110 recalls several principles of international law and the Charter of the United Nations, including, inter alia, the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples and the principle of the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war. In the resolution, the Assembly also expresses its full support for the peace process and sets forth the basis for a just settlement of the question of Palestine. The resolution stresses the need for (a) the withdrawal of Israel from the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967; and (b) the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, primarily the right to self-determination and the right to their independent State. It also stresses the need for resolving the problem of the Palestine refugees in conformity with its resolution 194 (III) of 11 December 1948.

“The resolution also welcomes the affirmation by the Security Council of a vision of a region where two States, Israel and Palestine, live side by side within secure and recognized borders. In regard to the peace process, resolution 57/110 affirms the urgent need for the parties to cooperate with all international efforts, including the efforts of the Quartet of the United States of America, the Russian Federation, the European Union and the United Nations, to end the current tragic situation and to resume negotiations towards a final peace settlement. Resolution 57/110 also welcomes the Arab Peace Initiative adopted by the Council of the League of Arab States at its fourteenth session, held in Beirut on 27 and 28 March 2002. Moreover, the resolution emphasizes the permanent responsibility of the United Nations with regard to the question of Palestine until it is solved in all its aspects and emphasizes the importance of a more active and expanded role for the organization in the peace process.

“In addition to the reaffirmation of the above-mentioned principles and positions, resolution 57/110 addresses the grave situation on the ground in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. The resolution expresses its grave concern over the tragic events in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, since 28 September 2000 and the continued deterioration of the situation, including the rising number of deaths and injuries, mostly among Palestinian civilians, the deepening humanitarian crisis facing the Palestinian people and the widespread destruction of Palestinian property and infrastructure, both private and public, including many institutions of the Palestinian Authority. The resolution also expresses its grave concern over the repeated incursions into Palestinian-controlled areas and the reoccupation of many Palestinian population centres by the Israeli occupying forces. Resolution 57/110 also deals with another important aspect regarding the question of Palestine by affirming the illegality of Israeli settlements in the territories occupied since 1967, as well as the illegality of Israeli acts aimed at changing the status of Jerusalem.

“It is extremely regrettable that Israel has chosen to, once more, vote against resolution 57/110, defying the overwhelming majority of Member States and choosing to continue with its illegal actions and measures in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. In this connection, Israel has chosen to refuse the reasonable and sound foundation for the establishment of peace between Israel and Palestine, as well as in the Middle East region as a whole. In regard to the situation on the ground for most of the reporting period, Israeli occupying forces continued with its bloody military

campaign against the Palestinian people, committing additional grave breaches of the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949. The Israeli occupying forces have continued to commit countless war crimes, State terrorism and systematic human rights violations against the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem.

“Throughout most of the reporting period, the Israeli occupying forces also continued to launch attacks in Palestinian cities, towns and refugee camps, using all forms of heavy weaponry, including tanks, helicopter gunships and warplanes. Since 28 September 2000, and as of the date of this note, the Israeli occupying forces have killed around 2,500 Palestinians. Many of the killings committed in the past year by the occupying forces have been wilful killings and targeted extrajudiciary executions. Also, more than 45,000 Palestinian have been injured, many critically and many suffering permanent disabilities. The occupying forces have also abducted and detained thousands of Palestinians, particularly males, throughout this period. In addition, thousands of Palestinians continue to be illegally held in Israeli prisons and detention centres.

“In spite of the above, the official presentation of the Road Map by the Quartet on 30 April 2003 presented the parties with a new chance to end the tragic situation on the ground and to achieve a final settlement, including the realization of the two-State solution. The Palestinian side has, indeed, accepted the Road Map and has expressed readiness for its full implementation. The Israeli side, however, after a great deal of equivocation, declared its acceptance along with a lengthy list of “concerns” or “conditions” in spite of the efforts of the Quartet and the relatively positive atmosphere. The Israeli government has yet to comply with any of its obligations under the Road Map. Nevertheless, the violent situation on the ground has greatly calmed down as a result of the efforts made by the Palestinian government to secure assurances from all Palestinian groups to a ceasefire agreement, thus providing reasonable ground for the progress in the peace process.

“The Israeli government has not removed the unauthorized outposts of the Jewish settlements as required by the Road Map, and even has continued with its settlement activities, including the building of new units and the confiscation of additional Palestinian land. In this regard, the building by Israel, the occupying Power, of an illegal wall that cuts deep into the Occupied Palestinian Territory has led to a de facto confiscation of thousands of dunums of Palestinian land. Furthermore, the wall has served to isolate many Palestinian communities from one another and has destroyed their means of livelihood. This has represented the most flagrant violation of not only the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, but of the Road Map itself. The continuation of Israeli settlement activity and the building of the illegal wall can only ensure the complete destruction of the Road Map — the latest initiative in pursuit of Palestinian-Israeli peace.

“In addition to the above, Israel has also continued with its reoccupation of many Palestinian cities. It has also continued with its imposition of severe restrictions on the movement of persons and goods within the Occupied

Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. Furthermore, Israel has also continued with its prevention of the free movement of the President of the Palestinian Authority from and to his headquarters in Ramallah. It is, indeed, inconceivable for the peace process to proceed forward with such Israeli policies and measures in place. Further efforts of the Quartet are urgently needed to achieve an end to such policies and measures.

“Palestine expresses its appreciation for the role being played by the United Nations, including the efforts and the important role played by the Secretary-General. Palestine also expresses its appreciation to the Quartet and emphasizes the need for intensifying its role to ensure the honest implementation of the Road Map in its entirety. In this regard, a monitoring mechanism, as required by the Road Map, must be established in a speedy manner to ensure such implementation.”

[Original: Arabic]

Note verbale dated 3 July 2003 from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

“The Syrian Arab Republic supported General Assembly resolution 57/100 of 3 December 2002 entitled ‘Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine’, which states that achieving a final and peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, is imperative for the attainment of a comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East and refers to, in particular, Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973).

“Once again, the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic affirms the statements made in the resolution respecting the illegality of the Israeli settlements in the territory occupied since 1967 and of Israeli actions aimed at changing the status of Jerusalem. The Government further affirms that those measures and settlement activities represent fundamental obstacles to the conclusion of a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine and that successive Israeli Governments have had no political will to conclude a lasting and comprehensive peace in the region based on United Nations resolutions. The Israeli rejection of the principle of the equality of peoples with respect to rights and of the right to self-determination, which is one of the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, represents a further obstacle to the peace that is sought.

“The Syrian Arab Republic expresses total support for the affirmation made in the resolution respecting the principle that underlies Security Council resolution 242 (1967), namely, the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war, and condemns the continuation by Israel of aggressive acts and incursions into the Palestinian territories, its destruction of homes, expropriation of land and detention, assassination and expulsion from their homes, villages and towns of Palestinian persons. Such actions are indicative of the true intentions of Israel, namely, to maintain and prolong the occupation and to refuse to comply with United Nations resolutions or the desire of the international community to resolve the question of Palestine in conformity

with the relevant Security Council resolutions and, in particular, resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). Such resolutions affirm the need for the Israeli occupation of Arab territories to end and for the Palestinian people to be empowered to exercise the right to self-determination and to establish an independent State on its native soil.”

[Original: Arabic]

Note verbale dated 4 August 2003 from the Permanent Representative of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

“The question of Palestine is regarded by Jordan as a fundamental issue. From the outset, efforts to resolve it have taken up a major part of the attention of the Jordanian leadership. Jordan has therefore worked unremittingly at all levels with a view to arriving at an equitable solution that would restore the legitimate rights of the fraternal Palestinian people as the only means of achieving security and stability in the region. Jordan’s conception of such a solution is in keeping with international legitimacy and the relevant resolutions of the United Nations, foremost among them Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), together with General Assembly resolution 194 (III), which is regarded as the basis for resolving the issue of Palestinian refugees. Accordingly, together with the international family of nations, Jordan is committed to the necessity of achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East on the basis of the United Nations resolutions in implementation of the principle of land for security and recognition, the principle that is the starting point of all international efforts to resolve this enduring conflict.

“On a practical level, this implies the necessity of Israel’s withdrawal from all occupied Arab territories to the borders of 4 June 1967, the resolution of the problem of Palestinian refugees on the basis of the guarantee of the right of return and the right to compensation and implementation of the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination in its own national territory. It also implies the establishment of an independent and viable Palestinian State enjoying sovereignty over its national territory. That being so, Jordan has welcomed all the international initiatives and efforts, all of which have had the objective of giving effect to that vision. Foremost among those efforts have been the Arab initiative adopted by the Fourteenth Arab Summit in Beirut in 2002 and the initiative of Mr. George Bush, President of the United States of America, in June 2002. In keeping with that, Jordan has been working to create conditions conducive to the resumption of negotiations between the Palestinian and Israeli sides, has participated with the international parties involved in the finalization of the “road map” and is now working on its implementation as published after acceptance of it by both parties at the Summit convened in Aqaba, Jordan, on 4 June 2003 and attended by Mr. George Bush, President of the United States of America, Mr. Ariel Sharon, Prime Minister of Israel, and Mr. Mahmoud Abbas, Prime Minister of Palestine. Jordan is convinced that the declaration of a truce by the Palestinian groups is a positive development and

that all parties must work to consolidate it by abiding by their obligations under the road map.

“Furthermore, Jordan has stressed the importance of the role of the United Nations and of the international community in bringing about a comprehensive and just peace in the Middle East and the necessity of not relinquishing support for the Palestinian people and its legitimate leadership until it has obtained its rights. In this context we welcomed the statement by President George Bush of his support for the establishment of a Palestinian State by 2005 living in peace side by side with Israel. We also welcomed the efforts of the Quartet of the United States, the European Union, the Russian Federation and the United Nations.

“Jordan also urged the Ministerial Meeting of the Organization of the Islamic Conference held in Tehran last May to welcome the road map as an opportunity to strengthen international efforts to end the occupation and to achieve a lasting peace between Palestinians and Israelis leading to the establishment of an independent Palestinian State. The Meeting called for the implementation of the road map as published.”

II. Observations

5. The past year witnessed the emergence of some hope of a turning point in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. For the first time since September 2000, both parties, with the active assistance of the international community, in particular the Quartet (the Russian Federation, the United States of America, the European Union and the United Nations), committed themselves to serious and meaningful negotiations to halt the violence and reach a peaceful settlement. However, renewed violence in the latter half of August 2003 signalled the breakdown of the ceasefire and a reversal in progress. In the renewed cycle of violence and counter-violence, suicide bombings by Palestinian militant groups and targeted assassinations of members of those groups by Israel have regrettably resumed. Consequently, the implementation of the road map has been frozen, and some steps have actually been reversed.

6. Amid the escalation of the conflict in 2002, members of the Quartet jointly elaborated a “road map” to realize the vision of a two-State solution. After consultations with the parties and neighbouring Arab States, agreement was reached on the text of the road map at the meeting of the Quartet principals in Washington, D.C., on 20 December 2002. The performance-based and goal-driven road map presented clear phases, time lines, target dates and benchmarks aimed at the progression by the two parties through reciprocal steps in the political, security, economic, humanitarian and institution-building fields under the auspices of the Quartet. The goal of the road map is to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and end the occupation that began in 1967 on the basis of the 1991 Madrid peace conference, the principle of land for peace, Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 1397 (2002), agreements reached previously by the parties and the Arab Peace Initiative of Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah, which was endorsed by the Council of the League of Arab States at its summit meeting held in Beirut on 27 and 28 March 2002 (see A/56/1026-S/2002/932, annex II). A settlement would lead to the emergence of an independent, democratic and viable Palestinian State living side by side in peace and security with Israel and its other neighbours.

7. With the help of the international community, notable progress has been achieved in reforming the Palestinian Authority. The United Kingdom hosted the Task Force on Palestinian Reform in London on 20 February 2003, which welcomed the Government of Israel's decision to resume monthly transfers of Palestinian tax revenues and the considerable progress made by the Palestinian Authority in its reform efforts, especially in the fiscal sector.

8. On 18 March 2003, President Yasser Arafat approved a bill of amendments to the Palestinian Authority Basic Law to create the post and define the powers of Prime Minister. On 29 April 2003, the Palestinian Legislative Council confirmed Mahmoud Abbas and his new cabinet in office. This was an important step for which Prime Minister Abbas, President Arafat and the Palestinian Legislative Council deserved to be commended. However, early September saw the resignation of Prime Minister Abbas and the nomination of Ahmed Qurei, the Speaker of the Palestinian Legislative Council, as his successor.

9. Throughout this period, Israel persisted in its efforts to confine the elected President of the Palestinian Authority, Mr. Arafat, to his headquarters in the West Bank. On 11 September 2003, the Israeli security cabinet agreed in principle on the removal of Mr. Arafat from the West Bank and Gaza Strip. I have strongly urged the Israeli security cabinet to reconsider this decision as I believe that the forcible transfer of Mr. Arafat would be dangerous and counterproductive given the instability in the region.

10. On 30 April 2003, the road map was officially submitted to the parties (see S/2003/529, annex). At the beginning of June 2003, at the Aqaba Summit, organized by President Bush and hosted by Jordan, Prime Ministers Sharon and Abbas made a firm commitment to begin implementation of the road map. In this context, I was encouraged by the resumption of direct contacts and talks between Prime Ministers Sharon and Abbas.

11. The Quartet principals met again in Amman on 22 June 2003 and reviewed the steps needed to begin implementation of the road map. They called upon the Palestinian Authority to make all possible efforts to halt the activities of groups and individuals planning and conducting terror attacks against Israelis. While recognizing Israel's right to self-defence, the Quartet called upon the Government of Israel to respect international humanitarian law and to exert maximum efforts to avoid civilian casualties among the Palestinians. It also pointed out that steps must be taken to improve the humanitarian situation and to normalize the daily lives of the Palestinian people.

12. The first steps taken by the parties to start implementation of the road map included the withdrawal of Israeli forces from parts of the Gaza Strip and Bethlehem and the declaration of a ceasefire by various Palestinian groups, which was arranged with the active involvement of the Egyptian Government. President Bush deployed Ambassador John Wolf to lead the informal monitoring structure of phase I commitments on the ground, in full cooperation with other Quartet members.

13. Over the past year, the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question, remained the subject of extensive consultations and debates in the Security Council. The Secretariat continued to provide regular informal briefings to the Council on the latest developments in the Middle East.

14. I strongly believe that the principle of parallelism on which the road map is based must be maintained. Previous peace attempts have failed because of their reliance on sequentialism; a crucial role for the international community is to assist the parties to address security, economic, humanitarian and political issues at the same time.

15. The number of casualties in the past three years speaks eloquently to the need to persevere in order to achieve a lasting resolution to the conflict. Since September 2000, more than 2,800 Palestinians and more than 800 Israelis have been killed. Moreover, thousands have been injured. Behind each and every one of these numbers are stories of human loss and suffering. The overwhelming majority of casualties in Israel resulted from terrorist attacks against Israelis by various Palestinian militant groups. Bombs have been set off in cafés and restaurants and attacks have been carried out against public transport, including school buses, creating a climate of fear and constant watchfulness. A large number of Palestinian civilian casualties have resulted from Israel Defense Forces (IDF) operations, including incursions, pre-emptive strikes and the practice of targeted assassinations of suspected militants in Palestinian areas. The use of heavy weaponry in densely populated Palestinian areas has been of particular concern. Since the ceasefire and redeployment at the end of June, there has been a marked decline in violence.

16. I remain deeply concerned that most of these deaths resulted from actions that violated basic tenets of international humanitarian law, especially the obligation to protect civilians. I have repeatedly and consistently condemned all terrorist attacks on Israel as morally wrong and counterproductive for the Palestinian cause and have stressed the obligation of the Palestinian Authority to assume full security responsibility in areas still under its control. In addition, I have urged the Government of Israel to refrain from the excessive and disproportionate use of deadly force in civilian areas and, consistent with international humanitarian law, to take steps to ensure the protection of Palestinian civilians.

17. Three United Nations staff members were among the many civilians killed at the start of the period covered in the present report. Iain Hook, a British citizen, was employed by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) when he was shot and killed by IDF while in the Jenin camp on 23 November 2002. Two Palestinian employees of UNRWA died in Gaza on 6 December 2002 during Israeli military incursions.

18. Israel continued its policy of demolishing houses as a reaction to security incidents. From 1 January to 21 August 2003, 158 homes of Palestinians who had carried out attacks against Israel or who were suspected of involvement or of planning future attacks were destroyed. Residential apartment blocks have also been demolished following armed clashes between IDF and Palestinian militants.

19. In addition, IDF has demolished hundreds of houses, workshops and agricultural buildings and damaged thousands more, particularly along the Gaza/Egyptian border and in areas bordering Israeli settlements and settler roads in order to create “buffer zones”. Rafah, in the southern Gaza Strip, has been one of the worst-affected areas. In the first quarter of 2003, 161 houses were demolished there, the greatest number of house demolitions in the occupied Palestinian territory since September 2000. Homes and businesses have also been demolished in preparation for the construction of the separation barrier.

20. The confiscation of land and the levelling of agricultural land have continued unabated, particularly in border areas, around settlements and settler roads and in connection with the construction of the separation wall. Thousands of trees have been uprooted and crops destroyed. The most serious destruction has occurred in the northern Gaza Strip in the Beit Hanoun and Beit Lahiya areas. During the IDF incursion into the Beit Hanoun area in May/June, over 1,000 dunums of land were levelled, and homes and infrastructure were damaged or destroyed.

21. Continued Israeli settlement construction activity and the building of a separation wall are two key challenges to the fulfilment of the road map's goal of the two-State solution. The construction of the separation wall is a unilateral act not in keeping with the road map. Its building has involved the separation of Palestinians from their lands and from each other. Israel's continued expansion of settlements and construction of bypass roads have, over time, made the creation of a viable and contiguous Palestinian State more difficult. Despite the obligation in phase I of the road map to dismantle settlement outposts and to freeze all settlement expansion, the Government of Israel has not taken decisive action in that direction.

22. It has been of great concern that, despite political developments, the humanitarian and economic situation of the Palestinian people continued to deteriorate during the past year. This deterioration was a direct result of the policy of systematic closures and curfews and its impact on Palestinian social and economic life. The World Bank has found that two thirds of the population of the West Bank and Gaza Strip live on less than \$2 per day; in fact, the number of the poor has tripled, from 637,000 in September 2000 to nearly 2 million in March 2003. Gross national income per capita has fallen to nearly half of what it was two years before. More than half of the workforce is unemployed, and, more shockingly, more than half of Palestinians are receiving some form of donor-financed food assistance. The limited steps taken so far by Israel to lift closures, curfews and other restrictions have not yet been sufficient to significantly ease the economic deterioration in the occupied Palestinian territory and the humanitarian suffering of the Palestinian people. I remain very concerned that the damage done to Palestinian social and economic spheres may prove difficult to reverse unless meaningful and urgent steps are taken to lift closures and curfews and to allow normal life to resume.

23. The humanitarian situation was worsened this year by unprecedented movement restrictions imposed on United Nations and non-governmental organization personnel, especially limiting their access into and out of the Gaza Strip. For most of May, a significant number of United Nations staff were stuck on either side of the Erez boundary and were unable to carry out their humanitarian tasks. Those policies violated the privileges and immunities of United Nations personnel and ran counter to Israel's obligations under international humanitarian law as the occupying Power to provide for the well-being of the people of Gaza.

24. The inter-agency United Nations humanitarian action plan, released in November 2002, includes activities to reinforce existing relief programmes and to provide temporary assistance to the affected population in priority sectors such as food security, health, education, employment generation and agricultural production to help mitigate the devastating impact of repeated military incursions, closures, curfews and economic decline. Up to mid-September, a total of \$106,467,347 had

been provided by donor Governments, or 37.4 per cent of the amount needed to cover all activities outlined in the humanitarian action plan.

25. The humanitarian action plan also includes a recommendation that humanitarian indicators be tracked and reported, in particular the commitments made by the Government of Israel to my Personal Humanitarian Envoy, Catherine Bertini. A monthly humanitarian monitoring report, issued by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, tracks the humanitarian indicators and commitments. During the reporting period the Office documented an overall decline in the humanitarian situation in all but one area, namely curfews.

26. As the General Assembly has underscored on many occasions, achieving a final and peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine, the core issue of the Arab-Israeli conflict, is imperative for the attainment of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East. Therefore I hope that, as called for in the road map, there will also be movement on the Syrian and Lebanese tracks so that peace, security and stability will be achieved for all in the region on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973).

27. For its part, the United Nations will continue to support the peace process and will remain at the forefront of efforts to alleviate the severe social and economic hardships of the Palestinian people. To that end, I will continue to press for the implementation of the road map, which I still believe provides the best opportunity to move forward. I will continue to maintain close and regular contact with other members of the Quartet, as well as with the parties, regional leaders and the wider international community, to encourage progress in these difficult and critical times. The active engagement of the international community continues to be needed at this critical juncture.

28. I call upon the international community to provide the resources necessary to support United Nations programmes in addressing the deteriorating economic and humanitarian situation of the Palestinian people, and especially to provide adequate funding to UNRWA so that it can continue to deliver the necessary services to the Palestinian refugees. Donor assistance is especially vital at a time when the humanitarian situation is so critical.

29. I should like to pay special tribute to Terje Roed-Larsen, United Nations Special Coordinator and my Personal Representative to the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Palestinian Authority, to the staff of the Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator in the Occupied Territories and to Commissioner-General Peter Hansen of UNRWA, the staff of the Agency and all other United Nations agencies, which continue to provide their sterling services while working under most demanding and difficult circumstances.

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Agenda items 36 and 37**Security Council**
Fifty-ninth year**The situation in the Middle East****Question of Palestine****Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine****Report of the Secretary-General*****Summary*

The present report is submitted in accordance with General Assembly resolution 58/21. It contains replies received from the President of the Security Council and the parties concerned to the notes verbales sent by the Secretary-General pursuant to the request contained in paragraph 11 of that resolution. The report also contains the observations of the Secretary-General on the current state of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and on international efforts to revive the peace process with a view to achieving a peaceful solution. The report covers the period from mid-September 2003 to mid-September 2004.

* Reissued for technical reasons.

** The report was submitted after the established deadline in order to include as much updated information as possible.

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 58/21 of 3 December 2003.

2. On 13 April 2004, pursuant to the request contained in paragraph 11 of that resolution, I addressed a letter to the President of the Security Council reading as follows:

“I have the honour to refer to resolution 58/21, which the General Assembly adopted on 3 December 2003, at its fifty-eighth session, under the agenda item ‘Question of Palestine’.

“Paragraph 11 of the resolution requests the Secretary-General to continue his efforts with the parties concerned, and in consultation with the Security Council, towards the attainment of a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine and the promotion of peace in the region and to submit a report on these efforts and on developments on this matter.

“In order to fulfil my reporting responsibilities under this resolution, I should be grateful if you would kindly convey to me the views of the Security Council by 31 May 2004.”

3. On 19 May 2004 a reply was received from the Security Council reading as follows:

“The situation in the Middle East including the Palestinian question remains one of the most important items on the Security Council agenda. The Security Council continues to discuss and receive monthly briefings under this item from the Secretary-General, the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Terje-Roed Larsen, or senior Secretariat staff.

“In June 2003, the Council reacted positively to the issuance of the performance-based road map to a permanent two-State solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In November 2003, the Council strengthened its support for the road map by unanimously adopting resolution 1515 (2003). The resolution, inter alia, endorsed the road map and called on the parties to fulfil their obligations under the road map in cooperation with the Quartet and to achieve the vision of two States living side by side in peace and security. The Council continues to follow the status of the implementation of the road map with a view to promoting a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East.

“During the reporting period, the Security Council held five open meetings in response to various security challenges that surfaced, from time to time, in the region. Following the open meeting held on 12 September 2003, at the request of the Non-Aligned Movement Caucus and the Arab Group, the Council presidency, in a press statement, expressed the view that the removal of Chairman Arafat should not be implemented. The presidency also condemned all violence and urged both sides to act with maximum restraint.

“The Council could not agree on three draft resolutions submitted for action on 16 September 2003, 14 October 2003 and 24 March 2004. The subjects of the draft resolutions were the safety of the President of the Palestinian Authority, continued construction of a barrier in the Palestinian

territories and the extrajudicial killing of Hamas leader Shaikh Yassin in Gaza, respectively.

“The Council continues to keep the evolving situation in the Middle East under active review through monthly briefings, open meetings and informal consultations. During these meetings, the Council members reiterate their support for a just and comprehensive settlement in the Middle East based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973), 1397 (2002) and 1515 (2003), the foundations of the Madrid Conference, the principle of land for peace, agreements previously reached by the parties and the initiative of Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah endorsed in Beirut at the Summit-level Council of the League of Arab States.”

4. In notes verbales dated 12 April 2004 to the parties concerned, I sought the positions of the Governments of Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic, as well as the Palestine Liberation Organization, regarding any steps taken by them to implement the relevant provisions of the resolution. As at 17 September 2004, the following replies had been received:

Note verbale dated 2 July 2004 from the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

“As the Secretary-General is aware, Israel voted against this resolution, as well as against similar resolutions adopted by the General Assembly at previous sessions. In the light of the urgent need to bring an end to all acts of violence and terrorism in the region and to further the agreed negotiating process, Israel wishes to put on record, once again, its position on this matter.

“Israel views the aforementioned General Assembly resolution not only as unbalanced, but also as an undue interference in matters which the parties have agreed to resolve within the context of direct bilateral negotiations.

“The violence in the region has been a result of a Palestinian decision to abandon peace negotiations and pursue their goals through violence and terrorism. The one-sided approach reflected in the resolution, which seeks to dictate the outcome of the negotiating process, effectively rewards violence at a time when the Palestinian side should discontinue all acts of violence and terrorism and boldly pursue the path of peaceful dialogue, as called for in the road map peace process, which compels the Palestinian Authority to prevent ‘all acts of violence against Israelis anywhere’.

“The time to put an end to such biased United Nations resolutions is long overdue, requiring immediate and serious consideration by the Secretary-General. These one-sided resolutions are not only out of touch with reality and anachronistic, they are counterproductive to the very spirit of peace. Rather than promoting a vision which recognizes the rights and obligations of both sides, as articulated in the road map, these resolutions obscure the efforts of the parties to achieve a negotiated outcome, at a moment when Prime Minister Sharon’s courageous disengagement plan has opened a critical window of opportunity in the peace process.”

Note verbale dated 16 August 2004 from the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

“The General Assembly’s resolution on the peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine has traditionally reaffirmed rules and principles of international law that are central, and in fact deemed to be essential, to the peaceful and just resolution of the long-standing question of Palestine. The overwhelming support received by this resolution is reflective of the near consensus of the international community with regard to this issue, a consensus rooted in positions and convictions that are based on the primacy of international law in international relations and on the universal ideals of justice and peace. During the fifty-eighth session of the General Assembly, Member States once again adopted this resolution by a huge majority of 160 votes in favour, with only 6 votes against and 5 abstentions.

“Among the rules and principles of international law the Assembly reaffirms in resolution 58/21 are two fundamental ones, namely the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples and the principle of the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war, as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. Other rules recalled in the resolution are embodied in relevant General Assembly resolutions, including those adopted by its tenth emergency special session, and Security Council resolutions, including resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973), 1397 (2002) and 1515 (2003). Accordingly, as it reaffirms the necessity of achieving a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, in all its aspects and of intensifying efforts towards that end, the Assembly, inter alia, stresses the need for the withdrawal of Israel from the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967 and the need for the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, primarily the right to self-determination and the right to their independent State. The resolution also stresses the need for resolving the problem of the Palestine refugees in conformity with the Assembly’s resolution 194 (III) of 11 December 1948.

“As regards the efforts for achieving a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine, the Assembly significantly reaffirms the permanent responsibility of the United Nations with regard to the question of Palestine until it is resolved in all its aspects, reaffirms also its full support for the Middle East peace process and the existing agreements between the Israeli and Palestinian sides, welcomes the efforts of the Quartet aimed at the establishment of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East, welcomes the Arab Peace Initiative adopted by the League of Arab States at Beirut in March 2002 and calls upon both parties to fulfil their obligations in implementation of the road map, stressing in this regard the importance and urgency of establishing a credible and effective third-party monitoring mechanism including all members of the Quartet. Further, towards the aim of achieving a peaceful settlement, the Assembly, in resolution 58/21, rightly stresses the necessity of a commitment to the two-State solution and the principle of land for peace, as well as the implementation of the relevant Security Council resolutions, and also stresses the need for a speedy end to the reoccupation of Palestinian population centres and for the complete cessation

of all acts of violence, including military attacks, destruction and acts of terror, which in recent years have caused the grave deterioration of the situation on the ground and have severely debilitated the search for a peaceful resolution of the question of Palestine.

“The resolution also addresses another aspect of the question of Palestine that constitutes an extremely relevant consideration for any efforts aimed at resolving this tragic and protracted conflict, namely the humanitarian aspect. The Assembly expresses its grave concern over the tragic events in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, since 28 September 2000, including the rising number of deaths and injuries, mostly among Palestinian civilians, the deepening humanitarian crisis facing the Palestinian people and the widespread destruction of Palestinian property and infrastructure, both private and public, including many institutions of the Palestinian Authority. In this regard, the Assembly emphasizes the importance of the safety and well-being of all civilians in the whole Middle East region and condemns all acts of violence and terror against civilians on both sides, including the suicide bombings and extrajudicial executions. Further, with regard to the dire humanitarian crisis being inflicted on the Palestinian people, the Assembly urges Member States to expedite the provision of economic, humanitarian and technical assistance to the Palestinian people and Palestinian Authority during this critical period to help alleviate their suffering, rebuild the Palestinian economy and infrastructure and support the restructuring and reform of Palestinian institutions.

“In calling for efforts to be exerted for the peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine, the Assembly is fully aware of the urgent need for revitalized and active international involvement to support both parties in overcoming the current dangerous impasse in the peace process. The Assembly affirms the urgent need for the parties to cooperate with all international efforts and accordingly calls upon the parties concerned, the Quartet and other interested parties to exert all efforts and initiatives necessary to halt the deterioration of the situation and to reverse all measures taken on the ground since 28 September 2000 and to ensure a successful and speedy resumption of the peace process and the conclusion of a final peace settlement. The role of the United Nations is further spelled out in resolution 58/21, with the Assembly’s request for the Secretary-General to continue his efforts with the parties concerned, and in consultation with the Security Council, towards the attainment of a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine and the promotion of peace in the region, and its call upon the Secretary-General to submit a report on the efforts and developments on this matter, the purpose to which the present note is addressed.

“Regrettably, resolution 58/21 of 3 December 2003, like countless other United Nations resolutions relevant to the question of Palestine, has not been implemented. This has been mainly due to the intransigence of Israel, the occupying Power, and its refusal to adhere to international law and to fulfil its obligations in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and relevant General Assembly and Security Council resolutions. Instead, Israel, the occupying Power, has continued to blatantly and flagrantly violate and even commit grave breaches of international law as it has persisted with its now 37-year occupation of the Palestinian people and the Palestinian land, refusing

to withdraw its occupying forces, in compliance with Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), and relentlessly carrying out its illegal and oppressive policies and practices in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. Indeed, not a single day has passed during which the occupying Power has not deliberately engaged in the violation of international law, including international humanitarian law and human rights law, in its practices and measures against the Palestinian people, both individually and collectively, and there is no doubt that systematic human rights violations and war crimes continue to be committed by Israel against the Palestinian people.

“Since the Assembly’s adoption of resolution 58/21, Israel, the occupying Power, has continued carrying out its military campaign against the Palestinian people and has continued to use excessive, indiscriminate and disproportionate force against Palestinian civilians, wilfully killing civilians, including by extrajudicial execution, and causing thousands of injuries. To date, more than 3,160 Palestinian civilians have been directly killed by the Israeli occupying forces since September 2000 and more than 40,000 Palestinians have been injured, many critically and permanently disabled. At the same time, the occupying Power has continued to wantonly destroy Palestinian homes, properties, infrastructure and agricultural lands and orchards, to detain and imprison thousands of Palestinian civilians, including women and children, and to impose harsh measures of collective punishment on the entire Palestinian population, including severe restrictions on the movement of persons and goods throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory, causing the further socio-economic debilitation of the Palestinian society and exacerbating the already dire humanitarian crisis.

“Throughout the recent period, Israel, the occupying Power, has also continued to intensively carry out its campaign of settler colonialism in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, in direct contravention of international law, particularly the Fourth Geneva Convention and Protocol I Additional to the Geneva Conventions. The occupying Power has continued to confiscate more and more Palestinian land, to construct and expand illegal settlements, to build bypass roads for the armed illegal Israeli settlers and to allow the establishment of dozens of settler outposts on Palestinian land. Directly linked to Israel’s campaign of settler colonialism is its ongoing construction of the wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including in and around East Jerusalem, in contravention of international law.

“In utter contempt of and disrespect for resolutions ES-10/13 of 21 October 2003 and ES-10/14 of 8 December 2003, and in violation of numerous relevant provisions of international law, Israel has continued to construct the wall and for this unlawful purpose has continued to confiscate land, to destroy property and to impose a series of illegal restrictions, including by means of a ‘permit system’, constituting an entire associated regime of measures intended to facilitate its construction of the wall. The wall and its associated regime have resulted in the complete caging-in of thousands of Palestinian civilians in walled enclaves or ghettos and the separation and isolation of cities, towns and villages from each other and in some cases from within; have caused the displacement of thousands of Palestinian civilians; have severely impaired the access of the hundreds of thousands of Palestinian civilians in affected areas to their jobs, schools, medical facilities, farmlands

and each other; and have led to extensive loss of livelihood and the impoverishment of thousands of families, compounding their suffering and hardships under Israel's occupation.

“In the months since the adoption of resolution 58/21, the critical issue of the wall has been the predominant concern of the international community vis-à-vis the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. In the most significant development in the United Nations system with regard to the question of Palestine since the adoption of the partition plan in resolution 181 (II) of 29 November 1947, the International Court of Justice rendered, on 9 July 2004, an Advisory Opinion on the *Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory*. The Advisory Opinion, rendered pursuant to the request made by the Assembly at its tenth emergency special session in resolution ES-10/14 of 8 December 2003, is strong and comprehensive and represents a historic opportunity for a return to the rule of international law in the efforts to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Indeed, the Advisory Opinion underscores the applicability of, and the need for respect for, the rules and principles of international law for resolving the issue of the wall and for the ultimate peaceful resolution of the question of Palestine. The legal rules and principles emphasized by the Court correspond to the very same rules and principles repeatedly affirmed by the General Assembly in its resolutions relevant to the question of Palestine, which for decades have been disregarded and violated by Israel, the occupying Power.

“The International Court of Justice, in its Advisory Opinion, concluded, inter alia, that ‘the construction of the wall being built by Israel, the occupying Power, in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including in and around East Jerusalem, and its associated regime, are contrary to international law’. In arriving at this determination, the Court undertook a historical analysis of the status of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, followed by an analysis to establish whether the law had been breached and then a determination of the legal consequences in this regard. The Court found that the area east of the 1949 Armistice Line (the ‘Green Line’) and the former eastern boundary of Palestine under the Mandate, including East Jerusalem, was occupied by Israel in 1967 and, under international law, considered to be occupied territory. Here it is necessary to also recall the important adoption by the General Assembly, on 6 May 2004, of resolution 58/292 on the status of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem.

“In brief, with regard to the specific violations of international law, including international humanitarian law and human rights law, the Court concluded, inter alia, that Israel's construction of the wall and its associated regime create a fait accompli on the ground which would be tantamount to de facto annexation, severely impede the exercise by the Palestinian people of its right to self-determination and therefore violate that right; have led to the destruction or requisition of properties in contravention of relevant provisions of the Hague Regulations and the Fourth Geneva Convention; and violate the Palestinian people's freedom of movement and the right to work, to health, to education and to an adequate standard of living. In examining the route of the wall, the Court found that not only did it depart from the Green Line, but that the ‘wall's sinuous route has been traced in such a way as to include within

that area the great majority of Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (including East Jerusalem)'. In this regard, it is significant that the Court also explicitly concluded that 'the Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (including East Jerusalem) have been established in breach of international law'.

"It is equally imperative to refer in this context to the importance of the conclusions set forth by the Court in the Advisory Opinion. Following its determination that the construction of the wall and its associated regime are contrary to international law, the Court determined the following: that Israel is under an obligation to terminate its breaches of international law, to cease the construction of the wall being built in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including in and around East Jerusalem, to dismantle the structure therein situated, and to repeal or render ineffective all legislative and regulatory acts relating thereto; that Israel is under an obligation to make reparation for all damage caused by the construction of the wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including in and around East Jerusalem; that all States are under an obligation not to recognize the illegal situation resulting from the construction of the wall and not to render aid or assistance in maintaining the situation created by such construction; that all States parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention have an additional obligation of ensuring compliance by Israel with the Convention; and that the United Nations, especially the General Assembly and the Security Council, should consider what further action is required to bring to an end the illegal situation resulting from the construction of the wall and the associated regime, taking due account of the Advisory Opinion.

"With regard to the United Nations, the General Assembly, at its tenth emergency special session, has already taken the first step in this respect. The Assembly received and acknowledged the Advisory Opinion and adopted resolution ES-10/15 of 20 July 2004, in which it, *inter alia*, demanded that Israel, the occupying Power, comply with its legal obligations as mentioned in the Advisory Opinion and also called upon all States Members of the United Nations to comply with their legal obligations as mentioned in the Advisory Opinion. Indeed, respect for and compliance with the rules and principles of international law, as determined in the Advisory Opinion, by Israel, the occupying Power, and by Member States, can only positively influence the current situation on the ground in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and the efforts for achieving a peaceful, political settlement of the conflict based on international law.

"It is highly regrettable that the immediate reaction by Israel, the occupying Power, to both the Advisory Opinion and resolution ES-10/15, has been negative and defiant, with Israeli officials declaring Israel's intention to continue its construction of the wall and with the occupying forces in fact carrying out that construction as well as the associated illegal measures. Clearly, the continuing violation of international law and total disrespect for the Advisory Opinion and the Assembly's resolutions must continue to be a matter of serious concern for the United Nations. The direct and grave impact of this ongoing illegal situation on the efforts to achieve a peaceful settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is unquestionable and must be urgently addressed by both the General Assembly and the Security Council. Israel, the

occupying Power, has a choice: it can choose either to comply with the Advisory Opinion or to formally become an outlaw State.

“Israel’s withdrawal from the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, as called for by resolution 58/21 as well as by Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and numerous other resolutions, is a fundamental requisite for solving the question of Palestine and achieving a peaceful settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, based on the two-State solution. The occupying Power’s settler colonialism and its construction of the wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, are the antithesis of withdrawal and actually constitute the main obstacle, and indeed danger, to the realization of the national rights of the Palestinian people and the achievement of the two-State solution. Without the complete cessation and reversal of all settlement activities and of the construction of the wall, there can be no hope for the road map and there can be no hope for a peaceful settlement. The international community must face this reality and take necessary, serious measures in this regard, including the exertion of all efforts for the full implementation of those resolution as well as full compliance with the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice. Only by upholding international law and the purposes and principles of the Charter can efforts aimed at the achievement of a just, comprehensive and lasting peace succeed. All concerned parties should intensify their efforts towards this end.

“In this regard, it is hoped that the international community and the Quartet will exert the necessary efforts as well to salvage the road map and to implement its provisions towards its stated aims and goals. Accordingly, repeated Israeli attempts to evade the road map and replace it with different steps should be rejected. The Israeli Prime Minister’s ‘unilateral disengagement plan’ and the Israeli-American exchange of letters of 14 April 2004 are inconsistent with the road map and, moreover, the plan, and several passages within the letters violate international law, relevant Security Council resolutions and the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including the Palestine refugees. In this regard, it must be firmly stated that the letters are unacceptable and cannot alter the terms of reference of the peace process or alter the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. Further, any Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip should be a full and complete withdrawal and should be accompanied by similar steps in the West Bank — that is, to genuinely be a part of the road map. Any such withdrawal should also be carried out in full cooperation with the Palestinian Authority.

“Palestine looks forward to the resumption of meaningful negotiations for a final peaceful settlement and the establishment of a just, comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East, including full peaceful relations between Israel and Palestine. Until the achievement of such a peaceful settlement, Palestine hopes for and indeed expects the continued support of the international community and the continued exertion of genuine efforts towards this end, including in particular by the United Nations.”

Note verbale dated 10 May 2004 from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: Arabic]

“The Syrian Arab Republic supported General Assembly resolution 58/21 of 3 December 2003, entitled ‘Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine’. This position was based on its belief that the attainment of a comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East based on decisions of international legitimacy, especially Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) of 22 November 1967 and 338 (1973) of 22 October 1973, will not be feasible until a peaceful, comprehensive and just settlement of the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, has been achieved. On this basis, the Arab countries unanimously agreed the Arab Peace Initiative adopted by the Summit-level Council of the League of Arab States at its fourteenth session, held in Beirut on 27 and 28 March 2002. In the meantime, the Syrian Arab Republic reiterated its strategic position, based on achieving a comprehensive and just peace, through the call by the President of the Syrian Arab Republic for the resumption of peace talks in order to continue what was achieved during the peace negotiations that followed the Madrid Conference in 1991.

“The Syrian Arab Republic wishes to affirm anew the contents of General Assembly resolution 58/21 (2003) of 3 December 2003 concerning the illegality of the Israeli settlements in the territory occupied since 1967. The Syrian Arab Republic also wishes to stress that the ongoing presence of these settlements constitutes a fundamental obstacle to the reaching of a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine and indicates that the successive Israeli Administrations have lacked the necessary political will to reach a just and comprehensive peace in the region based on decisions of international legitimacy. It has become apparent to all that Sharon’s proposed plans are designed to revoke the right of refugees to return to their homes on the basis of General Assembly resolution 194 (III) of 11 December 1948.

“The Syrian Arab Republic unequivocally supports the affirmation contained in this resolution concerning the principle of the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war, which is based on Security Council resolution 242 (1967) of 22 November 1967. It also reaffirms the illegality of Israeli actions aimed at changing the status of Jerusalem.

“Israel’s determination to continue its expansionist project inside Palestinian territory, especially as it continues to construct the separation wall in implementation of its policy of *fait accompli*, and its non-compliance with General Assembly resolution ES-10/13 of 21 October 2003, which demanded that Israel stop the construction of this wall, are blatant examples of Israel’s illegitimate actions in violation of the Armistice Line of 1949 and its denial of the principle of equal and inalienable rights and self-determination of peoples, all of which constitutes a further obstacle to achieving the desired peace.

“The Syrian Arab Republic condemns Israel’s continued illegal occupation of Arab territories, acts of aggression, incursions into Palestinian areas, house demolition, confiscation of land, detentions, policy of

assassination of Palestinian leaders, all of which has escalated recently, and the expulsion of Palestinians from their houses, cities and villages. These Israeli policies reflect the State terrorism that Israel practises, its real intention of continuing the occupation and its disregard for decisions of international legitimacy. These Israeli policies are incompatible with the desire of the international community to reach a settlement of the Palestine question in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions, in particular Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) of 22 November 1967 and 338 (1973) of 22 October 1973, which affirmed the necessity of Israel's withdrawal from all occupied Arab territories and of enabling the Palestinian people to exercise its right to self-determination and to establish its own independent State on its national soil."

II. Observations

5. I regret to report that despite the efforts of the international community through the Quartet (the United Nations, the European Union, the Russian Federation and the United States of America), and the stated commitment of the parties to the road map initiative expressed at the summit meeting at Aqaba, Jordan, on 4 June 2003, the situation in the Middle East is characterized by a stalled peace process and continuing high levels of violence. Throughout the past year, both Palestinians and Israelis have suffered from violence and ever-mounting death tolls. The humanitarian situation in the occupied Palestinian territory continued to deteriorate sharply, with even a minimum standard of living for many Palestinians being sustained only by assistance from the donor community, particularly by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and other United Nations agencies and programmes.

6. The rising number of deaths and injuries is evidence of the lack of progress in advancing the peace process over the last year. As at 16 September 2004, 825 Palestinians and 136 Israelis had lost their lives in the conflict in the preceding year. In the four years that have passed since the eruption of the violence in September 2000, no fewer than 3,633 Palestinians and 966 Israelis have been killed. This ever-mounting human tragedy reiterates the urgent need for the parties to implement their road map obligations and for getting the peace process back on track.

7. Neither side has taken adequate steps to protect civilians, and both are in breach of their international legal obligations. Israel, as the occupying Power, has clear obligations to protect Palestinian civilians and their property. Nevertheless, Palestinian civilians continue to be killed and injured in Israeli military operations, including incursions and pre-emptive strikes. In addition, Israel has continued the illegal practice of extrajudicial killings. The scale of destruction of Palestinian property by the Israeli military raises serious concerns about collective punishment. For its part, the Palestinian Authority has obligations under agreements reached with Israel, international humanitarian law and its commitments to the road map to protect Israeli civilians from attacks emanating from territories in its control. It has failed to live up to those obligations, and Israeli civilians continue to suffer terrorist attacks from Palestinian militant groups, including suicide bombings and Qassam rocket strikes. For each side to cite the actions of the other excuses neither from fulfilling its own obligations. There can be no preconditions for the observance of humanitarian law and international agreements.

8. More broadly, the parties have not lived up to their road map obligation. The Israeli Government has made no progress on its core obligation immediately to dismantle settlement outposts erected since March 2001 and to freeze settlement activities, including natural growth. The Palestinian Authority has made no progress on its core obligations to take immediate action on the ground to end violence and combat terror. Until and unless both the Palestinian Authority and the Government of Israel take the necessary first steps to restore momentum towards peace, the stalemate will continue and there will be no lasting ceasefire. Those first steps are clear: on the Israeli side, the dismantling of settlement outposts and the implementation of a full freeze of all settlement activities, and on the Palestinian side, the implementation of meaningful security reforms and bringing to an end the use of violence in all its forms.

9. Israel has failed to implement its core commitments under the road map. Settlement expansion and lack of action on removing the outposts erected since 2001 severely undermine Palestinian trust in Israel's intentions and contribute to strengthening extremist opinion among Palestinians. Despite repeated promises by the Israeli Government, settlement activities continue. According to figures of the Israeli Ministry of the Interior, the settler population continues to increase. Settlement construction is reported to have continued at a considerable pace, in particular in large settlement blocs. In and around East Jerusalem, recent settlement activity, both governmental and privately sponsored, has proceeded at a rate that observers describe as unmatched since 1992. Government-sponsored settlement activity has serious effects on the territorial contiguity of the Palestinian territory. Thus, reports that the Israeli Government had approved plans for the construction of 600 new accommodation units in Maale Adumim, already the largest Israeli settlement, and the release of tenders for the construction of more than 1,000 new housing units in West Bank settlements were of special concern.

10. Throughout the reporting period, Israel persisted in its efforts to confine the elected President of the Palestinian Authority, Mr. Arafat, to his headquarters in the West Bank.

11. The security measures taken by the Palestinian Authority are still limited and unclear. Over the last 12 months, we have been consistently calling on the Palestinian Authority to take decisive action to reform, refocus and rehabilitate the Palestinian security services. Decisive action in this regard would help to restore law and order as well as the Palestinian Authority's diminished credibility. The required elements of reform are clear to all: the consolidation of all security services into three main bodies, with a professional leadership, and putting them under the authority of an effective Interior Minister who reports to an empowered Prime Minister.

12. Another crucial area is elections. On 4 September 2004, voter registration began under the auspices of the Central Elections Commission, as the international community had persistently demanded over the past year. At the same time, it is most regrettable that the Israeli authorities closed three registration centres and detained five Palestinian staff of the Commission on 13 September 2004. Such action represents an unacceptable interference with the registration process in East Jerusalem, and we call on Israel to facilitate, rather than hinder, this important process. In addition, much work remains to be done by the Palestinian Authority to ensure that the local elections, scheduled to begin on 9 December 2004 and last for

one year, meet minimum international standards. Even more important, national elections have to follow soon.

13. Over the past year, the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question, remained the subject of extensive consultations and debates in the Security Council. The Secretariat continued to provide regular informal briefings to the Council on the latest developments in the Middle East. Over the course of this year, the Security Council adopted two resolutions regarding the Middle East. On 19 November 2003, the Council adopted resolution 1515 (2003), endorsing the road map and calling on the parties to fulfil their road map obligations. On 19 May 2004, the Security Council adopted resolution 1544 (2004), calling on Israel to respect its obligations under international humanitarian law, including its obligation not to destroy Palestinian homes in a manner contrary to the law.

14. Israel continued construction of the barrier in parts of the West Bank during the year. The General Assembly adopted resolution ES-10/13 on 21 October 2003, demanding that Israel immediately stop and reverse construction of the wall being built in parts of the West Bank. The resolution requested that I submit reports periodically to the Assembly, with the first, on compliance with the resolution, due within a month. I submitted to the Assembly the report, ES-10/248, on 24 November 2003. On 8 December 2003, the General Assembly adopted resolution ES-10/14, requesting the International Court of Justice to urgently render an advisory opinion on the legal consequences of the wall. The Court heard arguments in public hearings in February 2004 and on 9 July rendered an advisory opinion declaring that the construction of the wall in the occupied Palestinian territory, including in and around East Jerusalem, is contrary to international law; that Israel is obligated to terminate such breaches and make reparation for all damage caused by the construction of the wall; and that the Assembly and Security Council might wish to consider further action to bring an end to the illegal situation. The Assembly, on 20 July 2004, adopted resolution ES-10/15, demanding that Israel comply with its legal obligations and requesting me to establish a register of damage caused by the construction of the wall.

15. During the reporting period, there has been a disturbing increase in acts of violence against and harassment of United Nations staff and property. United Nations staff are frequently hindered in carrying out their duties. Israel has a clear obligation to ensure the safety and security of United Nations staff and property. In addition, Israel should work to ensure that the movement of humanitarian goods is not unduly impeded by security concerns. Israel should also undertake efforts to facilitate the movement of United Nations staff through the Erez crossing, in accordance with the privileges and immunities accorded to all United Nations staff members.

16. In February 2004, Prime Minister Sharon announced an initiative to withdraw Israeli armed forces from Gaza and parts of the West Bank and to evacuate all settlements in the Gaza Strip, as well as four settlements in the northern West Bank. At its meeting on 4 May 2004, the Quartet welcomed this step and stated that for it to be effective and a real contribution to the peace process, the following requirements needed to be met: that the withdrawal be full and complete; that it lead to an end of the occupation of Gaza and be accompanied by similar steps in the West Bank; that it take place within the framework of the road map and the vision of two States; and that it be fully coordinated with the Palestinian Authority and the

Quartet. It is my hope that both the Israeli and the Palestinian sides will focus on the tasks at hand in order to make withdrawal and its aftermath a new beginning of the peace process. Egypt and Jordan can assist this process. Both countries have so far displayed welcome and commendable leadership.

17. The United Nations, and the international community at large, is ready to assist the parties in this endeavour, if they make the right choices. The Quartet remains in close consultations and meets regularly to assess the situation on the ground and examine appropriate courses of action. The main donor coordination body, known as the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee, is planning to meet later in the year to examine ways in which the donor community could assist the parties to turn this withdrawal into the beginning of a genuine peace process. But, yet again, this depends on the parties themselves, the Government of Israel and the Palestinian Authority, and the choices they make in this regard.

18. On the economic front, the picture remains grim. The Palestinian economy is in tatters and stands little chance of recovery unless immediate action is taken. Forty-seven percent of the Palestinian population currently lives in poverty. Unemployment among Palestinians stands at 34.3 per cent, or 28.6 per cent at the International Labour Organization-adjusted rate, which excludes discouraged workers. At present, UNRWA and the World Food Programme are providing regular food aid to as many as 1,480,000 beneficiaries — 39 per cent of the total Palestinian population in the occupied territory — and UNRWA is now supplying 10 times as much food as it was before September 2000.

19. A recent World Bank study found that the deep economic crisis in the West Bank and Gaza is one of the worst recessions in modern history. It is contributing to the impoverishment of an entire generation of young Palestinians, as well as to the undermining of the credibility of the Palestinian Authority, and, inevitably, it is increasing the popular appeal of militant factions. The primary cause of this crisis is the closure regime imposed by the Government of Israel. Without a significant change in the closure regime, the Palestinian economy will not be revived. Indeed, the World Bank has emphasized that Israel's disengagement plan will have limited impact on the Palestinian economy and Palestinian livelihoods if it is not accompanied by a radical easing of closure that encompasses three elements: the removal of internal obstacles to movement in the West Bank, the opening of Palestinian external borders to commodity trade and a return to a reasonable flow of Palestinian labour into Israel.

20. If these conditions are met, additional donor money can be raised. But donors need some assurance that their contributions will have a productive impact. Aid will be provided in the context of a successful comprehensive Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and the northern West Bank, as a first step in the implementation of the road map.

21. It is particularly disquieting that Israel has announced its intention to phase out completely Palestinian employment inside Israel by 2008. The number of Palestinians employed in Israel has decreased significantly since September 2000. The Palestinian economy is dependent on the Israeli economy, not only for employment but also for raw materials and trade. Although the parties may choose to change this relationship in the long term, a revival of the Palestinian economy in the short term depends on a return to reasonable levels of Palestinian employment in Israel. Should Israel insist on ending Palestinian employment and implement the

disengagement plan without accompanying measures to ease internal and external closure, unemployment and poverty will continue to soar among Palestinians.

22. I call upon the international community to provide the resources necessary to support United Nations programmes in addressing the deteriorating economic and humanitarian situation of the Palestinian people, and especially to provide adequate funding to UNRWA so that it can continue to deliver the necessary services to the Palestinian refugees. Donor assistance is especially vital at a time when the humanitarian situation is so critical.

23. So far this year UNRWA has received pledges covering less than one half of its financial requirements for its emergency appeal for refugees in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Only \$89 million of the almost \$210 million needed has been pledged. With insufficient financial resources, the quality and level of the Agency's emergency humanitarian assistance will suffer, making the already miserable life of the Palestinian people even more difficult, with wider consequences.

24. Later this year, the Agency will be launching a five-year medium-term plan covering the approximately 2 million registered refugees throughout its area of operation. The additional funding needed for the plan will help create equity between refugees and non-refugees living side by side and enable the Agency to make up for years of under-funding.

25. I should like to pay special tribute to Terje Roed-Larsen, United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and my Personal Representative to the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Palestinian Authority, to the staff of the Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator and to Commissioner-General Peter Hansen of UNRWA, the staff of the Agency and all other United Nations agencies, who continue to provide sterling services while working under most demanding and difficult circumstances.

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The present report is submitted in accordance with General Assembly resolution 59/31. It contains replies received from the President of the Security Council and the concerned parties to the notes verbales sent by the Secretary-General pursuant to the request contained in paragraph 13 of the resolution. The report also contains the observations of the Secretary-General on the current state of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and on international efforts to move the peace process forward with a view to achieving a peaceful solution. The report covers the period from September 2004 through September 2005.

* The report was submitted after the established deadline in order to include as much updated information as possible.

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 59/31 of 1 December 2004.

2. On 25 May 2005, pursuant to the request contained in paragraph 13 of the above-mentioned resolution, I addressed the following letter to the President of the Security Council:

“I have the honour to refer to resolution 59/31, which the General Assembly adopted on 1 December 2004, at its fifty-ninth session, under the agenda item ‘Question of Palestine’.

“Paragraph 13 of the resolution requests the Secretary-General to continue his efforts with the parties concerned, and in consultation with the Security Council, towards the attainment of a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine and the promotion of peace in the region and to submit a report on these efforts and on developments on this matter.

“In order to fulfil my reporting responsibilities under this resolution, I should be grateful if you would kindly convey to me the views of the Security Council by 31 July 2005.”

3. On 26 July 2005, the following reply was received from the Security Council:

“The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question, remains one of the most important items on the Security Council agenda. The Council continues to consider the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question, on a regular basis, in particular with monthly briefings by the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs and senior Secretariat staff.

“On 31 August 2004, the President made a statement to the press, in which the members of the Council condemned the terrorist attacks in Israel that had resulted in the loss of innocent lives. They also condemned all other acts of terrorism, denounced the escalation in violence in the Middle East and called on the parties to continue the peace process in the region.

“The Council held an open debate on the situation in the Middle East on 4 October 2004, at which Algeria introduced a draft resolution on behalf of the Arab Group of States concerning Israeli military operations in Gaza. The Council voted on the draft resolution on 5 October 2004, but failed to adopt it.

“Following a regular briefing by Kieran Prendergast, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, and subsequent informal consultations on 22 October 2004, the President, in a brief statement to the press, highlighted the concerns of the Council at the lack of progress on the Middle East peace process and urged both parties to begin to implement, as soon as possible, the provisions of the road map.

“On 13 January 2005, following a regular briefing by the Under-Secretary-General Kieran Prendergast, which focused on the Palestinian presidential elections held on 9 January 2005, and subsequent informal consultations, the Council adopted a presidential statement (S/PRST/2005/2) referring to the following issues: the Palestinian presidential elections; the future political process, in particular the Palestinian legislative elections,

reinforcement of the Palestinian institutions, international assistance to the people and the Palestinian Authority; and the necessity of implementing the road map for a viable, democratic and sovereign Palestinian State, in peaceful and secure coexistence with Israel.

“On February 16 2005, the Council adopted a presidential statement (S/PRST/2005/6) welcoming the Sharm el Sheikh Summit of 8 February 2005 and the resumption of direct talks between Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas.

“On 9 March 2005, the Council adopted a presidential statement (S/PRST/2005/12) whereby it welcomed the conclusions of the London meeting on supporting the Palestinian Authority held on 1 March 2005.

“Responding to a request by the Arab Group for an immediate meeting of the Council to consider recent developments in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, the Council held an open debate on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question, on 21 July 2005. The United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Mr. Alvaro de Soto, briefed the Council on the latest developments in the region. No action was taken by the Council following this meeting.

“The Council continues to keep the evolving situation in the Middle East under active review through monthly briefings, open meetings and informal consultations. During these meetings, the Council members reiterate their support for a just and comprehensive settlement in the Middle East based on resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973), 1397 (2002) and 1515 (2003), the foundations of the Madrid Conference, the principle of land for peace, agreements previously reached by the parties and the initiative of Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah endorsed in Beirut at the summit-level Council of the League of Arab States.”

4. In a note verbale dated 31 May 2005 to the parties concerned, I sought the positions of the Governments of Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic, as well as of the Palestine Liberation Organization, regarding any steps taken by them to implement the relevant provisions of the resolution. As at 20 September 2005, the following replies had been received:

Note verbale dated 4 August 2005 from the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

“As you are aware, Israel has voted against this resolution, as it has done time and time again against similar resolutions adopted by the General Assembly during previous sessions. Because the situation in the Middle East is at a delicate crossroads, Israel wishes to once again put on record its position on this matter.

“As I write this letter, Israel is making its final preparations to implement its disengagement from Gaza and part of the northern West Bank in the hope of restarting the peace process. Even as Israel is taking unilateral steps for the

sake of peace, Palestinian terrorism not only continues but also, as of late, has intensified.

“While Israel remains hopeful that new, positive developments in the region will bear fruit, no real progress can be made until the Palestinian Authority takes the necessary steps to end Palestinian terrorism.

“Israel views this General Assembly resolution as unbalanced and politically motivated. What is more pressing about this resolution is that it causes undue interference in issues that both parties agreed to resolve within the context of direct bilateral negotiations and, thus, risks derailing the peace process further.

“The violence in the region has been a result of a Palestinian decision to abandon peace negotiations and pursue their goals through violence and terrorism. The one-sided approach reflected in the resolution, which seeks to dictate the outcome of the negotiating process, effectively rewards violence at a time when the Palestinian side must discontinue all acts of violence and terrorism and boldly pursue the path of peaceful dialogue, as called for in the road map, which compels the Palestinian Authority to prevent ‘all acts of violence against Israelis anywhere’.

“Aside from being damaging to the Middle East peace process, this type of resolution contradicts the decisions to reform and reinvigorate the United Nations. Rather than promoting a vision that recognizes the rights and obligations of both sides, as articulated in the road map, these resolutions obscure the efforts of the parties to achieve a negotiated outcome. It is one-sided resolutions like this that put in jeopardy the efficacy of the United Nations and the efficiency of the General Assembly and that must be done away with.

“The damaging effects on future peace that these kinds of resolutions have require your immediate consideration. Israel calls upon the international community to use its voices to promote peace rather than misuse the United Nations to pass counterproductive, politically motivated resolutions.”

Note verbale dated 2 August 2005 from the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

“General Assembly resolutions on the peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine have traditionally reaffirmed rules and principles of international law central and, in fact, deemed to be essential to the peaceful and just resolution of the long-standing question of Palestine. The overwhelming support received by those resolutions is reflective of the near consensus of the international community with regard to this issue, a consensus rooted in positions and convictions that are based on the primacy of international law in international relations and on the universal ideals of justice and peace. During the fifty-ninth session of the General Assembly, Member States once again adopted a resolution on this subject, resolution 59/31, by a huge majority of 161 votes in favour, with only 7 votes against and 10 abstentions.

“Moreover, the International Court of Justice, the principal judicial organ of the United Nations system and the highest authority in international law, in its advisory opinion of 9 July 2004 on the *Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory*, determined the applicable rules and principles of international law, including international humanitarian law and human rights law. The Court determined that the The Hague Regulations — considered to have become part of customary international law — and the Fourth Geneva Convention are indisputably applicable in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. The Court also found that the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child are also applicable within the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

“The Court found that Israel had violated the customary rule regarding the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory resulting from the threat or use of force, a principle enshrined in the Charter and reaffirmed in General Assembly resolution 2625 (XXV) of 1970. In this context, the Court found that the area east of the 1949 Armistice Line (the Green Line) and the former eastern boundary of Palestine under the mandate, including East Jerusalem, was occupied by Israel in 1967 and, under international law, considered to be occupied territory. The Court concluded that subsequent events have done nothing to alter this situation and that this territory remains occupied and that Israel continues to have the status of occupying Power. As to the specific violation of other relevant provisions of the law, the Court found that the obligations violated by Israel include certain obligations erga omnes, including the obligation to respect the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and certain of its obligations under international humanitarian law.

“The General Assembly, in its resolution 59/31, reaffirmed these basic rules and principles of international law, which are deemed essential for achieving a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East. Other rules recalled in the resolution are also embodied in other relevant Assembly resolutions, including those adopted by its tenth emergency special session, and in various Security Council resolutions, including resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973), 1397 (2002) and 1515 (2003). Accordingly, as it reaffirmed the necessity of achieving a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, in all its aspects, and of intensifying efforts towards that end, the Assembly, inter alia, stressed the need for the withdrawal of Israel from the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967 and the need for the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, primarily the right to self-determination and the right to their independent State. In the resolution, the Assembly also stressed the need to resolve the problem of the Palestinian refugees in conformity with resolution 194 (III) of 11 December 1948.

“Since the adoption of resolution 59/31, the international community has been preoccupied with two critical issues vis-à-vis the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, namely, the critical issue of the continuing unlawful construction of the wall by Israel, the occupying Power; its impact on the humanitarian situation on the ground and

on the prospects for a just and lasting political settlement; and the issue of Israel's unilateral disengagement plan from Gaza and parts of the northern West Bank.

“The scope and significance of the ruling of the International Court of Justice were highlighted in our previous note to the Secretary-General of 16 August 2004 on the peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine (see A/59/574-S/2004/909). It is regrettable that Israel continues to defy the international community and engage in grave violations and breaches of international law and international humanitarian law in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. One year after the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the *Legal Consequences of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory*, Israel has announced accelerated plans for the completion of the construction of the wall in and around East Jerusalem, which will completely isolate Jerusalem from the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory and will leave more than 55,000 Palestinian Jerusalemites cut off from their city. Clearly, the continuing violation of international law and total disrespect for the advisory opinion and the Assembly's resolutions must continue to be a matter of serious concern for the United Nations. The direct and grave impact of this ongoing illegal situation on the efforts to achieve a peaceful settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is unquestionable and must be urgently addressed by both the Assembly and the Security Council — this is a duty that was affirmed by the International Court of Justice in clear and definitive terms. The international community must act and it must be made clear that Israel, the occupying Power, has a choice: either it can choose to comply with the advisory opinion and its legal obligations under international law or it can formally choose to become an outlaw State and be treated as such.

“The Court has determined beyond any doubt that Israel is under obligation to terminate its breaches of international law, to cease the construction of the wall being built in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including in and around East Jerusalem, to dismantle the structure therein situated and to repeal or render ineffective all legislative and regulatory acts relating thereto; that Israel is under an obligation to make reparation for all damage caused by the construction of the wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including in and around East Jerusalem; that all States are under an obligation not to recognize the illegal situation resulting from the construction of the wall and not to render aid or assistance in maintaining the situation created by such construction; and that all States parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention have an additional obligation of ensuring compliance by Israel with the Convention. The Court has also determined that the United Nations, especially the General Assembly and the Security Council, should consider what further action is required to bring to an end the illegal situation resulting from the construction of the wall and the associated regime, taking due account of the advisory opinion.

“The Assembly, at its tenth emergency special session, received and acknowledged the advisory opinion and adopted resolution ES-10/15, on 20 July 2004, in which it, inter alia, adopted specific measures and demands that need to be followed up by the United Nations Secretariat, the Security Council and all Member States. The Security Council held an open public

debate on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question, on 21 July 2005, in which Palestine clearly recalled the responsibilities of the different organs of the United Nations, including the Secretariat, the General Assembly and the Security Council, to step up the implementation of their obligations as contained in the advisory opinion and as contained in resolution ES-10/15. This includes the establishment by the Secretary-General of the register of damages and the necessary follow-up to the report submitted to the Assembly by Switzerland, in its capacity as depositary of the Geneva Conventions.

“With regard to Israel’s unilateral disengagement plan and the intended withdrawal from Gaza and certain parts of the northern West Bank, it is deplorable that, since Prime Minister Sharon’s declaration regarding the implementation of his unilateral plan, Israel, the occupying Power, has intensified its illegal colonization campaign, including the intensification of settlement activities, the completion of the construction of the wall and the complete isolation of East Jerusalem from the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory. The focused efforts of the international community to ensure that the Gaza withdrawal plan is a success and an opportunity to revive the peace process should not be manipulated and exploited by Israel in order to complete its colonization and de facto annexation of huge areas of the West Bank. The international community must be aware that the continuation of such illegal Israeli policies and measures will not only undermine the success of the Gaza withdrawal, but will also undermine the possibility of reaching a final settlement based on the two-State solution.

“The withdrawal of the Israeli occupying forces and the evacuation of illegal settlements from Gaza, on the one hand, and the intensification of the expansion of settlement activities, the construction of the wall and the isolation of East Jerusalem, on the other hand, regrettably indicate that the Gaza disengagement is a ploy by Israeli Prime Minister Sharon to preclude any serious resumption of final status negotiations leading to the establishment of the independent State of Palestine on the territory occupied by Israel in 1967. Therefore, the international community must exert serious efforts to ensure that the Gaza withdrawal is actually implemented in the context of the road map, wherein the Gaza withdrawal is a first step leading towards the implementation of the road map and the achievement of the two-State solution. The withdrawal from Gaza should be coupled with a total freeze of settlement activities in the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including in and around East Jerusalem, and Israel should immediately halt the construction of the wall and dismantle the parts already erected, as recommended by the International Court of Justice. These are preconditions that will facilitate the success of the Gaza withdrawal and a meaningful resumption of the long-overdue final status negotiations.

“In this context, it is essential that the international community, while focusing its efforts on making the Gaza withdrawal a success, adopt a serious position vis-à-vis Israel’s illegal policies and measures in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem. Such efforts should include the provision of practical measures to ensure compliance by Israel with its legal obligations under international law, including those contained in the findings of the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice. The international

community must also ensure that Israel terminates its illegal policies and measures, which are destroying the territorial contiguity and the national unity of the Occupied Palestinian Territory in an attempt to unilaterally draw de facto borders that totally undermine and preclude the establishment of a viable Palestinian State as envisaged in the road map.

“Thirty-eight years after Israel occupied the Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, and other Arab territories, the fundamental prerequisite for resolving the question of Palestine and achieving a peaceful settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict based on the two-State solution remains Israel’s withdrawal from the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, as called for in General Assembly resolution 59/31, Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and numerous other resolutions.

“With regard to the efforts for achieving a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine, the Assembly has significantly reaffirmed the permanent responsibility of the United Nations with regard to the question of Palestine until it is resolved in all its aspects; has also reaffirmed its full support for the Middle East peace process and the existing agreements between the Israeli and Palestinian sides; has welcomed the efforts of the Quartet aimed at the establishment of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East; has welcomed the Arab Peace Initiative adopted by the League of Arab States in Beirut in March 2002; and has called upon both parties to fulfil their obligations in the implementation of the road map, stressing in this regard the importance and urgency of establishing a credible and effective third-party monitoring mechanism including all members of the Quartet. Furthermore, the Assembly, in resolution 59/31, rightly stressed the necessity of a commitment to the two-State solution, the principle of land-for-peace, the implementation of the relevant Security Council resolutions, a speedy end to the reoccupation of Palestinian towns and cities and the complete cessation of all acts of violence, including military attacks, destruction and acts of terror, which in recent years have caused the grave deterioration of the situation on the ground and have severely debilitated the search for a peaceful resolution to the question of Palestine.

“In the resolution, the Assembly also addressed another aspect of the question of Palestine that constitutes an extremely relevant consideration for any efforts aimed at resolving this tragic and protracted conflict, namely the humanitarian aspect. The Assembly expressed its grave concern regarding the tragic events in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, since 28 September 2000, including deaths and injuries, mostly among Palestinian civilians, the deepening humanitarian crisis facing the Palestinian people and the widespread destruction of Palestinian property and infrastructure, both private and public, including many institutions of the Palestinian Authority. In this regard, the Assembly emphasized the importance of the safety and well-being of all civilians in the whole Middle East region and condemned all acts of violence and terror against civilians on both sides, including suicide bombings and extrajudicial executions. Further, with regard to the dire humanitarian crisis being inflicted on the Palestinian people, the Assembly urged Member States to expedite the provision of economic, humanitarian and technical assistance to the Palestinian people and Palestinian Authority during this critical period to help alleviate their suffering, rebuild

the Palestinian economy and infrastructure and support the restructuring and reform of Palestinian institutions.

“In conclusion, the Palestinian leadership reaffirms its commitment to a negotiated, peaceful solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict based on international law. Furthermore, the Palestinian leadership, despite the difficulties that Israel is imposing with regard to its departure from Gaza and areas in the northern West Bank, is also keen to achieve the rapid success of this exercise so that we can immediately proceed thereafter to the implementation of the road map and the negotiations on the final settlement. Indeed, the issue of the withdrawal from Gaza should not be kept on the political agenda for much longer than the end of this year. We believe it is imperative that this be concluded by year’s end and that we begin final negotiations before the end of 2005, for time is truly of the essence and its continued passage, along with the continuation of violations in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, will only make the peace that is so desperately yearned for by the Palestinian people and by the international community as a whole ever more elusive.”

II. Observations

5. I am glad to report that the “window of opportunity” to revitalize the Middle East peace process that emerged during the past year has, despite setbacks, remained open. We have witnessed the successful completion of the Israeli disengagement from the Gaza Strip and parts of the northern West Bank. On 7 August 2005, the Israeli Cabinet approved the evacuation of the first settlements under this initiative. In the early hours of 12 September 2005, Israel withdrew the last of its military personnel and installations from the Gaza Strip. Furthermore, as of 20 September 2005, and following the completion of the evacuation of civilian army infrastructure from four settlements in the northern West Bank, Israeli forces put an end to their permanent presence in the area of the evacuated settlements. As Israel’s first withdrawal from occupied Palestinian territory since the occupation began in 1967, it was a landmark in Israeli-Palestinian relations, setting an important precedent for the eventual realization of the two-State solution.

6. I would like to commend Prime Minister Sharon’s political courage and steady commitment to disengagement. I would also like to commend the Palestinian Authority for its responsible behaviour during this period, in facilitating a smooth and peaceful operation. The increased coordination between the parties as a result of this is a positive step, which must be built upon in the future. Nevertheless, the events in the aftermath of disengagement illustrated the problems of unilateral actions. For example, the Israel Defense Forces withdrew from Gaza without demolishing places of worship. The buildings were thus passed unexpectedly to the Palestinian Authority, which was not in a position to protect them.

7. I also commend James D. Wolfensohn, the Quartet’s Special Envoy for Gaza Disengagement, for his work since his appointment in April 2005. Mr. Wolfensohn helped to enhance crucial channels of coordination between the parties in the process of disengagement, the importance of which I emphasized during my own visit to Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory in March 2005. In the aftermath of the Israeli withdrawal, he continues his efforts to follow up on a six-point agenda:

border crossings and trade corridors; movement between the West Bank and Gaza; movement within the West Bank; the Gaza airport and seaport; the houses in the Israeli settlements; and their agricultural assets. As yet, many of these issues remain unresolved. Mr. Wolfensohn believes that the parties are close to an understanding on how the main border passages between Israel and the Palestinian Authority will operate. Rafah (on the Gaza-Egypt border) is likely to be operated by Palestinians and Egyptians, with a possible third-party presence. It is hoped that agreement on outstanding issues will be reached in the coming weeks.

8. Mr. Wolfensohn identified three key areas for the Palestinian Authority to address, with international support: the Palestinian Authority's fiscal crisis and development of a fiscal stabilization plan to be included in the 2006 budget; the creation of a general development plan related to a fiscally sound financial plan for 2006-2008; and the design of quick-impact economic programmes that would respond to pressures for short-term employment generation. These issues are important elements of the foundations for economic recovery, good governance and, eventually, statehood.

9. I would like to congratulate the Palestinian people for demonstrating their commitment to democracy during the Palestinian presidential election in January 2005. Although the elections were complicated by the continuing Israeli occupation and restrictions on freedom of movement imposed in the occupied Palestinian territory, turnout was nonetheless high. I would also like to congratulate Mahmoud Abbas, who won in the seven-candidate field with 62.5 per cent of the votes cast. The elections for the Palestinian Legislative Council will follow the presidential ballot. These elections were delayed on 3 June 2005, when President Abbas issued a decree stating the need for a new electoral law ensuring at least 50 per cent proportional representation. They are now scheduled to be held in January 2006. The Palestinian Authority leadership has sought to encourage groups that have engaged in terrorism to abandon this course and engage in the democratic process. This objective deserves the full support of the international community.

10. At the Sharm el Sheikh summit in February 2005, the parties pledged to end all violence with a ceasefire that has broadly survived. Israel agreed to release a number of Palestinian prisoners and transfer control of five West Bank cities to the Palestinian Authority. The security situation improved noticeably in the aftermath of the summit, a trend that was reflected in a marked decrease in the number of deaths and injuries recorded during the reporting period. Israel released a number of prisoners but transferred control of only two of the five cities agreed upon. It also resumed its policy of extrajudicial killings. Nevertheless, Israel exercised restraint in its military activities in the period prior to disengagement, despite incidents of Palestinian violence. In a welcome step, the Israel Defense Forces decided to halt their policy of demolishing Palestinian houses either as punishment for acts of violence or as deterrence.

11. Of particular concern to me are the incidents in which United Nations staff members and other international aid workers have been held hostage by Palestinian armed elements. The most recent of these incidents to date occurred on 8 August 2005, when two hostages were released amidst shooting. There remains significant concern for the safety of United Nations staff members and other international aid workers in the Gaza Strip.

12. The Palestinian Authority must push ahead with efforts to reform the Palestinian security services. Decisive action in this regard should help to restore law and order. The fragmented Palestinian security services are being consolidated into three main branches — the national forces, the intelligence forces and the police — under the supervision of the Ministry of Interior. New heads of the security services have been appointed and the security retirement law is being implemented. President Abbas has repeatedly emphasized his commitment to work towards the Palestinian Authority's monopoly on the use of force.

13. A recent independent report by Strategic Assessments Initiative, written in close collaboration with United States Security Coordinator General William Ward and in consultation with senior Palestinian security officials, stated that the Palestinian security services remained divided, weak, overstaffed, badly motivated and under-armed. A number of unintegrated forces, Palestinian clans and individual force commanders continue to wield undue influence. Other potentially troubling issues within the security services include corruption, institutional hierarchies, cults of personality and lack of cohesive training. The problems within the security services were also illustrated in the post-disengagement period, when law and order seemed to crumble.

14. Israel, in turn, has also failed to make progress on the implementation of its core commitments under the road map. Settlement expansion and lack of action on removing illegal settlement outposts erected since 2001 severely undermined trust in Israel's intentions. In the spring of 2005, Israel announced plans to construct 3,500 new housing units in Ma'ale Adumim and two other settlement blocs in the West Bank, and in early June it publicized tenders for the construction of 22 housing units in Ma'ale Adumim. Government-sponsored settlement activity may have a negative impact on the territorial contiguity of Palestinian territory and thus remains a source of serious concern. According to the road map, Israel has an obligation to freeze all settlement activity, including natural growth, and immediately dismantle outposts erected illegally since March 2001.

15. I also remain concerned about Israel's continued construction of the barrier in the West Bank, which encroaches on Palestinian land. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution ES-10/15 of 20 July 2004, I am in the process of establishing a register of damages incurred by Palestinians due to the construction of the wall. The construction of the barrier is a unilateral act not in keeping with the road map. Along with continued Israeli settlement activity, it constitutes a key challenge to the fulfilment of the road map's goal of a two-State solution. I urge the Government of Israel to address its security concerns in a manner that will not increase suffering among Palestinians, prejudge final status issues or threaten longer-term prospects for peace by making the creation of a viable and contiguous Palestinian State more difficult. I reiterate my call to Israel to abide by its legal obligations as set forth in the 9 July 2004 advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice and resolution ES-10/15.

16. The Secretariat continued to provide regular monthly briefings to the Security Council on the latest developments in the Middle East and efforts to achieve a full and comprehensive peace, security and stability for the entire region on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973).

17. The Quartet (the United Nations, the European Union, the United States of America and the Russian Federation) intensified its work, meeting in September,

March, May and June of the reporting period. On 20 September 2005, Quartet principals gathered at the margins of the High-level Plenary Meeting of the sixtieth session of the General Assembly in New York. They discussed three clusters of issues: improving the daily lives of Palestinians; Palestinian security sector reform; and the participation of armed groups in the political process. The Quartet concluded that, in principle, those who wish to be part of the political process should not engage in militia or armed group activities, as there is a fundamental contradiction between such activities and the building of a democratic State.

18. The wider international community also signalled a greater interest and engagement in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, particularly as disengagement approached. On 25 May 2005, United States President George Bush and President Abbas met for the first time since Mr. Abbas's election in January. United States Security Coordinator General William Ward was active in assisting Palestinian security sector reform and turned his attention to security coordination in preparation for the Israeli withdrawal. On 23 June 2005, the Group of Eight offered strong support at its annual Summit, at Gleneagles, pledging \$3 billion in aid to the Palestinian Authority once disengagement was completed.

19. The humanitarian situation of the Palestinian people in 2004 remained grave. About half of the Palestinian population lived below the official poverty line of \$2.10 per day, compared to just 22 per cent in 2000. Furthermore, 16 per cent of Palestinians (approximately 560,000 people) were in deep poverty. Unemployment increased more than threefold since 2000, reaching a figure of 238,000 unemployed in 2004, largely as a result of internal and external roadblocks in and to the occupied Palestinian territory. Palestinians continued to face problems reaching their places of work, schools and hospitals, and standards of health and education continued to deteriorate. In some parts of the territory, Palestinians' needs for additional humanitarian assistance rose sharply as a consequence.

20. I call upon the international community to provide adequate funding for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) so that it can continue to deliver the necessary services to the Palestinian refugees. So far this year, UNRWA has received pledges covering 53 per cent of its financial requirements for its emergency appeal for refugees in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Only \$110 million of the \$209.4 million needed has been pledged. With insufficient financial resources, the quality and level of the Agency's emergency humanitarian assistance will suffer, making the already very difficult life of the Palestinian people even more miserable.

21. For its part, the United Nations will continue to work towards a renewal of the peace process and continue in its efforts to alleviate the severe social and economic hardships of the Palestinian people. To this end, I will continue to press for renewed action in parallel by both parties on their obligations under the road map, which provides both Israel and the Palestinians the best opportunity to move beyond the conflict and towards peace, security and prosperity. The international community must continue to assist the parties to address economic, humanitarian, security and political issues simultaneously. The United Nations reaffirms its commitment to an independent, democratic and viable Palestinian State living side by side with Israel, as well as its commitment to the broader achievement of peace, security and stability for the entire region on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973), 1397 (2002) and 1515 (2003), and in accordance with the road

map and the Arab peace initiative, presented by Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah, which culminated in the Beirut Arab summit declaration of 2002. The coordinated efforts of the international community are needed to support this process, and I will continue to maintain close and regular contact with members of the Quartet, the parties involved, regional leaders and the broader international community to capitalize on the progress made in the past year.

22. I would like to pay tribute to the late Palestinian President Yasser Arafat, who passed away on 11 November 2004. For nearly four decades, he represented the national aspirations of the Palestinian people. In 1988, he led the Palestinians to accept the principle of peaceful coexistence between Israel and a future Palestinian State.

23. Finally, I would like to pay special tribute to Alvaro de Soto, recently appointed as United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and my Personal Representative to the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Palestinian Authority, to the staff of the Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator, to newly appointed Commissioner-General Karen Koning AbuZayd of UNRWA, the staff of the Agency and all other United Nations agencies, who continue to provide excellent services while working under the most demanding and difficult circumstances.



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The situation in the Middle East

Question of Palestine

Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report is submitted in accordance with General Assembly resolution 60/39. It contains replies received from the President of the Security Council and the concerned parties to the notes verbales sent by the Secretary-General pursuant to the request contained in paragraph 18 of the resolution. The report also contains the observations of the Secretary-General on the current state of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and on international efforts to move the peace process forward with a view to achieving a peaceful solution. The report covers the period from September 2005 through September 2006.



I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 60/39 of 1 December 2005.

2. On 1 June 2006, pursuant to the request contained in paragraph 18 of the above-mentioned resolution, I addressed the following letter to the President of the Security Council:

“I have the honour to refer to resolution 60/39, which the General Assembly adopted on 1 December 2005, at its sixtieth session, under the agenda item ‘Question of Palestine’.

“Paragraph 18 of the resolution requests the Secretary-General to continue his efforts with the parties concerned, and in consultation with the Security Council, towards the attainment of a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine and the promotion of peace in the region and to submit to the General Assembly at its sixty-first session a report on these efforts and on developments on this matter.

“In order to fulfil my reporting responsibilities under this resolution, I should be grateful if you would kindly convey to me the views of the Security Council by 15 July 2006.”

3. On 18 July 2006, the following reply was received from the Security Council:

“The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question, remains one of the most important items on the Security Council agenda. The Council continues to consider the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question, on a regular basis, in particular with monthly briefings by the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs and senior Secretariat staff.

“On 23 September 2005, following a regular briefing by Alvaro de Soto, United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, and subsequent informal consultations, the Council adopted a presidential statement (S/PRST/2005/44) in which the Council called for renewed action in parallel by the Government of Israel and the Palestinian Authority on their obligations in accordance with the road map and to ensure continued progress towards the creation of an independent sovereign, democratic and viable State of Palestine living side by side with Israel in peace and security.

“Following a regular briefing by Ibrahim Gambari, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, and subsequent informal consultations on 30 November 2005, the Council adopted a presidential statement (S/PRST/2005/57), in which the Council welcomed the opening of the Rafah crossing on 25 November 2005 and, in this regard, commended the efforts of the Middle East Quartet, its Special Envoy and his team, as well as the positive contributions of the Government of Egypt, and it expressed its strong appreciation to the European Union for assuming the role of third-party monitor.

“On 3 February 2006, the Council adopted a presidential statement (S/PRST/2006/6) congratulating the Palestinian people on a free, fair and secure electoral process, expressing the Council’s expectation that a new government would remain committed to realizing the aspirations of the

Palestinian people for peace and statehood, and furthermore noting indications by major donors that they would review future assistance to a new Palestinian Authority government against that government's commitment to the principles of non-violence, recognition of Israel, and acceptance of previous agreements and obligations, including the road map.

“Acting on a request by the Arab Group and the League of Arab States for an immediate meeting of the Council to consider recent developments in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, including East Jerusalem, the Council held an open debate on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question, on 17 April 2006. No action was taken by the Council following this meeting.

“Acting again on a request by the Arab Group and the League of Arab States for an immediate meeting of the Council to consider recent developments in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, including East Jerusalem, the Council held an open debate on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question, on 30 June 2006. Qatar introduced a draft resolution on behalf of the Arab Group concerning Israeli military operations in Gaza. After further consultations, the Council voted on a revised text of the draft resolution on 13 July 2006, but failed to adopt it.

“The Council continues to keep the evolving situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question, under active review through monthly briefings, open meetings and informal consultations. During these meetings, the Council members reiterate their support for a just and comprehensive settlement in the Middle East based on resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973), 1397 (2002) and 1515 (2003), the foundations of the Madrid Conference, the principle of land for peace, agreements previously reached by the parties and the initiative of Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah endorsed in Beirut at the Summit-level Council of the League of Arab States.”

4. In a note verbale dated 30 May 2006 to the parties concerned, I sought the positions of the Governments of Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic, as well as of the Palestine Liberation Organization, regarding any steps taken by them to implement the relevant provisions of the resolution. As at 1 September 2006, the following replies had been received:

“Note verbale dated 10 August 2006 from the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

“As you are aware, Israel has voted against this resolution, as it has done time and time again against similar resolutions adopted by the General Assembly during previous sessions. Because the situation in the Middle East stands at a delicate crossroads, Israel wishes to once again put on record its position on this matter.

“One year ago, in August 2005, Israel withdrew all presence from the Gaza Strip and parts of the northern West Bank. The disengagement marked a time for renewed opportunities in the region, in the hope of restarting the peace process.

“Yet one year later, Palestinian terror not only continues but also, as of late, has intensified. Daily barrages of Qassam rockets, launched from terrorist positions in the Gaza Strip, fall persistently on southern Israeli communities. Israel had hoped that disengaging from Gaza, as one measure, would be a step in the right direction. Yet the response has been more of the same: terrorism. Day in and day out Israel is under attack. Israeli families, particularly those in the city of Sderot, which bears the brunt of Palestinian terror and rocket attacks from Gaza, live daily under siege.

“Analogous to the continued Palestinian terror attacks has been the failure of the Hamas-led Palestinian government to implement and accept the agreement and responsibilities established by the international community, in particular the goals and provisions outlined by the Quartet in the road map. The Hamas-led government has repeatedly neglected to condemn the continuing and increasing number of terror attacks, and has avoided their responsibility to recognize Israel.

“Israel views this General Assembly resolution as unbalanced and politically motivated. What is more pressing is that such a resolution causes undue interference in issues that both parties agreed to resolve within the context of bilateral negotiations and, thus, risks derailing the peace process further.

“Aside from being damaging to the Middle East peace process, this type of resolution contradicts the decisions to reform and reinvigorate the United Nations. Rather than promoting a vision that recognizes the rights and obligations of both sides, these resolutions obscure the efforts of the parties to achieve a negotiated outcome. It is one-sided resolutions like these that jeopardize the efficacy of the United Nations and the efficiency of the General Assembly. Hence, they must be done away with.”

“Note verbale dated 4 August 2006 from the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

“General Assembly resolutions on the peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine have traditionally reaffirmed rules and principles of international law, central and, in fact, deemed to be essential, to the achievement of a peaceful and just resolution of the long-standing question of Palestine. The overwhelming support traditionally received by those resolutions reflects the international community’s consensus regarding this issue, a consensus rooted in positions and convictions based on the primacy of international law in international relations and on the universal ideals of justice and peace. Indeed, during the Assembly’s sixtieth session, Member States again adopted a resolution on this subject, resolution 60/39, by a huge majority of 156 votes in favour, with only 6 votes against and 9 abstentions.

“Among the rules and principles of international law that the Assembly reaffirmed in its resolution 60/39 are two fundamental ones, namely the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples and the principle of the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war, as enshrined in the

Charter of the United Nations. Other rules recalled in the resolution are also embodied in other relevant Assembly resolutions, including those adopted by its tenth emergency special session and in various Security Council resolutions, including resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973), 1397 (2002), 1515 (2003) and 1544 (2004). Accordingly, as it reaffirmed the necessity of achieving a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, in all its aspects and of intensifying efforts towards that end, the Assembly, inter alia, stressed the need for the withdrawal of Israel from the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967 and the need for the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, primarily the right to self-determination and the right to their independent State. In the resolution, the Assembly also stressed the need to resolve the problem of the Palestine refugees in conformity with resolution 194 (III) of 11 December 1948.

“In connection with the requirements for achieving a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine, the Assembly has significantly reaffirmed the permanent responsibility of the United Nations with regard to the question of Palestine until it is resolved in all its aspects in accordance with international law; and has also reaffirmed, inter alia, its full support for the Middle East peace process and the existing agreements between the Israeli and Palestinian sides; has welcomed the efforts of the Quartet aimed at the establishment of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East; has called for the implementation of the road map; and has welcomed the Arab Peace Initiative adopted by the League of Arab States in Beirut in March 2002. Further towards the aim of achieving a peaceful settlement, the Assembly, in resolution 60/39, rightly stressed the necessity of a commitment to the two-State solution, the principle of land-for-peace, the implementation of the relevant Security Council resolutions, a speedy end to the reoccupation of Palestinian population centres and the complete cessation of all acts of violence, including military attacks, destruction and acts of terror, which in recent years have caused the grave deterioration of the situation on the ground and have severely debilitated the search for a peaceful resolution to the question of Palestine.

“In resolution 60/39, the Assembly also addressed another aspect of the question of Palestine that constitutes an extremely relevant consideration for any efforts aimed at resolving this tragic and protracted 39-year-old conflict, namely the humanitarian aspect. The Assembly expressed its grave concern regarding the tragic events in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, including East Jerusalem, since 28 September 2000, including the rising number of deaths and injuries, mostly among Palestinian civilians, the deterioration of the socio-economic and humanitarian conditions of the Palestinian people and the widespread destruction of public and private Palestinian property and infrastructure resulting from the unlawful policies and practices of Israel, the occupying Power. In this regard, the Assembly emphasized the importance of the safety and well-being of all civilians of the whole Middle East region and condemned all acts of violence and terror against civilians on both sides, including suicide bombings, extrajudicial executions and the excessive use of force. Further, the Assembly urged Member States to expedite the provision of economic, humanitarian and technical assistance to the Palestinian people and Palestinian Authority during this critical period to help alleviate their

suffering, rebuild the Palestinian economy and infrastructure and support the restructuring and reform of Palestinian institutions.

“In calling for efforts to be exerted for the peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine, the Assembly has been fully aware of the urgent need for revitalized and active international involvement in support of both parties so as to re-launch the peace process and lead towards the resumption and acceleration of direct negotiations between the parties. The Assembly has affirmed the need for the parties to cooperate with all international efforts and accordingly has called upon the concerned parties, the Quartet and other interested parties to exert all efforts and take all initiatives necessary to halt the deterioration of the situation and to reverse all measures taken on the ground since 28 September 2000, and to ensure a successful and speedy resumption of the peace process and conclusion of a final peace settlement. The role of the United Nations has been further spelled out in resolution 60/39 with the Assembly’s request that the Secretary-General continue his efforts with the parties concerned, and in consultation with the Security Council, towards the attainment of a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine and the promotion of peace in the region and to submit to the Assembly at its sixty-first session a report on these efforts and on developments on this matter, the purpose to which the present note is addressed.

“In sum, resolution 60/39 outlines in very clear terms what is fundamentally needed for the peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine. The international community’s support for the resolution reflects the wide consensus and conviction that the implementation of these provisions would effectively pave the way for the achievement of a just and lasting peace. Yet, regrettably, this resolution remains unimplemented, the question of Palestine remains unresolved and the Palestinian people continue to be denied their most basic rights and to suffer under Israel’s belligerent occupation.

“Of course, Israel has not complied with resolution 60/39 and continues to commit flagrant violations and grave breaches of the provisions of international law stipulated therein. Indeed, like countless other United Nations resolutions relevant to the question of Palestine, this resolution remains unimplemented and a peaceful settlement remains elusive. In addition, the Advisory Opinion rendered by the International Court of Justice on 9 July 2004 regarding Israel’s expansionist wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, including East Jerusalem, continues to be blatantly disrespected by the occupying Power. This historic Advisory Opinion constituted an authoritative and definitive determination of the applicable law regarding not only the wall but other core aspects of the question of Palestine, and indeed the Court was clear about the requirements for the peaceful settlement of this question in the Advisory Opinion, calling, inter alia, for compliance with the relevant provisions of international law and the implementation of relevant United Nations resolutions, and underscoring the importance of the law and of such resolutions, including the comprehensive resolutions adopted annually on the peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine for the ultimate just and lasting resolution of this conflict.

“Today, it is a profoundly regrettable fact that the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, including East Jerusalem, has not improved

and has in actuality dramatically deteriorated since the Assembly's adoption of resolution 60/39 in December 2005. Currently, we appear to be further away than ever from achieving the peaceful settlement envisaged in this resolution. This is primarily due to the continuation by Israel, the occupying Power, of its illegal policies and practices against the Palestinian people, which have included not only systematic human rights violations but also acts constituting State terrorism and grave breaches of the Fourth Geneva Convention under Article 147 on war crimes. In this regard, the unlawful actions by Israel have included, but have not been limited to: military raids and attacks; disproportionate and indiscriminate use of force against civilians, including children and women; extrajudicial executions; wanton and deliberate destruction of property, including homes; confiscation of land; construction of colonial settlements, especially in and around East Jerusalem, and transfer of the occupying Power's civilians to the Occupied Palestinian Territories; construction of a wall for the purposes of besieging and isolating civilians in walled enclaves; the arrest, detention and imprisonment of thousands of civilians, including minors; and collective punishment of the entire civilian population, including by means of severe restrictions on the freedom of movement of persons and goods via closures and hundreds of checkpoints.

“In terms of the restrictions on movement, it is necessary to draw attention to the fact that, during the reporting period, some of the Israeli checkpoints have been illegally transformed into structures similar to permanent border crossings in the middle of the Occupied Palestinian Territories, away from the 1967 border (the Green Line), which are physically severing the northern, central and southern parts of the Occupied Palestinian Territories, undermining its territorial integrity and contiguity, and devastating the Palestinian economy. During this same period, Israel has also declared its intentions to carry out its illegal so-called E1 plan in and around East Jerusalem, and illegally to annex the Jordan Valley. If implemented, the E1 plan will isolate occupied East Jerusalem from the West Bank by encircling the city with illegal settlement structures and the expansionist wall, severing the city territorially from the rest of the Palestinian territories and tipping the demographic balance of Jerusalem in favour of Israel by creating a Jewish majority through the incorporation of Jerusalem's illegal settler population. Further, it must be stated that, in general, Israel's continuing fervent campaign of settler colonialism throughout the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territories continues to threaten gravely the prospects for achieving a negotiated settlement based on the two-State solution as the occupying Power continues unlawfully to seize more Palestinian land and to sever the contiguity of the territory.

“Also during the reporting period, a month after resolution 60/39 was adopted, the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territories went to the polls to vote in their new legislature. The elections were deemed by all to be democratic, free and fair. The unfortunate response of some in the international community resulted in the political, economic and financial isolation of the Palestinian Authority, which has only intensified the already difficult situation facing the Palestinian people. Israel has taken the decision to withhold tax revenues belonging to the Palestinian Authority in violation of the Paris Protocol signed by both sides in 1994. This decision by the

occupying Power, coupled with the negative reaction of the international community, has caused a severe financial crisis for the Palestinian Authority and the Palestinian people and constitutes the punishment of the Palestinian people for exercising their democratic rights. The Palestinian leadership continues to call for the international community to reverse such decisions and for Israel to release those Palestinian Authority funds it is withholding.

“The difficult situation on the ground in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, including East Jerusalem, has been deeply exacerbated by this financial crisis. Yet what has caused even more devastation and humanitarian suffering for the Palestinian people has been the death and destruction wrought by Israel, the occupying Power, in recent months in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, particularly in the besieged Gaza Strip. The human and physical devastation caused by Israel in the Gaza Strip underscores the ever-present reality of the brutal, violent, and oppressive policies of the occupying Power against the Palestinian people. Israel’s premeditated military aggression against the Palestinian civilian population in the Gaza Strip, which began on 28 June 2006, has resulted in the death of nearly 200 Palestinians, including women and children, and the injury of hundreds more and has caused hundreds of families to flee their homes in fear and panic.

“Magnifying the deadly impact of Israel’s actions is the fact that well before Israel’s recent military incursion, Palestinians in Gaza were facing a dire humanitarian crisis stemming from shortages of food, medicine, clean drinking water and a lack of access to public utilities. Regrettably, this most recent Israeli aggression has further exacerbated the situation as a result of the complete destruction of basic and vital infrastructure in Gaza, as the occupying forces have bombed power stations, water pipelines, bridges and roads, as well as bombing institutions of the Palestinian National Authority causing extensive damage to many and completely destroying others, including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Gaza City. All of the above-mentioned actions, in addition to the repeated closure of border crossings into and out of the area, continue to impact severely the humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip.

“At the same time as its onslaught on Gaza, Israel has also kidnapped and detained at least 64 Palestinians, the majority of them high-ranking, democratically elected officials, including 8 cabinet ministers of the Palestinian Authority, 24 members of the Palestinian Legislative Council and several mayors. Israel’s direct targeting of senior Palestinian officials in such an operation is a clear indication that the current aggression is being carried out for political objectives and is intended to sabotage the recent agreement achieved among Palestinian parties for reconciliation and unity, and not only to hamper severely the functioning of the Palestinian Authority, but ultimately to cause its complete collapse, thus clearing the way for Israel to continue with its unlawful unilateral measures and plans in the Occupied Palestinian Territories under the pretext of having no partner for peace. Indeed, this recent Israeli military campaign was coincidentally launched on the eve of the agreement reached among Palestinian parties that was aimed directly at opening the door to a resumption of negotiations and the peace process.

“Prior to the recent military onslaught, it was already evident that the Israeli unilateral disengagement from Gaza had only deepened the economic,

social and humanitarian crises in the Gaza Strip. Moreover, Israel's unilateral disengagement had cut Gaza off from the rest of the world, as well as from the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territories. While the occupying Power repeatedly attempted to portray this move as the end of its military occupation of Gaza, Israel obviously never relinquished its control of Gaza's borders, territorial sea and airspace. This has turned Gaza into a massive prison, entirely besieged by Israel, with no attributes of sovereignty or independence. Currently, the humanitarian situation of the Palestinian people continues to decline rapidly, while Israeli tanks and occupying forces have also returned to Gaza, carrying out relentless bombing raids by Israeli F-16 jets and tank shelling of targets throughout the heavily populated civilian areas of Gaza. As we witness what is taking place in the Gaza Strip, it is more difficult than ever to interpret Israel's unilateral disengagement as a positive step forward.

"In this connection, the Palestinian leadership rejects any and all unilateral actions in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. The unilateral plan envisaged by the Israeli Prime Minister, which consists, inter alia, of the illegal de facto annexation of more territory in the occupied West Bank, the annexation of occupied East Jerusalem and its holy sites, and the imposition of a security border along the Jordan Valley, will effectively bury the internationally endorsed two-State solution. In this regard, it must be clearly reiterated that the Occupied Palestinian Territories, including East Jerusalem, constitute one single territorial unit and Israel's declared intentions to impose its unilateral plans in the West Bank must be completely rejected. In addition, such plans are unlawful, unacceptable and cannot alter the terms of reference of the peace process, which began in Madrid, nor negate the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, international law and relevant United Nations resolutions.

"The Palestinian people and their leadership continue to call upon the international community to unequivocally reject Israel's continuing military aggressions and unilateralism in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, including East Jerusalem, which will lead to neither peace nor stability. The international community is called upon to take urgent measures to address this ongoing tragedy. The United Nations has a permanent responsibility towards the question of Palestine until it is resolved in all its aspects. The Security Council should take the lead in this regard and undertake the bold and courageous actions necessary for ensuring Israeli compliance with the Council's resolutions and adherence to international law. It is not too late for the Council to use its authority to address this issue and to take the appropriate measures to bring an end to Israel's violations and grave breaches and to salvage the prospects for reaching a peaceful settlement.

"In conclusion, Palestine reaffirms its commitment to a negotiated, peaceful solution, based on international law, to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Despite the difficulties that Israel, the occupying Power, continues to impose on the Palestinian people, President Mahmoud Abbas continues to call for the immediate resumption of negotiations on the final settlement, based on the provisions of international law, international conventions, United Nations resolutions and the Arab Peace Initiative adopted in Beirut in 2002. Until the achievement of such a peaceful settlement, Palestine expresses its hopes for the continued support of the international community and the continued

exertion of genuine efforts towards this end, including in particular by the United Nations.”

II. Observations

5. As the current round of Israeli-Palestinian violence enters its seventh year, I regret that the opportunity for the revitalization of the Middle East peace process I had hoped for last year has not materialized. Violence has been on the rise during the reporting period and has included suicide bombings in Israel by Palestinian militants and indiscriminate rocket and mortar fire at Israel, as well as Israeli aerial strikes, extrajudicial killings of alleged militants, extensive ground operations and tank shelling. There have also been worrying incidents of intra-Palestinian violence, primarily in the Gaza Strip.

6. As I have said in the past, I deplore the killing of civilians, who too often have fallen victim to this violence because of a lack of adherence by the parties to their obligations under international law.

7. Elections for the Palestinian Legislative Council were held on 25 January 2006 throughout Gaza and the West Bank, and included limited participation of Palestinian residents of East Jerusalem. At that time, I congratulated President Abbas and the Palestinian people on the peaceful and orderly conduct of the elections. The official results indicated that the Change and Reform list of Hamas had won a majority of seats. Subsequently, the Quartet indicated that it was inevitable that future assistance to any Palestinian government would be reviewed by donors against the commitment of that government to the principles of non-violence, recognition of the right of Israel to exist and acceptance of previous agreements and obligations, including the road map.

8. President Abbas tasked Mr. Ismail Haniyeh of Hamas to form a government and urged him to align his government's programme with that of the presidency. In his inauguration speech, the Prime Minister stated his respect for the constitutional relationship with President Abbas and his respect for the role of the Palestine Liberation Organization. However, the government did not commit to the principles articulated by the Quartet.

9. After the Israeli general election of 28 March 2006, a coalition government was formed, led by Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, which expressed its desire to set the permanent borders of Israel, preferably through an agreement with the Palestinians. The Government acknowledged that this would entail a reduction of the number of Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, but also envisaged the retention of major settlement blocs on occupied land. According to the Government's guidelines, Israel would stand ready to proceed unilaterally should it judge that negotiations with the Palestinian side were not possible.

10. On 10 May 2006, Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails, including senior Fatah and Hamas figures, drafted a document that referred to common political goals aimed at establishing a Palestinian State within the 1967 borders and describing the Palestine Liberation Organization as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. Fatah and Hamas reached an agreement on 27 June 2006 on a revised version of this document and pledged to make it the basis for establishing a

national unity government. Negotiations to form such a government are continuing, but have not borne fruit to date.

11. On 25 June 2006, Palestinian militants attacked an Israeli military base near the Gaza border, killing three Israeli soldiers and capturing one. The Government of Israel subsequently launched a wide-ranging military operation in the Gaza Strip with the stated aims of freeing the soldier and putting a halt to rocket fire. The operation has included aerial bombardments, ground activities, the arrest of Palestinian cabinet ministers and lawmakers, and the destruction of civilian infrastructure, including the only electric power plant in Gaza, roads and bridges, as well as many other public and private installations. To date, over 200 Palestinians have been killed.

12. The United States Security Coordinators, Lieutenant General Ward (until November 2005) and his successor Lieutenant General Dayton, continued their work to push forward Palestinian security sector reform in order to control internal violence and make progress towards the fulfilment of Palestinian road map commitments. During the first months of the reporting period, the Palestinian security services exhibited a readiness to confront militants by conducting arrests or operations to confiscate explosive material. In November 2005, President Abbas established a leadership committee which tasked a technical team with drafting a white paper on safety and security. A first draft was produced in December 2005 with the support of the United States Security Coordinator.

13. The result of the Palestinian legislative elections, however, was not without impact on the security sector. The Government of Israel put a stop to the transfer by the international community of equipment for the Palestinian security forces. Additionally, President Abbas and the government made conflicting security appointments and decisions. The Palestinian Minister of Interior deployed in Gaza a new "special force" drawing its members from existing security services and various factions in spite of President Abbas' declaration that this move was illegal. Clashes ensued between security forces and calm was restored only after President Abbas and Prime Minister Haniyeh agreed to absorb the "special force" into the payroll of the Palestinian Authority. The United States Security Coordinator has continued to work with President Abbas in an effort to strengthen the Presidential Guard, and with the President's office in a strategic advice capacity.

14. The Government of Israel has failed to implement its obligations under the road map to freeze its settlement activities and dismantle outposts constructed in the West Bank since March 2001, although it carried out the evacuation of the Amona settlement outpost in February 2006. The construction of a police station in the El area between Jerusalem and the West Bank settlement of Ma'ale Adumim is under way, consistent with a plan to link Ma'ale Adumim to Israeli territory. In December 2005, it was reported that 3,696 housing units were under construction in West Bank settlements and another 1,654 in East Jerusalem. Further expansion of West Bank settlements to the north and south of Jerusalem and in the Jordan Valley were authorized by the Israel Ministry of Defence.

15. The pace of construction of the barrier in the West Bank accelerated during the reporting period. Land expropriation orders were issued by the Government of Israel to allow the extension of the barrier around Jerusalem eastward so as to envelop the settlement of Ma'ale Adumim. The Israeli High Court of Justice rejected a petition against the construction of the barrier in northern Jerusalem, but ordered the

dismantling of five kilometres of the barrier east of the settlement of Tzofim. The Israel Ministry of Defence reportedly ordered a review of the route of the barrier in order to reduce its impact on Palestinian daily life. The continuing construction of the barrier encroaching on Palestinian land contradicts the legal obligations of Israel set forth in the 9 July 2004 Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice and General Assembly resolution ES-10/15 of 20 July 2004. Further to this resolution, I have continued my efforts to establish a register of damage incurred by Palestinians due to the construction of the barrier.

16. Quartet Special Envoy James Wolfensohn has emphasized that without the re-establishment of free movement inside the West Bank, a viable Palestinian economy is not possible. For several months, he endeavoured to advance an agenda covering issues relating to movement and reform in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. On 15 November 2005, further to his efforts and to the personal engagement of United States Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and European Union High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy Javier Solana, the Government of Israel and the Palestinian Authority reached an Agreement on Movement and Access. The Agreement included the opening of the Rafah crossing for travel of persons between the Gaza Strip and Egypt under the supervision of the European Union. Accordingly, the Rafah crossing initially operated on a daily basis, but since 25 June 2006, it has only been open sporadically. The Agreement also covered the continuous opening of crossings between Israel and Gaza for both goods and people. Again, and despite initial operation of the crossings, the Karni, Kerem Shalom and Erez crossings have not operated regularly throughout 2006. The frequent closure of the Karni commercial crossing has meant that few exports have been able to pass. Other aspects of the Agreement, such as the Israeli commitment to allow truck and bus convoys between Gaza and the West Bank and to reduce the number of movement obstacles in the West Bank have not been implemented. The Government of Israel has also not yet provided assurance that it would not interfere with the operation of the Gaza seaport, and there have been no discussions on the opening of the airport.

17. Israeli security forces have increasingly divided the West Bank into three distinct areas, with movement relatively free inside those areas but severely hampered between them. According to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the Government of Israel has increased the number of physical obstacles in the West Bank by 43 per cent since the signing of the Agreement on Movement and Access. New Israeli measures in the Jordan Valley have prevented almost all Palestinian non-residents who do not work in the area from accessing it. Access has also been restricted to closed areas between the Green Line and the barrier.

18. The Palestinian Authority was already facing serious political, financial and social difficulties at the end of 2005. While the international community praised aspects of the Palestinian Authority response during the disengagement process, the Authority's performance in the months following disengagement was mixed. The wage bill continued to grow as the Authority recruited more officers into the security forces, security in Gaza deteriorated, and rocket attacks on Israel continued. By December 2005, key donors were reconsidering their support to the Palestinian Authority's budget, which was already depleted.

19. After the Palestinian legislative elections in January 2006, the Government of Israel declared that the Palestinian Authority had turned effectively into a “terrorist entity” and decided to withhold the transfer of customs and value added tax payments that it collects on its behalf. This decision, which effectively deprived the Palestinian Authority of approximately US\$ 50 million per month, is contrary to the provisions of the Paris Protocol. Key donor Governments also withdrew their direct support to the Authority in the light of the failure of the new Palestinian government to commit to the principles laid out by the Quartet. The ensuing contraction of economic activity reduced domestic tax revenues. These combined factors, further compounded by a crisis in the banking system, resulted in an acute fiscal crisis for the Palestinian Authority.

20. As a result, the Palestinian Authority became increasingly unable to meet its financial obligations. It cut most social benefits in February 2006 and stopped paying salaries to civil servants as of March. By April 2006, it was estimated that its monthly revenue was a mere sixth of its requirement. Aware of the humanitarian consequences of the situation, and while stressing that the Palestinian Authority was not relieved of its responsibilities to assist the Palestinian people, the Quartet expressed on 9 May 2006 its willingness to endorse a temporary international mechanism, limited in scope and in duration and operating with full transparency and accountability, to ensure the direct delivery of assistance to the Palestinian people. The provision of fuel support costs and payment of allowances to health workers by the European Union under the mechanism began in July 2006. Other aspects, including payments of needs-based allowances and other non-salary costs, such as medicines, have also begun.

21. Nearly one million Palestinians used to rely on a Palestinian Authority wage earner, and the salaries paid by the Authority used to account for about 25 per cent of gross domestic product. Additionally, recipients of Palestinian Authority salaries operate the health, education, security and other services for the Palestinian people. Economic surveys have pointed to dramatic rises in poverty and unemployment should the fiscal crisis continue, and have evidenced a 7 per cent decrease in the Palestinian gross domestic product in the first quarter of 2006. The destruction of civilian infrastructure during the Israeli military operation that was launched following the capture of an Israeli soldier near Gaza has resulted in electricity being cut in Gaza between 12 and 18 hours a day, the rationing of water and an increase in public health hazards. The frequent closures of the Karni crossing into Gaza have caused a serious depletion of stocks of basic food commodities and food rationing has been introduced.

22. The Secretariat has continued to provide regular monthly briefings to the Security Council on the latest developments in the Middle East, as well as whenever the situation on the ground demanded that the members of the Council be kept urgently apprised.

23. The Ad Hoc Liaison Committee met in London in December 2005 to discuss the economic, fiscal and humanitarian situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. The Quartet met in the margins of this meeting and expressed support for the Palestinian Authority’s efforts to prevent armed groups from acting against law and order. It continued its sustained efforts during the reporting period, having already met in September 2005, and again in January and May 2006, thus signalling its readiness to engage in the conflict and support efforts at implementing the road

map. I have also remained committed to furthering the cause of peace in the Middle East and undertook a visit to the region in November 2005 and in August-September this year.

24. The United Nations agencies and programmes have continued to carry out their mandates to assist the Palestinian people. Donor support is more necessary than ever, and in July 2006, donors pledged to make significant contributions to the revised consolidated appeal of the United Nations for the Occupied Palestinian Territories, and notably to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). In its statement of 9 May 2006, the Quartet called upon the international community to respond urgently to assistance requests by international organizations, especially United Nations agencies. I also urge all potential donors to reaffirm their support to UNRWA and to the consolidated appeal.

25. I remain disturbed over restrictions imposed by the Israeli security forces resulting from the construction of the West Bank barrier, as well as from checkpoints and other obstacles that have consistently impeded the ability of United Nations agencies and programmes to provide assistance to Palestinians. Increasingly tight restrictions have confronted movement of international staff to and from Gaza and movement of national staff has been more difficult between Jerusalem, where most United Nations offices are headquartered, and the West Bank, where aid is needed. The supply of humanitarian goods to the Gaza Strip through the Karni crossing has been difficult and significant costs have been incurred as a result of long delays in returning empty containers.

26. Of particular concern to me are incidents that have compromised the security of United Nations staff members. Some have occasionally been fired on at checkpoints. Demonstrations were held in front of United Nations offices in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, notably at the Gaza office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East. On 30 July 2006, after a demonstration at United Nations premises in Beirut following the Israeli shelling of Qana during the conflict between Israel and Hezbollah, Palestinian militants participating in a demonstration entered the office and ransacked it, damaging valuable material. On 31 December 2005, a recreational facility operated by UNRWA in Gaza City was bombed by Palestinian militants. Fortunately, no staff member of the United Nations was hurt in either incident.

27. It must be noted that the road map indicated the end of 2005 as the target date for settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Though this deadline passed unobserved, the road map remains the agreed framework for achieving a just and lasting peace in the Middle East and is therefore an important reference for the future. I regret that prospects for achieving a two-State solution have not improved over the reporting period. While realities have changed, it is essential that all parties be encouraged to adopt policies and practices that are conducive to a peaceful solution. In this regard, I have welcomed the continued commitment of President Abbas to a platform of peace, and I have noted with satisfaction Prime Minister Olmert's stated readiness to engage a Palestinian partner. I am also pleased that opinion polls have continued to emphasize the desire of both the Israeli and the Palestinian peoples for a negotiated two-State solution, even if confidence in the peace process is declining. While the negative developments in recent months are gravely distressing, they must not distract the international community from

exerting all efforts to re-energize the Middle East peace process. I therefore wish to reiterate the central importance of negotiations between the Government of Israel and a Palestinian partner committed to the principles of the road map in order to achieve a two-State solution. The United Nations will continue to work towards the attainment of an independent, democratic and viable Palestinian State living side by side in peace and security with Israel, and of a broader regional framework for peace and stability, in keeping with Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973), 1397 (2002) and 1515 (2003), and in accordance with the road map and the Arab peace initiative.

28. I should like to pay special tribute to Alvaro de Soto, United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and my Personal Representative to the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Palestinian Authority, to the staff of the Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator and to Commissioner-General Karen Koning AbuZayd of UNRWA, the staff of the Agency and all other United Nations agencies, who continue to provide dedicated and efficacious services while working under the most demanding, difficult and sometimes dangerous circumstances. I also wish to express my appreciation for the work of the Special Envoy of the Quartet, Mr. James Wolfensohn, who stepped down in April 2006, and whose contribution was essential.

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The present report is submitted in accordance with General Assembly resolution 61/25 of 1 December 2006. It contains replies received from the President of the Security Council and the concerned parties to the notes verbales sent by the Secretary-General pursuant to the request contained in paragraph 18 of the resolution. The report also contains the observations of the Secretary-General on the current state of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and on international efforts to move the peace process forward with a view to achieving a peaceful solution. The report covers the period from September 2006 through September 2007.

* A/62/150.



I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 61/25 of 1 December 2006.

2. On 1 August 2007, pursuant to the request contained in paragraph 18 of the above-mentioned resolution, I addressed the following letter to the President of the Security Council:

“I have the honour to refer to resolution 61/25, which the General Assembly adopted on 1 December 2006, at its sixty-first session, under the agenda item entitled ‘Question of Palestine’.

“In order to fulfil my reporting responsibilities under this resolution, I should be grateful if you would kindly convey to me the views of the Security Council by 31 August 2007.”

3. On 10 September 2007, the following reply was received from the Security Council:

“The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question, remains one of the most important items on the Security Council agenda. The Council continues to consider the situation in the Middle East on a regular basis, in particular with monthly briefings by the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and senior Secretariat staff, followed by an open debate of the Council or by consultations.

“On 12 December 2006, the Security Council adopted a presidential statement (S/PRST/2006/51), which was read by its President. On that occasion, the Council stressed that negotiation was the only way to bring peace and prosperity to peoples throughout the Middle East and welcomed the agreement between Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert and Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas to establish a mutual ceasefire in Gaza, signed in December 2006. It also encouraged the parties to engage in direct negotiations and reaffirmed the vital role of the Quartet in providing needed assistance to the parties.

“In early January 2007, the Security Council considered a draft presidential declaration, proposed by Indonesia, aimed at keeping the momentum from positive developments on the ground, including the ceasefire agreement and the understandings reached at the summit between Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert and Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas on 23 December 2006. Due to a lack of consensus, the draft was not adopted.

“On 25 January 2007, the Security Council held consultations on the situation in the Middle East, including the question of Palestine, which, owing to the worsening humanitarian crisis in the Palestinian territories, focused on initiatives aimed at reviving the peace process and on the need to preserve the Gaza ceasefire agreement.

“On 13 February 2007, the Security Council held an open debate on the situation in the Middle East, in which Mr. Alvaro de Soto, Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, gave a briefing. The Council members took note of the agreement between Hamas and Fatah, reached in Mecca on

8 February 2007, under the leadership of Saudi Arabia, with a view to putting an end to the fratricidal clashes between Palestinians.

“Several Council members expressed great concern about the violence resulting from the construction carried out near the Al-Aqsa Mosque, raising tensions in the Palestinian territories and in Muslim countries.

“On 14 March 2007, Council members heard a presentation by Mr. Lynn Pascoe, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, which was followed by consultations on the situation in the Middle East.

“On 5 April 2007, the Council considered your report after your visit to the Middle East and the meetings you had held during and in the margins of the League of Arab States Summit, held in Riyadh (Saudi Arabia), on 28 and 29 March 2007, including on the question of the revitalization of the Israeli-Palestinian peace process.

“On 15 and 18 May 2007, we exchanged letters on the appointment of Mr. Michael Williams as Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General to the Palestinian Liberation Organization and the Palestinian Authority, succeeding Mr. Alvaro de Soto.

“On 24 May 2007, a presentation by Mr. Lynn Pascoe, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, was followed by consultations on the Middle East. Council members generally deplored the renewed violence and urged the principal parties to exercise restraint. They expressed the hope that the Middle East Quartet would become more involved in the effort to revive the Israeli-Palestinian peace process.

“On 30 May 2007, the President of the Security Council delivered a press statement on the breakdown of the ceasefire in the Gaza Strip in which the members of the Council expressed their grave concern at the resulting increase in violence.

“On 1 June 2007, you informed the Council of the outcome of the meeting of the Middle East Quartet, held in late May 2007.

“On 20 June 2007, the Council held consultations on, in particular, the situation in Palestine. It deplored the serious events in Gaza and the West Bank that had led to the dissolution of the Palestinian National Unity Government and to the declaration of a state of emergency.

“Council members appealed to the Palestinians to settle their differences peacefully through dialogue. Special emphasis was placed on the worsening humanitarian situation in Gaza. Several Council members welcomed the measures aimed at lifting the financial blockade imposed on Palestine since the Hamas victory in the legislative elections.

“On 25 July 2007, the Council heard a public presentation by Mr. Michael Williams, Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, in which the continued violence and the worsening humanitarian situation, particularly in Gaza, were stressed.

“On this last point, a draft presidential declaration on the worsening humanitarian situation in Gaza, proposed by Qatar and Indonesia, was not adopted owing to a lack of consensus.

“On 29 August 2007, the Council held an open debate on the situation in the Middle East. The Council heard the last briefing of Mr. Michael Williams as Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process.

“Council members commended Mr. Williams’s work as Special Coordinator and expressed their hope that the diplomatic momentum described by Mr. Williams (substantive dialogue developing between Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas and Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert; upcoming high-profile international meetings on the Middle East, particularly the meeting called by the President of the United States of America) could pave the way for substantial developments towards finding a solution. Council members expressed the view that meaningful steps in the field would be useful to back this diplomatic process.

“The Council continues to keep the evolving situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question, under active review through monthly briefings, open meetings and informal consultations. During these meetings, the Council members reiterate their support for a just and comprehensive settlement in the Middle East based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973), 1397 (2002) and 1515 (2003), the outcome of the Madrid Conference, the principle of land for peace, the previous agreements reached by the parties, and the Arab Peace Initiative, reaffirmed at the League of Arab States Summit in Riyadh.”

4. In a note verbale dated 8 June 2007 to the parties concerned, I sought the positions of the Governments of Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic, as well as the Palestine Liberation Organization, regarding any steps taken by them to implement the relevant provisions of the resolution. As at 1 September 2007, the following replies had been received:

“Note verbale dated 24 August 2007 from the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

“As you are aware, Israel has voted against this resolution, as it has done time and time again against similar resolutions adopted by the General Assembly during previous sessions. Because the situation in the Middle East stands at a delicate crossroads, Israel wishes to once again put on record its position on this matter.

“Palestinian terror continues. Mortar and Qassam rocket attacks, launched by Palestinian terrorists in the Gaza Strip at Israeli communities in the south, occur on a daily basis. Over the last month, numerous rockets were launched by Palestinian terrorists, bringing the total number of Qassam rockets that hit Israeli territory during the past year to over 1,000, causing deaths, hundreds of casualties, and vast damage to properties, including schools, kindergartens and residential areas. Hamas has been holding Corporal Gilad

Shalit captive ever since he was kidnapped by the terrorist organization more than a year ago. His abduction also presents a pressing humanitarian situation.

“Palestinian terrorists continue to smuggle weapons across the southern border. Tunnels, burrowed deep beneath the ground, are used by terrorists to move weapons and other munitions. The build-up of weapons presents a grave threat, and efforts must be reinforced to stem the tide of arms smuggling.

“The horrific violence of last June, which resulted in the death and injury of countless innocent Palestinians, imperils the region. Moreover, Hamas’s terrorizing of Palestinian society has created a serious humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip. Nevertheless, Israel remains committed to ensuring that the necessary humanitarian aid is delivered to the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip. Despite the departure of Palestinian Authority security forces from the crossings between the Gaza Strip and Israel, arrangements have been made for humanitarian aid and other supplies to enter and exit the crossings. Since 19 June, more than 50,000 tons have been transferred through the Sufa crossing, and more than 4,000 tons have passed through the Kerem Shalom crossing. Israel continues its coordination activities on the ground, working through the appropriate channels to ensure the passage of aid and other materials. Israel is committed to working with a Palestinian leadership that supports peace and renounces violence. As just one example, on 20 July, Israel released 255 Palestinian prisoners who had been held in Israeli prisons in connection with terrorist activity. In the past month a number of meetings took place to set in motion the building blocks for a political horizon and to maintain a dialogue between Israel and the Palestinian Authority. Most notable among them was the meeting held on 6 August between Prime Minister Olmert and President Abbas in Jericho. Israel hopes to work with its moderate counterparts in the region to advance mutual understanding and formulate the framework that will allow Israel and the Palestinians to move forward on a bilateral process. This process, it must be underscored, should be supported by other like-minded moderate States in the region and the international community, but it cannot be a substitute for direct Israeli-Palestinian dialogue.

“General Assembly resolution 61/25 also cannot be a substitute for direct Israeli-Palestinian dialogue. Rather than promoting a vision that recognizes the rights and obligations of both sides, it obscures the efforts of the parties to achieve a negotiated outcome. It is one-sided resolutions like this one that jeopardize the efficacy of the United Nations and the efficiency of the General Assembly.”

“Note verbale dated 19 July 2007 from the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

“At the writing of this note, the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, remains grave, with the humanitarian, economic, social, political and security situation deteriorating on all fronts since the adoption by the Assembly of resolution 61/25. In June of this year, the Palestinian people solemnly marked the fortieth year of Israel’s military occupation of the Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem. Tragically,

the Palestinian people remain a stateless, dispossessed and oppressed people, suffering mounting hardships in their ongoing struggle to realize their inalienable human rights, including the right to self-determination. Each passing year witnesses the deepening of the injustice imposed upon the Palestinian people, including the Palestine refugees, further trampling of their human dignity and further shredding of the fabric of Palestinian society.

“The fact is that, while resolution 61/25 and the many resolutions that preceded it remain unimplemented and while the peace process remains stalled, despite efforts exerted to revive it, Israel, the occupying Power, has exploited the passage of time and the inaction of the international community for the continued execution of its illegal policies and actions in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. The result has been the continued Israeli violation of the fundamental rights of the Palestinian people and the creation of even more unlawful facts on the ground in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, with the consequent deepening of the humanitarian crisis and the further fragmenting territorial contiguity of the Palestinian territory, seriously endangering the viability of the two-State solution, the crux of any peaceful solution, and further compounding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

“The daily actions of Israel, the occupying Power, are in total contradiction to the provisions of the General Assembly’s resolution on the ‘Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine’ and in total breach of the relevant tenets of international law. Instead of abiding by the law and United Nations resolutions and actually pursuing peace, Israel has continued acting with flagrant impunity, denying the rights of the Palestinian people and committing grave breaches, including systematic human rights violations, acts of State terror and war crimes against them.

“Since the adoption of resolution 61/25, the occupying Power has not ceased its brutal military campaign against the Palestinian civilian population, a defenceless population entitled to protection under international humanitarian law. The Israeli occupying forces have killed and injured hundreds more Palestinian civilians, including children, in frequent military attacks and raids launched in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, typically characterized by excessive and indiscriminate use of force and frequent extrajudicial killings. Since the adoption of resolution 61/25 until the date of this note, the Israeli occupying forces have killed at least 184 Palestinian civilians. The Israeli occupying forces have also continued to cause the wanton destruction of Palestinian property, including homes, agricultural lands and orchards, vital civilian infrastructure, cultural, religious and historical properties, and national institutions, leading to further displacement and homelessness of civilians, loss of livelihoods, and environmental damage. Such unlawful, lethal and destructive military attacks by the occupying Power not only deepen the suffering of the Palestinian civilian population at all levels, but also constantly fuel tensions and perpetuate the cycle of violence between the two sides.

“Israel also continues to unlawfully and arbitrarily detain and imprison more than 11,000 Palestinians, including at least 112 women and 300 children, and has persisted with daily arrest campaigns. These civilians are typically

held in inhumane conditions, enduring harassment, physical and psychological ill treatment and many subject to torture, rarely having any recourse to due process of law, and many are denied visitation by their families, whose access to the prisoners and to any knowledge about them is severely restricted by the occupying Power. In addition, Israel continues to illegally imprison several democratically elected Palestinian officials.

“Simultaneously, Israel has continued to pursue its illegal colonization campaign via the construction of settlements, the wall, and bypass roads and the imposition of the checkpoints throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. After the passage of so many decades of Israel’s systematic and constant violations, it has become glaringly clear that the occupying Power has been carrying out its illegal policies against the Palestinian people with the deliberate intent of oppressing and keeping under siege the entire Palestinian population while it consolidates its unlawful occupation of the Palestinian land — now the longest occupation in contemporary history — in order to achieve the de facto annexation of as much of that land as possible. Israel has done this in flagrant violation of the rule of international law regarding the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force and in grave breach of the Fourth Geneva Convention and Additional Protocol 1.

“Since 1967 and continuing today, the occupying Power has relentlessly carried out its colonization campaign, confiscating thousands of dunums of Palestinian land, destroying thousands of Palestinian properties and imposing countless illegal measures for this purpose. Israel’s construction, expansion and fortification of illegal settlements is a vast enterprise. The major organs of the United Nations have explicitly affirmed the illegality of these settlements and have called for their dismantlement. Yet, there are now 161 settlements and at least 96 settlement outposts in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. More than 450,000 Israeli settlers — many armed and fanatical, who constantly harass and terrorize the Palestinian civilian population — have been illegally transferred into these settlements and continue to be transferred on a daily basis. Settlement construction in and around occupied East Jerusalem has been especially intense, with the occupying Power declaring its intention to create a contiguous Jewish presence linking East Jerusalem to major settlement areas in the West Bank, including via the so-called E-1 plan, totally isolating the city and its Palestinian inhabitants from the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory and furthering the Judaization of the city.

“Over the past four years, this colonization campaign escalated, with the occupying Power’s unlawful construction of the wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including in and around East Jerusalem, which is intricately linked to the settlements and intended to entrench them and to advance the land grab. The International Court of Justice and the General Assembly have deemed this wall to be unlawful and have demanded that Israel dismantle the wall and make reparations for all damages caused by it. Yet, in 2007, the construction of the wall has continued unabated. Entire communities are being destroyed and thousands of Palestinians continue to be displaced by this apartheid wall, which separates Palestinian areas, many of which have become walled-in enclaves, and is causing extensive socio-economic

devastation by destroying thousands of livelihoods, particularly those related to agriculture, and preventing access, inter alia, to education, food and water supply, medical care and other essential social services.

“In yet further collective punishment of the Palestinian people, Israel maintains a discriminatory road network for Israelis only, a racist permit system, and more than 550 checkpoints and roadblocks, including hundreds of ‘flying checkpoints’ per month, throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. Prolonged closures and severe restrictions on the movement of Palestinian persons and goods throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory and into and out of that territory are imposed by the occupying Power via these measures. Such restrictions violate the freedom of movement of the Palestinian people and many of their other basic human rights and continue to damage the economy, undermine development and deepen the humanitarian crisis. There is also extensive documentation of the harassment, physical abuse and humiliation endured by the Palestinian people at these checkpoints, as well as of the numerous deaths and live births that have occurred there, as civilians have been repeatedly prevented from reaching hospitals by the occupying forces. In this regard, the occupying Power also continues to obstruct the movement and access of humanitarian and medical personnel, including the staff of United Nations agencies, hampering the provision of essential services to the civilian population and the provision of emergency food and medical care.

“In terms of the closures, the Gaza Strip has been most impacted. In violation of the Agreement on Movement and Access of 2005, the Rafah crossing for people and the Karni crossing for goods are frequently closed and, when opened, only a limited amount of traffic is permitted through. At the time of the writing of this note, both crossings have been closed indefinitely by Israel. This has, among other things, left more than 6,000 Palestinians stranded on the Egyptian side of Rafah under severe humanitarian conditions. These persons include more than 1,000 Palestinians who had travelled to Egypt for medical care, 16 of whom died at or near the crossing due to the long wait under inhuman conditions. Moreover, the closures have gravely affected the economy in Gaza, since goods for export typically perish before reaching their destination, leading to loss of income and livelihoods, and basic goods are often in short supply in Gaza, aggravating already poor socio-economic conditions. Moreover, the Gaza Strip remains separated from the West Bank.

“Such unlawful Israeli measures are clearly intended to completely control the movement of the Palestinian people and contain them in disconnected, non-viable and unsustainable cantons. The shocking result of this massive and illegal Israeli colonization campaign is the carving up of the Palestinian territory into several isolated, non-contiguous Bantustans. All of these illegal Israeli practices and measures are dramatically altering the demographic composition, geographic character and nature of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and destroying its territorial contiguity and integrity, gravely undermining the prospects for achieving the two-State solution.

“Further, all aspects of Palestinian life continue to be gravely impacted by the illegal and inhumane Israeli policies and practices enumerated above.

Socio-economic and humanitarian conditions are particularly acute. Poverty, unemployment and hunger have sharply risen, frustrations, insecurity and despair remain high, and day-to-day survival in the Occupied Palestinian Territory has become more difficult, particularly in the impoverished Gaza Strip. These precarious conditions in the Occupied Palestinian Territory worsened in the past year with the continuation of the financial sanctions unjustly and punitively imposed on the Palestinian people following the democratic elections of January 2006. Today, at least 70 per cent of the Palestinian civilian population lives in poverty and nearly 50 per cent of the population is dependent on food aid.

“It is a tragic irony that the Palestinian people — an occupied people — have had sanctions and one condition after another imposed on them, while Israel, despite decades of systematic and grave breaches of the law, has never been placed under sanctions. Overall, this sanctions regime, in addition to Israel’s withholding of Palestinian tax revenues, in violation of the Paris Protocol, has caused a severe financial crisis for the Palestinian Authority, debilitating its ability to function effectively and causing the degradation and de-development of Palestinian institutions and public services, particularly in the health and education sectors. The short and long-term effects of this unjust, illogical and unethical boycott continue to plague the Palestinian people.

“In this regard, it is unquestionable that the sanctions regime greatly contributed to the steep deterioration of the situation in the Gaza Strip and the upsurge of tensions, which in turn fuelled a cycle of internal fighting between Palestinian political factions and the complete downward spiralling of the situation in June with the regrettable criminal actions carried out by outlaw militias affiliated with Hamas that took over Palestinian Authority institutions in the Gaza Strip. Following these developments, the President of the Palestinian Authority, Mahmoud Abbas, initially formed an emergency government, which became a caretaker government, and continues to pursue efforts to bring calm and stability to the Palestinian people and to refocus energies towards a resumption of peace negotiations.

“Yet, the crisis on the ground continues, primarily as a result of the continuation by Israel, the occupying Power, of all of its illegal policies and practices in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the negative ramifications of the sanctions, which have undermined peace efforts. The current situation thus remains dire and the prospects for achieving a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine seem more remote.

“Unfortunately, numerous efforts and initiatives over the years and countless United Nations resolutions have not brought an end to this conflict and/or achieved the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. However, this is not because these resolutions are defective. On the contrary, the many resolutions adopted by the United Nations, including the annual resolution on the item entitled ‘Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine’, as well as the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice (9 July 2004), justly, thoroughly and realistically address the core issues of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and set out in very clear terms the requisites for redressing the plight of the Palestinian people and resolving this conflict. Yet, Israel, the occupying Power, has remained intransigent, acting in absolute

contempt of these resolutions and in grave breach of international law, including international humanitarian and human rights law. Such impunity by the occupying Power has undoubtedly been encouraged by the inaction of the international community in the face of such continuous violations and grave breaches of the law. This vicious cycle must be brought to an end.

“Urgent action must be taken by the international community to redress this unjust and unlawful situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, for its continuation is untenable. There can never be peace, security and prosperity in the Middle East as long as the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, remains unresolved. If implemented, the many relevant United Nations resolutions addressing this crisis, including resolution 61/25, would have long ago ended the conflict. These resolutions remain valid and the principles and positions therein constitute the foundations of the peace process and the keys to resolving this prolonged conflict.

“The international community must uphold its responsibilities vis-à-vis international law and United Nations resolutions by taking practical measures to ensure respect for the law and the implementation of these resolutions and thus to finally hold Israel, the occupying Power, accountable for its actions, bring an end to its impunity and compel it to comply with its legal obligations. Only this will augur a new era in which the requisites for achieving a just and lasting peace could be implemented and fulfilled.

“Despite all of the difficulties and challenges, the achievement of such a peace — at the core of which is the two-State solution of Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security on the basis of the 1967 borders — must remain our ultimate goal. This is recognized by the international community in resolution 61/25. In this regard, assessing the status of implementation of resolution 61/25 requires at minimum a brief examination of the calls made by the international community in the operative paragraphs of the resolution.

“While the Assembly has reaffirmed, inter alia, the necessity of achieving a peaceful settlement and intensifying all efforts towards that end, reaffirmed its full support for the Middle East peace process, and called for the fulfilment of road map obligations, developments in the Occupied Palestinian Territory over the past year, resulting mainly from the illegal policies and practices of Israel, the occupying Power, as detailed above, have undermined such efforts. Nevertheless, opportunities for pursuing peace are still before us and must be seized.

“The Palestinian leadership is committed to achieving a just, lasting and peaceful solution to the conflict and has repeatedly reaffirmed its commitment to the peace process on its agreed basis, to the agreements concluded between the two sides, to the road map and to the Arab Peace Initiative. In fact, the Palestinian side has repeatedly extended its hand in peace and indicated its readiness to proceed with final status negotiations without conditions and, in a very important development in the past year, President Abbas has been mandated by all political groups to negotiate a final peace settlement with Israel.

“Moreover, it is significant that the Arab Summit decided to renew and revive the Arab Peace Initiative, which continues to present a just basis for the achievement of peace. Full peace and normalization of relations are being offered to Israel in exchange for full withdrawal from the territories occupied by Israel in 1967 and the establishment of an independent Palestinian State on the basis of the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital, along with a just and agreed upon solution for the Palestine refugees on the basis of General Assembly resolution 194 (III) of 1948. The Assembly has welcomed this initiative and should continue to support its promotion. At the same time, the Quartet recently decided to re-energize itself and to become more active by holding more meetings, including with the two parties, with the aim of promoting the implementation of the road map, and its efforts should continue to be supported as well. The promotion of confidence-building measures between the two parties by both the Quartet and the Arab side and all other efforts to stabilize the situation and restart the peace process should be supported, including the call by United States President George Bush on 16 July 2007, for the convening of an international conference for this purpose in the fall of 2007.

“In resolution 61/25, the Assembly also called upon the parties themselves to exert efforts to halt the deterioration of the situation, to reverse all measures taken on the ground since 28 September 2000 and to immediately resume direct peace negotiations, and stressed the need for a speedy end to the reoccupation of Palestinian population centres and for the complete cessation of all acts of violence, including military attacks, destruction and acts of terror. Most regrettably, these calls remained unheeded and the situation continued to deteriorate. Moreover, despite the Israeli withdrawal from within the Gaza Strip and the international community’s call for the resolution of all remaining issues in the Gaza Strip, the situation there deteriorated to unprecedented lows as Israel continued to carry out attacks against the civilian population, to violate the Agreement on Movement and Access, and to keep Gaza under a total siege.

“Operative paragraphs 11, 12 and 13 of resolution 61/25 are very important. The complete cessation of Israeli violations of international law, including Israel’s illegal colonization campaign and all other violations and grave breaches, is imperative for salvaging the potential for peace.

“In this regard, the Assembly has called upon Israel to comply strictly with its obligations under international law and to cease all of its unlawful measures and unilateral actions in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, that are aimed at altering the character and status of the Territory, including via the de facto annexation of land, and thus at prejudging the final outcome of peace negotiations. It also has demanded that Israel comply with its legal obligations under international law, as mentioned in the advisory opinion and as demanded in resolutions ES-10/13 of 21 October 2003 and ES-10/15 of 20 July 2004. In addition, the Assembly has reiterated its demand for the complete cessation of all Israeli settlement activities and for the full implementation of the relevant Security Council resolutions. Regrettably, and much to the detriment of the search for a peaceful settlement, Israel, the occupying Power, has not complied with any of these demands and in fact continues to actively and flagrantly commit violations.

The Assembly must therefore continue to demand that Israel, the occupying Power, abide by international law and United Nations resolutions and cease all such illegal actions, and should seriously consider actions to compel it to comply.

“Operative paragraphs 14, 15 and 16 of resolution 61/25 are also central to this resolution and indeed to the peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine as a whole. The elements in these paragraphs constitute key requisites for achieving a just and lasting peace, and all efforts must continue to be exerted towards their fulfilment.

“The aid has become ever more crucial in light of the continued deterioration of socio-economic and humanitarian conditions over the past year, the deterioration of the economy and the degradation of Palestinian national institutions.

“Finally, we urge the Secretary-General to exert the efforts requested in operative paragraph 18, guided by the Charter and on the basis of international law and United Nations resolutions. Indeed, the United Nations as a whole has a permanent responsibility towards the question of Palestine until it is resolved in all its aspects, in accordance with international law. The United Nations should work concertedly to implement its relevant resolutions, which form the foundations for the achievement of a just, lasting and comprehensive peace.

“As resolution 61/25, regrettably, remains unimplemented, the General Assembly is duty-bound to continue pursuing efforts for a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine via, inter alia, the implementation of the provisions of this important resolution. Serious efforts must be exerted to uphold the law, to bring an end to the Israeli occupation and to bring about the realization by the Palestinian people of their inalienable rights in their independent State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital, and to thus allow for the establishment of peace, stability and security for both the Palestinian and Israeli peoples, as well as the region as a whole. Accordingly, in light of the current critical situation, the international community must act collectively to compel Israel, the occupying Power, to comply with United Nations resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and all other relevant General Assembly and Security Council resolutions, to abide by its legal obligations under the Fourth Geneva Convention and the human rights covenants, to fully respect the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice. Such action by the international community will tangibly contribute towards the promotion of the peace process and the ultimate achievement of a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine.”

II. Observations

5. During the reporting period, political turmoil, violence and the creation of facts on the ground further undermined efforts to achieve a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine. However, in a positive development, bilateral dialogue between the Israeli Prime Minister and the Chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organization resumed, in a context of renewed regional and international engagement, to help realize the vision of two States living side by side in peace and security.

6. The reporting period was marked by intense rivalry between Palestinians loyal to Fatah and to Hamas in Gaza, with efforts to bridge differences undermined by episodes of heavy violence. In February 2007, following a year of isolation of the Hamas-led Palestinian Authority Government, an agreement to form a national unity Government which respected the signed agreements of the Palestine Liberation Organization, was reached under the auspices of King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia. President Abbas subsequently tasked Prime Minister Hanniyeh to form a national unity Government.

7. The Quartet, which had stated in January 2006 that it was inevitable that assistance to any Palestinian Government would be reviewed by donors against the commitment of that Government to the principles of non-violence, recognition of Israel, and acceptance of previous agreements and obligations, encouraged progress in the direction of these principles. Some donors engaged the new Government, but most maintained a “wait and see” approach.

8. Regrettably, the agreement did not lead to significant alterations in the behaviour of security elements and militias. Heavy intra-Palestinian fighting resumed in May 2007. On 15 June, Hamas took control of the Gaza Strip, in fighting that shocked many by its brutality. President Abbas declared a state of emergency, dismissed Prime Minister Hanniyeh, and appointed Salam Fayyad as Prime Minister of an emergency Government.

9. Hamas refused to accept the appointment of the new Government and continued to assume control over the Gaza Strip. As the Palestinian Legislative Council failed repeatedly to convene to confirm or dismiss the emergency Government, owing to boycotts by either Hamas or Fatah, Prime Minister Fayyad was reappointed by President Abbas on 13 July to lead a caretaker Government. I believe that the Palestinian Authority remains the only legitimate authority, and that Gaza and the West Bank continue to form one single Palestinian territory. Without the de facto reintegration of Gaza under the Palestinian Authority, efforts to revitalize the peace process will be difficult to sustain.

10. In Israel, the Government faced difficulties throughout the reporting period due to political scandals and investigations into the conduct of the July 2006 conflict with Hezbollah. Prime Minister Olmert broadened his coalition in October 2006 by including the party Israel Our Home, which favours transfer of Palestinian citizens of Israel. In June 2007, the Labour Party, a partner in the governmental coalition, elected Ehud Barak as its leader. On 13 June, Shimon Peres was elected by the Knesset as Israel’s ninth president.

11. Violence between Israelis and Palestinians, as well as among Palestinians, continued into the seventh year since the collapse of the Oslo process. Altogether, 11 Israelis and 1,053 Palestinians lost their lives in the reporting period. I deplore the heavy internecine violence in Gaza, which has brought about a major increase in the number of Palestinians killed and injured by fellow Palestinians. I condemn acts of terrorism, including a suicide bombing in Eilat and Palestinian rocket fire from the Gaza Strip, which have continued during the reporting period, causing civilian casualties and damage in Israel, and have also targeted crossings into the Strip. I also deplore the continuation of Israeli military operations into the Gaza Strip, which lead to civilian casualties. While fully acknowledging the right to self-defence of Israel, I recall that this right must be exercised in accordance with international law, that civilians must be protected, and that an appropriate

mechanism of accountability must be in place. In this regard, I note with concern the continuation of the practice of extrajudicial killings of alleged Palestinian militants, which has often resulted in the deaths of innocent bystanders.

12. On 4 July, I was relieved when Alan Johnston, a British journalist who had been kidnapped by Palestinian militants in Gaza nearly four months before, was released. However, it is a matter of regret that Israeli Corporal Shalit, who was captured by Palestinian militants in June 2006, has not been released. I am grateful to the Government of Egypt for its efforts to secure his release and that of a number of the more than 10,000 Palestinian prisoners in Israel. I am also concerned by the continuing detention by Israel of nearly a third of all Palestinian legislators, and I call for their release.

13. The wide-ranging military operation initiated by the Israel Defence Forces in the Gaza Strip after the capture of Corporal Shalit continued until a ceasefire was reached in November 2006. This operation was marked by a deplorable incident on 8 November, when at least 18 Palestinians, nine of whom were children, were killed in their homes by Israeli fire in Beit Hanoun. The General Assembly, at its tenth emergency session, requested the Secretary-General to establish a fact-finding mission on the attack. In a letter to the President of the General Assembly dated 21 December, my predecessor informed her that the Israeli Government had not indicated that it would extend the necessary cooperation to the mission, and he regretted that he had been unable to dispatch the mission.

14. Israeli excavations surrounding a new link between the Mughrabi Gate to the Haram as-Sharif/Temple Mount in the Old City of Jerusalem led to incidents of civil disorder and tension both on the ground and regionally.

15. The continued Israeli creation of facts on the ground has also undermined the search for a peaceful settlement. The Government of Israel has continued to fail to meet its obligation under the road map calling for a comprehensive settlement freeze and the dismantling of outposts. I wish to emphasize that a halt to settlement expansion is a necessity for the creation of a contiguous and viable Palestinian State, and for the credibility of the process not to be undermined. During the reporting period, settlement development and construction has continued, with major construction taking place, and the number of settlers in the West Bank and East Jerusalem has increased by 5.5 per cent. Furthermore, none of the more than 100 outposts in the West Bank have been removed.

16. I continue to note with concern the route of the wall, particularly as it results in the confiscation of Palestinian land and cuts off the movement of people and goods, in contravention of Israel's legal obligations as set forth in the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice of 9 July 2004. In accordance with the provisions of General Assembly resolution ES-10/17, I have continued efforts to establish the United Nations Register of Damage Caused by the Construction of the Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. On 10 May 2007, I appointed three international experts as members of the Board of the Register of Damage. The Secretariat is also in the process of completing the recruitment of qualified staff and the establishment of the Office of the Register of Damage at the United Nations Office at Vienna. As detailed by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the route of the barrier and the nature of the closure regime in the West Bank are intimately related to the existence and continued expansion of settlements, in violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention.

17. It remains a source of great concern that the Agreement on Movement and Access of November 2005 has not been implemented. Exports from Gaza have totalled only a fraction of the agreed targets. Even before the more severe closure of Gaza crossings following the Hamas takeover, many factories had closed and farmers were unable to export crops. No progress has been reported on bus or truck convoys between the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, nor on plans to rebuild the Gaza seaport and airport. The number of the internal closures imposed by the Israeli authorities in the West Bank increased from approximately 400 at the time of the Agreement on Movement and Access, to 532 in August 2007, severely impeding normal economic activity.

18. During the reporting period, the European Commission, in agreement with the Quartet, renewed and expanded the mandate of the temporary international mechanism. Total assistance to Palestinians in 2006, excluding funds channelled by donors not following the Quartet principles, reached approximately \$1.2 billion, representing an increase of 10 per cent over 2005. Approximately €510 million, including a total European Union contribution of €485 million, was made available between June 2006 and August 2007 to the temporary international mechanism, thus helping the health and education sectors to continue to function, albeit with major disruptions. Humanitarian assistance also increased dramatically. In spite of this substantial effort, the deterioration of the situation made it clear that the temporary international mechanism could not be a substitute for the Palestinian Authority.

19. Consequently, the period before June 2007 was marked by an unprecedented fiscal crisis for the Palestinian Authority. As a result of the suspension of most direct international assistance and the withholding by Israel of the clearance revenue it collected on behalf of the Palestinian Authority, it faced a deficit of about 30 per cent of gross national product. This fiscal crisis in turn contributed to a serious decline in the delivery of public services. Most public schools in the West Bank remained closed for a prolonged period of time; public health facilities offered only limited services; and non-payment of the security services did not contribute to their effective functioning.

20. The takeover of Gaza by Hamas led to the absence of Palestinian Authority forces at the crossings, leaving the crossings mostly inoperable. I expressed my concern about the humanitarian and economic impact of this situation, and I reiterate my call on all parties to work constructively to operate the crossings. While humanitarian assistance is entering Gaza, it cannot suffice to stop the economic decline that results from the virtual inability to import raw materials essential for the production of industrial goods and construction, and export agricultural products and commercial goods. It is estimated that 90 per cent of Gaza's industrial capacity has been suspended and more than 70,000 workers have been laid off since June. Eighty per cent of the population in Gaza relies on food assistance from the United Nations.

21. The decision of the international community to re-engage with the Palestinian Authority during the summer of 2007, and the transfer by the Israeli Government of Palestinian tax revenues to the Palestinian Authority helped to ameliorate the latter's fiscal situation. As a result, Prime Minister Fayyad was able to pay full salaries to 160,000 Palestinian Authority employees for the first time in 15 months. In spite of this progress, the fiscal situation of the Palestinian Authority remains precarious, as its fiscal framework for 2007 shows a deficit for current operations of close to \$1.6 billion.

22. I welcome the renewal of international diplomatic efforts in the reporting period to help the parties resume dialogue and overcome the many obstacles to peace. United States President Bush renewed his commitment to a two-State solution in a speech on 16 July 2007, and announced the intention of the United States to convene an international meeting in the autumn. This initiative built on the efforts of United States Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice from the start of 2007 to facilitate regular meetings between Palestinian President Abbas and Israeli Prime Minister Olmert. The leaders have met on several occasions during the reporting period for substantive discussions.

23. I encourage the leaders to find genuine and substantive understandings on permanent status issues for the international meeting, together with an agenda on further steps, both diplomatic and on the ground. Such steps would build on those already taken, such as the transfer of withheld Palestinian tax revenues to the Palestinian Authority, the release of 256 Palestinian prisoners, and the agreement not to arrest 173 wanted persons. The additional steps must, inter alia, bring an end to settlement expansion and remove outposts, improve Palestinian Authority security performance, enhance security cooperation, ease the severe restrictions on freedom of Palestinian movement, and create new economic opportunities for Palestinians.

24. In helping to advance this agenda, former British Prime Minister Tony Blair, who was appointed as Quartet representative on 27 June, will have a vital role to play. He has taken up with admirable commitment his new functions to support Palestinian institutional reform and economic rejuvenation. The United Nations is committed to providing the necessary support to ensure the success of his mission.

25. I welcome the efforts of the League of Arab States and several Arab countries to advance regional efforts for peace. On 28 March in Riyadh, the League of Arab States reaffirmed the Arab Peace Initiative. A follow-up ministerial committee established working groups to engage international partners and Israel and create greater public awareness of the potential of the initiative, and in July the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Egypt and Jordan travelled to Israel to engage the Government of Israel. I note also that the Syrian Arab Republic has continued to state its commitment to the Arab Peace Initiative.

26. I further welcome Norway's proposal to reactivate the ad hoc liaison committee, which has not met since December 2005. The next meeting, to be held in New York on 24 September 2007, will be an opportunity to discuss management of assistance to the Palestinians, financial support to the Palestinian Authority, and Palestinian institutional reform, in consultation with the Quartet representative. It will be a stepping stone towards a donor pledging conference planned for December. In this context, the Palestinian Authority is expected to publish a three-year medium-term expenditure framework by November 2007. I hope that this strategy will take into account the needs of all Palestinians, in the West Bank and in Gaza.

27. The United Nations has remained engaged at a political level. The Secretariat has provided monthly briefings to the Security Council on developments in the Middle East, as well as whenever the situation on the ground has demanded that the Council be kept urgently apprised. I travelled three times to the region since becoming Secretary-General. I also attended four meetings of the Quartet, which has been re-energized, and I will host a meeting of the Quartet in New York on 23 September 2007. Members of the follow-up committee of the League of Arab States on the Arab Peace Initiative will also meet with the Quartet. I am confident

that this round of consultations will be helpful in shaping the context for the international meeting this autumn and the intimately related work of Mr. Blair.

28. I take this opportunity to deplore any threat or violence exerted against United Nations staff and humanitarian workers operating in the Occupied Palestinian Territory in general. I am particularly concerned at the fact that Palestinian and international United Nations staff members have faced increasingly arbitrary treatment by Israeli authorities, and I am looking forward to improvements in this regard in the context of ongoing discussions with the Government of Israel. I am also concerned by Palestinian violence targeting United Nations personnel, as has occurred inside or in the immediate vicinity of United Nations installations, and elsewhere in Gaza. Two national staff members of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) were killed and others were injured while serving the Palestinian people. I pay tribute to their memory.

29. In this difficult and challenging context, I want to praise the courage and dedication of the United Nations personnel serving in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. In particular, I am grateful to the Director of UNRWA Operations in Gaza, his staff and the security personnel, who remained at their posts throughout the height of the fighting in June 2007. I also wish to express my deep appreciation to Alvaro de Soto and Michael Williams, the previous and outgoing United Nations Special Coordinators for the Middle East Peace Process and my successive Personal Representatives to the Palestinian Liberation Organization and the Palestinian Authority, and the staff of their Office, as well as to the Commissioner-General of UNRWA, Karen Koning AbuZayd, the staff of the Agency and all other United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, who continue to provide indispensable and remarkable service under demanding and sometimes dangerous circumstances.

30. At this juncture, I am encouraged by the renewed and substantive dialogue between the parties and the reaffirmed commitment of the international community, including regional partners, on the political and assistance aspects of the peace process. I am also reassured by the repeated polls that show that a majority of people on both sides support the realization of the two-State solution in a non-violent manner. However, I remain deeply conscious of the challenges, particularly in the light of the continued Israeli settlement policy, the de facto division of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, the challenge of improving Palestinian Authority security performance and rejuvenating its economy, and the potential for those who oppose progress in the peace process to try to derail it through violence. I stress that it is vital that Hamas cease any effort to establish separate rule in Gaza and that Palestinians find peaceful means to overcome their internal differences and unite towards peace under the Palestinian Authority.

31. As Secretary-General, I will continue to ensure that the United Nations works towards the creation of an independent, democratic, contiguous and viable Palestinian state living side by side in peace with a secure Israel, within the framework of a comprehensive regional settlement, consistent with Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973), 1397 (2002) and 1515 (2003), and in accordance with the road map, the Arab Peace Initiative and the principle of land for peace.



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The situation in the Middle East

Question of Palestine

Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report is submitted in accordance with General Assembly resolution 62/83 of 10 December 2007. It contains replies received from the President of the Security Council and the concerned parties to the notes verbales sent by the Secretary-General pursuant to the request contained in paragraph 20 of the resolution. The report also contains the observations of the Secretary-General on the current state of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and on international efforts to move the peace process forward with a view to achieving a peaceful settlement. The report covers the period from September 2007 through August 2008.



I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 62/83 of 10 December 2007.

2. On 1 June 2008, pursuant to the request contained in paragraph 20 of the above-mentioned resolution, I addressed the following letter to the President of the Security Council:

“I have the honour to refer to resolution 62/83, which the General Assembly adopted on 10 December 2007, at its sixty-second session, under the agenda item ‘Question of Palestine’.

“In order to fulfil my reporting responsibilities under this resolution, I should be grateful if you would kindly convey to me the views of the Security Council by 30 June 2008.”

3. On 1 July 2008 the following reply was received from the Security Council:

“The goal of achieving a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine remains one of the major challenges facing the international community, including the Security Council.

“The Security Council considers the situation in Palestine each month under an agenda item entitled ‘The situation in the Middle East, including the question of Palestine’, with general presentations in the form of briefings by either the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs or the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, followed by an open meeting of the Council or by consultations among the Council members.

“On 29 August 2007, the Security Council held an open debate on the situation in the Middle East after hearing a briefing by the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Michael Williams, on recent diplomatic efforts and the United States-sponsored international meeting to be held in the fall.

“On 20 September 2007, Council members heard a presentation by Lynn Pascoe, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs. The briefing was followed by consultations on the situation in the Middle East, during which Member States discussed ongoing bilateral dialogue between Ehud Olmert, the Prime Minister of Israel, and Mahmoud Abbas, President of the Palestinian Authority. Members also discussed the current trip to the Middle East of Condoleezza Rice, Secretary of State of the United States, and Israel’s characterization of the Gaza Strip as an ‘enemy entity’.

“On 24 October 2007, Under-Secretary-General Pascoe delivered the monthly briefing on the situation in the Middle East, expressing optimism about the level of dialogue between the parties on the Israeli-Palestinian track while also expressing concern about the situation on the ground. In the closed consultations that followed, Council members welcomed the upcoming United States-sponsored Middle East meeting in Annapolis and the ongoing efforts of Secretary Rice. The Council also discussed regional efforts to promote peace and the humanitarian situation in Gaza.

“On 29 and 30 November 2007, the Security Council held closed consultations on the Middle East peace process, specifically addressing the joint understanding that had been reached at the Annapolis conference. On 30 November, the Council also held an open session, during which Council members were briefed by Under-Secretary-General Pascoe on the Annapolis process, efforts of the Quartet, and the upcoming Paris donors’ conference.

“On 21 December 2007, a presentation by Under-Secretary-General Pascoe was followed by consultations on the Middle East. The Under-Secretary-General remarked on the latest developments in the peace process, stressing that, since the Annapolis conference, bilateral negotiations between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization had commenced and that strong international engagement had been reflected in a donors’ conference, a Quartet meeting and a meeting between the Quartet and members of the League of Arab States, all held in Paris on 17 December. At the same time, he stated that developments on the ground, including new settlement activity and ongoing violence, had been a cause of concern.

“On 22 January 2008, Council members held a debate on the situation in Gaza after public statements were delivered by Under-Secretary-General Pascoe about the 18 January closure of the Gaza Strip. The Under-Secretary-General briefed the Council on the latest regional developments, stressing the deterioration in the humanitarian situation in Gaza and southern Israel.

“On 23, 24, 25 and 29 January 2008, the Council met for consultations on the situation in Gaza.

“On 30 January 2008, following an update on the humanitarian and economic situation by Under-Secretary-General Pascoe, the Security Council met for an open debate on the situation in Gaza. Council members expressed concern about the situation in Gaza and southern Israel and its humanitarian repercussions.

“On 26 February 2008, Robert Serry, Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, and John Holmes, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, briefed the Council, providing detailed descriptions of the political, humanitarian, security and socio-economic situation in the Palestinian territories. Following the briefing, Council members met for closed consultations to discuss the impact of the situation on the ground on the Annapolis process.

“On 28 February 2008, the Council held consultations to continue the discussion of ongoing violence in Gaza and southern Israel.

“On 1 March 2008, the Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon, addressed an emergency meeting of the Security Council to discuss the escalation of violence in Gaza and southern Israel. The Secretary-General condemned the violence and the excessive use of force and called on both sides to respect international humanitarian law, exercise restraint and restore order. He also expressed concern that the violence could have a negative impact on the negotiation process. The Council also heard from the Palestinian and Israeli delegations before holding closed consultations.

“On 6 March 2008, consultations were held on the situation in the Middle East.

“On 25 March 2008, the Secretary-General expressed alarm about the prospect of renewed violence in Gaza and southern Israel and beseeched the parties and international community to support the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations. Following the Secretary-General’s remarks, Under-Secretary-General Pascoe delivered a briefing on recent developments, which was followed by an open debate focusing on the difficult situation on the ground, the role of the United Nations and the Security Council, settlement activity, Israeli military operations and rocket attacks.

“On 23 April 2008, the Security Council heard a presentation from Angela Kane, Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, during which she spoke about efforts to advance the political process through direct bilateral negotiations, recent attacks in Gaza and southern Israel, the worsening humanitarian situation in Gaza and an upcoming Quartet meeting. Her remarks were followed by closed consultations.

“On 28 May 2008, the Council heard a presentation from Mr. Serry, the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, who spoke about ‘fragile’ progress on the Israeli-Syrian and the Israeli-Palestinian tracks. In closed consultations, Council members discussed the Israeli closure of Gaza, rocket fire out of Gaza, Israeli military operations and the ongoing Annapolis process.

“On 27 June 2008, Lisa Buttenheim, Director of the Asia and Pacific Division of the Department of Political Affairs, briefed Council members about positive but fragile developments in the Middle East. She welcomed the recent truce between Israel and Hamas but noted with concern breaches of the ceasefire by both parties. She also spoke about the continuing closure of Gaza and the deteriorating humanitarian situation there, about concerns regarding Israeli settlement activity in the West Bank, and about the 24 June meeting of the Quartet. Ms. Buttenheim’s briefing was followed by closed consultations.

“The Council continues to pay close attention to developments in the situation in the Middle East; the next meeting on this question is scheduled to be held on 22 July 2008.”

4. In a note verbale dated 28 April 2008 to the parties concerned, I sought the positions of the Governments of Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic, as well as the Palestine Liberation Organization, regarding any steps taken by them to implement the relevant provisions of the resolution. As at 31 August 2008, replies had been received from Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization. The note verbale dated 30 July 2008 from the Permanent Mission of Israel to the United Nations reads as follows:

“As the meeting records detail, Israel voted against this resolution, as it has done so on this and similar resolutions adopted by the General Assembly during previous sessions. In accordance with this voting practice, the Permanent Mission of Israel wishes to explain and reiterate its position in light of the realities on the ground.

“Despite major developments in the region, including the Annapolis process convened in November 2007, Palestinian terrorism continues with alarming intensity. Over the course of the last year, cities and villages in southern Israel suffered a significant increase in the number of rocket attacks fired by Palestinian terrorist organizations in the Gaza Strip. Over 3,000 Grad missiles, mortar shells and Qassam rockets have been fired at southern Israel since Hamas took over the area in June 2007. These rocket attacks have killed a number of Israelis and caused injury to countless civilians and extensive damage to properties.

“Data released by the Israel Trauma Centre for Victims of Terror and War during the last year show that 90 per cent of residents of the southern city of Sderot have experienced a Qassam rocket falling on their street or one adjacent to them. Some 28 per cent of adults and 30 per cent of children suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder, with children exhibiting extremely high levels of fear, avoidance behaviour, school, behavioural and somatic problems, regression and sleep deprivation.

“Moreover, Hamas’s upgraded capabilities, which it received from the smuggling of weapons via tunnels along the southern border and during the breach of the border in January 2008, now place a quarter of a million Israeli civilians in constant danger.

“On Thursday, 18 June 2008, a ‘state of calm’ went into effect, with the explicit purpose of securing a complete cessation of terrorism and firing of rockets by all factions in the Gaza Strip, an end to Palestinian smuggling and military build-up, and progress in securing the release of the abducted soldier Gilad Shalit. Israel has made clear that if quiet and calm can be restored to the south, it will increase the amount and scope of goods that enter the Gaza Strip, which will improve the quality of life for the Palestinians. Only a few days later, rockets were again launched at southern Israel.

“Hamas, clearly, has no interest in long-term peace, reconciliation or mutual inhabitation with Israel. Any perceived lull is an opportunity for Hamas to rearm and strengthen itself.

“As noted, Hamas and other terrorist organizations in the Gaza Strip continue to build up their forces and arms by smuggling weapons across the southern border. Tunnels, burrowed deep beneath the ground, are used by terrorists to move weapons and other munitions. It is the backing and support of States like the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Syrian Arab Republic that enable the terrorist organizations to carry out acts of violence and terrorism against Israeli civilians. Hamas and its backers bear full responsibility for the violence and terrorism and the humanitarian conditions imposed on the Palestinians in Gaza. Hamas and other terrorist groups seek to take advantage of cooperative mechanisms between Israel and the Palestinians, be they border crossings or even the removal of security checkpoints. These violations demonstrate that Palestinian terrorism is still a major threat, requiring Israel to take measures in self-defence, and that Hamas is not interested in peace.

“While Palestinian terrorists do everything in their capacity to thwart humanitarian efforts and provoke Israeli reactions, Israel continues to ensure the steady and continuous flow of fuel and other supplies into the Gaza Strip to

meet the needs of the civilian population. The gasoline and diesel fuel transferred by Israel are meant primarily for ambulances, water pumps, the sewage system, public transportation, food trucks, garbage collection, food plants and generators at various institutions including schools, hospitals and clinics. Since June 2007, more than 600,000 tons have been transferred through the crossings. Israel continues its coordination activities on the ground, working through the appropriate channels to ensure the passage of aid and other materials.

“On 25 June 2008, the Israeli public marked the second anniversary of Corporal Gilad Shalit’s abduction. A letter written by Corporal Shalit was recently forwarded to his parents by Hamas. However, the Red Cross or any other humanitarian agency has been denied permission to visit him and verify his condition.

“Israel remains committed to the bilateral process with the moderate, legitimate Palestinian Authority leadership that embraces its responsibilities and the vision of two States living side-by-side in peace and security. In the past months a number of meetings have taken place to set in motion the building blocks for a political horizon and to maintain a dialogue between Israel and the Palestinian Authority. Israel hopes to work with its moderate counterparts in the region to advance mutual understanding and formulate the framework that will allow Israel and the Palestinians to move forward on a bilateral process. This process, it must be underscored, should be supported by other like-minded moderate States in the region and the international community, but it cannot substitute for direct Israeli-Palestinian dialogue.

“In this vein, General Assembly resolution 62/83 too cannot substitute for direct Israeli-Palestinian dialogue. Moreover, rather than promote a vision that recognizes the rights and responsibilities of both sides, the aforesaid resolution obscures the efforts of the parties to achieve a negotiated outcome. And it is one-sided resolutions like this that jeopardize the efficacy of the United Nations and the efficiency of the General Assembly.”

The note verbale dated 30 July 2008 from the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations reads as follows:

“This year the Palestinian people marked the passage of 60 years since Al-Nakba — the catastrophic tragedy that befell Palestine in 1948, whereby the Palestinian people lost their homeland, the majority of them were forcibly expelled or fled from their homes in fear, and an entire nation became refugees and a stateless people whose plight continues until this day. This year also marked the passage of the forty-first year of the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, since 1967, under which the Palestinian people continue to suffer the denial and violation of their human rights, including their right to self-determination, and their national rights and aspirations for freedom and peace remain unfulfilled.

“The United Nations has been addressing the question of Palestine in all its aspects since its inception by means of, inter alia, numerous resolutions of its major organs and several programmes of assistance to the Palestinian people, particularly the Palestine refugees, through its specialized agencies. The General Assembly’s annual consideration of the agenda item entitled

‘Question of Palestine’ and its adoption of a resolution on the peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine represents a significant contribution by the United Nations to the search for a just and lasting peace. The resolution is comprehensive and clearly delineates the parameters and requisites for achieving a peaceful settlement in accordance with international law, relevant United Nations resolutions and the agreed terms of reference of the peace process, including the principle of land for peace.

“Regrettably, however, since the Assembly’s adoption of resolution 62/83, the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, has remained critical and little progress has been made towards the realization by the Palestinian people of their inalienable rights and the achievement of a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine. Economic, social, political, humanitarian and security conditions have not improved, continuing to deteriorate in many aspects due to continuing unlawful and oppressive Israeli practices, and the peace process continues to face formidable obstacles. As in the past, Israel, the occupying Power, has continued to violate international law, including by committing systematic human rights violations and war crimes against the Palestinian people, to reject United Nations resolutions, and to act with contempt towards the will of the international community. It has persisted with and at times intensified its illegal actions in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, in breach of its legal obligations, including under the Fourth Geneva Convention, inflicting more collective punishment, suffering and loss on the Palestinian people and creating more unlawful facts on the ground that are further fragmenting the Territory’s contiguity and thus seriously threatening the viability of the two-State solution and the prospects for peace.

“This situation has continued despite various efforts and initiatives undertaken during the past year, regionally and internationally, to advance the Middle East peace process and also to ameliorate the situation being faced by the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and promote conditions actually conducive to the pursuit of peace. In addition to the resolutions adopted by the General Assembly at its sixty-second session, such efforts have included reaffirmation of the Arab Peace Initiative by the twentieth Arab Summit in March 2008, meetings of the Quartet, and the convening, just prior to the adoption of resolution 62/83, of an international conference at Annapolis under the auspices of the Government of the United States of America on 27 November 2007, which resulted in a joint understanding between the Palestinian and Israeli sides and the relaunching of the peace process with the resumption of direct negotiations after a bitter and destructive seven-year freeze.

“The Annapolis conference, along with the convening of a major donor conference in Paris in December 2007, provided an important impetus to the peace process and revived efforts aimed at achieving an end to the Israeli occupation that began in 1967, the establishment of the independent State of Palestine and the achievement of a just, lasting and peaceful settlement to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The Annapolis conference set the end of 2008 as the timeline for achieving this long-elusive goal. However, while bilateral negotiations have continued and several high-level meetings have been held between the Israeli and Palestinian leaderships and the Middle East peace

process remains high on the international agenda, progress has been minimal as negative developments on the ground continue to impede the process and complicate the efforts to address the core, final status issues of Jerusalem, settlements, borders, refugees, water and security.

“The reality is that this peace process is in a state of serious disrepair because the entire premise of the process is constantly being undermined by Israel’s illegal actions in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, actions that are totally contrary to the principle of land for peace and the objective of achieving a just, lasting and peaceful settlement based on the two-State solution in accordance with international law and relevant United Nations resolutions. In this regard, a review of the current situation in the context of resolution 62/83 reveals that its provisions continue to be violated by the occupying Power, precluding the resolution’s full implementation by the international community.

“Since adoption of resolution 62/83, Israel has not ceased its unlawful measures of collective punishment, reprisals and military operations against the Palestinian civilian population, which is a defenceless population entitled to protection under international humanitarian law. In the past several months, the Israeli occupying forces have killed and injured hundreds more Palestinian civilians, including children, in military attacks and raids in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, particularly in the Gaza Strip, continuing to use excessive and indiscriminate force against civilians as well as extrajudicial killings. The occupying forces also continued to cause wanton destruction of Palestinian property, including homes, agricultural lands and orchards, and civilian infrastructure, leading to further displacement of civilians, loss of livelihoods and environmental damage.

“Israel has also persisted with its daily arrest campaigns in the Occupied Territory. More than 11,000 Palestinians, including more than 400 children and more than 100 women, continue to be held in Israeli jails and detention centres, with the majority suffering inhumane conditions, harassment, physical and psychological ill-treatment and many subject to torture.

“At the same time, Israel continues to aggressively pursue its illegal colonization campaign in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, through the unlawful confiscation of land, construction and expansion of settlements, transfer of hundreds of thousands of Israeli settlers and construction of the Wall, which is directly linked to the settlements and intended to protect them and facilitate their expansion and entrenchment, as well as by numerous other illegal measures. This colonization campaign, which constitutes a grave breach of international humanitarian law, particularly the Fourth Geneva Convention, which absolutely prohibits the transfer by the occupying Power of its civilian population into the territory it occupies, actually represents the main obstruction to the peace process. It is a campaign undeniably aimed at creating facts on the ground by altering the demographic composition, status and character of the Occupied Palestinian Territory in order to facilitate the de facto annexation of large areas of land, amounting to a blatant situation of acquisition of territory by force, which is strictly prohibited by international law.

“In the recent period, Israeli settlement activities have intensified, particularly in and around Occupied East Jerusalem and the Jordan Valley. This has been the case despite General Assembly and Security Council resolutions calling for their cessation, for the dismantlement of settlements and settlement ‘outposts’ and for Israel’s compliance with its legal obligations; despite the International Court of Justice’s advisory opinion of 9 July 2004; and despite the fact that the freezing of all settlement activity is a cornerstone of the Quartet road map. Combined, the 150 Israeli settlements, more than 100 settlement ‘outposts’, an extensive labyrinth of Israeli-only bypass roads connecting the settlements to each other and to Israel itself, and the wall that is being constructed in deviation from the 1967 Green Line and projected to be more than twice its length, are occupying huge swaths of Palestinian land, totalling approximately 50 per cent of the occupied West Bank.

“This vast colonial network, along with Israel’s imposition of over 600 checkpoints and a stringent, discriminatory permit regime intended to collectively punish the Palestinian people and restrict their movement, has created a situation on the ground whereby Palestinian communities are being separated, with many transformed into walled cantons and some being destroyed in their entirety, causing the further displacement of thousands of Palestinian civilians; East Jerusalem is being isolated from the rest of the Palestinian Territory, which is being dissected into northern, central and southern parts; and economic and social devastation continues to be inflicted on the Palestinian people. The overall result is the severe fragmentation of the Occupied Palestinian Territory and the undermining of its contiguity, integrity and unity.

“Israel’s colonization campaign thus constitutes the primary danger to the realization by the Palestinian people of their inalienable and national rights and to the achievement of the two-State solution of an independent State of Palestine living side-by-side with Israel in peace and security and on the basis of the 1967 borders. In this regard, the settlements issue is not only one of the final status issues in the peace process, but is also intricately related to and at the crux of nearly all other final status issues, including Jerusalem, borders, water and security. As such, continuation of this illegitimate situation will make physically impossible the establishment of a sovereign, contiguous, viable and independent Palestinian State, with East Jerusalem as its capital, and the ultimate realization of the two-State solution for peace in accordance with relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973), 1397 (2002) and 1515 (2003).

“The situation in the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, namely the Gaza Strip, also remains extremely critical. Israel’s siege of Gaza has surpassed one year and the occupying Power continues to impose a suffocating closure of border crossings, obstructing the movement of persons and goods into and out of the area, in collective punishment of the entire Palestinian civilian population there. The Gaza Strip also remains separated from the West Bank, with no functional territorial link between these two areas of the Territory.

“Consequent declining socio-economic conditions have deepened poverty and hardships as livelihoods and income continue to be lost. Health

conditions have also continued to deteriorate due to inadequate medical and food supplies as well as the breakdown of sewage and sanitation systems because of lack of spare parts and fuel. The ongoing fuel crisis has disrupted all sectors of life — home life, schools, hospitals, businesses, farming and fishing — and also disrupted United Nations operations. Moreover, this deliberately imposed humanitarian crisis is only worsening with the globally rising food and fuel prices affecting the whole international community. The negative short- and long-term repercussions of this crisis on the Palestinian population and institutions, public services and infrastructure are vast, and tensions, insecurity and despair remain high in Gaza, where the majority of the more than 1.4 million Palestinians there live in poverty and depend on food aid for survival.

“One encouraging development in terms of the situation in the Gaza Strip has been the conclusion of a truce agreement following intensive mediation efforts by the Government of Egypt. Despite several infractions, the truce, which took effect on 19 June 2008, continues to be upheld as of the date of this note. The Palestinian leadership continues to appeal for respect of the truce on both sides and to call as well for extension of the truce to the West Bank, emphasizing that the West Bank and the Gaza Strip constitute one geo-political unit — the Occupied Palestinian Territory — and, therefore, Israeli military attacks in either area affect the other negatively. As repeatedly witnessed, violent Israeli actions in the past have undercut attempts to bring about a cessation of violence, sabotaged Palestinian Authority efforts to promote law and order, harmed peace negotiations, and fuelled the deadly cycle of violence. Such an outcome must be averted at all costs.

“The Palestinian Authority thus continues to exert all efforts within its circumscribed capacity to promote law and order, and expresses the hope that Israel will abide by its commitments in this regard and that calm will prevail. In this regard, it is imperative that Israel completely lift its inhumane and unlawful siege of Gaza to allow for movement of persons and goods to ease the isolation and humanitarian suffering of the Palestinian civilian population. The Palestinian Authority reiterates its readiness to assume responsibility for the Palestinian side of Gaza’s border crossings in line with the 2005 Agreement on Movement and Access. Israel should be called upon to abide by its commitments and legal obligations in this regard, including in relation to the civilian population in the Gaza Strip under the terms of the Fourth Geneva Convention.

“The inability of the international community to act in the face of such continuous Israeli breaches of international law and United Nations resolutions has undoubtedly abetted the occupying Power’s impunity. The international community must not, however, capitulate and should continue to exert serious efforts to redress the unjust, illegal situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, for, as recognized by the General Assembly in resolution 62/83, achieving a just, lasting and comprehensive settlement of the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, is imperative for the attainment of comprehensive and lasting peace and stability in the Middle East. The provisions of resolution 62/83 remain valid, as do the countless other United Nations resolutions addressing the core issues of the question of Palestine, and

the principles therein constitute the foundations of the peace process and the keys to resolving this tragic conflict.

“Despite the many challenges before us, the achievement of the two-State solution, the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including their right to self-determination, and peace remain our ultimate goals. Palestine is encouraged by the international community’s continuing firm support in this regard, as reflected by the overwhelming support for resolution 62/83, and conveys its strong hope for continuation of such support and of the necessary efforts for attainment of these goals. The time now is for practical measures to be taken by the international community to uphold the Charter, international law and these resolutions, thereby ensuring Israel’s respect for the law, bringing an end to this unlawful situation constituting the longest military occupation in contemporary history, and achieving a just, lasting peace settlement. In this connection, Palestine reiterates that the United Nations has a permanent responsibility towards the question of Palestine until it is resolved in all its aspects, including a just resolution for the plight of the Palestine refugees in conformity with General Assembly resolution 194 (III), and stresses once again that the Security Council should not be exempt from its Charter responsibilities in this case.

“On its part, Palestine reaffirms the commitment of the Palestinian leadership to the peace process and urges all concerned parties in the international community to seize the opportunities for peace that are still before us and not allow the process and negotiations to continue to be undermined by illegal, unilateral and destructive actions. The complete cessation of all Israeli violations of international law, including Israel’s colonization campaign and all other grave breaches, is imperative for salvaging the potential for peace. Active efforts should also be pursued to sustain the Annapolis process, including through confidence-building measures between the two sides to create an environment more conducive to peace negotiations, and to promote as well the Arab Peace Initiative. In addition, the provision of economic, humanitarian and technical assistance to the Palestinian people and the Palestinian Authority at this crucial time remains essential.

“In closing, as resolution 62/83 regrettably remains unimplemented, the General Assembly is duty-bound to continue its efforts with regard to a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine. The Assembly must continue striving to uphold the law and ensure respect of the law by Israel, the occupying Power. Such action by the international community can tangibly contribute to bringing an end to the 1967 Israeli occupation and enabling the Palestinian people to exercise their inalienable rights in their independent State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital, thus allowing for the realization of peace, stability and security for the Palestinian and Israeli peoples as well as the Middle East region as a whole.”

II. Observations

5. During the reporting period, new hope for the achievement of a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine emerged, with the launch of the Annapolis

process and regular bilateral negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians. At the same time, the situation on the ground in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, remained difficult and hampered political efforts to achieve the vision of two States living side by side in peace and security. In the Gaza Strip, in particular, prolonged violence and a deepening humanitarian crisis prevailed.

6. The Annapolis conference, hosted by the United States on 27 November 2007 with the participation of all major parties, provided a new impetus to the search for a just, lasting and comprehensive settlement of the question of Palestine. Ehud Olmert, the Prime Minister of Israel, and Mahmoud Abbas, President of the Palestinian Authority, presented a joint understanding, agreeing to immediately launch good-faith bilateral negotiations in order to conclude a peace treaty, resolving all outstanding issues, before the end of 2008. The two leaders also committed themselves to implementing their respective obligations under the road map and agreed to form a trilateral mechanism, led by the United States, to follow up on implementation.

7. Bilateral negotiations between Israeli and Palestinian negotiating teams, led by Tzipi Livni, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Israel, and Ahmed Qureia, the Palestinian Chief Negotiator, have taken place on a regular basis, with confidentiality maintained about the substance of those talks. Technical teams have also met in support of the bilateral talks. Prime Minister Olmert and President Abbas have also continued to meet on a regular basis.

8. I welcome the diplomatic efforts exerted by the parties. I would also like to commend the United States for taking the initiative to convene the Annapolis conference. The international community has come together in support of the bilateral negotiations conducted by Israel and the Palestinians. The Quartet has been reinvigorated, and I was glad to take part in its meetings in New York in September 2007, in Washington, D.C., on 26 November 2007, on the eve of the Annapolis conference, in Paris on 17 December 2007, in London on 2 May 2008 and in Berlin on 24 June 2008.

9. I also welcome and commend the efforts of the League of Arab States and several Arab countries to advance regional efforts for peace in recent months. The League of Arab States, at its annual summit in Damascus on 29 and 30 March, expressed concern over developments on the ground, but reaffirmed the Arab Peace Initiative, which remains a central element in the search for a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine.

10. The United Nations has remained engaged at a political level. The Secretariat has provided monthly briefings to the Security Council on developments in the Middle East, as well as whenever the situation on the ground demanded that the Council be kept urgently apprised, as was the case several times during the reporting period. I have continued to take part in the meetings of a reinvigorated Quartet, and I now look forward to the meeting of the Quartet I am hosting in New York in the margins of the general debate, in conjunction also with a meeting of the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee and consultations with our Arab partners.

11. Regrettably, violence between Israelis and Palestinians, as well as among Palestinians, continued during the reporting period. Altogether, between

1 September 2007 and 19 August 2008, 35 Israelis, including four children, and 600 Palestinians, including 87 children, lost their lives in conflict-related incidents.

12. Road map implementation saw some arguable progress during the reporting period. I am pleased to note that the Palestinian Authority, under the leadership of Prime Minister Salam Fayyad, has made significant strides towards imposing law and order, including disarming and arresting militants, in the reporting period. Palestinian security forces have redeployed in Jenin and Nablus, including personnel trained and equipped in Jordan with the assistance of the United States Security Coordinator, and Palestinian security operations are also taking place elsewhere in the West Bank. On 24 June 2008, the international community offered support to the further development of the Palestinian security sector and judiciary at the Berlin conference in support of Palestinian civil security and the rule of law, convened by Germany. The Quartet voiced its support for the outcomes of the meeting and called for speedy implementation of projects agreed and robust donor support in order to build the capacity of the Palestinian police and justice sector. The Quartet also urged Israeli-Palestinian cooperation in that respect, and emphasized the importance of unobstructed delivery of security assistance to the Palestinian Authority. In this regard, I am glad to note Israel's facilitation of the reopening of 12 Palestinian police stations in the West Bank in recent months. I regret, however, that Israel Defense Force incursions into West Bank cities and towns have continued on a regular basis.

13. Violence continued to occur in Israel. A suicide bombing took place in the Israeli city of Dimona on 4 February 2008. I condemned this terrorist attack targeting civilians. I also strongly condemned the attack that claimed eight lives at a Jewish seminary in Jerusalem on 6 March 2008. I further condemned the attacks utilizing bulldozers in Jerusalem on 2 and 22 July 2008.

14. I also deplore the continued expansion of settlements in the West Bank by the Government of Israel, which negatively impacts the ongoing bilateral political process. Continued settlement activity in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, stands in contradiction to international law, Security Council resolutions, the Fourth Geneva Convention, Israel's obligations under the road map and its commitments under the Annapolis process. I have called upon Israel to freeze all settlement activity, including "natural growth", to dismantle all outposts erected since March 2001, and to reopen Palestinian institutions in East Jerusalem, and have emphasized that a halt to settlement expansion is a necessity for the creation of a contiguous and viable Palestinian State.

15. Construction work on the barrier also continued within occupied Palestinian territory, in deviation from the Green Line and contrary to the International Court of Justice advisory opinion of 9 July 2004. I continue to note with concern that the route of the barrier results in the confiscation of Palestinian land and the isolation of Palestinian communities and agricultural areas. In accordance with the provisions of General Assembly resolution ES-10/17, I have continued efforts to establish the United Nations Register of Damage caused by the Construction of the Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, with the constitution and assumption of operations of the Office of the Register of Damage at the United Nations Office at Vienna and the first meeting of the members of its Board.

16. On 17 December 2007, a significant donor meeting was held in Paris in support of the Annapolis process and with the aim of securing financial support for

the Palestinian Authority over the next three years. Donors commended the Palestinian Reform and Development Plan presented by Prime Minister Fayyad and pledged \$7.7 billion in assistance. Two new financing mechanisms were launched in 2008 to support the implementation of the Plan, namely the World Bank trust fund and the European Commission's Palestinian European Aid Mechanism.

17. The Government of Prime Minister Fayyad also undertook significant measures of economic and fiscal reform, successfully containing the Palestinian Authority's wage bill and reactivating the budget process. On 2 May, the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee met in London to assess progress in Palestinian institutional and economic development since its previous meeting in September 2007. The donor community responded to Palestinian reform efforts and generously supported the Palestinian Authority with over \$1.1 billion in budget support from the beginning of 2008 until August. However, the Authority still faced renewed budgetary shortfalls. I have called upon those donors who have not yet fulfilled their pledges from the Paris donor conference to provide budget support to fill a gap of \$400 million for the period from August to December 2008.

18. From 21 to 23 May 2008, the Palestine investment conference convened by Prime Minister Fayyad took place in Bethlehem. Hundreds of foreign representatives and Palestinian businesses, including from Gaza, attended. Prime Minister Fayyad announced that investors pledged \$1.4 billion for Palestinian business projects. Earlier the same month, on 13 May, Tony Blair, the Quartet Representative, had announced a package of measures to stimulate economic development, ease movement and access restrictions, develop the 60 per cent of the West Bank in Area C and build Palestinian security capability. Quartet Representative Blair continues to follow up on his plan.

19. Unfortunately, the Government of Israel did not significantly relax the closure regime in the West Bank. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs reported that the number of Israeli-imposed obstacles to Palestinian movement in the West Bank grew from 532 in August 2007 to 608 as of 18 August 2008, with negative political and economic implications.

20. Palestinian economic growth was flat and the economy continued to hollow out. This put the Palestinian Authority on the path of increasing aid dependency. While the economy stagnates and the population grows, per capita income continues to fall. The International Monetary Fund estimated that real gross domestic product growth in 2007 was only about 0.5 per cent. Results from the first quarter of 2008 suggest that growth was slightly negative. Unemployment remained high in the West Bank and Gaza.

21. Following the takeover of the Gaza Strip by Hamas in June 2007, the launching of rockets and mortars from Gaza against Israeli civilian targets intensified. I condemn the indiscriminate rocket and mortar firing from the Gaza Strip towards Israeli civilian population centres and against crossing points, which is totally unacceptable and has detrimental effects on humanitarian conditions.

22. The Government of Israel declared the Gaza Strip an enemy entity on 19 September 2007 and imposed a stringent closure regime, halting all exports from Gaza and severely restricting imports, including electricity and fuel. I called upon Israel to reconsider and cease its policy of pressuring the civilian population of Gaza for the unacceptable actions of Hamas and other militants.

23. In response to the rocket fire against Israeli civilian targets, Israel launched military incursions into the Gaza Strip and targeted militants with air strikes, often causing civilian casualties. I called for the strict observance of international humanitarian law by Israel and its armed forces. While cognizant of Israel's security concerns and of its assertion that in using military force it does not target civilians and takes care to avoid civilian casualties, I emphasized that Israel is obliged not to take disproportionate measures or to endanger civilians, and must thoroughly investigate incidents leading to civilian casualties and ensure adequate accountability.

24. Following several Israeli military incursions and heavy fighting in Gaza during the month of January, as well as the imposition of a four-day comprehensive closure on 23 January, Palestinian militants destroyed entire sections of the border fence with Egypt. Hundreds of thousands of Gazans crossed the border and purchased food, medicine and other supplies. The border was resealed six days later.

25. In February 2008, after the firing of rockets and mortar on Israel included the launch, for the first time, of longer-range rockets against Ashkelon, the situation escalated again. The Israel Defense Force operation named Hot Winter, beginning on 29 February, lasted five days and caused dozens of civilian casualties, including the deaths of 31 children, while Hamas rocket attacks, with increased capability, threatened nearly a quarter of a million Israelis. In subsequent months, rocket and mortar fire continued, and a number of attacks also targeted crossings between Israel and Gaza.

26. The violence, as well as the humanitarian distress the civilian population of the Gaza Strip endured as a result of Israel's closure policy, convinced me that a new and more constructive strategy on Gaza was required. I called for such an approach, emphasizing, in particular, the need to end the violence and reopen the Gaza crossings in a sustained manner. The Quartet endorsed my call in its meeting in London on 2 May, strongly encouraging Israel, the Palestinian Authority and Egypt to work together to formulate a new approach on Gaza that would provide security to all Gazans, end all acts of terror, provide for the controlled and sustained opening of the Gaza crossings for humanitarian reasons and commercial flows, support the legitimate Palestinian Authority Government and work towards conditions that would permit implementation of the 2005 Agreement on Movement and Access.

27. Egyptian efforts led to the agreement of a ceasefire between Israel and Hamas, which entered into effect on 19 June and has largely held since. I welcomed the ceasefire. Building on the ceasefire, Egypt has continued its efforts to reach an agreement to exchange the captured Israeli soldier, Gilad Shalit, for a number of Palestinian prisoners currently held by Israel. I repeatedly expressed my dismay at the fact that the International Committee of the Red Cross was not provided with access to Corporal Shalit, in contravention of international humanitarian law, after more than two years of captivity.

28. The situation in the Gaza Strip during the reporting period was characterized by prolonged humanitarian crisis. The Gaza crossings remained largely closed, except for imports to meet minimal humanitarian needs. Israel also instituted restrictions on the supply of fuel, with broad socio-economic effects, including extensive electricity cuts. While humanitarian assistance continued to enter Gaza, most of Gaza's industrial capacity was suspended and more than 70,000 workers were laid off. About 76 per cent of the population in Gaza became reliant on

assistance from the United Nations. United Nations agencies were also severely affected and had to prioritize projects. Following the entering into effect of the ceasefire between Israel and Hamas, there has been some improvement in humanitarian conditions.

29. Gaza also witnessed the consolidation of Hamas's rule, with institutions increasingly falling under the direct control of Hamas. Factional violence occurred, and in November 2007, internecine fighting left 18 people dead. Renewed bloody clashes between Hamas and Fatah loyalists left 11 Palestinians dead in August 2008, and nearly 200 Palestinians sought refuge in Israel before being returned to Gaza or transferred to West Bank cities. Overall, between 1 September 2007 and 19 August 2008, 136 Palestinians were killed in internal violence.

30. I would stress that the Palestinian Authority remains the sole legitimate authority and that Gaza and the West Bank comprise one single Palestinian territory. Dialogue for the purpose of making progress towards the reunification of Gaza and the West Bank within the framework of the legitimate Palestinian Authority is vital to sustain the efforts to revitalize the peace process. Accordingly, I welcomed President Abbas's statement of 5 June 2008, during which he called for the holding of a comprehensive national dialogue in order to implement the initiative on Palestinian reunification taken by the President of Yemen and endorsed by the Foreign Minister of the League of Arab States in March 2008.

31. In Israel, the Government also faced difficulties throughout the reporting period. Prime Minister Olmert's resignation on 21 September 2008 opened up the prospect of the new head of the *Kadima* party, Foreign Minister Livni, taking over the premiership and forming a new Government, or of new elections, with possible effects on the peace talks.

32. I regret that Palestinian and international United Nations staff members have faced growing restrictions as concerns their free movement and access in the service of the United Nations. I have discussed these restrictions with the Government of Israel and look forward to improvements in this regard. In Gaza, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) and other United Nations agencies face significant challenges to their operations. The security and humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip has made their work both more important and more difficult.

33. In this challenging context, I want to praise the courage and dedication of the United Nations personnel serving in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. I wish to express my deep appreciation to Robert H. Serry, the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and my Personal Representative to the Palestinian Liberation Organization and the Palestinian Authority, to the staff of his Office, as well as to the Commissioner-General of UNRWA, Karen Koning AbuZayd, and the staff of the Agency and all other United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, who continue to provide indispensable and remarkable service in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

34. Over the past year, there have been important steps towards a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine, and I call upon the Government of Israel and the Palestinian Authority to undertake every effort to achieve the goal of the Annapolis process. Time is now running short until we reach the benchmark of the Annapolis process, and there reportedly remain significant gaps. Should the parties not be able to reach a peace agreement by the end of the year, it will be essential

that the process not be disrupted and instead continues, with the aim of leading to the long overdue peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine as early as possible.

35. The situation on the ground, both in Gaza and in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, has deteriorated in many instances. Much more needs to be done to build the necessary foundations for a successful political process and for the eventual and sustainable implementation of any agreement reached. Settlement activity needs to stop completely, and movement and access restrictions need to be lifted. The Palestinian Authority needs to make further progress to impose law and order.

36. The question of Gaza remains critical. I am glad that the ceasefire in effect since June 2008 has held so far. At the same time, I am acutely conscious that the ceasefire is by definition a temporary arrangement that needs to lead to further steps: a reopening of the Gaza crossings, the release of Corporal Gilad Shalit, and dialogue for the purpose of the reunification of the West Bank and Gaza Strip within the framework of the legitimate Palestinian Authority.

37. The United Nations will continue to work towards the creation of an independent, democratic, contiguous and viable Palestinian State living side-by-side in peace with a secure Israel, in the framework of a comprehensive regional settlement, consistent with Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973), 1397 (2002) and 1515 (2003), and in accordance with the road map, the Arab Peace Initiative and the principle of land for peace.

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Items 15 and 16 of the provisional agenda*

The situation in the Middle East**Question of Palestine****Security Council
Sixty-fourth year****Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine****Report of the Secretary-General***Summary*

The present report is submitted in accordance with General Assembly resolution 63/29. It contains replies received from the President of the Security Council and the parties concerned to the notes verbales sent by the Secretary-General pursuant to the request contained in paragraph 21 of the resolution. The report also contains the observations of the Secretary-General on the current state of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and on international efforts to move the peace process forward with a view to achieving a peaceful settlement. The report covers the period from September 2008 to August 2009.

* A/64/150 and Corr.1.



I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 63/29.

2. On 1 July 2009, pursuant to the request contained in paragraph 21 of the above-mentioned resolution, I addressed the following letter to the President of the Security Council:

“I have the honour to refer to resolution 63/29, which the General Assembly adopted on 26 November 2008, at its sixty-third session, under the agenda item ‘Question of Palestine’.

“In order to fulfil my reporting responsibilities under this resolution, I should be grateful if you would kindly convey to me the views of the Security Council by 31 July 2009.”

3. On 24 July 2009 the following reply was received from the Security Council:

“The goal of achieving a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine remains one of the major challenges facing the international community, including the Security Council.

“The Security Council considers the situation in Palestine each month under an agenda item on ‘The situation in the Middle East, including the question of Palestine,’ with general presentations in the form of briefings by either the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs or the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, followed by an open meeting of the Council or by consultations among Council members.

“On 22 July 2008, the Council convened an open debate on the situation in the Middle East, during which it heard a briefing by the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, B. Lynn Pascoe, who indicated a number of encouraging developments across the region and stressed the importance of achieving further visible progress in peaceful negotiations, consolidating the ceasefire and resolving the humanitarian crisis in Gaza, and improving the livelihood of Palestinians in the Occupied Territories. Most representatives called upon the parties concerned to renounce violence, implement agreements, abide by their obligations under international law, particularly human rights and humanitarian law, and take further concrete action to advance the peace process towards its stated goals on the basis of United Nations resolutions, the principle of land for peace, the Arab Peace Initiative and the Annapolis Conference.

“On 20 August 2008, the Council heard a briefing by the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question, which was followed by consultations of the whole. The Under-Secretary-General informed the Council that Israeli-Palestinian negotiations as part of the Annapolis process were continuing, that the fragile ceasefire between Israel and Hamas had been largely respected, but that the situation on the ground remained a cause for concern, particularly the continuing settlement activity across the West Bank and in East Jerusalem, and the rise of internal Palestinian violence. The organization in September of a meeting of the Quartet, followed by an iftar with Arab partners, and a meeting

of the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee would provide occasions to take stock of the progress made and to assist in the implementation of donor pledges to address the impending Palestinian budget crisis.

“The Under-Secretary-General concluded by reaffirming the Secretary-General’s commitment to a just and lasting comprehensive regional peace in the Middle East, based on Security Council resolutions. The meeting was followed by consultations of the whole.

“The Council examined this issue twice during the month of September 2008.

“On 18 September 2008, in consultations, the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Robert Serry, briefed the Council on the negotiations taking place between Israel and the Palestinian Authority, in particular the talks of 26 and 31 August and 16 September 2008. He also stated that relations between the Syrian Arab Republic and Lebanon were improving, while the blockade imposed by Israel in the Gaza Strip was still a concern.

“At the request of the Permanent Mission of Saudi Arabia to the United Nations on behalf of the Arab League, the Security Council held a debate on 26 September 2008, at the ministerial level. Although many delegations focused their statements on the settlements that were still going on in the Palestinian territories, others spoke about the global situation in the Middle East.

“On 22 October 2008, the Council heard a briefing on the Middle East from the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs. He told the Council, inter alia, that despite ongoing efforts by the parties concerned, the situation on the ground was not improving ‘in the way that is required’ to ensure a durable settlement. He also hoped that, notwithstanding the transition currently under way, the Israel-Palestinian negotiations would not only continue but would intensify until the end of the year, within the framework of the Annapolis process. During consultations of the whole, many members of the Council reaffirmed their support for the continuation of Israeli-Palestinian negotiations, and expressed the wish that the United Nations would, as appropriate, play a greater role in support of the peace process. Members of the Council also emphasized that the international community could not lose sight of the humanitarian situation on the ground.

“On 25 November 2008, the Council was briefed by the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, B. Lynn Pascoe, on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question. He expressed regret that Israel and the Palestinians were likely to fall short of their commitment, made at Annapolis, to reach an agreement by the end of the year. At the same time, he welcomed the parties’ affirmation that they had engaged in direct, sustained and intensive negotiations.

“After the briefing, owing to the sensitivity of the issue, the Council held consultations of the whole, during which members of the Council held an interactive dialogue with the Under-Secretary-General.

“On 3 December 2008, the Security Council held a debate to discuss the situation in connection with the Libyan ship which was heading to the Port of

Gaza carrying humanitarian supplies. Members of the Council made statements. The Council also heard statements by the Permanent Observer of Palestine and the Permanent Representative of Israel. The Council did not reach any specific conclusion.

“On 5 December 2008, the Council addressed events in Hebron in consultations of the whole. Following the consultations, the President of the Council informally conveyed to the press that the members of the Council welcomed Israel’s evacuation of settlers, condemned the resulting settler violence, urged respect for the rule of law without discrimination or exception and encouraged Israel and the Palestinian Authority to continue their security cooperation in the Hebron Governorate.

“On 16 December 2008, the Security Council adopted resolution 1850 (2008) by 14 votes in favour, with 1 abstention. The adoption was preceded by a Council debate that included the ministerial participation of several members and was chaired by the Prime Minister of the Republic of Croatia, Ivo Sanader. The Secretary-General also addressed the Council. Reiterating the vision of the two-State solution while noting the importance of the 2002 Arab Peace Initiative and the Quartet’s ongoing work, the Council, in resolution 1850 (2008), declared its support for the Annapolis process and the irreversibility of the negotiations. The Security Council supported the parties’ agreed principles for the bilateral negotiations, called on both parties to fulfil their obligations under the Road Map and refrain from any steps that could undermine confidence or prejudice the outcome of negotiations, and called on all States and international organizations to contribute to an atmosphere conducive to negotiations and to assist the Palestinian Authority. It urged intensified diplomatic efforts to foster mutual recognition and peaceful coexistence in the region in the context of achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East, and welcomed the consideration of an international meeting in Moscow in 2009.

“On 18 December 2008, the Security Council held an open debate on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question. The Council heard a briefing by the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Robert Serry, on the situation in Gaza and the West Bank. He also addressed the situation in Lebanon and the dynamics between the Syrian Arab Republic and Israel. He said that the main objective in the coming year was to sustain the political process during a period of transition, emphasizing the importance of the adoption of resolution 1850 (2008). He appealed for the observance of basic humanitarian principles in Gaza and warned against the escalation of violence. The Security Council then heard statements by the Permanent Observer of Palestine and the Permanent Representative of Israel. Representatives of Brazil, Cuba, Qatar, Turkey, Japan, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Chile, Pakistan, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Morocco, Norway, Australia, Iceland and the Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People also addressed the Council.

“On 28 December 2008, after consultations of the whole that had begun the previous evening following the outbreak of violence in the Gaza Strip and southern Israel, the President of the Council read out a statement to the press, expressing serious concern at the escalation of the situation in Gaza, and

calling for an immediate halt to all violence, calling for all parties to address the serious humanitarian and economic needs in Gaza, and stressing the need for the restoration of calm in full, which would open the way for finding a political solution.

“On 31 December 2008, the Security Council held an emergency meeting on the situation in the Gaza Strip and southern Israel. The Secretary-General addressed the Council, expressing profound concern that the Security Council’s call for an end to the violence had gone unheeded, emphasizing the suffering of the civilian population in Gaza and stating that all parties must fully uphold international humanitarian law. He stressed the need for decisive action and welcomed efforts by European and Arab leaders. The Permanent Observer of Palestine and the Permanent Representative of Israel also addressed the Council. Members of the Council made statements, followed by the representatives of Egypt and the Permanent Observer for the League of Arab States.

“On 3 January 2009, the Council held consultations of the whole on the situation in Gaza.

“On 6 and 7 January 2009, the Council held a public debate at the ministerial level on the item entitled ‘The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question’. During the debate, the Secretary-General, the President of the Palestinian National Authority, the representative of Israel, and representatives of other States Members of the United Nations (including Ministers for Foreign Affairs, in particular of the Arab League States) made statements.

“On 8 January 2009, after thorough consultations, including at the ministerial level, the Council held a meeting presided over by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of France, Bernard Kouchner, at which it adopted resolution 1860 (2009) by 14 votes in favour, with 1 abstention. In the resolution, the Council called for an immediate, durable and fully respected ceasefire, leading to the full withdrawal of Israeli forces from Gaza.

“On 13 January 2009, during consultations of the whole, the Council was briefed by the Secretary-General before his visit to the Middle East. In their statements, Council members welcomed the efforts of the Secretary-General. On 15 January, in consultations of the whole, the Council was briefed by the Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Haile Menkerios, on the situation in Gaza, following the attacks on the headquarters of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). During the consultations, there was an agreement on elements for remarks to be made by the President to the press. The President of the Council expressed grave concern, in particular following the military operations against hospitals, a building hosting journalists and the headquarters of UNRWA.

“On 21 January 2009, the Council held a public meeting to receive a briefing by the Secretary-General following his visit to the Middle East. During the consultations of the whole that followed, members of the Council agreed to issue a statement to the press, in which they welcomed the ceasefire in Gaza, expressed their strong appreciation for the efforts of the Secretary-

General and reiterated their grave concern at the humanitarian situation in Gaza.

“On 27 January 2009, the Council held a meeting at which it heard briefings by the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator and by the Commissioner-General of UNRWA, Karen AbuZayd, on the situation in Gaza. It was the first time that a Commissioner-General of UNRWA had been invited to address the Council. Both the Under-Secretary-General and the Commissioner-General expressed great concern about the humanitarian situation in Gaza and stressed the importance of free access for humanitarian aid. The meeting was followed by consultations of the whole.

“On 18 February 2009, the Council heard a briefing on the Middle East by the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Robert Serry. He reported to the Council that a number of issues, including the humanitarian situation in Gaza, Palestinian reconciliation, and the new political situation in Israel, needed to be addressed for the peace process to advance and emphasized the importance of a durable and sustainable ceasefire as called for in resolution 1860 (2009). With regard to Lebanon, he noted that the situation remained relatively stable despite increased tension following the crisis in Gaza. During the consultations of the whole that followed, many Council members stressed the need for an effective ceasefire, unimpeded access for humanitarian assistance, the opening of the crossings into Gaza and Palestinian unity.

“On 25 March 2009, the Council held its 6100th meeting to consider the agenda item entitled ‘The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question’.

“The Council heard a briefing by B. Lynn Pascoe, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs. Mr. Pascoe began the briefing by stating that ‘two months after unilateral ceasefires were declared in Gaza, we face a worrying situation of impasse and uncertainty. Despite international engagement and support, very little concrete progress has been made on key issues outlined in Security Council resolution 1860 (2009).’ In conclusion, he stressed that ‘it is important that the Quartet and the international community act with unity of purpose to help stabilize Gaza and reinvigorate the peace process. We need to have both Israeli and Palestinian Governments that are clearly committed to the two-State solution. We need a continuation of negotiations, the implementation of commitments on the ground and a strategy for de-escalating tensions and addressing the urgent humanitarian needs in Gaza.’

“Turning to Lebanon, he said that the killing by a roadside bomb of the Deputy Representative in Lebanon of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) on 23 March 2009 had interrupted the prevailing relative calm in the country.

“Following the briefing, the Council heard statements by the Permanent Observer of Palestine, and the Permanent Representative of Israel.

“Statements were made by Council members, the President, in his national capacity, and the representatives of Egypt and Lebanon.

“Upon resumption of the meeting, the Council heard statements by the representatives of Cuba (on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement), the Syrian Arab Republic, the Czech Republic (on behalf of the European Union), Brazil, Morocco, Qatar and Bangladesh. The Council then heard statements by Paul Badji, Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, the representatives of Indonesia, Ecuador, Malaysia, Algeria, Mauritania, South Africa, Norway, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Nicaragua, Jordan, Australia, the Republic of Korea, Mali, Pakistan and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela (S/PV.6100-SC/9626).

“On 20 April 2009, the Council heard a briefing on the situation in the Middle East by B. Lynn Pascoe, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs. Mr. Pascoe reported that very little progress had been made on the key elements of resolution 1860 (2009), namely the commitment of the parties to a durable and sustainable ceasefire, the opening of the crossings for humanitarian access and provision of materials for recovery, and intra-Palestinian reconciliation. He conveyed the Secretary-General’s expectation that the Middle East peace process would resume, with the aim of achieving an independent and viable Palestinian State living side by side in peace with a secure Israel and a comprehensive Arab-Israeli peace as envisaged in Security Council resolutions. He stated that the situation in Gaza and southern Israel remained fragile in the absence of a proper ceasefire regime, and noted that 30 rockets and mortars had been fired by Palestinian militants at southern Israel during that period. He also highlighted Egyptian efforts to combat the continued arms smuggling across the Gaza border, and informed the Council that settlement activity had continued in the West Bank and East Jerusalem during the reporting period and must be frozen. After the meeting, the Council held informal consultations. Members drew attention to the need to achieve a stable ceasefire, implement the provisions of Council resolutions 1850 (2008) and 1860 (2009) and open Gaza’s border crossings to allow for the entry of more humanitarian aid and essential goods and materials.

“On 11 May 2009, the Security Council held a ministerial-level meeting on the Middle East peace process chaired by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Sergei Lavrov. Speaking at that event, the Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon, stressed the need to generate momentum in the Israeli-Palestinian talks, warning that the situation on the ground could worsen easily without fresh efforts by both sides as well as by the international community. After the inconclusive results of the previous year’s negotiations and the bloodshed in Gaza, the previous three months had witnessed almost no progress on the two key resolutions — 1850 (2008) and 1860 (2009).

“The Secretary-General also referred to the deep crises of confidence among ‘ordinary people on the ground’. He said that Palestinians continued to see unacceptable unilateral actions in East Jerusalem and the remainder of the West Bank, such as ‘house demolitions, intensified settlement activity, settler violence and oppressive movement restrictions due to permits, checkpoints and the barrier’. He stressed that the time had come for Israel to fundamentally change its policies in that regard. However, he also emphasized that ordinary Israelis needed reassurance that a future Palestinian State would guarantee their right to live in peace and security, and he stated that ‘indiscriminate rocket attacks that have caused loss of life, civilian suffering and damage to

property in Israel are not only deeply unacceptable, but also totally counterproductive, and must cease’.

“He also stated that the challenge was to begin to implement transformative changes on the ground; and to kick-start a renewed and irreversible drive to achieve an Israeli-Palestinian agreement, stressing that resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict was fundamental to the well-being of both peoples, the region and the world.

“In their interventions, members of the Council reaffirmed their hope that the commitments made by the parties would be kept and stated that the parties must pursue an irreversible effort towards the two-State solution, including by fully implementing commitments on the ground. Council members also voiced their concern about the situation in and around Gaza, including continued arms smuggling into Gaza and continued Hamas rocket fire from Gaza into Israel, as well as Israeli settlement activities undermining the contiguity and viability of the Occupied Palestinian Territory and jeopardizing the two-State solution, and stressed the need for Palestinian reconciliation.

“The Security Council adopted a Presidential Statement (S/PRST/2009/14) at the end of its session, read by Mr. Lavrov, in which the Council stressed the urgency of reaching comprehensive peace in the Middle East. It stated that vigorous diplomatic action was needed to attain the goal set by the international community of lasting peace in the region, based on an enduring commitment of mutual recognition and on previous agreements and obligations.

“The Council also voiced support for the Russian Federation’s proposal to convene, in consultations with the Quartet and the parties, an international conference on the Middle East peace process in Moscow later that year.

“The Council continues to pay close attention to developments in the situation in the Middle East; the next meeting on this question is scheduled to be held on 27 July 2009.”

4. In a note verbale dated 30 April 2009 to the parties concerned, I sought the positions of the Governments of Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic, as well as of the Palestine Liberation Organization, regarding any steps taken by them to implement the relevant provisions of the resolution. As at 31 August 2009, replies had been received from Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization. The note verbale dated 20 July 2009 from the Permanent Mission of Israel to the United Nations reads as follows:

“As shown in the meeting records, Israel voted against this resolution, as it has done on similar resolutions adopted in the past by the General Assembly. The Permanent Mission of Israel wishes to reiterate the considerations guiding this voting practice in light of the current situation.

“Despite the continuation of intensive Israeli-Palestinian dialogue during 2008, Palestinian terrorism continued unabated and remains an alarming reality. During 2008, over 3,100 rockets and mortars were launched against Israel by Hamas, including over 360 during the so-called ‘lull’ initiated in June 2008. Deliberately targeting Israeli civilian targets and cynically launched from within Palestinian civilian concentrations, these attacks came in the wake

of seven years of similar attacks, during which over 8,900 rockets and mortars had been fired at Israel from Gaza.

“This campaign of terror reached a pinnacle towards the end of 2008, with over 300 rockets and mortars hitting Israel in the single week between December 21 and December 27, leaving it with no choice but to act to protect its civilians from the unceasing barrage of rocket fire. Moreover, during ‘Operation Cast Lead’ an additional 571 rockets and 205 mortars landed in Israel, reaching as far as the cities of Ashdod, Beer Sheva and Gedera.

“This campaign of violence has not been limited to rocket fire from Gaza. Palestinian terrorists carried out numerous terror attacks during 2008, killing 12 and wounding dozens of Israeli civilians. On 4 February 2008, a Palestinian suicide bomber killed an Israeli woman in Dimona; on 6 March 2008, a Palestinian terrorist went on a shooting rampage in a religious seminary in Jerusalem, killing eight high school students; and in three separate incidents in July 2008 and March 2009, Palestinians driving bulldozers plowed into Israeli bystanders, killing three and wounding numerous others.

“ Hamas, entrenched in Gaza with the support of the Islamic Republic of Iran, continues to stockpile weapons of ever-increasing lethality and range, operating a full-fledged weapons-smuggling operation through the extensive tunnel network running under the Egypt-Gaza border.

“In addition, Hamas has been holding kidnapped Israeli corporal Gilad Shalit incommunicado for over three years, violating basic humanitarian practice of permitting the International Committee of the Red Cross access to see the captive. The Hamas regime continues to reject the Quartet conditions, persists adamantly in its calls for Israel’s destruction and remains vigilant in its commitment to seeing this grim vision through. It is disturbing, if not to say appalling, that resolution 63/29 makes no mention of any of the above.

“Notwithstanding this concerted and enduring campaign of violence against Israeli civilians and testifying to Israel’s commitment to humanitarian principles even in the face of it, Israel continues to facilitate the entry of large quantities of humanitarian supplies into Gaza, including in the very midst of the recent Gaza conflict. Between the June 2007 Hamas takeover of Gaza and September 2008, 35,542 trucks bearing 813,870 tons of humanitarian supplies entered Gaza through the crossings from Israel. During Operation Cast Lead alone, 1,503 trucks carried 37,159 tons of humanitarian aid into Gaza via the Kerem Shalom and Karni crossings, alongside 1,535,750 litres of heavy-duty diesel for the Gaza power station.

“In addition, over the past months, and especially in recent weeks, the Government of Israel has authorized a major easing of security-related restrictions in the West Bank, dismantling two thirds (27 of 41) of the formerly existing checkpoints and some 140 dirt roadblocks during the past year. These positive developments, noted and lauded by the Quartet Envoy, accompany a marked improvement in economic indicators in the West Bank. Israel has taken these steps as confidence-building measures, with the aim of further encouraging Palestinian economic activity, despite the fact that in the past, such gestures have directly resulted in an upsurge in terror attacks by Palestinians against Israelis. The Permanent Mission expresses its hope that

the Palestinians will depart from prior practice and seize this opportunity to focus their collective energies in such ways as may serve to nurture peaceful coexistence with Israel.

“The Government of Israel has repeatedly extended an open and unequivocal invitation to launch peace talks with the Palestinian Authority. Guiding Israel in this respect is a vision of a reinvigorated political process alongside a rejuvenated effort to focus on economic cooperation and development. Regrettably, these overtures have been rejected by the Palestinian Authority.

“Despite an ongoing and acute threat to its security, Israel has gone to great lengths to assist in extending humanitarian assistance, fostering conditions for Palestinian economic development and cooperation, and engaging in political dialogue with the Palestinian Authority. Regrettably, these overtures have yet to achieve their goal of reaching comprehensive, just and lasting peace. Inexcusably, they are given no mention in resolution 63/29.

“Thus, far from acting as a vehicle for promoting a peaceful resolution of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, resolution 63/29 joins the numerous one-sided resolutions passed annually by the General Assembly on Israel which serve only to undermine the credibility of the United Nations as an impartial agent for the advancement of peace. The Permanent Mission takes this opportunity to urge the Secretary-General to use his good offices to encourage a cessation of this counterproductive practice.”

The note verbale dated 26 June 2009 from the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations reads as follows:

“The urgency of ending the tragedy and injustice inflicted upon the Palestinian people after more than 61 years of statelessness and dispossession and more than 42 years of military occupation and oppression by Israel, the occupying Power, cannot be overstated. For too long the Palestinian people have suffered crises, loss and subjugation, their human rights and fundamental freedoms brutally violated, and for too long the inability to achieve a just solution to the question of Palestine, despite persistent and noble efforts, has represented a tragic failure on the part of the international community, with grave consequences for not only the Palestinian and Israeli peoples, but for the Middle East region and beyond. The question of Palestine, which lies at the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict as a whole, is indeed central to the quest for regional and international peace, security and stability in our contemporary world, and a peaceful settlement is long overdue.

“There is international consensus that achieving a just and peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine, in accordance with international law and relevant United Nations resolutions, is a political, security, legal, human rights, humanitarian and moral imperative for the international community. This is clearly reflected in the General Assembly’s annual adoption of the resolution on the ‘Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine’ by an overwhelming majority.

“From Palestine’s perspective, the role of the United Nations remains central for the promotion of a peaceful settlement. As affirmed in numerous resolutions, the responsibility of the United Nations towards the question of

Palestine is an enduring one until the achievement of a just, lasting and comprehensive solution. During this critical period, Palestine reaffirms the importance of, as well as deep gratitude for, the efforts of the United Nations system, including its principal organs and specialized agencies, vis-à-vis the question of Palestine in, inter alia, the humanitarian, political, socio-economic, human rights and development fields. However, more concerted efforts are essential if the Charter, United Nations resolutions and the rule of law are to be truly upheld, and United Nations organs, including, inter alia, the General Assembly, Security Council, Human Rights Council, Economic and Social Council, International Court of Justice and the International Criminal Court, must continue to exert all efforts in this regard.

“Israel’s flagrant and deliberate violation of its legal obligations and United Nations resolutions must not continue to be tolerated. This has only emboldened Israeli impunity and lawlessness and further complicated the conflict. Such violations by the occupying Power must be directly addressed with the appropriate actions and measures at the international community’s disposal if the responsibility for achieving a peace settlement based on the two-State solution is ever to be fulfilled.

“Guided by the purposes and principles of the Charter, international law, including humanitarian and human rights law, and relevant United Nations resolutions, as well as the Madrid terms of reference, including the principle of land for peace, the Arab Peace Initiative and the Quartet Road Map, the international community must intensify its collective efforts to promote a peace that brings to an end the occupation of the Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, that began in 1967, and the establishment of the independent State of Palestine, as well as a just and agreed solution to the plight of the Palestine refugees on the basis of General Assembly resolution 194 (III). The parameters and core requirements for achieving such a peace are clearly stipulated in resolution 63/29, just as they have been for decades.

“Indeed, despite the passage of time, cyclical crises and the deterioration of the situation on the ground in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, the solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict remains the same: two States for two peoples to live side by side in peace and security. This solution finds its foundation in resolution 181 (II) of 29 November 1947 and has been reaffirmed and called for thereafter in numerous United Nations resolutions, including Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973), 1397 (2002), 1515 (2003) and 1850 (2008), General Assembly resolutions on the question of Palestine and on the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, as well as in the 2004 advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the legal consequences of the construction of a wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. The two-State solution is also at the crux of the Arab Peace Initiative and the Road Map.

“Regrettably, however, the months since the adoption of resolution 63/29 have been marked by the dramatic deterioration of the situation at all levels in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and by the obstruction of the efforts to achieve a peaceful settlement.

“With the exception of a few encouraging developments — such as: (a) the adoption by the Security Council of resolution 1850 (2008), in which

the Council, inter alia, declared its support for the Annapolis process and the resolution of all outstanding issues, including all core issues; called on the parties to fulfil their obligations under the Road Map and to refrain from any steps that could undermine confidence or prejudice the outcome of negotiations; and urged the intensification of diplomatic efforts towards achievement of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East; (b) the adoption by the Security Council of resolution 1860 (2009) at the height of the Israeli military aggression against the Gaza Strip, in which the Council, inter alia, called for a permanent and durable ceasefire, unimpeded provision of humanitarian assistance, arrangements for the sustained reopening of Gaza's crossing points, and renewed and urgent peace efforts; (c) the renewal of the Arab Peace Initiative in March 2009 by the League of Arab States Summit despite the marked deterioration of the situation; (d) the adoption by the Security Council of presidential statement PRST 2009/14, in which the Council, inter alia, reaffirmed the two-State solution, the basis for achieving a peaceful settlement, and the irreversibility of the peace process; (e) ongoing Egyptian efforts to promote a ceasefire, as well as Egyptian and regional efforts to foster Palestinian reconciliation and unity; (f) the more active, balanced and just approach being undertaken by the United States administration of President Barack Obama towards the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the Arab-Israeli conflict as a whole, based on a clear commitment to the two-State solution for the achievement of peace; and (g) the comprehensive and forward-looking statement by the Quartet on 26 June 2009 in Trieste, Italy — the period since the adoption of resolution 63/29 has witnessed a series of negative developments and setbacks as a result of Israel's continued breach of all rules and norms of international law, in particular the Fourth Geneva Convention, which has had a detrimental effect on the situation on the ground and the drive for peace.

“Even the minimal progress made in the Israeli-Palestinian peace process since its relaunch at the November 2007 Annapolis Conference has been undermined by Israel's illegal and aggressive policies in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, particularly its colonization campaign throughout the West Bank, its blockade in collective punishment of the entire civilian population in the Gaza Strip, and its daily humiliation and degradation of the Palestinian people. Such actions constitute gross violations of international law, including systematic human rights violations and war crimes against the Palestinian people, and of United Nations resolutions, and show contempt for the will of the international community.

“At the same time, Israel's unlawful actions have seriously compromised its credibility as a partner in the peace process. Rather than conducting negotiations in good faith and refraining from taking measures prejudicing the outcome of negotiations on the core issues — Jerusalem, settlements, refugees, borders, security and water — and repeatedly undermining confidence, the occupying Power has instead continued to brutally oppress the Palestinian civilian population and to establish ever more facts on the ground, creating more obstacles to contend with, deepening mistrust and preventing any real progress from being achieved, despite the convening of 27 meetings between the two sides since the Annapolis Conference.

“In comparison, the Palestinian leadership has exerted all efforts to uphold its obligations and commitments under international law, agreements reached and the Road Map. It has conducted negotiations in good faith, repeatedly reaffirmed its commitment to the two-State solution for peace, striven to promote a positive environment for negotiations, made extensive and well-documented progress in fulfilment of its obligations regarding promotion of security and law and order in the areas under the Palestinian Authority, diligently worked with the support of the international donor community to build the institutions of the future Palestinian State, and also continued to strive for much-desired national reconciliation and unity. All of this has been achieved by the Palestinian leadership despite the obstacles and measures imposed by Israel that have undermined these efforts and despite Israel’s blatant intransigence and violation of its legal obligations and commitments in total contradiction of the goals and spirit of the peace process.

“In this regard, Israel, the occupying Power, has intensified settlement activities, construction of the Wall, home demolitions and excavations, particularly in and around East Jerusalem; it has intensified its imposition of obstacles to the movement of persons and goods throughout the West Bank and its imposition of the two-year blockade on Gaza; it has continued to carry out military raids and assaults killing and injuring Palestinian civilians; it has continued to arrest, detain and imprison thousands of Palestinian civilians, with over 11,000 Palestinians, including hundreds of women and children, in Israeli jails, suffering inhumane conditions and treatment; and it has continued to exploit Palestinian natural resources and cause extensive environmental damage in the Territory.

“All recent reports, including those by United Nations agencies on the ground such as UNRWA, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, United Nations Children’s Fund, United Nations Development Programme, World Health Organization and World Food Programme, inter alia, attest to the decline of the economic, social, political, humanitarian and security conditions, especially in Gaza, as a result of Israel’s illegal and destructive policies. Poverty and unemployment rates remain inordinately high, health and education standards continue to decline, food insecurity is rampant, civilian lives continue to be threatened and lost as a result of the violence perpetrated by the Israeli occupying forces and settlers, and thousands more civilians have been displaced, which has exacerbated the hardships being endured by the Palestinian people under occupation.

“This negative trend culminated in Israel’s horrific military aggression against Gaza from 27 December 2008 to 19 January 2009 (Operation Cast Lead), in which more than 1,400 Palestinian civilians, including hundreds of children and women, were killed and more than 5,500 civilians were injured. The high number of casualties was the result of direct targeting by Israel of civilian areas and objects, including UNRWA schools where Palestinian civilians were known to be sheltering from the violence, and use of excessive, indiscriminate force and lethal, even prohibited, weaponry and ammunition, including white phosphorous, against the defenceless population. This has been verified by several investigations, including by the Secretary-General’s Board of Inquiry, the League of Arab States’ Independent Fact-Finding

Committee on Gaza and many human rights and humanitarian organizations on the ground.

“The Israeli occupying forces also caused wanton destruction throughout Gaza. Thousands of Palestinian homes were destroyed or seriously damaged. In addition, businesses, schools, hospitals, vital infrastructure such as roads, water, sanitation and electricity networks, agricultural land and numerous United Nations facilities were destroyed. The widespread destruction rendered thousands of people homeless. Moreover, appallingly, more than six months later no reconstruction of damaged or destroyed properties has been carried out owing to Israel’s ongoing blockade of Gaza, by which it has prohibited the entry of materials essential for reconstruction as well as the import and export of all other goods, with the exception of the minimum of food and medicine necessary to sustain the civilian population and other minor exceptions on a case-by-case basis.

“The massive deprivation and brutality inflicted by Israel on Gaza has traumatized and terrorized the Palestinian civilian population and the impact on the socio-economic, humanitarian, psychosocial and security situation has been disastrous. Moreover, at the time of writing this note, the peace process, which was suspended with the launch of the Israeli war against Gaza, remains frozen.

“The current situation is abnormal, unjust and untenable. The opening of Gaza’s border crossings to allow for the free movement of persons and goods, including unimpeded humanitarian access, commercial flows necessary for revival of the collapsed economy and civilian needs, and import of construction materials, spare parts and adequate fuel supplies is a matter of urgency. There is no acceptable justification for Israel’s continued imprisonment of the 1.5 million Palestinians in Gaza. Immediate efforts must be undertaken to ensure the sustained opening of the crossings in accordance with international humanitarian law, United Nations resolutions and the 2005 Agreement on Movement and Access. This is essential for reconstruction and healing the deep physical, psychological and societal wounds of Gaza, as well as for altering the very negative, tense environment between the two sides.

“Furthermore, Palestine emphasizes the importance of the continued pursuit of justice and accountability with regard to the war crimes committed by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian civilian population in Gaza. This is necessary for ending impunity, redressing the searing sense of injustice among the victims and allowing genuine healing to occur. That this is also essential for the long-term prospects for peace, reconciliation and coexistence is unquestionable.

“At the same time, the situation in the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory remains extremely precarious, owing primarily to Israel’s aggressive pursuit of its illegal colonization campaign aimed at creating massive facts on the ground to alter the demographic composition, status and character of the Territory, especially in and around Occupied East Jerusalem, and thus facilitate the occupying Power’s acquisition of more territory by force and prejudice the outcome of final status negotiations in its favour.

“We reiterate that Israel’s colonization of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, constitutes a grave breach of international humanitarian and criminal law, namely the Fourth Geneva Convention and Additional Protocol I, which prohibit the transfer by the occupying Power of its civilian population into the territory it occupies (articles 49 (6) and 85 (4) (a), respectively), and the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, under which the transfer, directly or indirectly, by the occupying Power of its own civilian population into the territory it occupies constitutes a war crime (article 8, para. 2 (b) (viii)). In addition, such illegal measures represent egregious violations of General Assembly and Security Council resolutions calling for the cessation and dismantlement of the settlements, blatant disrespect for the International Court of Justice advisory opinion of 9 July 2004 and violations of Israel’s Road Map obligation to freeze all settlement activities, including so-called natural growth, and dismantle settlement ‘outposts’.

“Even during the peace process, Israel has never ceased its settlement campaign, which has multiplied 17-fold at least in the period since the Annapolis Conference and continues to this day. The occupying Power continues its confiscation of Palestinian land; construction and expansion of settlements, settlement outposts and settlement infrastructure, including bypass roads and military installations and zones; the transfer of thousands more Israeli settlers to the Occupied Territory; construction of the Wall in deviation from the 1967 Green Line to entrench the settlements and advance their de facto annexation; imposition of a racist permit regime, residency restrictions and hundreds of checkpoints; demolition of Palestinian homes; and excavations, all of which are particularly intense in and around Occupied East Jerusalem. Simultaneously, armed and extremist Israeli settlers, with the protection of the occupying forces, continue to perpetrate acts of terror, harassment and intimidation against Palestinian civilians and to wantonly destroy Palestinian properties and orchards.

“On the ground, these illegal settlement colonization measures have been hugely detrimental and have affected all aspects of Palestinian life. The separation, isolation and cantonization of Palestinian communities, including the total isolation of East Jerusalem, by the settlements, Wall and checkpoints — which can only be likened to a state of apartheid — have caused the displacement of thousands of Palestinian civilians and widespread economic and social ills. Moreover, the contiguity, integrity and unity of the Occupied Palestinian Territory have been severely undermined, seriously threatening the prospects for physical realization of the two-State solution.

“As such, in terms of the peace process, the impact of Israel’s colonization has also been hugely detrimental, constituting the main obstruction to a peaceful settlement. These provocative, illegal Israeli actions have undermined the drive for peace, poisoned the atmosphere between the two sides and tainted the process as a whole. In this regard, it is imperative to note that the issue of settlements is not only a final status issue in the peace process but is also intricately related to and at the crux of nearly all other final status issues, including Jerusalem, borders, water and security.

“In reality, Israel’s colonization is totally contradictory to the objective of the peace process — achievement of the two-State solution of an independent State of Palestine living side by side with Israel in peace and security and on the basis of the 1967 borders — and to the principle of land for peace sustaining that process. We thus reaffirm that continuing negotiations under such conditions would be futile and unacceptable, and there is an international consensus that such a process will never achieve its goals. The Palestinian leadership has always negotiated in good faith but it cannot continue to engage blindly in this process while Israel continues to destroy the contiguity, viability and prospects for the future independent State of Palestine.

“The international community must act swiftly in response to the international consensus that exists with regard to the two-State solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, including that embodied in resolution 63/29, in order to salvage the two-State solution and the prospects for peace and stability in our region. Continued declarations or mild appeals to Israel will no longer suffice and further appeasement will only deepen this problem. Israel, the occupying Power, must be compelled to cease immediately all settlement and related colonization activities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and abide by its obligations under international law in this regard, as well as under the Road Map. Confronted with continued defiance, the international community, including the Security Council and Quartet, must take real action, including practical and concrete measures, to bring to an end Israel’s belligerent, unlawful practices.

“The provisions of resolution 63/29 thus remain valid, as do those of the other United Nations resolutions relevant to the question of Palestine, and the legal and political principles therein constitute the foundations of the peace process and the keys to resolving this prolonged conflict. Creating the appropriate environment for the advancement of negotiations and overcoming the obstacles that have repeatedly impeded progress towards a peaceful settlement require adherence to and full respect for these parameters and principles and fulfilment of the obligations and commitments they entail.

“The support of the international community in this endeavour remains critical and Palestine remains encouraged by the overwhelming support in this regard, as reflected, inter alia, by the vote on resolution 63/29. The General Assembly must continue striving to promote a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine in all its aspects. Our conviction remains firm that concerted and coordinated action by the international community can and will tangibly contribute to bringing an end to the 1967 Israeli occupation and enabling the Palestinian people to exercise their inalienable rights in their independent State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital, fundamental to a just, lasting and comprehensive settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the Arab-Israeli conflict as a whole.

“In conclusion, we reaffirm the Palestinian leadership’s commitment to a peace process based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973), 1397 (2002), 1515 (2003) and 1850 (2008), the Madrid terms of reference, including the principle of land for peace, the Arab Peace Initiative and the Road Map. We thus renew the call upon the international community to seize the slim prospects for peace that remain and not allow them to vanish as a

result of illegal, unilateral and destructive Israeli actions. Moreover, we reaffirm the enduring resilience of the Palestinian people, in spite of the formidable challenges, to ultimately realize their inalienable rights, including their rights to self-determination and to return, and to fulfil their legitimate national aspirations to live in peace, freedom and prosperity in their homeland and in harmony with their neighbours.”

II. Observations

5. During the reporting period, diplomatic developments and events on the ground underscored the importance of a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine. The past year witnessed the discontinuation of Israeli-Palestinian negotiations undertaken within the framework of the Annapolis process, a destructive conflict in Gaza and southern Israel, a deepening internal divide despite efforts towards Palestinian unity and the formation of a new Israeli Government following Knesset elections. In recent months, there have been renewed efforts by the international community to achieve the vision of two states living side by side in peace and security.

6. On 4 November 2008, Israel conducted a military incursion into Gaza for the purpose of destroying a tunnel allegedly used for abducting Israeli soldiers. After several months of relative calm, between 4 and 30 November, 138 rockets and 153 mortars were subsequently fired by Palestinian militants into Israel. I strongly condemned these rocket attacks by Palestinian militants as totally unacceptable and called upon all parties to fully respect the *tahdiya*, or calm, which had been brokered by Egypt between Israel and Hamas in June 2008.

7. Rocket fire from Gaza into southern Israel and Israeli air strikes accelerated throughout December. On 27 December 2008, the violence sharply escalated with the commencement of Israeli military operation Cast Lead, which included the launch of massive, coordinated strikes by the Israeli air force in Gaza. Notwithstanding the Security Council’s press statement on 28 December calling for both sides to halt all acts of violence, in the following days Israel heavily bombed a large number of Gaza’s military and civilian installations, while Hamas launched rockets into southern Israel almost continuously. Throughout this period, I engaged in bilateral contacts with leaders from the region to urge a return to the calm and to avoid further escalation and bloodshed.

8. On 31 December, I briefed the Security Council, deploring the fact that the civilian population of Gaza was trapped between the irresponsibility displayed in the indiscriminate rocket attacks by Hamas militants and the disproportionality of the continuing Israeli military operation. I also emphasized that life in southern Israel had become extremely difficult, with Israelis living in constant fear of rocket strikes. I called on all parties to fully respect international humanitarian and human rights law.

9. The conflict further escalated on 3 January 2009, when the Israel Defense Forces launched a major ground offensive into Gaza. The following weeks were marked by intense fighting, high numbers of civilian casualties and extensive damage to the civilian infrastructure in Gaza.

10. On 8 January 2009, the Security Council adopted resolution 1860 (2009), in which it called for a complete halt to the violence, an immediate and durable ceasefire, the unimpeded provision of humanitarian assistance, the sustained reopening of the crossing points and efforts to curb the illicit trafficking of weapons into Gaza.

11. Following the adoption of resolution 1860 (2009), I undertook an extended eight-country mission to the region to deliver the message that the fighting must stop and the resolution must be fully respected and implemented. I met with the leaders of Egypt, Jordan, Israel, the Palestinian Authority, Turkey, Lebanon, and the Syrian Arab Republic and, in the immediate aftermath of the end of major hostilities, I visited Gaza City and southern Israel. Throughout this mission, I sought to maximize coordination of the diplomatic efforts to end the crisis and to make clear the expectations of the United Nations as embodied in resolution 1860 (2009).

12. Major military operations ended on 18 January with the declaration of unilateral ceasefires by the Israeli cabinet and Hamas. Since January 2009, violence in Gaza has decreased significantly; however, sporadic firing from both sides has continued, underscoring the overall fragility of the situation. I believe it to be of the utmost importance that these unilateral ceasefires are translated into lasting arrangements based on the framework of resolution 1860 (2009).

13. The three-week conflict in Gaza resulted in extensive suffering and hardship. While figures from different sources vary, an estimated 1,300 Palestinians lost their lives and 5,300 were injured in the conflict, and on the Israeli side, 14 Israelis were killed and more than 530 were injured. A large proportion of the casualties, particularly on the Palestinian side, were civilians. I deeply regret the loss of civilian life during the conflict.

14. The intensity and destruction of the conflict substantially exacerbated the existent humanitarian crisis in Gaza, with deterioration in food security, physical and mental health, and access to basic services and economic livelihoods all being observed. During the conflict, practical arrangements were put in place between United Nations humanitarian agencies and Israel for the delivery of some relief supplies to the beleaguered civilian population. Following the end of the hostilities, United Nations agencies estimated that 3,700 houses and two health-care centres had been destroyed, and that 48,700 homes, 15 hospitals, 41 health-care centres and 273 schools had sustained varying degrees of damage.

15. On 2 March 2009, I attended the conference for the reconstruction of Gaza in Sharm el Sheikh, where the Palestinian Authority presented the Palestinian Early Recovery and Reconstruction Plan. The conference yielded pledges worth \$4.5 billion. At the time of writing, only a small percentage of these funds have materialized, at least in part due to donor concerns about the ability to get the necessary reconstruction materials into Gaza.

16. The numbers of truckloads of goods entering Gaza have increased since the period immediately preceding and during Operation Cast Lead. However, the import of goods still remains less than one fifth of that which occurred as part of normal commerce and trade prior to the imposition of the comprehensive closure regime in May 2007. Today, the overwhelming majority of imports into Gaza are limited to food and sanitation items, with still little or no entry for all other goods, including items for early recovery and reconstruction.

17. Some seven months after the conflict, this situation is unacceptable. Consistent with resolution 1860 (2009), the November 2005 Agreement on Movement and Access, and public statements made by the Quartet, I have repeatedly called for a sustained reopening of all crossing points in Gaza and for mechanisms to be put in place to prevent the illicit trafficking of arms into Gaza.

18. In addition, the United Nations has presented the Government of Israel with a proposal to begin a \$77 million first instalment of early recovery and reconstruction by working to complete previously suspended United Nations projects to build housing, schools and clinics across Gaza. In implementing these projects, United Nations agencies will utilize their own monitoring, verification and quality assurance processes in order to ensure integrity of programming. I hope to receive a positive response to this reasonable proposal.

19. From the outset of the conflict in Gaza, I called on all combatants to respect the sanctity of United Nations premises. However, during the course of the conflict a number of incidents occurred in which United Nations personnel, premises or operations were affected. In response, I established an internal Board of Inquiry to review and investigate nine of these incidents.

20. On 4 May 2009 I released a summary of the Board's report. The Board found that in seven incidents, the death, injuries and damages were caused by military actions of the Israel Defense Forces, using munitions launched from the air or fired from the ground. In one incident, the report concluded that damage to a World Food Programme facility was caused by a Palestinian faction, most likely Hamas, and in another incident, the Board was unable to reach any conclusions. The Board also made a number of recommendations, including with respect to pursuing claims for damages incurred by the United Nations and further improving coordination mechanisms between the United Nations and the Government of Israel in order to help ensure the safety and security of United Nations personnel and premises. I am actively pursuing these recommendations.

21. I have fully supported the United Nations fact-finding mission on the Gaza conflict led by Justice Richard Goldstone, pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution S-9/1 (2009), and its broad investigation into all alleged human rights and international humanitarian law violations that took place before, during and after the military operations in Gaza between 27 December 2008 and 18 January 2009. I look forward to the report of the fact-finding mission.

22. I also support continuing mediation efforts to secure the release of Israeli Corporal Gilad Shalit in exchange for some of the 11,000 Palestinian prisoners held in Israeli jails. I regret that three years after his capture, neither the International Committee of the Red Cross nor any other international body has been granted access to Corporal Shalit.

23. During the reporting period, Egypt convened six rounds of reconciliation talks between Fatah, Hamas and other Palestinian groups. Regrettably the talks have only yielded limited progress. I continue to fully support the efforts of Egypt on this vital issue and to urge the factions to quickly conclude an agreement to reunite within the framework of the legitimate Palestinian Authority, as called for in resolution 1860 (2009) and by the Quartet and League of Arab States. The United Nations is ready to engage a government under the authority of President Abbas that unites Gaza and the West Bank within such a framework.

24. A key achievement during the reporting period has been the beginning of Palestinian self-empowerment, which has taken place in the West Bank under the leadership of President Abbas and Prime Minister Fayyad and has included important reforms in fiscal management, development planning and the security sector. This positive momentum must not be imperilled by the financial crisis facing the Palestinian Authority. When the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee met in Oslo on 8 June 2009, Prime Minister Fayyad reported that the Palestinian Authority faces a critical budget crisis and still has great difficulty paying monthly salaries, which has a severe impact on its planning processes and undermines its reform agenda.

25. In July 2009, the International Monetary Fund reported that in 2009 the recurrent budget deficit for the Authority was approximately \$1.6 billion and that \$900 million in external financing was required for the remainder of the year. I very much welcome the recent transfers of funds by major donors to support the Palestinian Authority and I appeal to other donors to urgently fulfil pledges of budget support.

26. The Israeli system of creating physical obstacles to movement in the West Bank and imposing elaborate permit requirements on Palestinians has continued to be entrenched during the reporting period, including for movement in and around East Jerusalem. However, I welcome recent measures by the Israeli Government to ease movement restrictions around Nablus, Jericho, Qalqiliya and Ramallah. The positive steps taken by Israel, if sustained and expanded, would have a significant impact on Palestinian freedom of movement and economic development. As at August 2009, 613 obstacles to movement remained in the West Bank, 68 of which were permanently staffed checkpoints. According to the International Monetary Fund, if Israel continues easing restrictions, real growth in the gross domestic product in the West Bank could stand at 7 per cent in 2009. This would represent the first significant improvement in living standards in the West Bank since 2006.

27. I appreciate the work of Quartet Representative Tony Blair in his efforts to support continued economic development in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and encourage the parties to work with him to bring about transformative change on the ground.

28. During the reporting period, the Palestinian Authority continued to make real strides in the implementation of its security plan with considerable international assistance, in particular from the United States of America. I urge the Palestinian Authority to continue to make every effort to improve law and order and to fight violent extremism in accordance with its Road Map obligations. In line with the increasing capabilities of the Palestinian security forces, I also encourage Israel to further ease movement restrictions, as well as to reduce search and arrest operations in the West Bank.

29. In Gaza, Hamas has extended its de facto control over institutions and society. Actions taken to impose internal order, including the violent confrontation with the radical group Jund Ansar Allah on 14 August 2009, have taken place outside a legitimate legal framework. There is little accountability of the de facto authority towards the population regarding such actions. In recent months, despite sporadic incidents, Hamas has largely enforced a state of calm vis-à-vis Israel and it is vital that this is built upon. The only sustainable future for Gaza is for the Strip to be reunited with the West Bank within the framework of Palestinian, regional and international legitimacy. Hamas has key responsibilities in this regard which have

not yet been met and I continue to call on the Hamas leadership to respond positively to the urgings of the international community.

30. The reporting period has also been one of political transition in Israel. A Likud-led coalition Government headed by Prime Minister Netanyahu was sworn into office on 31 March 2009 following Israeli elections held on 11 February. I welcomed the formation of the new Israeli Government and stated my expectation that it would adhere to Israel's previous commitments regarding the peace process.

31. On 14 June 2009, Prime Minister Netanyahu delivered a speech in which he stated that the Israeli Government would accept a Palestinian state, but under several significant conditions related to final status issues. It is, however, actions on the ground, together with a genuine readiness to negotiate on all core issues based on existing commitments, that will be the true test of Israel's commitment to the two-State solution.

32. In this respect, I am concerned by the failure of the new Israeli Government to commit to its obligation under the Road Map to freeze all settlement construction, including natural growth, as well as to dismantle outposts erected since March 2001. I note that the Israeli organization Peace Now reported that in the first half of 2009, the building of 596 new structures had begun in West Bank settlements, outposts and industrial areas and that there had not been any evacuations of "real" outposts.

33. Israeli actions in support of settlers in the heart of East Jerusalem are a matter of particular concern. Most recently, on 2 August 2009, Israeli security forces forcibly evicted nine Palestinian families, amounting to 53 people, from their homes in the Sheikh Jarrah neighbourhood of East Jerusalem. Under the protection of Israeli security forces, the property was handed over to a settlement organization. I repeat here the Quartet's position that such unilateral actions cannot prejudice the outcome of negotiations and will not be recognized by the international community.

34. On 29 October 2008, following a five-month suspension of demolitions obtained by Quartet Representative Tony Blair, the Israeli authorities resumed the demolition of houses lacking building permits in East Jerusalem and Area C of the West Bank. I reiterate my call on Israel to adhere to international law and its Road Map obligations, and to cease and reverse provocative actions such as demolitions and evictions.

35. Contrary to the 9 July 2004 advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice, the Barrier deviates significantly from the 1967 Green Line into Occupied Palestinian Territory in the West Bank. It continues to restrict Palestinian access to East Jerusalem, key social services and agricultural land. In accordance with the provisions of General Assembly resolution ES-10/17 of 15 December 2006, on 9 April 2009 I provided a progress report on the work of the United Nations Register of Damage Caused by the Construction of the Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. At the time of writing, the Register of Damage had collected over 1,100 claim forms in the West Bank and had approved 268 claims for inclusion in the Register.

36. Violence between Israelis and Palestinians, as well as among Palestinians, continued. Excluding casualties during Operation Cast Lead, between 1 September 2007 and 17 August 2009, 5 Israelis were killed and 125 injured, while 89 Palestinians were killed and 1,212 injured in conflict-related incidents. A total of 80 Palestinians were killed and 200 wounded in internal violence. I once again

unequivocally condemn all acts of violence and hostilities directed against civilians and remind all parties of their obligations under international law.

37. Moving now to international diplomatic activity in support of the peace process, the latter half of 2008 witnessed regular bilateral negotiations between Israeli and Palestinian negotiating teams within the framework of the Annapolis process. On 9 November 2008, President Abbas and the then Minister for Foreign Affairs Livni briefed the Quartet on their progress, which they described as substantial and promising. While noting that a comprehensive agreement would not be reached by the Annapolis target of the end of 2008, the parties committed themselves to continuous, uninterrupted negotiations on all core issues. On 16 December 2008, the Security Council passed resolution 1850 (2008) reaffirming the basic principles upon which Israeli-Palestinian peace must rest as well as the irreversibility of bilateral negotiations undertaken through the Annapolis process.

38. Talks were initially suspended during the Israeli electoral period and were then discontinued owing to Operation Cast Lead, and no negotiations on core issues have taken place in 2009. However, an important new impetus to peace efforts was given by the early and welcome initiative of United States President Obama to vigorously pursue the creation of a Palestinian State as part of a comprehensive regional peace strategy. I also welcomed President Obama's appointment of Senator George Mitchell as United States Special Envoy for the Middle East. President Obama's speech in Cairo on 4 June 2009 challenged Israelis and Palestinians alike and demonstrated the importance which the United States Administration places on a peaceful settlement to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

39. On 26 June 2009, the Quartet met in Trieste and affirmed its determination to work with the parties to create the conditions necessary for the prompt resumption and early conclusion of negotiations on the end goal of a two-State solution. There was strong agreement among Quartet members that both Israelis and Palestinians should implement their obligations under the Road Map, and they urged the Government of Israel to freeze all settlement activity, including natural growth, and called upon the Palestinian Authority to continue to improve law and order and to fight violent extremism.

40. During the reporting period, the Quartet also continued its valuable practice of consulting with the League of Arab States. I welcome the renewed commitment of the Arab League to pursue a just and comprehensive regional peace in accordance with the Arab Peace Initiative, as expressed most recently in its ministerial communiqué of 24 June 2009. I continue to believe strongly in the potential for activating the regional tracks of the peace process, alongside a rejuvenated Palestinian track, on the basis of land for peace. I also support the convening of an international conference in Moscow to support this effort.

41. I want to record my deep appreciation to Robert H. Serry, the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process as well as to the Commissioner-General of UNRWA, Karen Koning AbuZayd, and all United Nations staff who continue to provide indispensable service in the Occupied Palestinian Territory under difficult and sometimes dangerous circumstances. Palestinian and international United Nations staff members have faced growing restrictions as concerns their free movement and access in the service of the United Nations. I have repeatedly protested these restrictions to the Government of Israel and look forward to improvements in this regard.

42. I am particularly indebted to the Director of UNRWA Operations in Gaza and his staff for bravely continuing their work throughout Operation Cast Lead. I want to pay special tribute to the UNRWA staff member killed and the 11 others injured while serving the Palestinian people during the Gaza conflict.

43. I call on the parties to honour all existing agreements and previous commitments and pursue an irreversible effort towards the two-State solution, including by fully implementing their obligations on the ground and by resuming, vigorously pursuing, and concluding negotiations to resolve all core issues of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, including Jerusalem, borders and refugees. A true end to violence and lasting security for both Palestinians and Israelis will only come through a just, comprehensive and peaceful settlement to the Arab-Israeli conflict. After the failure of efforts in 2008 to secure an agreement and the difficulties encountered in 2009 in securing a resumption of negotiations, it is vital that meaningful progress is now made towards the goal of a negotiated agreement, that the parties live up to their responsibilities in this regard, and that there is coordinated and effective international engagement in support of these efforts.

44. The United Nations will continue to work towards the peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine. The framework for peace remains unchanged: the establishment of two States, an independent and viable Palestine living side by side in peace and security with Israel, on the basis of the principle of land for peace and a just and comprehensive regional peace consistent with Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973), 1397 (2002), 1515 (2003) and 1850 (2008), the Road Map and the Arab Peace Initiative.

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Sixty-fifth year**The situation in the Middle East****Question of Palestine****Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine****Report of the Secretary-General***Summary*

The present report is submitted in accordance with General Assembly resolution 64/19. It contains replies received from the parties concerned to the notes verbales sent by the Secretary-General pursuant to the request contained in paragraph 24 of the resolution. The report also contains the observations of the Secretary-General on the current state of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and on international efforts to move the peace process forward with a view to achieving a peaceful settlement. The report covers the period from September 2009 through August 2010.



I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 64/19.

2. On 1 July 2010, pursuant to the request contained in paragraph 24 of the above-mentioned resolution, I addressed the following letter to the President of the Security Council:

“I have the honour to refer to resolution 64/19, which the General Assembly adopted on 2 December 2009, at its sixty-fourth session, under the agenda item ‘Question of Palestine’.

“Paragraph 24 of the resolution ‘*Requests* the Secretary-General to continue his efforts with the parties concerned, and in consultation with the Security Council, towards the attainment of a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine and the promotion of peace in the region and to submit to the General Assembly at its sixty-fifth session a report on these efforts and on developments on this matter’.

“In order to fulfil my reporting responsibilities under this resolution, I should be grateful if you would kindly convey to me the views of the Security Council by 31 July 2010.”

3. As of 31 August, no response had been received to that request.

4. In a note verbale dated 3 May 2010 to the parties concerned, I sought the positions of the Governments of Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic, as well as the Palestine Liberation Organization, regarding any steps taken by them to implement the relevant provisions of the resolution. As at 31 August 2010, replies had been received from Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization. The note verbale dated 20 July 2010 from the Permanent Mission of Israel to the United Nations reads as follows:

“As shown in the meeting records, Israel voted against this resolution, as it has done on similar resolutions adopted in the past by the General Assembly. The Permanent Mission of Israel wishes to reiterate the considerations guiding this voting practice, in light of the current situation.

“Despite significant efforts made on the part of the Government of Israel in the past year to renew negotiations with the Palestinian Authority and to foster conditions for economic growth and development, Palestinian terrorism continued and remains an alarming reality.

“Terrorist organizations in the West Bank remain active in planning, preparing and attempting to execute terrorist attacks. In 2009, 646 terrorist attacks emanated from or were carried out in the West Bank, leading to five deaths (three victims were shot and two were attacked and stabbed to death). These attacks were carried out in all potential forms and on all fronts, particularly by Hamas.

“The first half of 2010 witnessed an alarming escalation in terrorist activity against Israeli targets in the West Bank and the Jerusalem area. In the first two months of 2010, 87 terrorist attacks were carried out in the West Bank. In February 2010, an Israeli citizen was stabbed to death in one of these

attacks. In March 2010, 89 attacks were recorded in the West Bank and Jerusalem: three explosive devices, five attacks by gunfire, two stone-throwing attacks, and 79 Molotov cocktails.

“In 2009, 699 terrorist attacks emanated from the Gaza Strip, killing nine Israeli citizens. In January 2009, an Israeli citizen was killed by detonation of an explosive device. In January and February 2010, 45 terrorist attacks were carried out from Gaza, including 18 rockets and 33 mortar bombs. In March 2010, there was a disturbing increase in terrorist activity, and 36 attacks were recorded. Three victims were murdered in these attacks — two Israeli soldiers and a Thai worker. In addition, two Israelis were wounded in these attacks. The rocket and mortar attacks against Israel in the past year are a continuation of a nine-year-long terrorist campaign in which many thousands of such projectiles have been launched at Israeli civilian centres from Gaza.

“Concomitant with the Palestinian terrorist campaign against Israel, the Palestinian Authority has continued in its campaign of incitement designed to legitimize terrorism. In open breach of their road map obligations, senior Palestinian officials have been directly involved in glorification of terrorists who are responsible for the murders of scores of Israeli civilians. Recent examples of how the Palestinian Authority has institutionalized incitement by turning terrorists into role models include the recent naming of a Ramallah street after arch-terrorist Yehieh Ayash, and the naming of a Ramallah square, a number of schools, community and youth centres, sports tournaments and numerous additional facilities after Dalal Mughrabi, who led an infamous terrorist attack that killed 37 Israeli civilians.

“ Hamas, entrenched in Gaza with the support of Iran, continues to stockpile weapons of ever-increasing lethality and range, operating a full-fledged weapons-smuggling operation through the extensive tunnel network running under the Egypt-Gaza border.

“In addition, Hamas has been holding kidnapped Israeli Corporal Gilad Shalit incommunicado for over three years, violating basic humanitarian practice of permitting international humanitarian personnel access to the captive. The Hamas regime continues to reject the Quartet conditions, persists adamantly in its calls for Israel’s destruction and remains vigilant in its commitment to seeing this grim vision through. It is disturbing that resolution 64/19 makes no mention of any of the above.

“Notwithstanding this concerted and enduring campaign of violence and incitement, and testifying to Israel’s commitment to humanitarian principles even in the face of it, Israel continues to facilitate the entry of large quantities of humanitarian supplies into Gaza. In 2009, 738,576 tons (30,576 trucks) of humanitarian commodities were transferred to the Gaza Strip. In January and February 2010, 92,138.1 tons (4,056 trucks) were transferred. In 2009, 22,849 Palestinians exited the Strip, among them 10,544 patients and their companions, exiting for medical treatment in Israel. In 2009, 21,200 international organization staff members entered the Gaza Strip. In addition, numerous infrastructural projects have been advanced, including in the fields of housing, classrooms, sewage treatment plants and medical facilities. In this regard, in anticipation of winter, 3,607 tons of glass (103 truckloads) were transferred to Gaza in late 2009. Also, in the first quarter of 2010, 23 tons of

iron and 25 tons of cement were transferred to the Gaza Strip from Israel, with an additional 39 tons of building material in May 2010.

“In addition, the Government of Israel has authorized a major easing of security-related restrictions in the West Bank. Since 2008, the number of key checkpoints has been reduced from 41 to 14. Since April 2008, 357 obstacles (earth mounds, road blocks) have been removed. In January 2010, 10 roadblocks were removed on Route 60, the major North-South artery in the West Bank. Generally, movement from North to South in the West Bank is now smooth, with only a few checkpoints along the way, operated as normally open. These and other positive developments have resulted in an economic growth rate of 8 per cent in the West Bank in 2009, accompanied by a growth in foreign investment of 600 per cent since 2008.

“Over the course of the previous year, the Government of Israel repeatedly extended an open invitation to restart peace talks with the Palestinian Authority. Guiding Israel in this respect is a vision of a reinvigorated political process alongside continued and expanded efforts to foster economic cooperation and development. The launching of proximity talks between the sides in May 2010 is an encouraging development which will hopefully spawn the renewal of direct negotiations aimed at achieving a comprehensive resolution of the conflict.

“Despite an ongoing and acute threat to its security, Israel has gone to great lengths to assist in extending humanitarian assistance, to foster conditions for Palestinian economic development and cooperation, and to engage in political dialogue with the Palestinian Authority. While these overtures have yet to achieve their goal of reaching comprehensive and lasting peace, it is surprising that they are given no mention in resolution 64/19.

“Thus, resolution 64/19 joins the numerous one-sided resolutions passed annually by the General Assembly on Israel which serve to undermine the credibility of the United Nations as an impartial agent for the advancement of peace. The Permanent Mission takes this opportunity to urge the Secretary-General to use his good offices to encourage a cessation of this counterproductive practice.”

5. The note verbale dated 24 June 2010 from the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations reads as follows:

“Palestine regards the General Assembly’s resolution on the ‘Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine’ with utmost importance. The annual adoption of this resolution and numerous other resolutions regarding the question of Palestine in the various organs of the United Nations, the ongoing efforts by relevant committees and commissions, including, inter alia, the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, the many programmes of assistance by the specialized agencies, including in particular the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), and the efforts of the Secretary-General, his Special Representatives, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Special Rapporteurs are reflective of the priority that continues to be rightly given to this question by the international community. We believe the efforts of the United Nations system in all fields to be invaluable and

consistent with the permanent responsibility of the United Nations towards the question of Palestine until it is satisfactorily and justly resolved in all its aspects, a principle reaffirmed annually by the Assembly. We urge full activation of this responsibility towards resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in accordance with its relevant resolutions, the Charter and international law.

“In this regard, the resolution on the ‘Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine’ comprehensively delineates the parameters for achieving a just, lasting and peaceful settlement based on international law, relevant United Nations resolutions, and the established principles and agreed terms of reference of the peace process, including Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), the Madrid terms of reference, including the land for peace principle, the Arab Peace Initiative and the Quartet road map. As is clear from consecutive General Assembly session voting records, the overwhelming majority of States support the provisions and goals of this resolution, which from the outset reaffirms ‘the necessity of achieving a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, in all its aspects, and of intensifying all efforts towards that end’.

“This is reflective of the firm international consensus that exists in support of a peaceful settlement on the basis of the ‘two-State solution’ of an independent, viable and contiguous State of Palestine, living side by side with Israel in peace and security on the basis of the pre-1967 borders, with Jerusalem as the shared capital of two States, and a just solution for the plight of the Palestine refugees on the basis of General Assembly resolution 194 (III) of 11 December 1948. This international unanimity reflects the long-standing recognition of the Palestinian people as a nation and recognition of their inalienable rights, including their right to self-determination and independence in their homeland. As is well known, this solution finds its foundation in resolution 181 (II) of 29 November 1947, and has been reaffirmed and called for thereafter in numerous Security Council and General Assembly resolutions, as well as in the landmark 9 July 2004 advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice. The two-State solution is also at the crux of the Arab Peace Initiative and the Quartet road map, both of which figure prominently in resolution 64/19 and for which the Assembly calls for regional and international efforts to follow up and promote, and both of which the Palestinian leadership has consistently strived to adhere to and to implement.

“We are gratified that the international consensus has been further consolidated in the past year with increasing calls from all corners of the international community, governmental and civil society alike, for a just solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as a matter of urgency. The calls have been consistent for bringing an end to the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, in order to end this tragic conflict and make peace and security a reality in the Middle East and beyond. Strengthening of the international consensus and the rising momentum in this regard can be found in the support for resolution 64/19 as well as in many statements and declarations made at the United Nations and in other international forums by leaders and representatives of Member States, individually and collectively, including the European Union (EU) Council Conclusions on the Middle East Peace Process of 8 December 2009, the

Quartet statement adopted on 19 March 2010 in Moscow, and relevant statements by States members of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), among others. It is also reflected in the active efforts by the United States of America to revive the peace process through the launch of 'proximity talks', with the support of the other Quartet members (European Union, Russian Federation and United Nations), the League of Arab States and the international community as a whole.

“Regrettably, however, despite the unanimity and serious efforts being exerted, the question of Palestine remains unresolved and the situation on the ground remains critical and cause for alarm. In the period since the adoption of resolution 64/19, all international and regional initiatives for peace continue to be undermined by Israel’s ongoing violations and grave breaches of international law, including humanitarian and human rights law, and its disrespect for United Nations resolutions and the will of the international community. Hopes are waning and despair rising as Israel, the occupying Power, persists with its acts of aggression, colonization, collective punishment, provocation and incitement against the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. Attempts to revive the peace process and the Palestinian leadership’s commitment to peace continued to be responded to by Israel with intransigence and defiance, undoubtedly bolstered by the international community’s repeated failure to uphold its legal obligations and responsibilities to act to compel Israel to cease its violations and truly choose the path of peace.

“The pattern has become blatantly clear: it is one in which Israel, the occupying Power, continues to aggressively and systematically violate international law and the international community remains unable to rein in this impunity and to ensure compliance with the law, deepening the suffering and injustice endured by the Palestinian people and sabotaging peace efforts. Countless United Nations and international reports, including by United Nations agencies on the ground such as UNRWA, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, the United Nations Children’s Fund and the United Nations Development Programme among others, provide ample evidence of the continuation of Israel’s unlawful practices in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and their deleterious impact on the Palestinian people and on the efforts to promote a just and lasting peace. Rather than acting in good faith, including in the context of the United States-mediated proximity talks, Israel has instead persisted with policies intended to prejudice the outcome of negotiations on the core issues — Jerusalem, settlements, refugees, borders, security and water. This has, in turn, exacerbated conditions on the ground, undermined confidence, deepened mistrust, and obstructed resumption of the peace process, seriously calling into question Israel’s credibility as a peace partner and its commitment to the two-State solution and even its standing as a State Member of the United Nations, the resolutions of which it continues to flagrantly ignore and violate.

“In this regard, Israel has continued its illegal colonization campaign aimed at altering the demographic composition, legal status, character and geographic nature of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East

Jerusalem, to facilitate its de facto annexation of more Palestinian land. The occupying Power has also continued to commit other violations, foremost among them the imposition of severe measures of collective punishment, seriously infringing on and violating the human rights of the Palestinian civilian population, impairing all aspects of life and causing constant humiliation, hardship and instability. The situation is most dire in the occupied Gaza Strip, where 1.5 million Palestinians — approximately 70 per cent of whom are refugees and over 50 per cent of whom are children — remain imprisoned by Israel's illegal blockade, imposed by land, air and sea and now in its fourth year. These Israeli policies constitute gross violations of international law, including war crimes against the Palestinian people, for which Israel must be held fully accountable if justice is ever to prevail and peace to be attained.

“A brief description of this twofold Israeli policy of colonization and oppression over the past year in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, is necessary for understanding the grave situation on the ground and the failure of recent peace initiatives. In the Occupied West Bank, the Palestinian people continue to suffer from Israel's illegal colonization of their land and its consequences. In violation of the demand made by the Assembly in resolution 64/19 for, inter alia, the complete cessation of all Israeli settlement activities and all measures contrary to international law and any unilateral actions aimed at prejudging the final outcome of negotiations, Israel has continued confiscation of Palestinian property, settlement and Wall construction, transfer of settlers, home demolitions and evictions, excavations near and around holy and historic sites, and imposition of over 500 checkpoints and obstacles to free movement.

“Occupied East Jerusalem in particular has remained a main target of this aggressive Israeli colonization policy. The past year has witnessed the intensification of the demolition of Palestinian homes in East Jerusalem, rendering hundreds more families homeless; eviction of Palestinian residents of East Jerusalem, including by arbitrary revocation of their residency rights and obstruction of family unification efforts; expropriation of properties; excavations near and around holy and historic sites; closure of Palestinian institutions in the City; obstruction of freedom of worship; use of excessive force against worshippers on several occasions; and acts of terror, violence and incitement by Israeli settlers in the City. Such illegal and provocative measures, all intended to alter Jerusalem's demographic composition, legal status and distinctly Palestinian Arab character and identity and to sever it from the rest of the Palestinian Territory, have dramatically raised tensions and inflamed religious sensitivities, resulting in an extremely volatile situation in the City. The situation has been further aggravated by the enactment of an Israeli military order in April 2010, threatening the arbitrary arrest and deportation of thousands of Palestinian civilians from the West Bank and particularly from in and around East Jerusalem.

“As a result of Israel's settlement and Wall construction, Palestinian communities continue to be separated and isolated from each other, families continue to be displaced, and access and rights to education, health care, agricultural lands and livelihoods continue to be obstructed. Palestinian natural resources, especially land, water, and mining quarries, also continue to be

exploited and extensive environmental damage continues to be caused in the Territory. Palestinian civilians also continue to be the victims of settler terror and lawlessness, often upon incitement of Israeli officials and religious leaders. This has involved settler attacks against civilians, including children, resulting in deaths and injuries; attacks against homes and other properties, including the desecration of mosques and cemeteries; burning of farmlands and uprooting of trees and olive orchards; the unleashing of sewage on Palestinian villages and other acts of violence and intimidation. Such criminal acts by extremist, militant settlers continue to be perpetrated in full view and knowledge of the occupying forces, with rarely any accountability meted out. The occupying forces have also continued to use excessive force against and to arrest and intimidate Palestinian, Israeli and international activists engaging in non-violent, peaceful protest against the Wall and settlements.

“Official Israeli declarations regarding the construction of more illegal settlement units also continued to be made on a regular basis in defiance of the repeated international calls for Israel to cease immediately all of its settlement activities, including so-called ‘natural growth’ and including in East Jerusalem, and to abide by international law, United Nations resolutions and road map obligations. The most flagrant such declaration occurred in March 2010, when the Israeli Government announced approval for construction of yet another 1,600 settlement units in occupied East Jerusalem, within just days of the confirmation of Palestinian agreement to proceed with United States-mediated proximity talks despite strong reservations. Israel’s announcement was met with broad international condemnation, including by the United States, and intensified calls for the immediate freeze of all settlement activities, including in East Jerusalem. Indeed, there is an international consensus regarding the illegality of Israel’s settlement campaign under international law, particularly the Fourth Geneva Convention, Additional Protocol I and the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. Moreover, there is consensus that this illegal policy is severely undermining the Palestinian Territory’s contiguity, unity and integrity, endangering the prospects for physical realization of the two-State solution and resumption of the peace process towards that end. It is also widely understood that the settlements’ issue is not only a final status issue in the peace process, but is also at the crux of nearly all other final status issues, including Jerusalem, borders, water and security.

“Simultaneously, Israel persisted in the past year with its imposition of a total blockade on the Gaza Strip, deliberately imposed in collective punishment of the entire Palestinian civilian population in grave breach of the Fourth Geneva Convention. This has resulted in the violation of numerous human rights, including the rights to life, to food, to education, to health care, to water and to livelihood. Israel’s blockade has gravely impacted the socio-economic living conditions of the civilian population in Gaza and has had a traumatic impact, especially affecting children, women and elderly persons, constituting a humanitarian crisis. This illegal, punitive Israeli blockade continues in flagrant violation of international humanitarian law, Security Council resolution 1860 (2009), the statement of 1 June 2010 by the President of the Security Council (S/PRST/2010/9), and the calls of the international community for its immediate lifting and the sustained and regular

opening of Gaza's border crossings in accordance with the law and the November 2005 Agreement on Movement and Access, as also called for in General Assembly resolution 64/19.

“At the time of writing of the present note, the Israeli blockade continues to be imposed despite the widespread international calls and the demands of the Palestinian leadership for a complete lifting of the blockade and despite indications from the Israeli Government that it may ‘ease’ it. As such, Israel continues obstructing free movement of persons and goods through Gaza's border crossings, humanitarian access, commercial and economic flows, and the normal functioning of the Palestinian society. Families, sick persons and students also continue to be denied passage through border crossings, resulting in the death of several more Palestinian civilians this year owing to lack of access to life-saving medical care unavailable in Gaza. Commerce, trade and economic recovery continue to be completely thwarted by this unjust blockade. As a result, abject poverty, food insecurity, and near-total aid dependency now affect more than 75 per cent of the population in Gaza, where unemployment has reached dramatic levels; malnutrition, stunted growth, anaemia and other diseases have risen to unprecedented levels, especially among children; and hopelessness is widespread, with far-reaching consequences for the Palestinian people and society at present and in the future.

“In this connection, Israel has also continued to deliberately prevent the reconstruction of Gaza following its devastating military aggression against Gaza in December 2008-January 2009, despite the affirmation by the Assembly of the urgent necessity for the advancement of reconstruction, including numerous suspended United Nations civilian infrastructure projects. As reconstruction continues to be inhumanely prevented, thousands of homes and refugee shelters remain in ruins. Moreover, damaged and destroyed civilian infrastructure, including water, sanitation and electricity networks, and roads, as well as hundreds of factories, workshops and industries, vital to the normal functioning of Gaza, remain in disrepair and non-operational owing to the continued prevention of entry of necessary construction and other essential supplies. Public services have also been crippled, including the education system and the health-care system, which continues to rapidly decline as a result of ongoing supply and fuel shortages and lack of construction and repair materials. Combined, it is evident that the Israeli blockade and military aggression have terrorized and traumatized the Palestinian civilian population in Gaza and inflicted severe socio-economic distress.

“During this year, Israel's continued imposition of the blockade also led to efforts by international peace and human rights activists to make several attempts to break the blockade and deliver urgent humanitarian assistance to the Palestinian civilian population, including via the sea. Israel has responded with typical force, arrogance and disregard for all norms and principles of international law, culminating in its attack on a humanitarian convoy of ships that was headed to the Gaza Strip on 31 May 2010 in international waters. This Israeli attack resulted in the killing of nine Turkish nationals that had been on board one of the ships and the injury of dozens of others, setting off yet another international crisis, escalating tensions and destabilizing the situation. We reiterate the necessity for a full, impartial, credible, transparent

international investigation conforming to international standards into that Israeli military attack and ensuring accountability for the perpetration of this crime.

“It is also imperative to recall the conclusions of the United Nations Fact-Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict, led by South African Justice Richard Goldstone. As is widely known, the Mission’s investigation, as presented in the ‘Goldstone Report’ (A/HRC/12/48), led to findings that clearly confirmed that Israel, the occupying Power, had committed serious human rights violations and grave breaches of international humanitarian law, including the Fourth Geneva Convention — amounting to war crimes and even crimes against humanity — during its December 2008-January 2009 military aggression against the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip. That includes the wilful killing of civilians, torture and inhuman treatment, wilfully causing great suffering or serious injury to body or health, and extensive destruction of property not justified by military necessity and carried out unlawfully and wantonly. It was also concluded that the Israeli military campaign against Gaza was planned in all of its phases as a deliberately disproportionate and systematic attack aimed at punishing, humiliating and terrorizing the Palestinian civilian population, radically diminishing its domestic economic capacity to sustain itself and forcing upon it a heightened sense of dependency and vulnerability. This finding is reconfirmed by the depth of the suffering of the Palestinian people in Gaza to this day in all dimensions of life.

“In this regard, the Palestinian leadership and the international community as a whole have firmly called for accountability and justice to be served for the perpetration of these crimes by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people. To that end, the General Assembly and the Human Rights Council have adopted important resolutions, namely, Assembly resolutions 64/10 and 64/254 and Council resolution S-12/1 and 13/9, calling, inter alia, upon the parties ‘to conduct investigations that are independent, credible and in conformity with international standards into the serious violations of international humanitarian and international human rights law reported by the Fact-Finding Mission, towards ensuring accountability and justice’. Important follow-up also continues at various levels within the United Nations system and among the High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention. We stress the need to act, individually and collectively and with utmost urgency and responsibility, to bring an end to Israel’s impunity, to uphold the rule of law and ensure respect for international humanitarian law and human rights, and to ensure accountability and justice, all of which are essential for tangibly changing the current deplorable, unsustainable reality and promoting the healing of the multiple layers of trauma inflicted on the Palestinian people.

“Throughout the reporting period, Israel, the occupying Power, also continued to carry out military raids and assaults in towns and cities in the West Bank. In these raids, the Israeli occupying forces continued to kill and injure Palestinian civilians and to use civilians as human shields, including children. The occupying forces also continued to arrest, detain and imprison civilians, adding to the over 10,000 Palestinians that continue to be held in Israeli jails and detention centres, including nearly 400 children and 100 women, the majority

held under inhumane conditions, subject to physical and mental abuse and torture. Such repeated, intentional, provocative Israeli actions have continuously stoked tensions and also undermined the efforts undertaken and tangible progress made over the past year by the Palestinian Authority in the security arena and the promotion of law and order in Palestinian cities in accordance with its road map obligations.

“Indeed, while Israel continues to flout United Nations resolutions and its legal obligations and commitments, the Palestinian leadership has consistently exerted efforts to advance implementation of the provisions of resolution 64/19 and all other relevant resolutions, aimed at achieving a peace settlement that brings an end to the oppression and occupation of the Palestinian people and enables realization of their inalienable rights, allowing them to live in dignity and freedom in their homeland. Our goal remains the achievement of the independence of the State of Palestine on the Palestinian Territory occupied since 1967, with East Jerusalem as its capital, and a just solution for the plight of the Palestine refugees that will bring an end to the tragedy and injustice inflicted on them over 62 years ago in Al-Nakba. The Palestinian leadership has thus repeatedly reaffirmed its full commitment to the two-State solution for peace, beginning with the Palestinian Declaration of Independence over 20 years ago and its consistent adherence to its Madrid, Oslo, Taba, Sharm el-Sheikh and Annapolis commitments and the Arab Peace Initiative and the Quartet road map.

“The Palestinian leadership has striven in all areas to uphold its obligations under international law, United Nations resolutions, previous agreements and the road map in both word and deed. It views with utmost seriousness the provisions of the Assembly’s resolution on the ‘Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine’ and fully respects the resolution. Moreover, it has sought to promote a positive environment for the resumption of peace negotiations and engaged in all such regional and international efforts, including at the United Nations, in good faith and in a spirit of historic compromise.

“At the same time, the Palestinian leadership has intensified all efforts, with the support of the international donor community, to develop and strengthen the institutions of the future Palestinian State, in accordance with the programme of the thirteenth Government of the Palestinian Authority, launched in August 2009 by Prime Minister Salam Fayyad: ‘Palestine: Ending the Occupation, Establishing the State’, also known as the ‘State-building plan’ or the ‘Fayyad plan’. As noted above, the Palestinian Authority has also made extensive, well-documented progress in fulfilment of its obligations regarding promotion of security and law and order. At the same time, the Palestinian leadership has continued to seek, with the support of Egypt, the League of Arab States and countries in the region, to promote national dialogue for the attainment of national reconciliation and unity, convinced that they are essential for advancing the just cause of Palestine. All of this has been done in spite of persistent Israeli violations, challenges and provocations, which have only undermined all of the above efforts, in breach of its legal obligations and commitments and in contradiction of the goals and spirit of the peace process.

“Throughout the year, the Palestinian leadership, including at the highest levels of President Mahmoud Abbas, Prime Minister Salam Fayyad, and ministerial and ambassadorial representation, also maintained constant contact with their counterparts bilaterally and multilaterally, focused on bringing an end to the Israeli occupation that began in 1967 and achieving a peaceful settlement based on the two-State solution. In this regard, at the United Nations, Palestine remained active and engaged in the work of the major United Nations organs and repeatedly conveyed correspondence to and held meetings with the Secretary-General, the President of the General Assembly, the President and members of the Security Council, the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General to the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Palestinian Authority, the Commissioner-General of UNRWA, and other high-level United Nations officials.

“The Palestinian leadership’s efforts have also included, inter alia, participation in the general debate of the sixty-fourth session of the General Assembly and in the meetings held on the margins of that debate, and participation in several United Nations conferences during the year at the ministerial and senior official levels, including meetings organized by the United Nations Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People such as the International Meeting in Support of Israeli-Palestinian Peace: the urgency of addressing the permanent status issues — borders, Jerusalem, settlements, refugees and water (Malta, February 2010); the United Nations Seminar on Assistance to the Palestinian People: building institutions and moving forward with establishing the State of Palestine (Austria, March 2010); the United Nations International Meeting in Support of the Israeli-Palestinian Peace Process: ending the occupation and establishing the Palestinian State (Turkey, May 2010); and the upcoming United Nations African Meeting on the Question of Palestine: strengthening support by African States for a just and lasting solution of the question of Jerusalem (Morocco, July 2010). All of these efforts have, inter alia, aimed at keeping the United Nations system abreast of the reality and developments on the ground in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem; raising awareness of the Palestinian leadership’s positions and efforts; coordinating and facilitating United Nations assistance programmes to the Palestinian people, and promoting a resumption of the peace process.

“The Palestinian leadership has also actively engaged in this regard bilaterally with Member States from all regions, Arab, Asian, African, European, Latin American and North American countries, as well as multilaterally through regional and political groups such as the League of Arab States, the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), to mobilize and enhance support for the Palestinian people and a just peace settlement. In all such meetings and outreach efforts, whether diplomatic, public or in the media, the Palestinian leadership’s participation has always reflected and reaffirmed the consistent, responsible position in support of the two-State solution and unwavering respect for international law and United Nations resolutions and commitment to peace. In this regard, we deeply appreciate efforts in the region and throughout the international community, including efforts by the United States Administration

under President Barack Obama and by his Special Envoy, George Mitchell, to revive the peace process and advance a solution.

“At the same time, as noted above, despite serious Israeli obstructions, Palestinian State-building efforts continue apace in implementation of the comprehensive plan launched in August 2009 for developing national institutions and strengthening the foundations of the State of Palestine, in preparation for independence within a 24-month period. The plan seeks to involve all sectors and segments of Palestinian society in the national drive to build our institutions in a manner that fosters development in all spheres, fosters democracy and ensures the provision of security and basic services to all citizens, while respecting their human rights and liberties. This plan has become a very important, positive, proactive component of the Palestinian efforts towards the achievement of our legitimate national aspirations and rights and of peace and justice, and it is widely supported by the Palestinian people. The General Assembly welcomed this plan in resolution 64/19, and the plan has received the support and endorsement of the Quartet (statement of 19 March 2010, Moscow), the European Union (8 December 2009, EU Council Conclusions on the Middle East Peace Process) and the international community as a whole. Palestine is proud and grateful for the international support for this plan, politically as well as economically through the generosity of donor countries.

“Furthermore, as part of our complete rejection of Israel’s illegal colonization campaign in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, in line with international law and United Nations resolutions, the Palestinian leadership has initiated this year a boycott of all settlement products. The Palestinian market has regrettably been a captive market for the occupying Power for decades, and it has been decided by the leadership that this unjust situation should no longer continue. We fully reject the continued distribution and sale in our market of any goods manufactured or grown in the illegal Israeli settlements on confiscated Palestinian land and with our exploited natural resources. We believe that it is imperative that all means of support — whether direct or indirect, political or financial — for the illegal Israeli settlement campaign be ended immediately. In this connection, we reiterate our demand, on which there is international unanimity, for a complete cessation of all Israeli settlement activities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, including so-called ‘natural growth’, and the dismantlement of all settlement ‘outposts’ erected since March 2001. This is vital to allow for the resumption of a credible, meaningful peace process, since colonization is totally contradictory to the objective of the peace process.

“It is the Palestinian leadership’s strongest hope that the current United States-mediated proximity talks will succeed and that fundamental change will occur on the ground to enable the resumption of direct negotiations in the peace process to resolve all core final status issues without exception. For this to happen, Israel, the occupying Power, must cease all settlement and related illegal activities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and end all other illegal policies, including its blockade of the Gaza Strip, and abide by its obligations under international law and United Nations resolutions. It is this that will create a real change in the situation, defusing

tensions, building confidence and trust, and allowing for progress towards a peaceful and lasting settlement.

“The international community, including the Security Council, must act swiftly upon the international consensus and momentum that exists with regard to the two-State solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, as embodied in General Assembly resolution 64/19, in order to salvage the prospects for peace and stability in our region. In this regard, there is broad consensus that the achievement of a just, lasting and peaceful settlement constitutes a political, security, legal, human rights, humanitarian and moral imperative for the international community. Moreover, such a solution is vital for fulfilling the long-overdue international covenant to assist and enable the Palestinian people to exercise their inalienable human rights, including to self-determination.

“In this regard, continued declarations or mild appeals to Israel will no longer suffice. It is incumbent upon the international community to act decisively, guided by the rules and principles of international law and justice, the Charter and United Nations resolutions, including resolution 64/19, to tangibly advance the achievement of a just, lasting, comprehensive and peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine and the Arab-Israeli conflict as a whole. Israel cannot be allowed to continue acting above the law, defying the calls to end its violations, and making a mockery of the urgency of achieving a peaceful settlement and security and stability in our region and beyond. In this regard, Palestine has also continued to call for a reconvening of the Conference of High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention on measures to enforce the Convention in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, as called for by relevant General Assembly and Human Rights Council resolutions, including in follow-up of the recommendations of the Goldstone Report. Palestine is cooperating with Switzerland to advance this effort and continues to urge the High Contracting Parties to reconvene the Conference towards ensuring respect and compliance by Israel with all of its legal obligations as an occupying Power under the Fourth Geneva Convention.

“In closing, we reaffirm the Palestinian leadership’s commitment to a peace process based on relevant United Nations resolutions, including Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973), 1397 (2002), 1515 (2003) and 1850 (2008), the Madrid terms of reference, including the principle of land for peace, the Arab Peace Initiative and the road map. Moreover, we reaffirm the enduring resilience of the Palestinian people, in spite of the formidable challenges facing them, to realize their inalienable rights, including their rights to self-determination and to return, and to fulfil their legitimate national aspirations to live in peace, freedom, dignity and prosperity in their independent State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital, and in harmony with their neighbours.”

II. Observations

6. During the reporting period, efforts intensified to achieve the peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine. Direct Israeli-Palestinian negotiations, discontinued in December 2008, were set to resume on 2 September 2010. On the

ground, unilateral actions and human rights violations continued to undermine diplomatic efforts. The situation in Gaza remained unsustainable, while the divide between Gaza and the West Bank continued to deepen.

7. On 21 September 2009, the President of the United States of America, Barack Obama, hosted the first meeting between Palestinian and Israeli leaders since 2008. On 23 September 2009, the President addressed the General Assembly (see A/64/PV.3) and presented his goal of urgently starting talks, without preconditions, on the key issues of security for Israelis and Palestinians, borders, refugees and Jerusalem. Since then, the United States Special Envoy, George Mitchell, has regularly visited the region in an effort to bring about a resumption of negotiations. The Middle East Quartet and I welcomed and supported this engagement throughout the reporting period.

8. However, there was an overall impasse in diplomatic efforts from November 2009 to January 2010. This reflected the frustrations and low confidence of the parties in the renewed process; disputes over the terms of reference for negotiations; continued creation of facts on the ground by Israel; tensions in Jerusalem and the West Bank; and continued violence and closure in Gaza.

9. In February 2010, Senator Mitchell proposed to the parties to facilitate proximity talks. Israel accepted this proposal. Affected by internal political challenges, the Palestinian side turned to the League of Arab States for backing, and subsequently agreed to the proximity talks. However, the announcement on 9 March of additional settlement construction in East Jerusalem, during a visit to Israel by Vice-President Joseph R. Biden of the United States, caused a major setback, and highlighted the problems created by Israel's continued policy of illegal settlement construction.

10. The Quartet Principals' meeting in Moscow on 19 March focused on efforts to overcome obstacles and move the process forward. The Quartet urged the parties to launch proximity talks and move to direct negotiations as soon as possible, which should lead to a negotiated settlement within 24 months that would end the occupation which began in 1967 and result in the emergence of an independent, democratic and viable Palestinian State living side by side in peace and security with Israel and its other neighbours. The parties were called upon to act in accordance with international law and the road map, and refrain from provocative actions and inflammatory rhetoric. The Quartet agreed to closely monitor developments and consider additional measures that might be necessary.

11. Directly from the Quartet meeting, I visited Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory on 20 and 21 March, where I urged the Israeli leadership to refrain from actions that could undermine trust and prevent the launch of the proximity talks. I urged the Palestinian Authority to enter the proximity talks and give this process a chance.

12. On 26 and 27 March, I attended the League of Arab States Summit in the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, where I emphasized that the goal of the creation of an independent Palestinian State could be brought about only through a return to the negotiating table and testing the parties' commitments in that framework. I reiterated to President Mahmoud Abbas my own and the Quartet's support for the talks. The Arab leaders conditioned their support for Palestinian participation on the outcome of the efforts by the United States to create conditions conducive to the

success of the talks. However, tensions on the ground again delayed the start of the proximity talks.

13. On 1 May, the League of Arab States reaffirmed its support for the Palestinian participation in the proximity talks, but conditioned it to progress within four months. On 8 May, the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) agreed to enter the talks. President Obama reaffirmed that both parties would be held accountable for actions that would undermine trust during the talks. Senator Mitchell started shuttling between Ramallah and Jerusalem to build support for the start of direct negotiations, holding seven rounds of proximity talks in total.

14. On 6 July, following a meeting with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, President Obama expressed confidence in Israel's intentions to engage in negotiations on all core issues and hoped that direct negotiations would start within weeks. On 29 July, the Arab League lent its support to the Palestinians to enter direct negotiations at a point deemed appropriate by President Abbas.

15. On 20 August, the Quartet called on the parties to launch direct negotiations in Washington, D.C., on 2 September to resolve all final status issues. In parallel, the United States issued an invitation to the parties. Prime Minister Netanyahu and President Abbas responded positively. I welcomed this decision by the two leaders and called upon them to show leadership, courage and responsibility to realize the aspirations of their peoples. I stressed that this was an opportunity that must not be wasted.

16. The situation in occupied East Jerusalem remained tense and continued to impact the peace process. I have expressed concern at house demolitions and continued settlement construction in East Jerusalem. The reporting period witnessed disturbances in and around the Haram al-Sharif/Temple Mount compound and access restrictions for Muslim and Christian worshippers to holy sites. Reports of increased revocations of identity cards and the enactment of revised military orders on the expulsion of "infiltrators" contributed to the apprehension of the Palestinian residents of East Jerusalem. Archaeological excavations and tunnelling activities under Palestinian neighbourhoods continued and raised concerns among Palestinian residents. I appeal to all sides to exercise restraint. Jerusalem is a final status issue and a way should be found for the city to emerge as the capital of two States, with arrangements for the religious sites acceptable to all.

17. In June, expulsion orders were issued against four Palestinian legislators who were residents of Jerusalem, but had been members of the Hamas-affiliated Change and Reform bloc and imprisoned in 2006 for failing to meet the minimum loyalty criteria in Israel.

18. In the West Bank, the Palestinian Authority continued to implement a state-building agenda. Institutional reforms, improved security conditions and the resulting increased private sector confidence contributed to a solid economic recovery, evidenced by real GDP growth of 11.3 per cent in the West Bank in the first quarter of 2010. Most recently, the second Palestinian Investment Conference, held on 2 and 3 June in Bethlehem, attracted almost US\$ 1 billion in pledged investments in Palestinian businesses.

19. The state-building agenda of the Palestinian Authority, under the leadership of Prime Minister Fayyad, is an important complement to a renewed political process.

It must be enabled and supported. I call on donors to provide timely assistance to sustain this agenda and also to fulfil their pledges made in Sharm el-Sheikh in March 2009. I also call on Israel to do more to ease restrictions on movement and take steps to facilitate economic growth in the West Bank. The current number of obstacles to movement is approximately 500, compared to 618 in August 2009. This is movement in the right direction, which has had a real positive impact on the lives of many Palestinians, but I strongly encourage the Government of Israel to build on these positive steps with more far-reaching measures.

20. As the Palestinian Authority makes progress in institution-building, it remains constrained by the occupation and settlement activity, which stifle space and opportunities of the Palestinian people. I welcomed as a step in the right direction the announcement by Israel, on 26 November 2009, of a 10-month restraint on new construction in settlements, which was aimed at encouraging direct Israeli-Palestinian negotiations. However, I also noted that this restraint policy fell short of Israel's commitments under the road map to freeze all settlement activity, including "natural growth", and to dismantle outposts erected since March 2001. Settlements are illegal, they cast doubt on the viability of the two-State solution and prejudice the final status issues.

21. I appreciate the continued efforts of the Quartet's Special Representative, Tony Blair, to support continued economic development in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. I encourage the parties to work with him to bring about transformative change on the ground.

22. Violence in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, continued. The causes, among others, were Israeli security operations, mistrust between the communities, deep-rooted grievances, retaliation against Palestinians following the implementation of the settlement restraint, and unilateral acts deemed to be provocative. In total, 15 Palestinians were killed and 1,092 injured. Seven Israelis were killed, four of whom were killed on 31 August in an obvious attempt to undermine the launch of direct Israeli-Palestinian negotiations on 2 September 2010, which I condemned; Hamas claimed responsibility for this attack. During the reporting period, 205 Israelis were injured. There was a slight decrease of Israeli incursions and arrests in the West Bank; 247 settler attacks on Palestinians and their property, and 93 Palestinian attacks on settlers were recorded during the reporting period. I condemn all attacks that indiscriminately target civilians and I call for international humanitarian law to be upheld in all circumstances. I urge the parties to seek out those responsible for all such incidents and bring them to justice.

23. Both Israelis and Palestinians have legitimate security concerns. I believe that sustainable security will best be achieved by intensified cooperation, continued empowerment of the Palestinian Authority's security efforts and performance, further curtailment of Israel Defense Forces (IDF) incursions into Palestinian areas, full respect for legitimate non-violent protest, Israeli action to curb settler violence, Palestinian action against incitement, and progress in the political negotiations and economic development.

24. Although attempts at holding presidential, legislative and municipal elections did not materialize during the reporting period, I still hope that it will be possible in the near future to hold free and fair elections throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

25. Contrary to the 9 July 2004 advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice, the barrier continues to deviate significantly from the 1967 Green Line into Occupied Palestinian Territory in the West Bank. It continues to restrict Palestinian access to East Jerusalem, key social services and agricultural land. In accordance with General Assembly resolution ES-10/17 of 15 December 2006, on 19 July I provided a progress report on the work of the United Nations Register of Damage Caused by the Construction of the Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Palestinian, Israeli and foreign protesters continued demonstrating against the barrier, mostly in Nil'in and Bil'in villages, and there have been clashes with Israeli security forces. I regret the detention of activists involved in peaceful protests.

26. The Gaza Strip remained subject to a regime of closures and under the de facto control of Hamas. Security Council resolution 1860 (2009) continued to provide a strategic framework for addressing this situation, but its key elements remained unfulfilled. The blockade on Gaza remained unacceptable and punished innocent civilians. I have consistently urged the Government of Israel to lift it, and I welcomed the measures announced by Israel in June and July to ease it. As efforts are made to relaunch a meaningful political process, the situation in Gaza cannot be left to further deteriorate. Israel's legitimate security concerns should also be addressed.

27. Addressing dire conditions of the civilian population in the Gaza Strip remained my priority during the reporting period. The United Nations engaged intensively with the Government of Israel, and within the Middle East Quartet, to promote reconstruction. On 21 March I visited Gaza, where I witnessed first-hand the immense reconstruction needs, the impact of the closure on the civilian population and the unsustainable nature of the situation there. The Quartet continued to reaffirm that the situation in Gaza was unsustainable, unacceptable, and not in the interests of any of those concerned. The Quartet called for a solution that would ensure the opening of the crossings to allow for the unimpeded flow of humanitarian aid, commercial goods and persons to and from Gaza, consistent with Security Council resolution 1860 (2009).

28. Since March, Israel approved 15 United Nations projects in housing, water, sanitation, education and health. These projects are an important step forward but represent only a fragment of the vast reconstruction needs in Gaza, which I personally witnessed during my visit in March. The implementation of the approved United Nations projects has, however, been slow, and we continue to advocate for lighter approval and coordination procedures to allow for rehabilitation and reconstruction at a more appropriate scale.

29. Food and medical supplies made up the bulk of imports allowed through the official crossings. But this situation changed dramatically after the 31 May "Gaza aid flotilla" incident; Israel announced measures to ease the blockade on 20 June. The weekly average of imported truckloads reached 1,006 in mid-August 2010, compared to 531 truckloads during the same period in 2009. Construction materials needed to rebuild homes and social infrastructure are allowed for projects implemented under the oversight of international organizations and approved by the Palestinian Authority and the Government of Israel. Exports, so needed for economic development, are not part of the new measures. Nor can construction materials be imported on a commercial basis, available to all. Nevertheless, the Quartet welcomed this announcement and expressed hope that this move would

contribute to the fulfilment of resolution 1860 (2009), including for the unimpeded flow of humanitarian aid, commercial goods and persons to and from Gaza. The United Nations and the Quartet are following closely the implementation of these measures, while exploring additional ways to improve the situation in Gaza.

30. I continued to be alarmed by reports of smuggling of weapons into Gaza during the reporting period. Increased-capability rockets have reportedly been test-fired from Gaza. In this regard, I note Egypt's intensified efforts to curtail smuggling through illegal tunnels. The tunnels also continued to be used to import most of the goods available on Gaza's markets. This both sustained and distorted the local economy.

31. The blockade continued to impede freedom of movement of Gazan civilians. Although passage to and from Egypt and Israel through the Rafah and Erez crossings has been significantly relaxed since June, the movement of people is still limited largely to medical cases, some students and humanitarian workers. In a positive development, the number of businessmen allowed to exit through the Erez crossing has steadily increased since June and reached 99 per week as at 31 August.

32. All crossings into Gaza should be urgently opened, consistent with the Agreement on Movement and Access. The longer-term consequences of the closure are deeply worrying, in terms of deteriorating public infrastructure, environmental degradation, destruction of livelihoods and psychological impact on a population half of whom are children.

33. The reporting period witnessed two attempts to break the Gaza blockade. The "Viva Palestina — Lifeline 3" convoy entered the Gaza Strip through Egypt in January, amid confrontations between Egyptian authorities, convoy activists, Gaza residents and Hamas militants, in which an Egyptian border guard was killed and dozens of protesters and Egyptian police were injured. On 31 May, a tragic incident took place during the takeover by the Israeli military of the *Mavi Marmara* vessel which was part of the "Gaza aid flotilla". I immediately condemned the acts, which resulted in the deaths of nine civilians and injuries to at least 30 others, including seven IDF soldiers. I called for a prompt, impartial, credible and transparent investigation.

34. During its emergency session immediately following this incident, the Security Council called for a prompt, impartial, credible and transparent investigation conforming to international standards (S/PRST/2010/9). On 2 August, I launched a panel of inquiry on the flotilla incident. The United Nations was also instrumental in ensuring that all supplies delivered by the flotilla reached their destination in Gaza, and closely monitored the repatriation of the flotilla passengers and vessels.

35. A Libyan-sponsored vessel, carrying aid for Gaza, arrived in an Egyptian port without incident on 15 July. Egypt facilitated the transfer of its humanitarian cargo to Gaza. There were reports of other ships intending to sail towards Gaza. I continued to believe that only properly functioning open land crossings could make a strategic difference in reviving the economy in the Gaza Strip.

36. Turning to internal dynamics in the Gaza Strip, Hamas continued to strengthen control, thus further deepening the rift with the West Bank. There were reports of increasing human rights abuses and political arrests. On 15 April, Hamas illegally and unacceptably executed prisoners without proper and transparent trial. I called on Hamas not to carry out such executions. International and civil society organizations in Gaza have faced increasing pressure. In May and June, acts of vandalism were

committed against the summer camps of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency, which I condemned in the strongest terms. I insist on non-interference with international aid operations in Gaza.

37. Hamas continued to refuse the proposal for Palestinian reconciliation mediated by Egypt and presented to the parties on 10 September. Although the reporting period witnessed practical efforts at cooperation and goodwill gestures by Hamas and the Palestinian Authority, stalemate continued. I stress that Palestinian unity is a key component to finding a sustainable solution to the crisis in Gaza. I reiterate my call for the reunification of Gaza and the West Bank on the basis of the PLO principles and under the legitimate Palestinian Authority, and urge all factions to engage positively in dialogue. I support Egypt's efforts in this regard.

38. A fragile calm between Israel and Hamas prevailed during the reporting period. However, violent incidents continued: 147 rockets and 115 mortars were fired from Gaza; there were 173 IDF incursions and 100 air strikes; 56 Palestinians were killed, including 5 children and 39 militants; and 169 Palestinians were injured, including 40 militants. Meanwhile, a foreign worker in Israel was killed, as well as five Israeli soldiers. Five Israeli soldiers were injured. On 30 July, a rocket hit inside the town of Ashkelon in southern Israel, the first such attack since Operation Cast Lead. I urge all parties to refrain from violence and to respect international humanitarian law.

39. Israeli Staff Sergeant Gilad Shalit remains in Hamas captivity, now for over four years. I call for his immediate and unconditional release and humanitarian access to him. I also note the deteriorating living conditions for the approximately 9,000 Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails, down from 11,000 a year ago. In October, Israel released 20 Palestinian female detainees after Hamas presented, through a German mediator, a video clip showing Shalit in good health. I welcomed these developments, and call for the completion of a prisoner exchange agreement and the release of Palestinian prisoners to the Palestinian Authority.

40. The Fact-Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict mandated by the Human Rights Council and headed by Justice Richard Goldstone released its report on 25 September 2009 (A/HRC/12/48). The report made a number of recommendations for ensuring accountability for perpetrators and redress for victims. International humanitarian law, justice and accountability must be fully respected and civilians must be protected in all circumstances. I therefore called upon all parties to carry out credible domestic investigations without delay. The General Assembly and its Human Rights Council continued to follow the implementation of the recommendations of the Fact-Finding Mission. I will continue to support their work in this regard.

41. On 15 January, an arrangement was concluded whereby the Government of Israel made a payment of US\$ 10.5 million to the United Nations in respect of losses sustained in the nine incidents investigated by the Gaza Board of Inquiry. In the light of this payment, the United Nations has agreed that the financial issues relating to those incidents have been brought to a satisfactory conclusion.

42. I would like to record my deep appreciation to Robert H. Serry, the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, as well as to the Commissioner-General of UNRWA, Filippo Grandi, whom I appointed on 20 January. He replaced Karen Koning AbuZayd, whom I thank for her outstanding

performance. I express my appreciation to all United Nations staff who provide indispensable services under difficult and sometimes dangerous circumstances. National and international staff have faced growing restrictions as concerns their free movement and access in the service of the United Nations. I have repeatedly protested these restrictions to the Government of Israel and look forward to improvements in this regard.

43. I remain convinced that direct and meaningful negotiations are the only avenue towards a comprehensive and sustainable solution that fulfils the aspirations of the Israeli and the Palestinian peoples. In the days ahead, we must make sufficient progress at the negotiating table and on the ground to enable a move towards an agreement on all core issues of the conflict. The commitments of both Israeli and Palestinian leaders will be tested during direct negotiations. I call upon the parties to seize this opportunity and show leadership, courage and responsibility to arrive at a final status agreement within one year. For these negotiations to have a chance of success, a conducive environment on the ground will be crucial, in line with the parties' respective road map commitments and international legal obligations. I urge Israel to extend its moratorium on settlement construction in the West Bank past its 30 September 2010 deadline, and to expand its scope to East Jerusalem. I call on the Palestinians to continue maintaining law and order, fighting extremism and incitement against Israel, and building strong and democratic institutions. I call on regional and international partners to lend their support to these negotiations, and look forward to their success.

44. As Secretary-General, I will continue to ensure that the United Nations works towards the creation of an independent, democratic, contiguous and viable Palestinian State living side by side in peace with a secure Israel in the framework of a comprehensive regional settlement consistent with Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973), 1397 (2002), 1515 (2003) and 1860 (2009), and in accordance with the road map, the Arab Peace Initiative and the principle of land for peace.



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The situation in the Middle East

Question of Palestine

Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine

Report of the Secretary-General

Addendum

I. Introduction

1. On 20 September 2010, the following reply to the letter of the Secretary-General dated 1 July 2010 (see A/65/380-S/2010/484, para. 2), was received from the Security Council:

“The goal of achieving a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine remains one of the major challenges facing the international community, including the Security Council.

“The Security Council considers the situation in Palestine each month under an agenda item on ‘The situation in the Middle East, including the question of Palestine’. During most months, a briefing has been given either by the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs or by the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East in a public meeting, followed by consultations among the Council members. During the months of July and October 2009 and January and April 2010, the monthly meeting was held in the form of an open debate.

“On 27 July 2009, the Council held an open debate on the situation in the Middle East, during which it heard a briefing from the Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Oscar Fernandez-Taranco. The Council also heard statements by the Representative of Israel and the Observer for Palestine. The Assistant Secretary-General outlined the recent international efforts to create conditions under which negotiations between the parties could resume. He recalled that the Secretary-General and members of the Quartet



had met in Trieste, Italy, on 26 June, and informed the Council that the members of the Quartet underlined the need for both Israel and Palestine to implement their obligations under the road map. He also emphasized that Security Council resolution 1860 (2009) remains the main framework for a way forward in Gaza. He called for a prompt and positive response to the proposal from the Secretary-General for the entry of materials needed to complete construction of housing, health and education facilities suspended since 2007 as a means to kick-start recovery in Gaza. Members of the Council reiterated their support for the ongoing efforts to reinvigorate the peace process in all its tracks and for the convening of an international conference in Moscow.

“On 19 August 2009, the Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Oscar Fernandez-Taranco, briefed the Council on the situation in the Middle East. During subsequent consultations of the whole, Council members expressed strong support for international efforts aimed at a rapid resumption and conclusion of peace negotiations, which it was hoped would lead to comprehensive peace in the Middle East. They also stressed the need for Israelis and Palestinians to fulfil their road map obligations, including a complete freeze of settlement activity by Israel and an end to violence instigated by Palestinian militants. Council members expressed concern about the continuing humanitarian situation in Gaza. They called for the implementation of resolution 1860 (2009), and for the opening of the crossing points into Gaza within an appropriate monitoring framework.

“On 17 September 2009, the Council heard a briefing from the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Robert H. Serry. He noted the efforts under way towards the early resumption and conclusion of Israeli-Palestinian negotiations. He voiced concern about continued Israeli settlement activity. He recognized the announcement by the Palestinian Authority that it planned to build the institutions of a State apparatus within the coming two years. He stated that the situation in Gaza remained unsustainable. He noted the release of the report of the United Nations Fact-Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict, headed by Justice Richard Goldstone (also referred to as the Goldstone report) (see S/2009/586) and its upcoming discussion by the Human Rights Council. The Special Coordinator also briefed the Council on efforts to form a government in Lebanon and on the two rockets launched from southern Lebanon into Israel on 11 September. He noted that leaders would be gathering in New York for the general debate in the General Assembly and that there would be a meeting of the Quartet principals. He called on the parties to take responsibility and seize the opportunity to make the necessary commitments to relaunch negotiations. The Council met in consultations following the briefing to discuss the situation further. A number of members expressed concern over continuing Israeli settlement activity and the humanitarian situation in Gaza.

“On 7 October 2009, during urgent consultations of the whole, the Council exchanged views on the request of a Council member to convene an urgent meeting to discuss the Goldstone report. After intensive consultations, the Council decided to hold its open debate on the Middle East on 14 October, instead of 21 October as previously scheduled.

“At the open debate on 14 October 2009, the Council was briefed by the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, who said that political efforts to resolve the Arab-Israeli conflict had continued but there had been no significant progress on the ground. He confirmed the support of the Secretary-General for the work of the Fact-Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict and his call for credible national investigations into the conduct of the conflict without delay, which was echoed by a number of delegations that addressed the Council after the briefing. The Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Palestinian Authority, the Permanent Representative of Israel and 27 other speakers addressed the Council. Many speakers called for an end to all acts of violence and for strict compliance with international humanitarian and human rights law, as well as for the safety and security of all civilians and diplomatic and United Nations premises and personnel. They urged all parties concerned to rise to shoulder their mutual obligations under the road map, the Madrid terms of reference, the Arab Peace Initiative and relevant Security Council resolutions, thus contributing to the peaceful settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian and Arab-Israeli conflicts, and the ultimate attainment of a just, comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East. A number of participants expressed concern about the findings in the Goldstone report and the need to urgently address the continuing grave humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip, including the need for the long-overdue reconstruction process to commence.

“On 24 November 2009, the Council heard a briefing on the situation in the Middle East by the Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Haile Menkerios. He reported that political efforts towards a negotiated two-State solution had reached a deep and worrying impasse, even as security and economic efforts had continued on the ground. He reiterated the call by the Secretary-General for immediate action to strengthen the process, a reaffirmation of road map requirements and their implementation, and clear terms of reference for negotiations on all core issues grounded in the resolutions of the Council and agreements reached between the parties. He recalled that the Secretary-General had issued a statement deploring Israel’s continued settlement activity and had expressed his dismay at the continuation of demolitions and evictions in Jerusalem. He pointed out that the situation in East Jerusalem underlined the importance that parties refrain from provocations and incitement. As to the situation in the Gaza Strip, he recalled that key elements of resolution 1860 (2009) remained to be fulfilled. He expressed concern at the deterioration of public infrastructure, environmental degradation and destruction of livelihoods in the Gaza Strip, and that no meaningful progress had been made to kick-start essential United Nations civilian construction activities. He reported that 12 rockets and mortars were fired from Gaza into southern Israel during the reporting period. During subsequent consultations of the whole, Council members urged the parties to rapidly resume peace negotiations. They stressed the need for Israelis and Palestinians to fulfil their road map obligations and a number called for a complete freeze of settlement activity by Israel, including in East Jerusalem. Members expressed concern at the humanitarian situation in Gaza and reiterated their call for the full implementation of resolution 1860 (2009).

“On 17 December 2009, the Council heard a briefing on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question, from the Special

Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General, Robert H. Serry. He said that negotiations had yet to resume between the two parties and confidence between the parties remained low. He noted the announcement by the Government of Israel that it would restrain certain settlement activity for a period of 10 months, and the decision of the Central Council of the Palestine Liberation Organization to extend the terms of the Palestinian Authority presidency and the Palestinian Legislative Council, until elections could be held. He referred to the readiness of the President of the Palestinian Authority, Mahmoud Abbas, to continue to serve until elections were held. One member of the Council took the floor in the Council Chamber. During the consultations of the whole that followed, Council members called on the two parties to resume negotiations. A number of members expressed their concern about the situation in Gaza and called for the full implementation of resolution 1860 (2009). Some members also called upon Israel to freeze all settlement activities in the occupied Palestinian territory. On 27 January 2010, the Council held an open debate on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question, during which the Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Oscar Fernandez-Taranco, briefed the Council on the recent developments in the region. He expressed concern about the lack of significant progress towards a solution within the peace process and recent events on the ground. He confirmed the support of the Secretary-General for the resumption of talks and his call for a freeze of settlement activity, which was echoed by the majority of delegations that addressed the Council after the briefing. The Permanent Observer of Palestine, the Permanent Representative of Israel, members of the Council and 25 other speakers addressed the Council. Most participants expressed their concern over the current impasse in the peace process and called for an early resumption of talks between the parties concerned. They also restated their grave concern at the humanitarian situation in Gaza and called for the full implementation of Council resolution 1860 (2009), with many speakers stressing the need for the immediate opening of the border crossings into Gaza in accordance with international humanitarian law, and the urgency of reconstruction. The majority of speakers called on Israel to end its settlement activity, including in East Jerusalem, and to refrain from all actions that might prejudice the outcome of the final negotiations. In this regard many speakers also stressed the need to resolve the status of Jerusalem as the future capital of two States. Most speakers reiterated their support for a two-State solution under relevant Security Council resolutions, thus contributing to the peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine and Arab-Israeli conflicts, and the ultimate attainment of a just, comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East.

“On 18 February 2010, the Council heard a briefing regarding the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question, from the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, B. Lynn Pascoe, who called on the parties to take the necessary measures to begin indirect talks as proposed by the United States of America. He also expressed the belief that an active Quartet would be vital to support the process. During subsequent consultations of the whole, the members of the Council expressed their concern at the impasse of the peace process and underlined the importance of resuming negotiations in order to move as soon as possible towards a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East.

“On 24 March 2010, the Council heard a briefing by the Secretary-General on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question. In his briefing, the Secretary-General informed the Council of the Quartet meeting held in Moscow on 19 March and his visit to the Middle East, in particular the statement issued by the Quartet on the following: the need to hold proximity talks; the freezing by Israel of all settlement activity; compliance by the Palestinians with security obligations; lifting the blockade on the Gaza Strip; and its firm support for the Palestinian Authority’s programme for the establishment of a Palestinian State.

“Members of the Council welcomed the diplomatic efforts made by the Secretary-General and the Quartet to facilitate the relaunching of the Israeli-Palestinian peace process. Members of the Council expressed their concern at the continued impasse and tensions between Israel and Palestine and called on Israel to freeze all settlement activities, considering that these were an obstacle to the resumption of peace talks.

“Members of the Council reiterated their call on the two parties to adhere to their commitment and to discharge their obligations in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the Security Council and the road map, and invited them to make every effort to resume the peace negotiations as soon as possible.

“At the open debate on 14 April 2010, the Council was briefed by the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, B. Lynn Pascoe, who said that efforts aimed at bringing about the conditions for a resumption of Israeli-Palestinian talks had continued. He said that the situation on the ground remained fragile and a crisis of confidence between the parties had so far prevented the resumption of talks. He stressed the continuing support of the United Nations for efforts to resume the peace process as well as for the Palestinian State-building agenda and briefed the Council about developments in that regard, including the convening of the recent meeting in Madrid of the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee for Assistance to the Palestinians. He also addressed the visit by the Secretary-General to the League of Arab States summit and gave a briefing on the situation in Lebanon, noting that it remained generally quiet in the area of operations of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon.

“Following the briefing, the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations, the Permanent Representative of Israel and 18 other speakers addressed the Council, and Council members also made statements. Many speakers stressed that the only way to achieve a solution was through negotiations. They expressed support for the effort of the United States to start the proximity talks between the Israeli and Palestinian sides and at the same time stressed that it should lead to direct talks. A number of members urged all parties to abide by their obligations under the road map, the Madrid terms of reference, the Arab Peace Initiative and the relevant Security Council resolutions, which would contribute to a peaceful settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian and Arab-Israeli conflicts and, ultimately, to the attainment of a just, comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East. A number of participants expressed concern about the situation in Gaza and the need to address its humanitarian situation.

“On 18 May 2010, the Council heard a briefing by the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General, Robert H. Serry, on recent developments in the region.

“The Special Coordinator told the Council that the proximity talks had commenced and that their goal, as stated by the Quartet on 19 March in Moscow, was the resolution of all core issues, an end to the 1967 occupation, and two States living side by side in peace and security. He stressed the scale of the unmet needs of the Palestinian civilian population in Gaza and urged an end to the Israeli blockade of the Strip.

“In the consultations of the whole that followed, members of the Council expressed support for the proximity talks. A number of members called on both parties not to engage in provocative acts and for an end to settlement activity. Many members expressed their grave concern at the humanitarian situation in Gaza, and called for the full implementation of resolution 1860 (2009). Some members called for the immediate opening of the border crossings into Gaza.

“On 31 May, at the request of Turkey and Lebanon, the Council held an emergency meeting on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question. During the meeting, the Council heard a briefing by the Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Oscar Fernandez-Taranco, on the Israeli military operation against the convoy sailing to Gaza.

“The Assistant Secretary-General told the Council that, on that same morning, Israeli forces had boarded a six-ship convoy that was sailing in the Mediterranean Sea en route to the Gaza Strip in an attempt to deliver humanitarian aid to Gaza and to break the Israeli blockade. He said that the Israeli navy had intercepted the convoy and that Israeli military personnel had boarded the vessels.

“All 15 Council members spoke, including the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Turkey, Ahmet Davutoğlu, who condemned the attack against the Gaza flotilla and demanded an urgent inquiry into the incident. A representative of Israel and the Permanent Observer of Palestine participated in the meeting and made statements.

“In the extensive consultations of the whole that followed, members of the Council agreed on a presidential statement (S/PRST/2010/9), which was adopted in the early hours of 1 June 2010, under the Mexican presidency of the Security Council.

“On 1 June, the Council adopted a presidential statement on the use of force during the Israeli military operation in international waters against a humanitarian assistance flotilla en route to Gaza. In the statement, the Council condemned those acts, expressed regret at the loss of human life during the military operation, requested the release of the ships and of the civilians held by Israel and called for a prompt, impartial, credible and transparent investigation conforming to international standards. The Council emphasized that the situation in Gaza was not sustainable, reiterated its grave concern at the humanitarian situation and stressed the need for a sustained and regular flow of goods and people to Gaza.

“On 15 June, the Council held its monthly meeting on the situation in the Middle East. The Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Robert H. Serry, participated in the meeting and stressed the importance of taking a different approach to Gaza in light of the incident involving the humanitarian assistance flotilla, which demonstrated the unsustainability of the situation in Gaza and confirmed that the current policy was counterproductive. He said that the Quartet had been involved in the search for a solution leading to the lifting of the restrictions imposed on Gaza and that, in response to the Council’s request for an investigation of the humanitarian flotilla incident, the Secretary-General had proposed the establishment of an international panel. He also stressed the need to encourage further indirect talks leading to genuine direct negotiations and said that those conversations should be accompanied by positive steps on the ground.

“An open debate on the situation in the Middle East, including the question of Palestine, took place on 21 July 2010. The Council was briefed by the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, B. Lynn Pascoe. He stressed the need to re-establish direct negotiations between the Israelis and Palestinians in order to pave the way for the realization of a two-State solution. Noting that the process was again at a critical juncture, he indicated that such talks were necessary to end the 1967 occupation and the conflict and resolve all core issues between the parties, including Jerusalem, borders, refugees, security, settlements and water. Noting the upcoming 29 July League of Arab States follow-up committee meeting, he urged the parties not to miss the current opportunity to make progress in talks and to move to direct negotiations with active third-party involvement and close Quartet support.

“After the briefing, and the interventions made by the Permanent Representative of Israel and the Permanent Observer of Palestine, Council members and 37 other speakers made statements. Council members were united in their wish to see the conflict between the two sides resolved as a matter of urgency. Council members reaffirmed their commitment to Middle East peace. Some Council members suggested measures that would support progress toward such a resolution, including the complete lifting of restrictions on access for goods and people to Gaza and called on Israel to end its settlement activities. Some Council members called for the release of Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit, who was being held prisoner by Hamas in Gaza and some stressed that the delivery of humanitarian assistance to Gaza should be made through established channels. Many Council members called for a prompt, impartial, transparent and credible investigation conforming to international standards into the flotilla incident of 31 May 2010 resulting from the use of force during the Israeli military operation in international waters against the convoy sailing to Gaza.

“The Council continues to pay close attention to developments in the situation in the Middle East.”



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The situation in the Middle East

Question of Palestine

Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report is submitted in accordance with General Assembly resolution 65/16. It contains replies received from the parties concerned to the notes verbales sent by the Secretary-General pursuant to the request contained in paragraph 26 of the resolution. The report also contains the observations of the Secretary-General on the current state of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and on international efforts to move the peace process forward with a view to achieving a peaceful settlement. The report covers the period from September 2010 through August 2011.

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 65/16.
2. On 1 July 2011, pursuant to the request contained in paragraph 26 of the above-mentioned resolution, I addressed the following letter to the President of the Security Council:

“I have the honour to refer to resolution 65/16, which the General Assembly adopted on 30 November 2010, at its sixty-fifth session, under the agenda item ‘Question of Palestine’.

“Paragraph 26 of the resolution ‘requests the Secretary-General to continue his efforts with the parties concerned, and in consultation with the Security Council, towards the attainment of a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine and the promotion of peace in the region and to submit to the General Assembly at its sixty-sixth session a report on these efforts and on developments on this matter’.

“In order to fulfil my reporting responsibilities under this resolution, I should be grateful if you would kindly convey to me the views of the Security Council by 31 July 2011.

“Recalling the Secretariat’s obligation to observe the page limit of its reports, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 52/214, I would like to encourage the Security Council to limit its submission to 1,500 words.”

3. As of 19 September, no response had been received to that request.
4. In a note verbale dated 11 May 2011 to the parties concerned, I sought the positions of the Governments of Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic, as well as the Palestine Liberation Organization, regarding any steps taken by them to implement the relevant provisions of the resolution. As at 31 August 2011, replies had been received from Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization. The note verbale dated 5 July 2011 from the Permanent Mission of Israel to the United Nations reads as follows:

“As shown in the meeting records, Israel voted against this resolution, as it has done on similar resolutions adopted in the past by the General Assembly. The Permanent Mission of Israel wishes to reiterate the considerations guiding this voting practice, in light of the current situation.

“Despite significant efforts made on the part of the Government of Israel in the past year to renew negotiations with the Palestinian Authority and to foster conditions for economic growth and development, and despite the vast improvement in economic indicators both in the West Bank and in Gaza, Palestinian terrorism continued and remains an alarming reality.

“Terrorist organizations in the West Bank remain active in planning, preparing and attempting to execute terrorist attacks. In 2010, 463 terrorist attacks emanated from or were carried out in the West Bank, leading to nine deaths of Israeli citizens. These attacks were carried out in all potential forms and on all fronts, particularly by Hamas.

“The first half on 2011 witnessed an alarming escalation in the nature of terrorist activity against Israeli targets in the West Bank and Jerusalem. In the

first 5 months of 2011, 278 terrorist attacks were carried out in or emanated from the West Bank, resulting in the deaths of 11 Israeli citizens, including the brutal murder in March 2011 of the Fogel family, in which five family members (father, mother and 3 children — 11 years old, 4 years old and a baby of 3 months) were murdered in their sleep by two terrorists who penetrated their home.

“In 2010, 372 terrorist attacks emanated from the Gaza Strip. In the first four months of 2011, we witnessed an alarming increase in terror attacks emanating from the Gaza Strip — the number of terrorist attacks is already at 163. Another alarming escalation is the nature of the attacks, which have started to involve, in addition to Grad missiles, rockets and mortar shells, anti-tank missiles aiming at Israeli civilian populations. On 7 April 2011, an anti-tank missile was fired from Gaza at a school bus, injuring two Israelis, one of them — a teenager aged 16 — was critically wounded.

“Concomitant with the Palestinian terrorist campaign against Israel, the Palestinian Authority has continued in its campaign of incitement designed to legitimize terrorism. Glorification of those who are responsible for the murder of Israelis is carried out as an institutional practice by both the Palestinian Authority and Hamas. Among recent examples are the main Ramallah street named after the terrorist Yehieh Ayash, who is responsible for the death of over 100 Israelis and one of the master minds behind the concept of suicide terror attacks; the girl’s summer camp in Bethlehem named after Dalal Mugrabi, who led a terror attack on a bus that claimed the lives of 37 Israelis (among them 12 children); and the Gaza square named after the suicide bomber Rim Al Riyashi, who killed 4 Israelis.

“Hamas, entrenched in Gaza with the support of Iran, continues to stockpile weapons of ever increasing lethality and range, operating a full-fledged weapons smuggling operation through the extensive tunnel network running under the Egypt-Gaza border.

“In addition, Hamas has been holding kidnapped Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit for the past five years; the last sign of life was received on 25 June 2007 with a tape of Gilad Shalit released by Hamas. Throughout his captivity, Gilad Shalit was not allowed international humanitarian personnel access, in violation of basic humanitarian practice. The Hamas regime continues to reject the Quartet conditions, persists adamantly in its call for Israel’s destruction and remains vigilant in its commitment to seeing this grim vision through.

“It is disturbing that resolution 65/16 makes no mention of any of the above.

“Notwithstanding the concerted and enduring campaign of violence and incitement, and as a testimony of Israel’s commitment to humanitarian principles, Israel continues to facilitate the entry of large quantities of humanitarian supplies and other products into Gaza. In 2010, there was a 28 per cent increase in the number of truckloads that were transferred into Gaza (39,868 in 2010 compared to 31,055 in 2009), and the daily average of truckloads transferred into Gaza amounted to 163 truckloads a day, a 43 per cent increase compared to 2009. Export from the Gaza Strip has also expanded — 152 tons of strawberries and 368,208 flowers were exported in

2010. In 2010, 17,924 patients and accompanying individuals were permitted to exit the Gaza Strip for medical care, a 70 per cent increase compared to 2009. Throughout the year, Israel maintains the supply of electricity to the Gaza Strip. The transfer of diesel for the Gaza power station was carried out according to Palestinian Authority requests — 70,876,781 litres of diesel were transferred.

“These changes resulted in an increase of 15 per cent in the gross domestic product (GDP) of Gaza in 2010. This positive trend is continuing in the first quarter of 2011, which shows a 24.4 per cent growth in GDP and 20 per cent growth in GDP per capita compared to the first quarter of 2010.

“The Government of Israel has also authorized major steps to ease security-related restrictions in the West Bank. In 2010, 98 roadblocks were removed throughout Judea and Samaria, and there is a free flow of movement between all Palestinian Judea and Samaria major cities — from Jenin in the north to Hebron in the south. GDP growth in the West Bank for 2010 is at 8 per cent and tourist visits increased by 49 per cent, mainly to Bethlehem.

“The positive trend is continuing in the first quarter of 2011 — GDP grew 3.4 per cent compared to the first quarter of 2010.

“Over the course of the previous year the Government of Israel repeatedly extended an open invitation to restart peace talks with the Palestinian Authority with no pre-conditions. Israel hopes for a renewal of the direct negotiations aimed at achieving a comprehensive resolution of the conflict.

“Despite an ongoing and acute threat to its security, Israel has gone to great lengths to assist in extending humanitarian assistance, to foster conditions for Palestinian economic growth and to engage in political dialogue. Israel’s actions have already manifested economic improvement in Gaza and the West Bank. It is surprising that they are given no mention in resolution 65/16.

“Thus, resolution 65/16 joins the numerous one-sided resolutions passed annually by the General Assembly on Israel which serve to undermine the credibility of the United Nations as an impartial agent for the advancement of peace. The Permanent Mission takes this opportunity to urge the Secretary-General to use his good offices to encourage a cessation of this counterproductive practice”.

5. The note verbale dated 27 June 2011 from the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations reads as follows:

“Palestine deems resolution 65/16 to be central to the international efforts to justly and peacefully resolve the question of Palestine. The resolution represents one of the main pillars underpinning the efforts of the United Nations system as a whole towards Palestine, consistent with its permanent responsibility until the question is satisfactorily resolved in all its aspects. This responsibility emanates from the unfulfilled international covenant since the General Assembly’s decision to partition Mandate Palestine by its resolution 181 (II) of 29 November 1947, which led to the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948 and the uprooting, dispossession and dispersal of

the Palestinian people and continuation of their plight for over 63 years, during which time they have been denied their inalienable human rights and their freedom by Israel, the occupying Power, and forced to suffer severe oppression and hardship.

“The Palestinian leadership is fully committed to resolution 65/16, which was again adopted by an overwhelming majority, and reaffirms in comprehensive terms the parameters for a just, lasting and peaceful settlement based on international law, relevant United Nations resolutions and the agreed terms of reference of the peace process, namely Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), the Madrid terms of reference, including the land-for-peace principle, the Arab Peace Initiative and the Quartet road map. In this regard, as reflected in the resolution, a strong international consensus exists in support of the two-State solution of an independent, viable and contiguous State of Palestine living side by side with Israel in peace and security on the basis of the pre-1967 borders, with Jerusalem as the shared capital of two States, and a just solution for the plight of the Palestine refugees based on General Assembly resolution 194 (III) of 11 December 1948.

“In the period since the adoption of resolution 65/16, the Palestinian leadership, under the stewardship of President Mahmoud Abbas and Prime Minister Salam Fayyad, has continued to strive to advance a peaceful solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the question of Palestine as a whole in line with the principles enshrined in the resolution. In all of its efforts, Palestine has been firmly guided by international law, including international humanitarian and human rights law, and the multitude of relevant resolutions adopted by the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Human Rights Council, and the Economic and Social Council, as well as by the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) of 9 July 2004.

“The realization by the Palestinian people of their right to self-determination — affirmed as an *erga omnes* right by ICJ — remains a paramount goal for the Palestinian leadership. Moreover, the international consensus is firm in its recognition of and support for the Palestinian right to self-determination and an independent State, as reflected in relevant resolutions, the most recent being resolution 65/202, as well as by the recognition accorded to Palestine by nearly 120 countries to date. The Palestinian leadership continues to act concertedly at all levels — nationally, regionally and internationally — for fulfilment of this right of the Palestinian people and all other inalienable rights, including the right to return based on United Nations resolutions and principles of international legality, and to appeal to the international community to uphold its inherent responsibilities in this respect.

“Specifically, the steps taken bilaterally and multilaterally in the past year by Palestine have been intended to effect positive change in the political and diplomatic processes, as well as on the ground. The overall objective remains the achievement at the earliest possible date of the two-State solution for peace on the basis of the pre-1967 borders, acknowledging that this objective is central to the goal of a peaceful solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict as a whole in accordance with relevant resolutions and the Arab Peace Initiative. Having made an historic compromise decades ago, the Palestinian

leadership has repeatedly affirmed its commitment to the internationally endorsed objective of two States and its willingness to engage in serious negotiations to justly resolve all final status issues — Palestine refugees, Jerusalem, settlements, borders, water and security — towards this end.

“This commitment remains despite the obstacles that continue to be imposed by Israel, the occupying Power, by its illegal policies and practices in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, which continue to exacerbate the situation on the ground, compound sensitive issues and raise tensions, as well as by its obstruction of all initiatives in the past year aimed at reviving peace negotiations. In spite of these challenges, the Palestinian leadership has continued to affirm its readiness to negotiate in good faith based on credible parameters and has positively considered the efforts initiated in this regard by the international community, including by the Quartet and individually by the United States of America, the European Union, the Russian Federation and other concerned Member States. Moreover, the Palestinian leadership has repeatedly stressed that the status quo in the Occupied Palestinian Territory is unsustainable and volatile, adding to the urgency of achieving peace, a goal made only more urgent in the context of the developments sweeping the Middle East.

“Thus, despite adverse circumstances in both the political environment and on the ground, the Palestinian leadership, with the support of the Arab ministerial follow-up committee, agreed to participate in direct negotiations in early September 2010 in Washington on the invitation of United States President Barack Obama, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and Special Envoy George Mitchell. This attempt to relaunch negotiations came on the heels of the 20 August 2010 Quartet statement, which reaffirmed strong support for direct negotiations, full commitment to previous statements, determination to support the parties throughout the negotiations, which can be completed within one year, i.e., by September 2011, and in the implementation of an agreement. Regrettably, Palestine’s good faith effort and flexibility, along with the Quartet’s efforts, including in particular President Obama’s visionary statement before the General Assembly on 23 September 2010, have been met with more Israeli intransigence and violations, as the Israeli Government immediately thereafter refused to extend its so-called ‘partial moratorium’ on settlement activities, completely undermining the negotiations with its deliberate and illegal colonization of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, especially areas in and around Occupied East Jerusalem.

“As called for in resolution 65/16 and demanded unanimously by the international community, the Palestinian leadership continues to call for the complete cessation of all Israeli settlement activities, which are illegal and remain a major obstacle to peace. It must be stressed that this is not a Palestinian condition, but rather a legal obligation incumbent upon Israel under the Fourth Geneva Convention, Security Council and General Assembly resolutions and the Quartet road map, and it is essential for resumption of a credible peace process aimed at achieving the two-State solution based on the pre-1967 borders. The initiative to address Israel’s illegal, destructive settlement campaign in the Security Council in February 2011, with the support of nearly 130 co-sponsoring Member States, which received the full support of 14 Council members, was undertaken in this context with the aim of

compelling Israel to cease all settlement activities and comply with the law and creating an appropriate environment for resumption of genuine negotiations that can succeed.

“On the other hand, the illogical pretexts being used by Israel to justify its illegal settlement campaign constitute arbitrary preconditions imposed to exact further political gains for Israel based solely on the imbalance of power and the impunity it enjoys and intended to distort the reality on the ground, distract the debate and the focus on the conflict’s core issues and undermine the peace process. Such persistent bad faith by the Israeli Government and its total disrespect for the agreed principles of the negotiation process has left the Palestinian side without a partner for peace. This disturbing reality was reaffirmed by the Israeli Prime Minister’s arrogant rejection of the call by President Obama, in a 19 May 2011 policy speech on the Middle East and North Africa, for a clear basis of negotiations between the two sides, in which he stressed that ‘the borders of Israel and Palestine should be based on the 1967 lines, with mutually agreed swaps, so that secure and recognized borders are established for both States’. While this statement has been welcomed by the Palestinian side and the rest of the international community, with efforts immediately exerted by the other Quartet members based on this position, Israel maintains its negative intransigence up to this moment, blocking all attempts to resume negotiations on even this minimal basis.

“Furthermore, despite the negative conditions in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, owing to ongoing illegal Israeli actions — including, inter alia, settlement activities, such as construction and expansion of settlements and the Wall, transfer of more settlers and confiscation of Palestinian land; rampant settler violence and terror against the Palestinian civilian population; demolition of homes and properties, evictions of Palestinian families and revocation of residency rights that have displaced thousands of people; imposition of the blockade on the Gaza Strip in collective punishment of the entire population, in addition to other forms of collective punishment; imprisonment of thousands of Palestinian civilians, including children and women, in Israeli jails and detention centres; and military raids and aggression — the Palestinian leadership has strived to maintain a proactive and productive course of action aimed at serving the needs of the Palestinian people and alleviating their hardships under occupation and at ultimately fulfilling their legitimate national aspirations for freedom, justice, peace, security and dignity in their homeland.

“To this end, the Palestinian leadership has sought to promote a positive environment for the resumption of peace negotiations and engaged in all relevant regional and international efforts, including at the United Nations, in good faith and in a spirit of historic compromise. It has also actively engaged bilaterally with Member States from all regions — Asian, African, European, Latin American and North American countries — and multilaterally through regional and political groups such as the League of Arab States, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and the Organization of the Islamic Conference to mobilize and enhance support for the Palestinian people, including recognition of their State of Palestine, and a just peace settlement. Palestinian diplomatic, public and media outreach has consistently reflected a solid respect for

international law and United Nations resolutions and commitment to peace and reaffirmed a responsible position in support of the two-State solution.

“On the ground, the Palestinian leadership remains actively engaged, with strong international support, in the development and strengthening of Palestinian institutions in preparation for independence of the State. The implementation of the two-year plan of the Palestinian National Authority launched by Prime Minister Fayyad in August 2009, which is guiding these efforts, is moving toward the final stages of completion of the second half of the plan, ‘Homestretch to Freedom’, in August 2011. The serious advances made in this regard have been recognized and endorsed by the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the United Nations in recent reports, all attesting to Palestinian readiness for independence. It is the Israeli occupation in all its manifestations that remains the main obstacle to fully realizing the objectives of this plan.

“Similarly, reconstruction and economic revival of the Gaza Strip, a priority for the Palestinian leadership to alleviate the civilian population’s suffering and give them hope and a horizon for a more stable, peaceful and prosperous future, continues to be undermined by the occupying Power. Reconstruction of homes, infrastructure, schools, hospitals and agricultural and business properties is still being obstructed by Israel by its blockade of Gaza and restrictions on the entry of needed construction and raw materials. Despite these formidable obstacles, the Palestinian leadership is exerting all possible efforts to advance Gaza’s reconstruction with the strong support and cooperation of the international community, including the donor countries, humanitarian aid organizations and civil society.

“The Palestinian leadership has also striven to promote reconciliation and unity among the Palestinian political factions. Serious efforts have been exerted to end the nearly four-year division, as demanded by the Palestinian people and in line with Security Council resolution 1860 (2009), various Quartet statements and calls for unity from around the globe, including by the League of Arab States, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the European Union. Following the signing of the reconciliation agreement in Cairo on 4 May 2011, the Palestinian leadership will do its utmost to preserve unity, cognizant of its centrality to the drive to realize the rights and national aspirations of the Palestinian people.

“The Palestinian leadership also continues to pursue efforts to broaden recognition of the State of Palestine on the basis of the pre-1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital. It strongly welcomed the recognitions accorded in recent months by various Member States, in addition to the majority of recognitions that followed the 1988 Palestinian Declaration of Independence, all constituting principled affirmations of support for the Palestinian people’s inalienable right to self-determination and fully consistent with the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and relevant resolutions. Such recognitions are also consistent with the global consensus on the parameters for a two-State peace settlement of an independent, contiguous and viable State of Palestine living side by side with Israel in peace and security based on the pre-1967 borders. Far from being unilateral, seeking

recognition of Palestine by the countries of the world is a truly multilateral endeavour, constituting a positive contribution towards realizing the goal of the two-State solution. In fact, we believe recognition of Palestine to be intrinsic to the political, legal and moral responsibilities of the international community for securing a just, lasting, comprehensive resolution of the conflict, bearing in mind the internationally endorsed target date of September 2011.

“The dramatic developments taking place in the Middle East are altering the geopolitical landscape of the region and are bringing to the fore the universal aspirations of all peoples for freedom, justice, democracy and respect for human rights. It is in this spirit that, despite the serious challenges that persist, the Palestinian leadership continues to strive to fulfil the national aspirations of the Palestinian people. The Palestinian leadership remains fully committed to the path of peace and justice, determined to achieve an end to the Israeli occupation that began in 1967 and the independence of the State of Palestine on the basis of the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital, and a just solution for the plight of the Palestine refugees.

“Palestine will continue to call upon the members of the international community, bilaterally and multilaterally, to redouble the efforts to uphold their responsibilities, including upholding the principles of resolution 65/16 on the peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine and acting to implement the resolution’s provisions. It is our deepest hope that the Palestinian leadership’s positive, constructive efforts and the regional and international efforts being exerted in this regard will converge by September 2011 to consolidate the political will and momentum necessary to finally bring an end to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and to allow Palestine to take its rightful place among the community of nations and to allow peace, justice and security to flourish in the region with achievement of an end to the Arab-Israeli conflict as a whole.”

II. Observations

6. Efforts to achieve the peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine made little progress during the reporting period, and confidence between the parties and in the political process reached a new low. Hopes raised by the start of direct talks on 2 September 2010 faltered rapidly. Negotiations were discontinued and have remained in an impasse since October. The Palestinians nevertheless advanced their State-building programme. They also resumed their efforts towards reuniting the West Bank and Gaza. On the ground, the situation remained challenging, in particular for the population living under closure in Gaza, while Israel continued to face the threat of rocket fire. In the West Bank, tensions persisted while settlement activity accelerated.

7. Following the proximity talks, facilitated by the United States since May 2010, Prime Minister Netanyahu and President Abbas met in Washington, D.C., on 1 and 2 September under the auspices of President Obama and Secretary Clinton to launch direct Israeli-Palestinian negotiations. A second round of talks was held on 14 and 15 September. Prime Minister Netanyahu affirmed that President Abbas was his partner for peace, while President Abbas stated his desire to see a permanent end to

the conflict. Both leaders reaffirmed their commitment to a two-State solution and agreed to seek a solution based on two States for two peoples. They agreed that the negotiations could be completed within a year, and that their aim was to resolve all final status issues, including borders, security, refugees and Jerusalem. I called upon both sides to show leadership, courage and responsibility to realize the aspirations of both peoples, and encouraged the efforts of the United States in that regard.

8. However, negotiations came to a halt after Israel's 10-month moratorium on new construction in settlements expired on 26 September. President Abbas indicated that he would not continue direct negotiations unless Israel froze settlement activity. Growing mutual distrust worked against the resumption of direct bilateral talks. I expressed disappointment that the moratorium was not renewed and reiterated that settlement activity in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, was contrary to international law. I urged Israel to fulfil its road map obligation to freeze settlement activity. The Middle East Quartet regretted the discontinuation of the moratorium and strongly reaffirmed that unilateral actions by either party could not prejudice the outcome of negotiations and would not be recognized by the international community.

9. On 9 October, at its summit in Sirte, Libya, the League of Arab States expressed support for President Abbas' position not to continue negotiations unless Israel froze settlement activity. In the following months, the League held several meetings in support of the Palestinian efforts. The Palestinian leadership launched a diplomatic campaign to secure bilateral recognition of an independent State of Palestine within borders that conform to the ceasefire lines in existence before 4 June 1967. Several States, notably in South America, announced such recognition. The Government of Israel continued to call for a continuation of negotiations, stating that settlements would be resolved as part of a final status agreement.

10. The United States continued to engage the parties in indirect talks after it announced in December the end of its attempts to reinstate the settlement moratorium. In February, Quartet members started diplomatic efforts to engage the parties in separate consultations, giving serious consideration to their views on how to bring about resumed negotiations on all core issues, including borders and security. I fully supported this process, based on the conviction that internationally agreed parameters were needed to provide a basis for the resumption of meaningful negotiations. I also gave my full support to the tireless work of Senator Mitchell until he resigned on 13 May from his post of United States Envoy for the Middle East.

11. On 19 May, President Obama put forward important principles as a foundation for negotiations, particularly regarding borders, which should be based on the 1967 lines with mutually agreed swaps, and security arrangements, which should be robust enough to prevent a resurgence of terrorism, to stop the infiltration of weapons, and to provide effective border security, and allow a full and phased withdrawal of Israeli military forces coordinated with the assumption of Palestinian security responsibility in a sovereign, non-militarized State.

12. Along with the other Quartet principals, I supported the vision outlined by President Obama and encouraged Prime Minister Netanyahu and President Abbas to respond positively. In its statement of 20 May, the Quartet appealed to the parties to resume direct bilateral negotiations. The Quartet principals met in Washington, D.C., on 11 July, to discuss how to translate President Obama's speech into an

internationally agreed framework for the resumption of talks. However, in view of the persisting differences between the parties regarding what terms should frame negotiations, Quartet members agreed to work on narrowing that gap before issuing a statement that could help bring both sides back to negotiations. Quartet discussions and efforts continued over the summer in the context of a deteriorating situation on the ground and deepening mistrust between both sides.

13. In August, with no political breakthrough and with Israeli settlement activity continuing, the Palestinian leadership, with the support of the Arab Peace Initiative Committee, confirmed its intention to approach the United Nations at the beginning of the new session of the General Assembly to call on Member States to recognize a Palestinian State within the 1967 lines and to apply for full membership in the United Nations. The Government of Israel expressed its strong opposition to such Palestinian action.

14. The Charter of the United Nations is clear that the issues of recognition of a State and membership in the United Nations are for Member States and the United Nations intergovernmental bodies to decide. My role as Secretary-General would be to transmit the Palestinian request for membership to the Security Council.

15. As an active proponent of the two-State solution, it remained my strong view that the Palestinians should have an independent and viable State of their own, living side by side with the State of Israel in peace and security. Resuming substantive negotiations to resolve all permanent status issues must therefore remain our collective priority. As we moved into September, I continued to hope that the international community would be able to shape a legitimate and balanced way forward to help the parties achieve the goal of ending the conflict and establishing a viable and sovereign Palestinian State.

16. The situation in occupied East Jerusalem remained tense. I expressed concern at new settlement construction, house demolitions and evictions of Palestinian families, and I deplored the demolition in January of the Shepherd's Hotel in a Palestinian neighbourhood. The reporting period also witnessed violent clashes in sensitive areas of East Jerusalem, which underscored the tensions caused by the presence and expansion of settler communities in the heart of Palestinian neighbourhoods, including Silwan, Sheikh Jarrah and Ras al-Amud. In a development that is the source of serious concern, the Government of Israel announced in August new constructions in several settlements in East Jerusalem. I also remained concerned about the human rights of Palestinian residents of East Jerusalem and continued to oppose any measures towards their forcible transfer out of the city, including revocation of residency rights. In August, in contravention of their obligations under the road map, the Israeli authorities extended the closure of Orient House and the Chamber of Commerce in East Jerusalem pursuant to their ongoing ban on Palestinian government institutions in the city. The status of three Hamas-affiliated Palestinian legislators from East Jerusalem, who were threatened with forcible transfer, has been unresolved since June 2010.

17. On 23 March, a bomb exploded adjacent to a bus stop in West Jerusalem, killing one female civilian and injuring 30 Israelis. I strongly condemned this act of terrorism and called for an immediate cessation of acts of terrorism and violence against civilians in order to prevent further escalation and loss of life.

18. Jerusalem is a final status issue that requires a negotiated solution. I have consistently emphasized that a way must be found for the city to emerge, through negotiations, as a capital of two States, Israel and Palestine, with arrangements for holy sites acceptable for all. It is equally important that political and religious authorities on both sides continue to ensure that the cultural and religious rights of all are duly respected.

19. In the West Bank, the implementation of the State-building programme launched by the Palestinian Authority in August 2009 was completed during the reporting period, although it was limited to the territory under the Authority's control, which excluded Area C, East Jerusalem and Gaza. It formed an essential complement to the political process.

20. In April, the Office of the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process reported to the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee that in the six areas where the United Nations is most engaged, governmental functions were sufficient for a viable government of a State.¹ The achievements of the State-building programme should be further supported, in line with the objectives of the Palestinian Authority's National Development Plan (2011-2013).

21. Despite financial constraints, the growth of the real gross domestic product (GDP) continued, reaching 8.3 per cent in the first quarter of 2011 as compared to the first quarter of 2010. This was supported by ongoing institutional reforms with donor support and earlier measures to facilitate movement and access.

22. I continued to call on donors to provide timely assistance to sustain this agenda. Donor support for the Palestinian Authority was grossly insufficient during 2011, affecting the Authority's ability to meet its financial obligations, including payment of salaries. I also strongly encouraged the Government of Israel to take all necessary measures to facilitate growth, including further easing of access and movement within, into and out of the West Bank for both goods and people.

23. The Palestinian Authority remained constrained by the occupation and settlement activity. In this regard, I reminded Israel of its commitments under the road map to freeze all settlement activity, including "natural growth", and to dismantle outposts erected since March 2001. Settlements are contrary to Security Council resolutions, the Fourth Geneva Convention and Israel's obligations under the road map. They complicate the path towards a two-State solution and prejudice final status issues.

24. The Palestinian Authority continued to make commendable efforts to maintain law and order in areas under its control and to strengthen its security capacity. The sixth and seventh battalions of Palestinian National Security Forces were trained in Jordan and deployed in the West Bank during the reporting period.

25. As of August 2011, the number of obstacles to movement was approximately 523, of which 62 were permanently staffed, compared to 509 in August 2010, of which 64 were permanently staffed. My concern has grown over forced displacement of Palestinians due to demolitions, especially in Area C, where 470 structures were demolished during the reporting period.

¹ The six areas include: governance, rule of law and human rights; livelihoods and productive sectors; education and culture; health; social protection; and infrastructure and water.

26. I appreciated the efforts of the Quartet's Special Representative, Tony Blair, to support economic development throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory. I welcomed the package of measures he announced in February with Prime Minister Netanyahu, for both the West Bank and Gaza, which must be implemented in full and supplemented by additional steps.

27. Violence in or emanating from the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, continued, manifesting itself in terror attacks and settler violence against Palestinians — also in retaliation to Government of Israel action, including against illegal outposts — as well as in the context of Israeli security operations. In total, 14 Palestinians were killed, including three militants, and 1,398 injured by Israel Defense Forces. Settler violence against Palestinians increased, killing 3 and injuring 182 during 366 settler attacks on Palestinians and their property, including the uprooting of thousands of olive trees. Four Muslim holy sites were also desecrated during the reporting period, including two arson attacks on West Bank mosques in October and June. There was a slight decrease in Israeli incursions and arrests in the West Bank, which however remained at a very high level despite improved Palestinian security performance and cooperation with the Israeli Defense Forces. In the same period, there were also 63 Palestinian attacks on settlers, in which 6 Israelis were killed and 27 injured in the West Bank. On 12 March, a family of five were murdered in the West Bank settlement of Itamar in a shocking act of violence, which I and the Quartet strongly condemned. On 29 August, eight Israelis were wounded when a Palestinian from the West Bank ran a car into a group of youth and police in Tel Aviv. I consistently condemned all attacks that indiscriminately targeted civilians and called for international humanitarian law to be upheld in all circumstances. I also urged the parties to seek out those responsible for such violent incidents and bring them to justice.

28. I believe that legitimate Israeli and Palestinian security concerns can be best addressed by intensified cooperation, continued empowerment of the Palestinian Authority's security efforts and performance, further curtailment of incursions by the Israeli Defense Forces into Palestinian areas, full respect for legitimate non-violent protest, determined action by the Government of Israel to curb settler violence, Palestinian action against incitement, economic development and, most importantly, the resumption of a credible political process of negotiation.

29. Although plans to hold presidential, legislative and municipal elections did not materialize during the reporting period, I still hope that it will be possible in the near future to hold free and fair elections throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

30. Contrary to the 9 July 2004 advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice, the barrier continued to deviate significantly from the 1967 Green Line into occupied Palestinian territory. It restricts Palestinian access to East Jerusalem, key social services and agricultural land. Protests against the construction of the barrier by Palestinian, Israeli and foreign activists continued during the reporting period, resulting at times in clashes with Israeli security forces.

31. In accordance with General Assembly resolution ES-10/17 of 15 December 2006, on 27 June I provided a progress report on the work of the United Nations Register of Damage Caused by the Construction of the Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. During her visit in February, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights highlighted the intensely negative impact that the

fragmentation of the West Bank by the Wall, settlements and checkpoints was having on human rights, peace, development and the Palestinians' right to self-determination.

32. The Government of Israel continued to maintain a regime of closure of the Gaza Strip, where Hamas continued to exercise de facto control.

33. The reporting period witnessed alarming escalations of tension between Gaza and Israel, most notably in January, March, April and August. In April, an anti-tank guided missile hit an Israeli school bus killing a teenage passenger and injuring the bus driver. Israel retaliated by launching heavy military operations. Calm was restored on 10 April. The calm was broken when, on 18 August, coordinated terrorist attacks killed eight Israelis, including six civilians in southern Israel. The attacks were followed by retaliatory strikes by Israel on targets in Gaza. I immediately strongly condemned the 18 August terrorist attacks and called for all to act with restraint. Both in April and August, Egypt and the Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process played an important role in defusing the tension.

34. Overall during the reporting period, Palestinian militants fired 961 rockets and mortar shells, in which 2 Israeli civilians were killed and 36 injured. With respect to Israeli military personnel, one was killed and two were injured in Gaza during the same period. The Israel Defense Forces carried out 224 air strikes and 122 incursions. In total, 43 Palestinian civilians were killed and 350 injured in Gaza. Seventy militants were also killed and 70 injured. The United Nations consistently expressed concern at actions by Hamas and other militant groups in Gaza to escalate violence, endangering civilians on both sides. The United Nations also consistently called for maximum restraint from Israel and urged full observance by all parties of their obligations regarding the protection of civilians.

35. Addressing the dire conditions of the civilian population and rebuilding a viable economy in Gaza, including by reviving the legitimate private sector, remained major priorities for the United Nations. To that end, the United Nations engaged intensively with the Government of Israel and within the Middle East Quartet to promote reconstruction, to further liberalize imports, in particular of construction materials, and to allow exports.

36. In this regard, I welcomed further measures taken by the Government of Israel during the reporting period to ease the closure. Egypt also eased the movement of persons at the Rafah crossing point. However, the closure continued to have a serious humanitarian impact on civilians and perpetuate an unsustainable and unacceptable situation for the population of Gaza. I consistently urged the Government of Israel to lift the blockade within the framework of resolution 1860 (2009), while also recalling that Israel's legitimate security concerns should be addressed, including by putting in place mechanisms to prevent the illicit trafficking of arms into Gaza.

37. The United Nations continued to call for free movement of people into and out of Gaza and a full reopening of all official land crossings, as well as an expansion of their capacity. The United Nations also put forward programming aimed at revitalizing the private sector and rehabilitating public health infrastructure. Israel approved a total of \$265 million in United Nations reconstruction projects as of the

end of August, which was a welcome and significant start to address Gaza's basic needs.

38. However, construction materials were still not allowed free entry and were approved only for international projects. As a consequence, they were imported through the illicit tunnel trade to Gaza's markets. This only empowered those who control trafficking at the expense of the legitimate commercial sector.

39. Overall during the reporting period, economic recovery continued in Gaza — albeit from a low base — driven in part by public expenditure, donor aid, tunnel traffic, increased imports from Israel and limited exports. However unemployment remained high, at 26 per cent in the second quarter of 2011. As of the end of the reporting period, 38 per cent of Gazans were living in poverty, and 75 per cent of the Gaza population remained dependent on humanitarian assistance.

40. Reports of increasing human rights abuses, extrajudicial executions and political arrests in the Gaza Strip remained a source of deep concern. The United Nations noted with alarm attempts by the Hamas de facto authorities to undermine the independence of local human rights organizations, in particular their decision to close down a number of civil associations, including the Sharek Youth Forum, which had been an important partner of the United Nations. Also alarming was the storming by Hamas security forces on 15 March of international news channel offices. The Hamas de facto authorities should allow both civic and media organizations to carry out their activities in full respect of the freedom of the press, as well as the freedoms of association and expression. Equally important is to ensure full respect for the work of United Nations agencies, some of whose activities in support of Palestinian beneficiaries have been misrepresented.

41. Other incidents in Gaza continued to underline the challenging security environment facing the humanitarian community and the United Nations. On 15 April, Italian citizen Vittorio Arrigoni was abducted and murdered, reportedly by a Salafist group. I deplored this crime. On 25 June, a bomb was detonated near the compound of the Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, causing only material damage to the perimeter wall.

42. I remain deeply concerned by the fate of Israeli Staff Sergeant Shalit, who has been in Hamas captivity for more than five years. I reiterated my call for humanitarian access and for his unconditional and immediate release. I also continued to support efforts for the completion of a prisoner exchange agreement. Approximately 5,500 Palestinian prisoners remain in Israeli jails, and while their number is decreasing at a rate of about 800 to 1,000 each year, I continue to follow their situation with concern, including that of women, children and other persons held without trial. I continued to call for the release of Palestinian prisoners to the Palestinian Authority.

43. In an effort to enable Gaza's society to engage with the world, the United Nations facilitated the visit to Gaza of United Nations Messenger for Peace Daniel Barenboim and musicians from leading European orchestras who performed a concert on 3 May. On 16 June, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) summer games were launched, providing thousands of Gazan children with recreational and learning activities.

44. The Panel of Inquiry into the 31 May 2010 flotilla incident concluded its work and submitted its report on 2 September. The Panel was an independent body tasked

with making findings about the facts, circumstances and context of the incident that took place in the Mediterranean Sea on 31 May 2010 and with recommending ways of avoiding similar incidents in the future.

45. Bearing in mind Security Council resolutions 1850 (2008) and 1860 (2009), I continued to support efforts to advance Palestinian unity within the framework of the commitments of the Palestine Liberation Organization, the positions of the Quartet and the Arab Peace Initiative. I welcomed efforts made towards bringing the division to an end, notably by Egypt.

46. Following popular calls, President Abbas and the Hamas leadership accelerated discussions on unity. On 4 May, Palestinian factions signed a reconciliation agreement under Egyptian auspices. Discussions over the implementation of the accord continued during the following months, with little progress so far.

47. Popular demonstrations demanding political change and social justice have swept across the region since December. The Occupied Palestinian Territory and Israel were not immune to the fallout of this movement. On 15 March, demonstrations were held in major West Bank cities, calling for an end to the Israeli occupation and to Palestinian division. Larger demonstrations were held in Gaza, which were regrettably suppressed by the security forces of Hamas. On 15 May, referred to by Palestinians as “Nakba Day”, demonstrations along the disengagement line in the occupied Golan, the Blue Line, in the West Bank and in Gaza resulted in numerous casualties following violent clashes with the Israeli forces. Demonstrations had traditionally occurred on this day in the past, but on a smaller scale. Both the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon and the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force remained in close contact with the parties in order to restore calm. I expressed deep concern at the significant number of people killed or injured and called on all concerned to exercise restraint. On 5 June, demonstrations again took place in the West Bank and in the occupied Golan, which resulted in the deaths of 23 persons.

48. In Israel, large scale popular demonstrations against rising costs of living were held in July and August.

49. I would like to express my deep thanks and appreciation to Robert H. Serry, the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, as well as to the Commissioner-General of UNRWA, Filippo Grandi. I also pay tribute to all United Nations staff who work in the service of the United Nations under difficult, at times dangerous, circumstances, marked by restrictions on their free movement and access. I have repeatedly protested these restrictions to the Government of Israel and look forward to improvements in this regard.

50. Peace and Palestinian statehood are long overdue. I am acutely conscious of the unsustainable status quo, which is only thrown into sharper relief by the profound political changes now under way in the region. I remain convinced that direct and meaningful negotiations are the main avenue towards a comprehensive, fair and lasting solution that fulfils the aspirations of Israel and the Palestinians, including an end to occupation, an end to conflict, and a just and agreed solution to the plight of Palestinian refugees.

51. I am seriously concerned at the lack of progress, during the reporting period, in the search for a negotiated solution which would bring Israel and the Palestinians

closer to durable peace and security, including the realization of the legitimate aspiration of Palestinians to a State of their own and of Israel to live within recognized and secure borders. The failure of the parties to meet their target of September 2011 to conclude a final status agreement, or even to resume negotiations, is a serious setback. I therefore call upon all parties to show leadership, courage and responsibility to arrive at a mutually agreeable and lasting peace that would resolve all final status issues. To this end, it is my sincere hope that the parties pursue vigorously all efforts to create an environment that is conducive to the resumption of direct and meaningful negotiations. In particular, I urge Israel to cease all settlement activity in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and to take concrete steps to further ease the numerous restrictions in place both in the West Bank and Gaza. I also strongly encourage all Palestinians on the path of non-violence and unity, and call on them to pursue their efforts to improve law and order, combat extremism and incitement against Israel, and to continue building strong and democratic institutions that are essential to a viable, independent Palestinian State. In a highly volatile environment, it is crucial that any outbreaks of violence that could undermine political efforts are prevented and that the parties refrain from provocative steps on the ground. The international community must also provide effective help by shaping a legitimate and balanced framework that offers a credible political path forward, combined with far-reaching steps on the ground.

52. As Secretary-General, I will continue to ensure that the United Nations works towards the establishment of an independent, democratic, contiguous and viable Palestinian State living side by side in peace with a secure Israel in the framework of a comprehensive regional settlement consistent with Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973), 1397 (2002), 1515 (2003) and 1860 (2009), and in accordance with the road map, the Arab Peace Initiative and the principle of land for peace.



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Question of Palestine

Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report is submitted in accordance with General Assembly resolution 66/17. It contains replies received from the parties concerned to the notes verbales sent by the Secretary-General pursuant to the request contained in paragraph 25 of the resolution. The report also contains the observations of the Secretary-General on the current state of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and on international efforts to move the peace process forward with a view to achieving a peaceful settlement. The report covers the period from September 2011 to August 2012.



I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 66/17.

2. On 1 July 2012, pursuant to the request contained in paragraph 25 of the above-mentioned resolution, I addressed the following letter to the President of the Security Council:

“I have the honour to refer to resolution 66/17, which the General Assembly adopted on 30 November 2011, at its sixty-sixth session, under the agenda item ‘Question of Palestine’.

“The General Assembly, in paragraph 25 of the resolution, requested the Secretary-General to continue his efforts with the parties concerned, and in consultation with the Security Council, towards the attainment of a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine and the promotion of peace in the region and to submit to the Assembly at its sixty-seventh session a report on these efforts and on developments on this matter.

“In order to fulfil my reporting responsibilities under this resolution, I should be grateful if you would kindly convey to me the views of the Security Council by 31 July 2012.

“Recalling the Secretariat’s obligation to observe the page limit of its reports, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 52/214, I would like to encourage the Security Council to limit its submission to 1,500 words.”

3. As at 12 September, no response had been received to that request.

4. In a note verbale dated 17 May 2012 to the parties concerned, I sought the positions of the Governments of Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic, as well as the Palestine Liberation Organization, regarding any steps taken by them to implement the relevant provisions of the resolution. As at 31 August, replies had been received from Egypt, Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization. The note verbale dated 26 June 2012 from the Permanent Mission of Egypt to the United Nations reads as follows:

“The main goal of Egypt is to support the two-State solution that has been internationally agreed upon and the establishment within the 4 June 1967 borders of an independent, sovereign Palestinian State, with East Jerusalem as its capital. Egypt therefore supported the Palestinian Authority’s request for full membership in the United Nations, just as it supported the inclusion of Palestine in the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. With regard to the peace process, Egypt has encouraged all efforts aimed at the resumption of the negotiations, the most recent of which were the exploratory negotiations that took place under Jordanian auspices, pursuant to a Quartet statement in September 2011, and to that end, applauded the points raised by President Abbas in his May 2012 letter to Prime Minister Netanyahu.

“Egypt is endeavouring to find a strong Palestinian position that will help to revive peace efforts. To that end, Egypt, in February 2009, initiated an intensive and comprehensive dialogue aimed at ending the division between the West Bank and Gaza Strip that began on 16 June 2007. Those efforts were

rewarded in May 2011, when a Palestinian reconciliation agreement was signed by all the parties at the leadership level and it was agreed that a number of committees should be established in order to make reconciliation a reality. Furthermore, Egypt supported the Doha agreement of February 2012 and in June 2012 will host consultations on the formation of the new Palestinian Unity Government.

“In a related vein, in March 2012, Egypt announced that a comprehensive truce that included a moratorium on assassinations had been brokered between the Palestinian and Israeli sides as part of continuous Egyptian efforts to halt Israeli military operations against the Gaza Strip and end the escalation in violence between the two sides and the resultant impact on the region as a whole and on any movement towards establishing a genuine process of negotiation.

“In May 2012, as part of Egyptian efforts to reduce tension between the Palestinians and Israelis, Egypt was able to reach an agreement with the Israeli side that included a response to the legitimate demands of the Palestinian prisoners, the most important of which included the ending of solitary confinement, in which certain prisoners had been held for more than 10 years, the use of special prisons and permission for the families of prisoners in the West Bank and Gaza Strip to visit their relatives in Israeli prisons after having been refused permission for over five years to have any contact, whether by telephone or in person. Other demands related to prison routines and living conditions. In October 2011, Egypt oversaw the exchange of 1,027 prisoners for Gilad Shalit as part of the process of calming the situation and making it possible for both sides to reach greater mutual understanding.”

5. The note verbale dated 17 July 2012 from the Permanent Mission of Israel to the United Nations reads as follows:

“Israel voted against this resolution, as it has done when similar resolutions were adopted by the General Assembly in the past. The Permanent Mission of Israel wishes to reiterate the considerations guiding this voting practice.

“Time and again, Israel has demonstrated that it is prepared to make painful compromises to secure lasting peace. Its hand remains extended to achieve the solution of two states for two peoples. The Palestinians should live in their own state alongside the Jewish State of Israel. The only way to achieve this is through bilateral negotiations.

“The Government of Israel has continuously called upon the Palestinians to return to the negotiating table, to no avail. Israel has fostered conditions for improvement in economic growth and development, cooperating with the Palestinian Authority in some 40 spheres of daily life. In response, the Palestinians have taken unilateral steps that are not constructive — and will not advance peace or compromise.

“Resolution 66/17 fails to mention the many incidents of Palestinian terrorism over the past year, which have placed the entire Israeli population under a constant spectre of violence. Terrorist attacks were carried out in all forms and by all means, particularly by Hamas.

“The 988 Palestinian terrorist attacks in 2011 resulted in the murder of 21 innocent men, women and children. These incidents included the murder of a 16-year-old school boy, when Hamas launched a Kornet laser-guided anti-tank missile at his yellow school bus; five members of the Fogel family, who were slaughtered by Palestinian terrorists as they slept — the victims included the parents, Ehud and Ruth, and three of their children, Yoav, 11, Elad, 4, and three-month-old Hadas; and eight civilians travelling on the roads in southern Israel, in a series of attacks by Palestinian terrorists in August.

“Some 680 rockets, mortars and Grad missiles were fired at southern Israel from Gaza in 2011. Since the beginning of 2012, the rocket fire has escalated. During the first six months of 2012, 477 high-trajectory rockets and mortars were launched into Israel. In June 2012 alone, 197 rockets and 21 mortar shells were launched into Israel, causing casualties and paralysing life for 1 million Israeli civilians.

“None of this is mentioned in resolution 66/17.

“Even in the face of continued terrorist activity, Israel has gone to great lengths to improve daily life for the Palestinian population, extending humanitarian assistance and working to spur economic growth. Israel has facilitated the entry of large quantities of humanitarian supplies and other products into Gaza and taken action to expand exports from the area. In 2011, Israel supplied 124 megawatts of electricity and worked with the United Nations Development Programme to increase the capacity of the Gaza power station by 200 megawatts. These changes helped to increase Gaza’s gross domestic product in 2011 by 27 per cent.

“The Government of Israel has also authorized significant measures to ease security-related restrictions in the West Bank. In 2011, roadblocks were removed throughout Judea and Samaria. Today Palestinians have free flow of movement between all major cities in Judea and Samaria, from Jenin in the north to Hebron in the south. There was a 33 per cent increase in Palestinian trade across the Allenby Bridge in 2011.

“Yet, none of this is recognized in resolution 66/17.

“The Government of Israel continues to call on the Palestinians to return to the negotiating table, with no preconditions, to achieve lasting peace with two States living side by side, one Jewish and one Palestinian.

“This one-sided resolution undermines the peace process, placing another obstacle on the path towards renewing peace negotiations between Israel and the Palestinian Authority; consequently, Israel voted against the resolution.”

6. The note verbale dated 3 August 2012 from the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations reads as follows:

“Palestine reaffirms that resolution 66/17 constitutes a central component of the international community’s efforts to justly, peacefully and comprehensively resolve the question of Palestine on the basis of clear parameters rooted in international law and other relevant United Nations resolutions. Significantly, resolution 66/17 receives Member States’ overwhelming support, reflecting the international consensus in support of the two-State solution of an independent, sovereign, democratic and contiguous

State of Palestine, living side by side with Israel in peace and security on the basis of the pre-1967 borders, with Jerusalem the shared capital of the two States, and a just solution for the Palestine refugees based on General Assembly resolution 194 (III) of 11 December 1948.

“Regrettably, however, the internationally endorsed parameters for a solution continue to be irrationally and recklessly rejected by Israel. Rather than adhering to the path of peace, the occupying Power continues to violate international law, including humanitarian and human rights law, and obstruct political efforts to resolve the conflict, causing incalculable suffering to our people, precluding the realization of peace and security in the region and inflaming successive crises, and burdening the rest of the global community, which continues to expend vast efforts and resources to resolve the conflict and alleviate its impact on innocent civilians. All of this makes it all the more imperative for the international community to remain firm in upholding the rule of law and its permanent responsibility towards the question of Palestine until a just solution is achieved in all aspects, and respectful of the international covenant arising from the General Assembly’s decision to partition Mandate Palestine in its resolution 181 (II) of 29 November 1947, which led to the establishment of Israel in 1948 and the uprooting of the Palestinian people from their homeland in *Al-Nakba*, which has lasted for over 64 years now, throughout which they have endured exile, dispossession and constant oppression and denial of their rights, including to return and self-determination.

“The international community’s inability to hold Israel accountable, in line with resolution 66/17 and other relevant resolutions and legal obligations, has fuelled Israeli impunity, further complicating the resolution of core final status issues — Palestine refugees, Jerusalem, settlements, borders, security and water, and prolonging the conflict. In particular, the Security Council’s paralysis and failure to address Israel’s deliberate, illegal settlement campaign, the major obstacle to peace, has only further emboldened the occupying Power. Thus, Israel continues to carry out its illegal, expansionist agenda in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, causing immense suffering to our people; impairing the contiguity, integrity, unity and viability of the State of Palestine; jeopardizing the prospects for physically achieving the two-State solution on the basis of the pre-1967 borders; and prompting searches for alternative solutions.

“This destructive Israeli agenda has been manifested, inter alia, in the following policies and practices, constituting serious violations and grave breaches of Israel’s legal obligations under the Fourth Geneva Convention, Security Council and General Assembly resolutions, international human rights covenants, and the Quartet road map: military attacks by the occupying forces against civilian areas in the Gaza Strip, as well as military raids in villages, towns and cities in the West Bank, causing death and injury to Palestinian civilians, including children, and destruction of civilian property; the illegal settlement campaign, especially in and around occupied East Jerusalem and the Jordan Valley, including vast construction of settlements, so-called settlement ‘outposts’ and the Wall, with thousands more settlement units constructed and planned in the past year; confiscation of Palestinian land; demolition of homes and civilian infrastructure; evictions and revocation of

Palestinian residency rights; imposition of a permit regime and hundreds of checkpoints; other illegal measures aimed at de facto annexation of Palestinian land and displacement of Palestinian civilians; acts of terror and destruction by extremist Israeli settlers against Palestinian civilians and properties, including homes, agricultural lands, mosques and churches, perpetrated with the support of the Government of Israel, which continues to transfer settlers to the occupied Palestinian territory, protect them, permit their lawlessness and promote their joint colonial agenda; imposition of the illegal blockade on the Gaza Strip for more than five years, in gross collective punishment of the entire Palestinian civilian population and by which reconstruction in Gaza, including by the United Nations, continues to be obstructed and critical humanitarian and socioeconomic conditions are being exacerbated; the arrest, imprisonment and detention of thousands of Palestinian civilians, including children, who continue to be subjected to all forms of physical and psychological abuse and deplorable conditions of captivity. Prolonged hunger strikes in the recent period by Palestinian prisoners and detainees have reached crisis proportions, underscoring in particular the plight of those held by the occupying Power under administrative detention without charge and due process of law.

“In addition to the severe hardship inflicted on the Palestinian people, Israel’s illegal policies have deepened the political deadlock, making the resumption of a credible, successful peace process seem more remote than ever. Israel continues colonization over peace, entrenching its settlements and control over the Palestinian land, rather than acting to bring an end to, or ‘roll back’, the occupation in all its manifestations and coming to the peace table in good faith. The situation is unsustainable and volatile. The urgency of achieving peace is even more crucial in the context of the dramatic developments in the region, which highlight the universal aspirations of all people for freedom, justice, democracy and human rights.

“Significantly, despite the deterioration of the situation on the ground and in the political environment and the vast asymmetry between the occupying Power and the occupied people, the Palestinian leadership, under the stewardship of President Mahmoud Abbas and Prime Minister Salam Fayyad, has remained fully committed to the path of peace and the historic compromise embodied in the 1988 Declaration of Independence of the State of Palestine, affirming acceptance of the two-State solution based on the pre-1967 borders. Moreover, we maintain our conviction in the international will and resolve to promote a solution that will ensure justice and achieve a complete end to the Israeli occupation that began in 1967, the independence of the State of Palestine and the rights of the Palestinian people.

“Palestine’s efforts to achieve the legitimate national aspirations of its people and make peace have been firmly guided by international law, the resolutions of the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Human Rights Council and the Economic and Social Council and the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice of 9 July 2004. Our leadership also remains committed to agreements reached between the Palestine Liberation Organization and Israel, the occupying Power, throughout the peace process. All of our efforts have focused on consecrating the two-State solution, in accordance with the terms of reference of the Middle East peace process,

namely relevant United Nations resolutions, including Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973), 1397 (2002), 1515 (2003) and 1850 (2008), the Madrid terms of references, including land for peace, the Arab Peace Initiative and the Quartet road map.

“Over the past year, the Palestinian leadership has acted in full conformity with resolution 66/17 and the parameters above. Thus, on 23 September 2011, President Mahmoud Abbas submitted the application of the State of Palestine for admission to membership in the United Nations, consistent with the right to self-determination and countless resolutions, from resolution 181 (II), adopted in 1947, to present-day resolutions. On that same day, President Abbas formally addressed the General Assembly, reaffirming our commitment to peace, the two-State solution and negotiations to resolve final status issues. He stressed, however, that the inalienable right of our people to self-determination was not a matter for negotiation.

“While this historic step was welcomed throughout the international community, and Palestine’s application was conveyed by the Secretary-General to the Security Council for its consideration and hoped-for recommendation, the lack of consensus within the Council, including the expressed negative position of a permanent member, has obstructed progress, despite the strong support expressed for the application and for a positive recommendation to the General Assembly by many Council members, as reflected in the deliberations of the Admissions Committee throughout October and November 2011. Palestine thus continues its appeals to the members of the Security Council to uphold the Council’s legal responsibilities vis-à-vis the question of Palestine and to do justice by the Palestinian people.

“Simultaneously, the Palestinian leadership continues to appeal, bilaterally and multilaterally, for recognition of the State of Palestine, convinced that Palestine’s recognition and rightful inclusion among the community of nations, including at the General Assembly, will constitute a major step towards securing freedom, dignity and peace for the Palestinian people. At the time of writing of the present note, 132 countries have recognized the State of Palestine, on the basis of our people’s right to self-determination under the Charter and human rights covenants, the international covenant to Palestine enshrined in resolution 181 (II), and the global consensus on the two-State solution. Here, we recall with pride the admission of Palestine as a member State of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization on 31 October 2011 and reaffirm our deep gratitude to all Member States that supported this historic decision.

“The Palestinian leadership has also continued its efforts to develop Palestinian national and civic institutions based on its 2009-2011 plans, entitled ‘Palestine: ending the occupation, establishing the State’ and ‘Home stretch to freedom’, to ensure a stable, viable foundation for our State and to serve our people and ease their hardships while still under occupation. This initiative has been fully supported by the international community, and progress has been well documented, including by the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee for the Coordination of the International Assistance to Palestinians, the World Bank and the United Nations, although it is being threatened by

Israel's illegal, obstructive measures and the financial crisis faced by the Palestinian National Authority.

“The Palestinian leadership also continues its efforts to achieve internal reconciliation and end the five-year division among our political factions, as demanded by our people and in line with Security Council resolution 1860 (2009), Quartet statements, and widespread calls for unity, including, inter alia, by the League of Arab States, the European Union, the Non-Aligned Movement, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and the African Union. We continue to seek ways to implement the reconciliation agreement signed in Cairo on 4 May 2011 and the declaration signed in Doha on 5 February 2012, and to appeal to the international community to respect and support Palestinian reconciliation. We express appreciation for the principled position of the Secretary-General and the United Nations, including the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General to the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Palestine Authority, in this regard.

“These internal tasks, however, have not distracted the Palestinian leadership from the overall objective of achieving a just peace and achieving the rights of our people, including to independence and to return to live at peace with their neighbours. We have never ceased cooperating with international and regional efforts to resume a substantive dialogue and negotiations based on clear parameters within a specified time frame, including efforts by the Quartet, the Arab ministerial follow-up committee and other concerned Member States. We reiterate in this regard that there is no contradiction between resumption of negotiations and efforts for recognition of Palestine and its membership in the United Nations, as the two-State solution enjoys global consensus and the aim of both processes is the independence of the State of Palestine and the achievement of a just, lasting peace between Palestine and Israel.

“Thus, following the submission of Palestine's application and the issuance of the Quartet's statement of 23 September 2011, the Palestinian leadership acted responsibly. It constructively received the Quartet statement and accepted the framework therein, on the understanding that negotiations would commence on the basis of the 4 June 1967 borders and that Israel was expected to meet its legal obligations, including under the Quartet road map, to stop all settlement activities in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem. On that understanding, and respectful of the efforts of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, the Palestinian leadership agreed to partake in the 'exploratory talks' held over the course of three weeks in January 2012.

“Our participation in these talks underscored again our commitment to negotiations as the main vehicle for achieving a peaceful solution. The leadership stressed that its participation was aimed at achieving a substantive understanding on the way forward, necessitating a reaffirmation of Israel's commitment to the two-State solution and the parameters of the peace process. Regrettably, the talks failed as Israel refused to adhere to those parameters and persisted with its grave violations and provocations, including its theft and colonization of Palestinian land. This totally undermined the purpose of the talks and obstructed the revival of the political process. We reaffirm that it is

not possible for the Palestinian leadership to continue ‘talks for the sake of talks’, while Israel continues to act in a manner destroying the process and its objectives.

“While committed to peace negotiations, the Palestinian leadership stresses that the situation on the ground and the two-State solution are too fragile to withstand such sabotage and further delays and, instead, require immediate, collective and practical measures to persuade Israel to cease all of its illegal practices in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, and to abide by international law, United Nations resolutions and the Quartet road map. The responsibilities of the United Nations in this regard are clear, and Palestine will continue to work in the United Nations system to ensure that the law is implemented and that the rights of the Palestinian people are safeguarded until the day that they are fully realized. Moreover, we reiterate our belief that efforts at the United Nations, the centre of multilateral activity in our world, can and must contribute towards peace and will not obstruct its realization.

“The Palestinian leadership is determined to bring an end to the injustice endured by our people, including the grave injustice inflicted on our refugees. We are determined to achieve the independence of the State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital, based on the pre-1967 borders, living side by side with Israel in peace and security. We are grateful for and continue to call for the support of all concerned States and peoples from around the world, and urge that no effort be spared to make this a reality. This clearly requires that the Security Council uphold its duties under the Charter and implement its resolutions and that the General Assembly also act to implement its resolutions on the question of Palestine, including resolution 66/17, to responsibly contribute to the realization of a just, lasting and comprehensive peace settlement.”

II. Observations

7. Efforts to achieve the peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine resulted in little progress during the reporting period, and confidence between the parties and in the political process continued to erode. Despite efforts by the United Nations, the Quartet and individual Member States to provide facilitation, negotiations remained at an impasse. At the heart of the unwillingness of the parties to engage in direct talks was a lack of trust and disagreement over the conditions that would allow them to do so. The Palestinians also submitted an application for membership in the United Nations and acquired membership in the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

8. The situation on the ground remained challenging, in particular for the population living under closure in Gaza, while Israel continued to face the threat of rocket fire. In the West Bank, tensions persisted, while settlement activity continued to accelerate. Altogether, the situation on the ground presented a growing cause for concern over the viability of the two-State solution. At the same time, the Palestinians continued to implement an ambitious State-building programme. They also briefly resumed their efforts towards reuniting the West Bank and Gaza, albeit with limited success at reconciliation.

9. On 23 September, the Quartet issued a statement that called for the resumption of direct bilateral Israeli-Palestinian negotiations. To that end, the Quartet outlined steps to help build the trust needed for the parties to return to the negotiating table. Specifically, a preparatory meeting was called within a month for the parties to agree on an agenda and a method of proceeding. The Quartet made clear its expectation that the parties would come forward with comprehensive proposals on territory and security within three months of resumed negotiations and that the goal was to make substantial progress within six months and reach an agreement by the end of 2012. The Quartet also stressed the need for the parties to refrain from provocations and reminded them of their obligations under the road map.

10. Within the framework of the Quartet statement of 23 September, Quartet envoys and the Quartet Representative, Tony Blair, met on three occasions in Jerusalem with Israeli and Palestinian representatives, on 26 October, 14 November and 14 December. Quartet envoys stressed the importance of a direct exchange between the parties without delay or preconditions, beginning with a preparatory meeting and leading to the presentation of comprehensive proposals on territory and security. Envoys called upon the parties to create an environment conducive to restarting talks and urged both to refrain from provocative actions.

11. After 15 months of absence of direct talks, Israeli and Palestinian negotiators embarked on a series of meetings on 3 January 2012 in Amman under the auspices of King Abdullah II of Jordan and the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Nasser Judeh. The parties began discussing important issues related to territory and security, in accordance with the Quartet statement of 23 September. They also discussed ways to build confidence and create a positive environment for the talks to lead to substantive negotiations. Following that first meeting, a series of direct preparatory talks were held under Jordanian auspices until 25 January. During my visit to Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory on 1 and 2 February, I expressed my appreciation to King Abdullah for his initiative and commended the Palestinian and Israeli leaders on these important first steps, urging the parties to build on them to launch meaningful negotiations to reach an agreement by the end of 2012. However, while quiet meetings between the negotiators have continued to date, they have yet to lead to the renewal of direct negotiations.

12. During the meeting of the Arab Peace Initiative follow-up committee on 12 February and of the Palestine Liberation Organization Central Committee on 20 February, the Palestinians reiterated their position that direct talks should not resume unless all settlement activity was halted, Israel committed to a two-State solution based on the 1967 lines and Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails were released. Meanwhile, Prime Minister Netanyahu continued to insist that Israel wanted to continue the talks, but without preconditions.

13. The Quartet met in New York on 12 March and again in Washington, D.C., on 11 April to reflect on those developments and forge a way forward that would build on the Quartet statement of 23 September. Quartet principals heard from Mr. Judeh on ongoing Jordanian efforts to promote exploratory talks. After a pause, negotiators met again in Amman in early April and agreed to an exchange of letters outlining their positions. As agreed by the parties, on 17 April a letter from President Abbas was delivered to Prime Minister Netanyahu, who responded on 12 May. The exchange was kept confidential and led to quiet direct engagement. Quartet envoys

continued to work with the parties to encourage them to step up direct contacts and refrain from counterproductive actions.

14. A number of high-level visits also took place to encourage the parties to resume talks. King Abdullah visited Ramallah on 21 November 2011. The High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Catherine Ashton, visited Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory from 24 to 26 January. On 25 and 26 June, the President of the Russian Federation, Vladimir Putin, held meetings in Israel and with President Abbas in Bethlehem. In Paris on 6 July, President Abbas met with the United States Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, the President of France, François Hollande, Ms. Ashton, and the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs of the United Kingdom, William Hague. Ms. Clinton later visited Israel on 16 and 17 July.

15. At the same time, the Arab follow-up committee held consultations in Doha on 22 July, in which it supported a Palestinian approach to the United Nations to seek further recognition without specifying a timeline. Arab League representatives asked the committee to prepare the appeal and report back at the next meeting in Cairo, on 6 September.

16. In parallel to these developments in the peace process, the Palestinians initiated a number of actions in United Nations forums. On 23 September 2011, during the general debate of the General Assembly, President Abbas submitted an application for membership for a State of Palestine in the United Nations. In accordance with the Charter and the rules of procedure of the Assembly, I transmitted the application to the President of the Security Council on the same day and sent a copy to the President of the Assembly. The report of the Committee on the Admission of New Members of 11 November (S/2011/705) stated that the Committee was unable to make a unanimous recommendation to the Security Council. The issue remains before the Council.

17. On 31 October 2011, the UNESCO General Conference voted in favour of Palestinian membership. The decision was the prerogative of member States. I indicated that I wished to work with member States on practical solutions to preserve the financial resources of UNESCO. I also urged all parties to approach this issue wisely in determining a course of action. Following the vote, the Government of Israel temporarily froze the transfer of tax and customs revenues that it was collecting on behalf of the Palestinian National Authority, which represented two thirds of the Authority's annual revenues. Transfers resumed on 30 November.

18. Against this backdrop, the Palestinians continued to advance their State-building programme, albeit limited to the territory under the control of the Palestinian National Authority, which excluded Area C, East Jerusalem and Gaza. This formed an essential complement to the political process. A strong international consensus emerged that the Authority was capable of running a State. The Ad Hoc Liaison Committee for the Coordination of the International Assistance to Palestinians, at its meetings on 18 September 2011 in New York and on 21 March 2012 in Brussels, confirmed the assessments contained in reports of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, which had concluded that the Government functions of Palestine were now sufficient for the functioning of a State. However, the World Bank report of April 2012 also indicated that, while the Palestinian Authority had had considerable success in building the institutions of a future State, it had made less progress in developing a sustainable economic base, particularly in

terms of private sector development. In addition, political and financial pressure on the Authority continued to grow throughout the reporting period, placing its sustainability increasingly at risk.

19. Palestinians also made renewed attempts to advance on the issue of reconciliation. Bearing in mind Security Council resolutions 1850 (2008) and 1860 (2009), I continued to support efforts to advance Palestinian unity within the framework of the commitments of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), the positions of the Quartet and the Arab Peace Initiative. Reconciliation on this basis and Israeli-Palestinian peace talks need not be mutually exclusive, and a united Palestinian polity is necessary for the viability of the two-State solution. I have welcomed the efforts made to this effect, notably by Egypt.

20. On 5 February 2012 in Doha, President Abbas and Hamas leader Khaled Meshal agreed to form a transitional government of technocrats to be headed by President Abbas as Prime Minister. President Abbas emphasized that that government would adhere to his political programme and to all previous PLO commitments. However, opposition to the agreement within Hamas in Gaza prevented concrete results until 20 May, when a new formula for progress on reconciliation was achieved with the assistance of Egyptian mediation. Under the agreement, Fatah and Hamas delegations met in Cairo on 6, 7 and 15 June to discuss the way forward. As a first step in the organization of general elections, the Palestinian Central Election Commission resumed operations in Gaza on 28 May with full cooperation from the de facto authorities and initiated plans to register voters in Gaza between 3 and 14 July. However, voter registration was suspended by Hamas on 2 July, and on 10 July the Palestinian Authority called for municipal elections to be organized in the West Bank only on 20 October 2012. Palestinian reconciliation has since been stalled.

21. At the same time, significant political changes occurred in Israel. On 8 May 2012, Prime Minister Netanyahu formed a new governing coalition with the opposition Kadima party. The new coalition represented one of the largest majorities in the history of the Knesset, holding 94 of its 120 seats. It also generated some hope that Prime Minister Netanyahu would, as was provided for in the new coalition agreement, have greater political space to pursue a “responsible peace process”. The coalition lasted 70 days, until 17 July, when the Deputy Prime Minister and Kadima Chairman, Shaul Mofaz, announced that his party was leaving the governing coalition following disagreements over a draft law seeking to mandate military service for a portion of the ultra-orthodox community.

22. Throughout the reporting period, developments on the ground continued to damage confidence and made the resumption of direct negotiations very difficult. Settlements, including in East Jerusalem, expanded and violence continued, with clashes between Palestinians and the Israel Defense Forces, between Palestinians and settlers and between settlers and the Israeli forces. A number of other sensitive issues likewise fuelled tensions, such as the issue of Palestinian prisoners in Israeli custody, protests and the closure of Gaza.

23. The situation in occupied East Jerusalem remained tense. The question of Jerusalem is a final status issue that requires a negotiated solution. I have consistently emphasized that a way must be found for the city to emerge, through negotiations, as the capital of two States, Israel and Palestine, with arrangements for holy sites acceptable to all. It is equally important that political and religious

authorities on both sides continue to ensure that the cultural and religious rights of all are duly respected.

24. Several times, I expressed my deep concern at continued efforts to advance planning for new Israeli settlements in occupied East Jerusalem. For example, on 27 September 2011, the Government of Israel announced the construction of 1,100 housing units in East Jerusalem settlements. In November, Israel publicized its intention to invite tenders for the construction of 1,557 new units in East Jerusalem. I have reiterated that all settlement activity in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, whether on private land or elsewhere, is contrary to international law and to the obligations of Israel under the Quartet road map. It prejudices final status negotiations, makes the two-State solution all the more difficult to achieve and must stop.

25. The expansion of settlements, which undermines the territorial basis for a future Palestinian State and the credibility of Palestinian moderates, is of particular concern. During the reporting period, the Government of Israel approved tenders for the construction of approximately 2,700 residential units in settlements in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and retroactively legalized others. Moreover, the Israeli authorities did not act effectively against the construction of illegal outposts on private Palestinian land. On 12 December, the Government of Israel approved the construction of 40 houses and a farm near the settlement of Efrat, near Bethlehem, and on 17 December the Government of Israel announced its intention to issue construction tenders for 1,028 housing units in the settlements of Har Homa, Beitar Illit and Givat Ze'ev. Construction in such sensitive areas is especially concerning, as it impedes the natural development of Palestinian urban centres.

26. On 22 March, among other decisions, the Human Rights Council decided to dispatch a fact-finding mission to examine the impact of Israeli settlements on Palestinian human rights. Israel is highly critical of the Council's action and has suspended its cooperation with the Council.

27. Settler violence increased throughout the year. It is deeply troubling that attacks by settlers on Palestinians and their property have become a systematic occurrence — often but not exclusively in the context of anticipated Government action against illegal settlement construction. Settler attacks on Palestinians and their properties resulted in injuries to 167 Palestinians, including 26 children, during the reporting period. Israeli extremists also attacked personnel of the Israel Defense Forces in the West Bank.

28. Area C remains critical to the viability of a future Palestinian State. We must ensure a broadening of community-driven planning in Area C, as well as the provision of basic services, including in education and health. The United Nations is already engaged on these issues at both the policy and programming levels. Moreover, Israel should give due consideration to the transfer of land in Area C to the Palestinian Authority, particularly in areas surrounding major urban centres, to facilitate more suitable urban development and relieve the acute pressure on the land and housing market.

29. The demolitions and evictions that took place in Area C during the reporting period are of particular concern and were condemned by the international community. Palestinians require access to a fair planning and zoning regime so as not to resort to the building of unauthorized structures that lead to unjustified

demolitions, which often affect the most vulnerable people. Demolitions have led to the displacement of some 586 individuals, including 246 children, in the West Bank and East Jerusalem during the reporting period. Overall, more needs to be done to ease access and movement throughout the West Bank, including Area C, the Jordan Valley and Gaza. In a comprehensive closure survey completed at the end of June, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs documented 542 obstacles blocking Palestinian movement within the West Bank, including 61 permanently staffed checkpoints (excluding checkpoints on the Green Line), 25 partial checkpoints (staffed on an ad hoc basis) and 436 unstaffed physical obstacles, such as roadblocks, earth mounds and trenches.

30. During my visit to Gaza on 2 February 2012, I was struck once again by the fragility and unsustainable nature of the situation. I called upon Israel to implement further measures to lift the closure of Gaza and allow the unrestricted import of key building materials. I also continue to call for the free movement of people into and out of Gaza and the full reopening of all official land crossings, as well as the expansion of their capacity. These changes could be applied with due consideration for the legitimate security concerns of Israel and could make a significant difference in the lives of many Gazans; they would also reduce the illicit tunnel trade. Indiscriminate rocket fire must also stop, and Israel must show maximum restraint.

31. The full implementation of Security Council resolution 1860 (2009) and the recovery and long-term economic growth of Gaza remain fundamental objectives of the United Nations. Some significant progress was made towards this goal, but much more needs to be done. A total of \$350 million worth of United Nations reconstruction work in Gaza was approved by the Government of Israel during the reporting period. This has had a positive effect for those receiving services as well as on short-term employment. However, the economic benefits of increased employment will end with the conclusion of these works. Deeper and more fundamental change is therefore required to enable a functioning Gazan economy, beginning with authorizing exports to Israel and other countries, as well as transfers to and from the West Bank. Without this essential step, the future of Gaza will remain tenuous at best.

32. There are growing funding challenges for United Nations operations. The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), for example, requires an additional \$50 million to meet the shortfall in its core budget, which, if not bridged, may lead to the suspension of the Agency's essential services, in particular its ability to operate schools and health clinics and provide poverty relief. In addition to the \$50 million required to keep the Agency operational, UNRWA launched an emergency appeal for the occupied Palestinian territory in order to respond to emergency needs in 2012. This appeal currently falls short by \$173 million, including \$7.5 million urgently needed to meet food procurement distribution in Gaza for the remainder of 2012. This funding shortfall has already resulted in the reduction of key poverty alleviation interventions and the cancellation of the UNRWA "Summer Games" for the children of Gaza and, if not addressed, will result in further cuts to humanitarian services provided by UNRWA under the Emergency Appeal across the occupied Palestinian territory.

33. I urge donors to continue to fund United Nations reconstruction work in Gaza through the Palestinian Authority/United Nations Trust Fund. I also urge the Government of Israel to continue to grant approvals for outstanding United Nations

reconstruction work in the Gaza Strip and emphasize once more that there should be a broader opening for the entry of all construction materials into Gaza.

34. Preserving calm in Gaza and southern Israel continues to be crucial for improvements there and for the overall political atmosphere. The fragility of the relative calm was once again demonstrated on a number of occasions throughout the reporting period by dangerous escalations taking place on 29 and 31 October, from 9 to 13 March and on 17 and 18 June. During the reporting period, 751 rockets were fired from Gaza, including 138 Grad rockets, as well as 177 mortar shells. Many rockets directed at populated areas in Israel were intercepted by the Iron Dome system. Israel Defense Forces conducted 57 incursions and 174 air strikes into Gaza, resulting in the deaths of dozens of Palestinians, including some 16 civilians. More than 225 Palestinian civilians were injured, including 3 children. A total of 59 militants were killed, and 79 were injured. One Israeli soldier and one Israeli civilian were killed, and 27 Israelis were injured. Again, I unequivocally condemn these indiscriminate rocket attacks from Gaza into Israel and call for their complete cessation. I also urge Israel to show maximum restraint. All should fully observe their obligations regarding the protection of civilians.

35. A final area of concern is the Sinai peninsula, where there have been a growing number of incidents. In February, Egyptian security forces seized a number of anti-aircraft missiles and explosives, which were being readied for transfer to the Gaza Strip. Soldiers of the Israel Defense Forces removed explosive devices on the Israeli-Egypt border and intercepted suspected smugglers. I reiterate that weapons transfers into Gaza must stop. In addition, on 16 June two rockets were shot from the Sinai into south Israel, and on 18 June at least three militants attacked Israeli workers constructing the security fence at the border. One Israeli worker was killed and two were injured, prompting the above-mentioned escalation in violence on 17 and 18 June. On 5 August, a militant attack on an Egyptian security post near Kerem Shalom killed 16 Egyptian border guards. The attackers subsequently breached the Israeli border before being intercepted. I strongly condemned this terror attack. On 15 August, one Grad missile fired from the Sinai landed near Eilat in southern Israel.

36. On 18 October, Israel and Hamas implemented the first stage of a prisoner exchange agreement. Israeli Sergeant Gilad Shalit, held in Gaza without international access since 25 June 2006, was released by Hamas. In exchange, 1,028 Palestinian prisoners — many of whom had been imprisoned for involvement in attacks on Israelis — were released, mostly to Gaza, but also to the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, the occupied Syrian Golan and Israel. Having long called for the end of the unacceptable captivity of Gilad Shalit and for the release of Palestinian prisoners, I welcomed the releases as a significant humanitarian breakthrough.

37. The hunger strike by more than 1,500 Palestinian prisoners in Israeli custody, which started on 17 April to protest prison conditions and the application of administrative detentions, ended on 14 May with an agreement to address prisoners' concerns. I was pleased that Israel had taken steps to implement this agreement with respect to the use of solitary confinement, family visits and the practice of administrative detention. Israel also delivered the remains of 91 Palestinians buried in Israeli-controlled areas. Despite the agreement that ended the hunger strike, and amid reports that some additional Palestinians have been put in administrative

detention, a small number of prisoners are reported not to have ended their hunger strikes. I would like to state my concern for their well-being.

38. There are more than 300 Palestinians being held under administrative detention. Administrative detention should be used only in the most limited number of cases, for as short a period as possible, and in exceptional cases. Those detained must be charged and brought to trial or released without delay.

39. In the West Bank, both the Palestinian application for membership in the United Nations and the prisoner release in October prompted significant public demonstrations but few acts of violence, thanks to the efforts of the Palestinian Authority police. However, it was disappointing that the language used by Hamas regarding the prisoner release lauded violent resistance. Demonstrations against the barrier in the occupied West Bank continued on a regular basis, as the barrier's route continued to deviate significantly from the 1967 Green Line in contravention of the 2004 advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice. The barrier restricted Palestinian access to East Jerusalem, key social services and agricultural land. Protests against the barrier by Palestinian, Israeli and foreign activists largely remained peaceful. The Board of the United Nations Register of Damage Caused by the Construction of the Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory submitted a progress report on 8 June 2012.

40. Tensions and violent incidents continued throughout the reporting period. Citing security reasons, the Israel Defense Forces conducted 1,092 operations in the West Bank, during which 718 Palestinians were injured, including 88 children, and 2,062 Palestinians were arrested. More than 53 personnel of the Israeli forces were injured by Palestinians. On 10 December, a Palestinian protesting the takeover of privately owned land by Israeli settlers died from wounds sustained in Nabi Saleh when an Israeli soldier fired a tear gas canister at close range from the armoured vehicle at which the protester had been throwing stones. A total of 61 Palestinians and 3 Israeli soldiers were injured during similar protests, and an investigation was launched by the Israeli authorities. I stress that the right to peaceful protest must be upheld and that protests should be kept strictly non-violent.

41. On 30 March, on the occasion of Land Day, large demonstrations were held in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, as well as in Gaza, Jordan, Lebanon and, to a smaller extent, in Egypt and the Syrian Arab Republic. Clashes between demonstrators and the Israel Defense Forces resulted in 1 Palestinian killed and some 180 wounded. The Israeli forces used crowd control measures aimed at minimizing the number of casualties. Palestinian security forces in the West Bank and Gaza also took critical measures to avoid bloodshed.

42. During the reporting period, a total of 78 Palestinians were killed, including 54 militants, while 2,849 Palestinians, including 247 children, were injured; 2 Israelis were killed, including 1 civilian; and 43 personnel of the Israeli forces and 39 Israeli civilians were injured, illustrating the continuing cost of the ongoing conflict.

43. Despite these challenges, the efforts to build robust state institutions and revive the Palestinian economy have brought real security and economic improvements. The Palestinian Authority also continued to make praiseworthy efforts to maintain law and order in areas under its control and strengthen its security capacity. In November, an eighth battalion of internationally trained Palestinian security forces was deployed, bringing their total number to more than 4,000. In a positive gesture, 51 alleged militants being held in protective custody by the Palestinian police in the West Bank

were granted amnesty by Israel on 4 November 2011. On 10 February 2012, for the first time in 15 years, Palestinian National Security Forces, in coordination with Israel, enforced law and order in the H-2 area of Hebron, which is under full Israeli control.

44. I commend President Abbas and Prime Minister Fayyad for this achievement. At the same time, I am concerned by reports of arbitrary detention being carried out by Palestinian security forces and reports of ill treatment in detention centres in Gaza. Moreover, in April and May, the de facto authorities in Gaza carried out five executions without the approval of President Abbas, which is required by Palestinian Basic Law. I would urge the Palestinian Authority to ensure that it fulfils its responsibilities with full respect for international human rights laws.

45. The Palestinian Authority has achieved what it set out to do two years ago, and this must be noted, preserved and built upon. However, I am now concerned about the ability of the Palestinian Authority to maintain these gains in the light of its increasingly dire financial situation.

46. At the start of July, the Palestinian Finance Minister announced that the Palestinian Authority could not pay all June salaries to its 150,000 employees on time. Israeli authorities transferred half of the monthly value added tax collection to the Palestinian Authority two weeks early in order to assist with the payment of salaries ahead of the holy month of Ramadan.

47. I continue to call upon donors to provide timely assistance to sustain this agenda. Donor support for the Palestinian Authority was insufficient during the reporting period, affecting the Authority's ability to meet its financial obligations, including the payment of salaries. I also strongly encouraged the Government of Israel to take all measures necessary to facilitate growth, including further easing of access and movement within, into and out of the West Bank for both goods and people. On 17 July 2012, Israel approved 5,000 permits for Palestinian construction workers to work in Israel, in addition to the 34,250 permits already issued for Palestinian workers to work there. In a noteworthy achievement, after lengthy discussions between the Palestinian Authority and the Ministry of Finance of Israel, arrangements with respect to the transfer of goods between Israel and the Palestinian Authority and related tax procedures that would take effect on 1 January 2013 were concluded on 31 July. These initiatives are welcome. Yet, more needs to be done to ease access and movement and enable economic growth throughout the occupied Palestinian territory, including Area C and Gaza.

48. I would like to express my deep thanks and appreciation to the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Robert H. Serry, as well as to the Commissioner-General of UNRWA, Filippo Grandi. I also pay tribute to all United Nations staff who work under difficult and at times dangerous circumstances in the service of the United Nations.

49. Peace and Palestinian statehood are long overdue. I am acutely conscious of the unsustainable status quo, which is thrown into sharper relief by the profound political changes in the region. More than 45 years since the beginning of the occupation, the keeping of a large population in profound poverty is in nobody's interest except that of the most extreme radicals in the region. I remain convinced that direct and meaningful negotiations are the main avenue towards a comprehensive, fair and lasting solution that fulfils the aspirations of Israel and the Palestinians, including an end to occupation and conflict and a just and agreed solution to the plight of Palestinian refugees.

50. Given the dramatic developments in the region, progress on the Israeli-Palestinian track is of even greater urgency and would have an important positive impact on the region. It has been a year since the Security Council was presented with the Palestinian application for membership in the United Nations, and we are increasingly moving away from a two-State solution into a one-State reality, which would diminish the prospects of regional peace in the spirit of the Arab Peace Initiative. The continuing negative trends reported at present are further manifestations that this reality is consistently undermining our common goal of a negotiated two-State solution that will end the conflict and the occupation that started in 1967.

51. I am seriously concerned by the lack of progress during the reporting period in the search for a negotiated solution that would bring Israel and the Palestinians closer towards durable peace and security, including the realization of the legitimate aspiration of Palestinians to a State of their own and of Israel to live within recognized and secure borders. The failure of the parties to follow the steps outlined by the Quartet on 23 September 2011 is of grave concern. The outlines of an agreement have long been clear. What is important now is for the parties to engage seriously on substance. I call upon Israeli and Palestinian leaders to show vision, courage and determination to reach a historical peace agreement that would meet the legitimate aspirations of the people on both sides.

52. To this end, it is my sincere hope that the parties pursue vigorously all efforts to create an environment that is conducive to the resumption of direct and meaningful negotiations. In particular, I urge Israel to cease all settlement activity in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and to take concrete steps to further ease the numerous restrictions in place both in the West Bank and Gaza. I also strongly encourage all Palestinians on the path of non-violence and unity in line with past PLO commitments. I call upon them to pursue their efforts to improve law and order and combat extremism and incitement against Israel, and to continue to build strong and democratic institutions, which are essential to a viable, independent Palestinian State. In a highly volatile environment, it is crucial that any outbreaks of violence that could undermine political efforts be prevented and that the parties refrain from provocative steps on the ground. The international community must also play its role by shaping a legitimate and balanced framework that offers a credible political path forward, combined with far-reaching steps on the ground. The international community should understand that its own efforts in pursuit of this goal will increasingly lack credibility if we continue to fail to take the steps necessary to enable an environment conducive to serious engagement.

53. As Secretary-General, I will continue to ensure that the United Nations works towards the establishment of an independent, democratic, contiguous and viable Palestinian State living side by side in peace with a secure Israel in the framework of a comprehensive regional settlement consistent with Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973), 1397 (2002), 1515 (2003) and 1860 (2009), and in accordance with the Quartet road map, the Arab Peace Initiative and the principle of land for peace.



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The situation in the Middle East

Question of Palestine

Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine

Report of the Secretary-General

Addendum

On 8 January 2013, the following reply to the letter of the Secretary-General dated 1 July 2012 (see A/67/364-S/2012/701, para. 2) was received from the Security Council:

“The goal of achieving a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine remains one of the major challenges facing the international community, including the Security Council.

“The Security Council considers the situation in Palestine each month in connection with the item entitled ‘The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question’. During most months, a briefing was given either by the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs or by the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process in a public meeting, followed by consultations among the Council members. During the months of October 2011 and January, April and July 2012, the monthly meeting was held in the form of an open debate.

“On 27 September 2011, the President of the Council of Ministers of Lebanon, Najib Mikati, presided over the meeting, and Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs B. Lynn Pascoe briefed the Council. Mr. Pascoe stated that it was not easy to chart a way forward, since the Palestinian and Israeli positions remained far apart. He added that the efforts of the Quartet and the expected proposals of the parties could help to resume negotiations. Mr. Pascoe summarized the Quartet statement of 23 September, explaining that the goals would be to make substantial progress within six months, to convene an international conference in Moscow at the appropriate time, and to reach an agreement no later than the end of 2012. He reaffirmed that settlements were



illegal and contrary to the road map commitments of Israel and condemned the rocket attacks fired into Israel from Gaza. The Under-Secretary-General referred to the Palestinian application for membership in the United Nations. He noted that the matter was before the Council and underlined the institutional readiness of the Palestinian Authority to run a State. In the consultations that followed, Council members called upon the Palestinian and Israeli sides to refrain from taking unilateral actions that might jeopardize the peace process. Some Council members supported the application of Palestine for full membership in the United Nations and stressed the need to stop all settlement activities and resume negotiations. Some members voiced their opposition to the application of Palestine and stressed that the two-State solution could be achieved only through direct negotiations.

“On 24 October 2011, the Security Council held an open debate on the situation in the Middle East, at which it heard a briefing by Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs B. Lynn Pascoe. He said that the recent exchange of prisoners between the Israelis and the Palestinians marked a significant humanitarian breakthrough. He encouraged the parties to display equal determination in the search for a lasting solution to the Middle East problem. Noting the Quartet statement of 23 September 2011, Mr. Pascoe urged the parties to refrain from provocations and to be ready to offer serious proposals on borders and security for negotiation in order to avoid the deepening of the impasse. Statements were made by the Permanent Representative of Israel and the Permanent Observer of Palestine. Council and non-Council members called upon the parties to seize the momentum and work towards early resumption of direct negotiations within the framework of the Quartet statement of 23 September 2011. In addition, they were encouraged to forge consensus on all permanent status issues. Several Member States expressed views on the Palestinian application for admission to United Nations membership, under consideration by the Council.

“On 21 November 2011, the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process briefed the Security Council on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question. Concerning the Middle East peace process, he considered that provocations continue to damage confidence and make resuming negotiations very difficult. He stressed the need to find a meaningful diplomatic way forward, including in the framework of the Quartet statement of 23 September. Both parties would have to show flexibility and responsibility. Direct engagement should be facilitated by a conducive environment and therefore the situation must ‘de-escalate’. To that end, Israel should act on its settlement obligations and immediately unfreeze transfers to the Palestinian Authority. It should also be mindful of the continuing appeal of the Palestinian Authority for prisoners to be released, some dating back to before the signing of the Oslo Accords. For its part, the Palestinian Authority should find ways to contribute to the de-escalation of the situation and improve the prevailing divisive climate, including in the international arena. The Special Coordinator also referred to the situation in Gaza and southern Israel, which had once again witnessed dangerous violence after rocket fire by militants and Israeli strikes. He mentioned in this regard that preserving calm in Gaza and southern Israel continues to be crucial for improvements there and for the overall political atmosphere. He said that the United Nations

condemned the indiscriminate rocket attacks and called upon Israel to exercise maximum restraint and minimize the risk to civilians, and reiterated the call of the Secretary-General for all to fully respect international humanitarian law. In consultations of the whole, Council members expressed both their support for the efforts of the Quartet and their concern about the lack of progress in negotiations and the troubling developments on the ground, in particular Israel's continued settlement activity and decision to hold payments of tax revenues to the Palestinian Authority. They supported the Special Coordinator's appeal for a de-escalation of the situation and reiterated the need for all parties to abstain from provocative actions and to resume meaningful direct negotiations. Some delegations reaffirmed their support for Palestine's admission to the United Nations, while others recalled the lack of unanimity on the issue and proposed an intermediate step by upgrading the status of Palestine in the General Assembly to that of an observer State. Some members stated that there are no alternatives to direct negotiations between the parties.

"On 12 December 2011, the Security Council was briefed in closed consultations by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Navanethem Pillay, on the situation in the Syrian Arab Republic and the occupied Palestinian territory. Some members of the Council stressed the deplorable human rights situation in the occupied Palestinian territory.

"On 20 December 2011, the Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Oscar Fernandez-Taranco, stressed that the realization of a two-State solution had not advanced, with violent incidents erupting at a worrisome rate, and outlined the efforts undertaken by the Quartet to help the parties to resume direct talks, stressing the importance of de-escalation and confidence-building between the parties. He noted recent arson attacks and acts of desecration against mosques, among other actions by Israeli extremists, and welcomed in this context the condemnation of those acts by the Prime Minister of Israel, Benjamin Netanyahu, and his intention to prevent further such incidents. The Assistant Secretary-General also voiced concern over Israeli settlement activity, violence on the part of settlers and the overall security situation in Gaza, including the firing of projectiles from Gaza into Israel. At the closed consultations that followed, members of the Council stressed the importance of resuming Israeli-Palestinian negotiations and condemned unilateral actions, in particular the construction of settlements in occupied territories, which undermined the Quartet's efforts towards a negotiable solution of the conflict.

"On 18 January 2012, in closed consultations, the Security Council received a briefing from the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordination, Valerie Amos, on the humanitarian situation in the Palestinian territories in connection with the item entitled 'The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question'. In the briefing, she highlighted the humanitarian impact of all settlement activity and the escalation of violence by settlers, as well as the dire humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip. Some Council members expressed concern about the humanitarian situation in the Palestinian territories, especially in the Gaza Strip, and criticized Israeli settlement activities and settler violence. There was also general support for the resumption of direct negotiations between the parties.

“On 24 January 2012, the Security Council held an open debate on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question. The Council heard a briefing by the Assistant Secretary-General of the Department of Political Affairs, Oscar Fernandez Taranco. The Assistant Secretary-General briefed the Council on the latest developments with regard to preparatory talks between Palestinian and Israeli negotiators, specifically the recent meetings between the parties as facilitated by Jordan in coordination with the Quartet. He also informed the Council of the continuing construction of settlements by Israel in the West Bank. He further informed the Council of the developments in the Gaza Strip, Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic. Following the briefing by the Assistant Secretary-General, the Permanent Observer of Palestine and the Permanent Representative of Israel addressed the Council, stating their respective positions. All members of the Council and representatives of 24 non-member States, as well as the representative of the European Union, made statements.

“Many States that participated in the debate expressed their disappointment in the fact that the peace process remained stalled and supported a return by the parties to direct negotiations. Almost all speakers welcomed the initiative of Jordan in coordination with the Quartet and expressed the hope that this initiative would be the beginning of serious talks between the parties in line with the Quartet’s statement of 23 September 2011. Some speakers also expressed their support for the application of Palestine for admission to membership in the United Nations. Many States registered their concern about the continuing settlement activity in the West Bank, including in East Jerusalem, as well as settler violence. Those States called upon Israel to stop this practice, as well as home demolitions, evictions and desecration of Palestinian religious sites, and to prosecute settlers who continue to carry out violence against the Palestinians. Some States condemned the rockets fired from the Gaza Strip into Israel. Some States urged Israel to lift without delay the blockade of the Gaza Strip so as to allow space for economic activity in that area. Some States urged the Palestinians to accelerate their unity efforts. Statements were also made on behalf of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, the European Union, the Group of African States and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation.

“On 8 February 2012, the Secretary-General briefed the Security Council in closed consultations on his visit to the Middle East and, among other things, the Palestinian-Israeli peace process. He commended King Abdullah of Jordan for hosting talks between the parties. He informed the Council that he had urged the parties to remain engaged and take confidence-building steps, including the submission of comprehensive proposals on territory and security to create an environment conducive to negotiations, which was the only viable option for a lasting two-State solution. He noted the recent Fatah-Hamas agreement on reconciliation and said he believed that the two tracks — reconciliation and negotiations with Israel — were not mutually exclusive. He informed the Council that the President of the Palestinian Authority, Mahmoud Abbas, had told him that any Palestinian unity government would abide by previous commitments. He stressed that while in the West Bank he had noticed concrete signs of institutional development fundamental for the functioning of

a future State, the situation in Gaza was unsustainable. He also mentioned the situation of Palestinian prisoners. Some Council members called upon Israel to remove impediments to peace negotiations so as not to compromise a final and peaceful solution, including accepting discussions of the issue of Palestinian prisoners and their inspection by the International Committee of the Red Cross. The Secretary-General condemned the rockets fired from Gaza into southern Israel the night before his arrival in the region.

“On 28 February 2012, the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, B. Lynn Pascoe, briefed the Security Council on the situation between the Palestinians and Israel. He said that the talks between the parties that started on 3 January in Amman had stalled. He reiterated that the framework set on 23 September 2011 by the Quartet remained relevant. He mentioned the Palestinian requirements for restarting the negotiations. He noted the agreement between the President of the Palestinian Authority, Mahmoud Abbas, and the leader of Hamas, Khaled Meshaal, to form a transitional government to be led by Mr. Abbas. The Under-Secretary-General reaffirmed that the United Nations supports Palestinian unity within the framework of the commitments of the Palestine Liberation Organization, the Quartet principles and the Arab Peace Initiative. He reiterated that the United Nations condemns indiscriminate rocket fire on Israel.

“On 27 March 2012, the Security Council held its monthly meeting on the Middle East. The Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General to the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Palestinian Authority, Robert Serry, briefed the Council at a public meeting. Council members then discussed the matter further in closed consultations. The Special Coordinator said that there was a dangerous combination of lack of political progress, instability and violence on the ground, and an increasingly precarious situation for the Palestinian Authority. The parties had not found sufficient common ground to resume direct negotiations. A continued political vacuum would threaten the achievements of Palestinian state-building. Such a vacuum would be filled by negative trends. It was essential that the Quartet assume its responsibilities when it met on 11 April. It needed to direct collective efforts towards overcoming gaps in trust and substance. In closed consultations, the Special Coordinator said that very little was happening and uncertainty was growing. The positions of the parties were far apart. There was no prospect of serious talks until the end of the year. The objective until the end of the year should be to keep the Palestinian Authority afloat. The challenge for the Quartet on 11 April was to chart a way forward that kept the prospects of a two-State solution alive. He was concerned that the principles underlying the two-State solution were being eroded, and that action was needed in order to protect the future of the two-State solution. Some members said the Council should encourage the parties to resume dialogue and to take tangible steps to improve the climate, and suggested that a visit by the Council to both Palestine and Israel could be of value. Some members expressed concern that the Council was not providing sufficient support for the Quartet’s difficult work. Several members also condemned indiscriminate rocket fire from Gaza into southern Israel. Most Council members lamented the lack of progress. Many said that

time was running out for the two-State solution and that the Quartet needed to do more — including by charting a clear way forward on 11 April.

“During the Security Council open debate on ‘The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question’ on 23 April 2012, the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs said that achieving peace for Israelis and Palestinians is ‘an undiminished priority’. He highlighted the Quartet meeting in Washington, D.C., on 11 April and said the delivery of a letter from the President of the Palestinian Authority, Mahmoud Abbas, to the Prime Minister of Israel, Benjamin Netanyahu, on 17 April was a positive step. Most Council members expressed support for the Quartet’s efforts and the letter from Mr. Abbas to Mr. Netanyahu as an opportunity to restart talks. Most Council members called Israeli settlement activity ‘illegal’ and argued that it undermines progress on a two-State solution. Some members condemned rocket attacks from Gaza on Israel.

“On 29 May 2012, the Security Council received a briefing at an open meeting from the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General, Robert Serry, followed by closed consultations. The Special Coordinator reported that the past month had been characterized by several challenging events but that each had been overcome for now and we were possibly moving in a more positive direction. He said the parties had exchanged letters in which they outlined their respective requirements for direct talks to continue. The Palestinians delivered a letter on 17 April and the Israelis responded on 12 May. The exchange was kept confidential and led to quiet direct engagement, which should be welcomed and encouraged. In parallel, however, a series of developments threatened to inflame tensions. He warned that if the parties did not grasp the current opportunity for a lasting peace, we could be moving down a path towards a one-State reality. He expressed hope that the parties would find a way forward to substantive talks in the coming months. He noted that during the reporting period settlement activity had continued, and reiterated that these actions were contrary to international law and Israel’s commitments under the road map, and should stop. Turning to Gaza, he stressed that the reconstruction and economic growth in the Gaza Strip remained fundamental objectives of the United Nations. He noted that the total value of approved United Nations works in the Gaza Strip involving potential dual-use materials that required Israel’s approval currently exceeded \$365 million, with \$96 million worth of projects still under Israeli review, adding that such projects now enabled United Nations agencies to play a major role in international efforts for priority recovery and reconstruction in Gaza.

“On 19 June 2012, during an open briefing on recent developments in the Middle East, the Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Oscar Fernandez-Taranco, stressed that sporadic clashes, military operations and announcements of settlement construction in the West Bank by Israel were challenging the positive environment created by recent fragile forward steps in the Israeli-Palestinian talks. He noted that Quartet envoys, after meeting in Brussels on 15 June, agreed that there was an urgent need for the parties to continue to pursue the current efforts towards resumed dialogue and substantive negotiations and that it was time for them to take the necessary steps towards that goal. He also reassured the Security Council that the

Secretary-General, together with the Quartet, would stress the need to renew dialogue and make real progress towards the two-State solution. He emphasized that only a direct and meaningful dialogue can help restore belief in a negotiated peace. During the closed consultations that followed, members of the Council stressed the importance of resuming Israeli-Palestinian negotiations and encouraged both sides to keep direct contact so as to maintain the positive momentum for the resumed dialogue and negotiations. Some members condemned unilateral actions, in particular the construction of settlements in occupied Palestinian territory. Some members stressed the urgency of reaching comprehensive peace in the Middle East and called for vigorous diplomatic action to attain lasting peace in the region based on an enduring commitment by the two parties to mutual recognition, the two-State solution, and building upon previous agreements and obligations. Some members emphasized the United Nations role in the Quartet to support the parties in their efforts to achieve a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East. Several members also reiterated their support for a visit by the Council to the Middle East.

“On 2 July 2012, the Security Council held closed consultations and was briefed by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the situation in the occupied Palestinian territory and Gaza. She mentioned that Israel’s blockade of the Gaza Strip, which had entered its sixth year, was causing severe limitations on basic rights, had nearly eliminated prospects for Gaza’s economic development and had created an unnecessary dependency on humanitarian assistance. At the same time, she condemned the indiscriminate rocket firing from Gaza as a blatant violation of international law. Regarding the steady expansion of Israeli settlements in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, she indicated that such actions were clearly prohibited by international law. She expressed concern regarding violence perpetrated by Israeli settlers against Palestinians and their property. She referred to such discriminatory policies as two separate legal systems, two separate infrastructures and a series of movement restrictions that apply only to Palestinians. She pointed out that the treatment and conditions of Palestinians imprisoned or detained by Israel merited attention from the international community. Some members of the Council condemned the expansion of Israeli settlements as illegal under international law, and some also condemned the firing of rockets from Gaza. Some members of the Council expressed the urgent need for a genuine dialogue between the parties.

“On 25 July 2012, the Security Council held the quarterly open debate on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question. The Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General, Robert Serry, briefed the Council on recent developments in the region. He indicated that June was characterized by quiet direct exchanges between the parties in an attempt to reach agreement on a package of measures that would create an environment conducive to restarting talks and pave the way for high-level contacts. He said that Quartet envoys had remained in close contact with each other and the parties and that there had been a number of high-level visits. He expressed his concern over new settlement announcements since this represented a further violation of Israel’s obligations under the road map. The Special Coordinator advised that

time was running out for the establishment of a Palestinian State living side-by-side in peace and security with Israel. He encouraged the parties to make every effort to overcome obstacles and take the necessary steps to enable an environment conducive to serious engagement. The members of the Council, the Permanent Observer of Palestine, the Deputy Permanent Representative of Israel, the Chair of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and 22 more delegations took part in the debate. Member States stressed the importance of resuming Israeli-Palestinian dialogue and negotiations. Some members condemned the construction of settlements in the occupied Palestinian territory. Certain members called for vigorous diplomatic action to attain lasting peace in the region based on a two-State solution, and building upon previous agreements and obligations. Various members emphasized the Quartet's role in supporting the parties in their efforts to achieve a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East."



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The situation in the Middle East

Question of Palestine

Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report is submitted in accordance with General Assembly resolution [67/23](#). It contains replies received from the parties concerned to the notes verbales sent by the Secretary-General pursuant to the request contained in paragraph 26 of the resolution. The report also contains the observations of the Secretary-General on the current state of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and on international efforts to move the peace process forward with a view to achieving a peaceful settlement. The report covers the period from September 2012 to August 2013.

* [A/68/150](#).



I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution [67/23](#).
2. On 26 July 2013, pursuant to the request contained in paragraph 26 of the above-mentioned resolution, I addressed the following letter to the President of the Security Council:

“I have the honour to refer to resolution [67/23](#), which the General Assembly adopted on 30 November 2012, at its sixty-seventh session, under the agenda item ‘Question of Palestine’.

“Paragraph 26 of the resolution ‘requests the Secretary-General to continue his efforts with the parties concerned, and in consultation with the Security Council, towards the attainment of a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine and the promotion of peace in the region and to submit to the General Assembly at its sixty-eighth session a report on these efforts and on developments on this matter’.

“In order to fulfil my reporting responsibilities under this resolution, I should be grateful if you would kindly convey to me the views of the Security Council by 12 August 2013.

“Recalling the Secretariat’s obligation to observe the page limit of its reports, pursuant to General Assembly resolution [52/214](#), I would like to encourage the Security Council to limit its submission to 1,500 words.”

3. As at 2 September, no response had been received to that request.
4. In a note verbale dated 29 May 2013 to the parties concerned, I sought the positions of the Governments of Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic, as well as the Palestine Liberation Organization, regarding any steps taken by them to implement the relevant provisions of the resolution. As at 31 August 2013, replies had been received from Israel, Lebanon and the Palestine Liberation Organization.
5. The note verbale dated 14 August 2013 from the Permanent Mission of Israel to the United Nations reads as follows:

“As shown in the meeting records, Israel voted against this resolution, as it has done on similar resolutions adopted in the past by the General Assembly. Resolution [67/23](#) joins the numerous one-sided resolutions passed annually by the General Assembly which only serve to undermine the credibility of the United Nations as an impartial agent for the advancement of peace.

“The Permanent Mission of Israel wishes to reiterate the considerations that guided this voting practice.

“Despite the Israeli Government’s efforts and notwithstanding the improved economic environment both in the West Bank and in Gaza, Palestinian terrorism continued unabated. The year 2012 saw a dramatic rise in terror attacks from the Gaza Strip, including rockets, IEDs, sniper fire and infiltration attempts. In total, there were 163 incidents (excluding rocket attacks), in comparison with 89 incidents in 2011. Similarly, there was a sharp increase in rocket attacks — both in numbers (211 per cent), range and

accuracy, as the targeting of both Tel Aviv and Jerusalem in November 2012 clearly demonstrated.

“In response to the escalating attacks from Hamas and other terror groups in the Gaza Strip, Israel launched operation ‘Pillar of Defense.’ In the months leading up to the operation, incidents along the border fence increased both in frequency and severity. Explosive devices, sniper fire, anti-tank fire and a booby-trapped tunnel, combined with the 787 rockets that had landed in Israel since the start of 2012, necessitated action to protect more than 1 million Israeli civilians.

“Throughout the eight-day operation, Israel worked together with international organizations and governmental representatives to provide assistance for Gaza’s civilian population. During that period, no fewer than 1,532 rockets, including long-range missiles, were fired at densely populated areas in Israel, effectively placing millions of civilians at risk. In total, six Israelis (two of whom were soldiers) were killed and over 250 injured.

“Despite a relentless and acute threat to its security, Israel has gone to great lengths to extend humanitarian assistance and foster conditions for Palestinians economic growth. Throughout 2012, cooperation intensified with the relevant international community organs on the ground, resulting in the successful implementation of dozens of projects, alongside various measures aimed at alleviating Palestinian economic hardships. No fewer than 219,469 entry permits were issued for medical patients and their companions, representing an increase of 11 per cent on 2011 figures. Israel also shouldered the costs of medical treatment for 20 Palestinian children whose families could not afford to do so.

“Extensive measures were introduced to improve the process of crossing from the West Bank to Israel, including the extensive refurbishment of installations and streamlining the relevant bureaucratic procedures. The number of Palestinian civilians crossing into Israel for recreational purposes nearly tripled since 2011. Similarly, the number of Israeli work permits increased and their terms broadened significantly.

“In the Gaza strip, Israeli measures adopted back in 2010 resulted in sharply increased imports. In November 2012, the policy was once again expanded, with the immediate outcome of an 8 per cent increase in the number of trucks entering Gaza during the year. Israel invested 80 million NIS to upgrade capacity at the Kerem Shalom crossing to 400-450 trucks per day. During 2012, no fewer than 57,540 trucks crossed via Kerem Shalom compared to 53,874 trucks in 2011. The number of pedestrians passing through the Erez Crossing also increased by 25 per cent overall.

“The Palestinian Authority (includes both Gaza and West Bank combined) economic growth continued steadily throughout 2012. In the first three quarters of the year, gross domestic product rose by 6.1 per cent compared with the same period in 2011, despite the worldwide economic slowdown.

“Resolution [67/23](#) does not refer to or reflect any of the information outlined above, thus resulting in a misleading and erroneous picture of the situation on the ground.

“At the same time, the Palestinian Authority has continued its efforts to delegitimize Israel by taking unilateral steps in various multilateral forums, culminating in its appeal for non-member status at the United Nations in November 2012.

“It is hoped that the recent resumption of direct negotiations between Israel and the Palestinian Authority will contribute to the achievement of a comprehensive resolution of the conflict.”

6. The note verbale dated 2 August 2013 from the Permanent Observer Mission of the State of Palestine to the United Nations reads as follows:

“The State of Palestine believes resolution 67/23 constitutes a major contribution by the international community to the ongoing efforts to realize a peaceful, just, comprehensive solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the question of Palestine as a whole. In this regard, we reiterate our firm belief that efforts at the United Nations, the center of multilateral activity in our world, can and must contribute towards peace and will not obstruct its realization.

“For decades, this resolution has defined the foundations for peace according to international law. The vast support for the resolution underscores the global consensus favoring a solution that results in Israel’s withdrawal from the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem, and achievement of the solution of two States: an independent, sovereign, democratic, viable and contiguous State of Palestine, living side by side with Israel in peace and security on the basis of the pre-1967 borders, and a just solution for the Palestine refugees based on resolution 194 (III) (1948).

“During the sixty-seventh session, this consensus was also boldly reaffirmed by the General Assembly in resolution 67/19, ‘Status of Palestine in the United Nations’, which accorded to Palestine non-member observer State status in the United Nations, in recognition of Palestine’s statehood. Resolution 67/19 also recalls the parameters of a peace settlement, as defined in relevant United Nations resolutions, the Madrid principles, the Arab Peace Initiative and the Quartet Roadmap, reaffirming unequivocal support for the two-State solution, an essential element for the majority of States voting in favor. The urgency of realizing the two-State solution and the Palestinian people’s right to self-determination and independence in their State of Palestine on the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, a right explicitly reaffirmed in the resolution, is further reflected in the calls for resumption and acceleration of negotiations in the Middle East peace process for achievement of a peace settlement and for all States, specialized agencies and organizations of the United Nations system to assist the Palestinian people in the early realization of their right to self-determination, independence and freedom.

“Support for resolution 67/19 came from all corners of the globe, comprising countries from every major political and regional group, including the Arab League, the Non-Aligned Movement, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, the European Union, the Group of Latin American and Caribbean Countries, the African Union, the Caribbean Community, the Nordic Group and the Asia-Pacific Group. The resolution — adopted on 29 November 2012, 65 years since the Assembly’s adoption of resolution 181 (II) partitioning Palestine in 1947 — was viewed by Member States as a vital opportunity to contribute to

salvaging the two-State solution in the light of its precarious status due to the illegal policies of Israel, the occupying Power, in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem — the Territory constituting the State of Palestine — that have diminished the solution's viability and popular conviction in the potential to justly realize it.

“Moreover, resolution 67/19 constitutes another important step by the international community towards rectifying the historic injustice endured by the Palestinian people and paving the way for the State of Palestine's full, rightful inclusion in the community of nations, pending acceptance of the application for admission to United Nations membership, which remains before the Security Council following its submission by President Mahmud Abbas on 23 September 2011, consistent with the right to self-determination enshrined in the Charter and relevant resolutions, from 181 (II) to 242 (1967) to the present.

“Since the adoption of resolutions 67/19 and 67/23, the State of Palestine has upheld its legal obligations and strived to implement the resolutions' provisions, endeavoring to advance conditions conducive for peace. This is consistent with Palestinian efforts and respect for United Nations resolutions and international law over the years. As acknowledged by the international community, Palestine has consistently fulfilled its obligations in good faith, despite the enormous challenges and manifold crises faced under Israeli occupation.

“Moreover, the Palestinian leadership has never placed conditions on the peace process and has only rightly called for respect of international law and the United Nations resolutions, including resolution 67/23, that constitute the foundation of that process. Respect of the law is obligatory for all States, including Israel, the occupying Power, and is vital for overcoming the problems that have repeatedly caused the peace process to fail and exacerbated conditions on the ground, causing grave hardship for the Palestinian people and undermining the two-State solution. And there is consensus that such respect is what will ensure that negotiations between the parties to resolve all final status issues — Jerusalem, Palestine refugees, settlements, borders, security, prisoners and water — will succeed and speedily result in the conclusion of a just peace agreement.

“In fact, the longstanding international position in support of the two-State solution — based on the parameters of, inter alia, the 4 June 1967 borders as the basis of the two States, Jerusalem as the shared capital of the two States, and a just agreed solution for the Palestine refugees as per relevant resolutions — is the position that the Palestinian people and their leadership have been committed to for at least a quarter century, since their formal acceptance of the two-State solution with the adoption of the Declaration of Independence of the State of Palestine in 1988. This significant compromise to establish the State of Palestine on only 22 per cent of our historic homeland for the sake of restoring our rights, achieving our freedom and ending the conflict is among the boldest reflections of the Palestinian commitment to peace and coexistence, despite the historic injustice inflicted on our people, including the Palestine refugees, who now number over 5 million people and who continue to endure the untold hardships of exile, including as a result of the crises that have wracked the region, the most recent being the grave conflict in Syria.

“This commitment is at the core of the Palestinian leadership’s pragmatism, from its engagement in all incarnations of the peace process from the Madrid Conference forward and its cooperation with all initiatives to advance it, to its legitimate actions at the United Nations to safeguard and realize the rights of the Palestinian people. This commitment has, remarkably, prevailed despite the deleterious impact of Israel’s unlawful policies and the consequent setbacks in the process.

“Heeding the calls in resolutions [67/19](#) and [67/23](#), Palestine again declares its readiness to make peace. We are ready to seize the current opportunity resulting from serious international and regional efforts, including by the United States, in coordination with the Ministerial Committee for the Arab Peace Initiative, along with the efforts and support of concerned States from around the world, efforts with which Palestine has cooperated at all stages. As of the writing of this note, we have committed to resume direct negotiations with Israel, based on our genuine desire to end the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict and establish peace.

“The decisions made now will determine whether the solution of two States — the State of Palestine and State of Israel — living side by side in peace and security on the basis of the pre-1967 borders will be achieved, or whether that solution will be tragically brought to an end by Israel’s illegal policies. The State of Palestine is prepared to uphold its responsibilities towards its achievement and the just resolution of all final status issues, and believes that the international community is likewise ready to uphold its obligations, as reflected in resolution [67/23](#). However, we caution that our collective efforts, no matter how well-intentioned and serious, will fail if Israel persists with the illegal policies and practices of its 46-year military occupation.

“For a meaningful peace process to be sustained and succeed, the reality on the ground must be immediately redressed. Respect for resolution [67/23](#) would greatly contribute to fostering an environment compatible with, and supportive, of the process’ goals. If Israel remains intransigent, however, the process will fail again with far-reaching consequences, ushering a search for alternative solutions and the onset of alternative efforts, political, legal and popular, to end the injustice and realize the inalienable human rights and legitimate national aspirations of the Palestinian people.

“Regrettably, since adoption of resolution [67/23](#), Israel has continued its measures of aggression, colonization and collective punishment against the Palestinian people, in flagrant breach of international law, including the Fourth Geneva Convention and the human rights covenants, and General Assembly, Security Council, Human Rights Council, Economic and Social Council, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and other resolutions, in disrespect of the International Court of Justice Advisory Opinion (9 July 2004), and in arrogant disregard for the global calls for compliance.

“This has included, inter alia: construction of settlements and the Wall, particularly in and around Occupied East Jerusalem, Bethlehem and the Jordan Valley; establishment of so-called ‘settlement outposts’; declarations regarding construction of thousands of settlements units, with particular intensity and in a blatantly retaliatory, punitive manner following the adoption of resolution [67/19](#); confiscation of hundreds of dunums of land; forced displacement and

transfer of Palestinian civilians, particularly Bedouin families; demolition of homes; violent military raids by the occupying forces causing loss of life, injury and property destruction; excessive force against peaceful civilian protesters; daily arrests and detention of civilians, including children; continued imprisonment of nearly 5,000 Palestinians under horrific conditions and abuse, including several prisoners remaining on hunger strike; a myriad of measures obstructing freedom of movement, foremost the illegal blockade on the Gaza Strip, which has entered its seventh year and is the cause of vast humanitarian suffering; and aggravation of religious sensitivities, with provocations against holy sites, especially at Al-Haram Al-Sharif, detention of the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem and harassment of worshippers, including during Christian Easter observances and the Muslim holy month of Ramadan.

“Extremist Israeli settlers have also continued their criminal rampages, terrorizing Palestinian civilians, destroying farmlands and thousands of trees, vandalizing churches and mosques and threatening the sanctity of Al-Haram Al-Sharif. Settlers act with support and incitement from Israeli officials encouraging colonization and de facto annexation of Palestinian land. Public statements by Ministers and Knesset members have exposed extremist positions of parts of the Israeli Government coalition, revealing rejection of the two-State solution and the rights and even existence of the Palestinian people, which is a serious cause for concern as we seek to overcome the political impasse.

“Palestine reiterates: the two-State solution and Israel’s settlement campaign are completely irreconcilable. As stressed in resolution 67/23 and by the international community at all junctures: settlement activities are illegal, constitute the major obstacle to peace and must be completely halted. In fact, settlement activities constitute war crimes under the Fourth Geneva Convention, Additional Protocol 1, and the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.

“Speaking of peace, while engaging in its destruction, makes a mockery of the international community’s support for the two-State solution and sabotages all efforts in this regard, as does claiming ‘readiness to negotiate without conditions’, while actually imposing conditions on the ground in the form of illegal, hard facts that entrench the occupation and obstruct a peace agreement. Until now, this has regrettably been Israeli policy, whereby settlement activities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, increased by 355 per cent in the first quarter of 2013, further impairing the Territory’s contiguity and physically jeopardizing the two-State solution.

“At this critical moment, Israel must tangibly demonstrate its willingness to end its occupation and truly make peace. The mentality and policies of occupation must end. This must include cessation of all settlement activities, regardless of the manifestation. Also, Palestinian prisoners must be released, military operations halted and all measures of collective punishment ceased, including the blockade of Gaza. This is imperative to stem the deterioration of the situation and of popular belief in the possibility for peace, and to salvage this final chance for the two-State solution.

“The international community must remain vigilant in demanding Israel’s respect for international law and United Nations resolutions. A firm message must be conveyed that Israel’s illegal policies must be halted and that the price

of occupation is steep, while there is much to be gained from peace. Here, we recall the June 2013 guidelines adopted by the European Union, which can tangibly contribute to promoting compliance with the law and thus advancing a peaceful solution. If Israel persists with its violations, the international community must hold it accountable, ensuring respect of the law, averting further destabilization and preserving the prospects for peace. Failure to do so would be a disservice to the cause of peace, endangering the future of the Palestinian and Israeli peoples and threatening peace and security in the Middle East and beyond.

“As reaffirmed in resolution [67/23](#), the permanent responsibility of the United Nations towards the question of Palestine until it is resolved in all aspects must be upheld and relevant resolutions implemented, including by the Security Council as per its Charter duty to maintain international peace and security. We also recognize here the important role of the United Nations Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People in raising international awareness and support for Palestinian rights and a just solution to the conflict.

“For its part, the State of Palestine will continue to act responsibly, upholding its commitment in word and deed to the goal of peaceful settlement, and to cooperate with all international efforts in this regard, based on its conviction in the rule of law and the international resolve to promote a just solution that will achieve the independence of the State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital, on the basis of the pre-1967 borders; the rights of the Palestinian people, including the Palestine refugees; and peace and security for Palestine and Israel.

“Internally, the Palestinian Government will continue developing Palestinian national institutions and infrastructure in accordance with the national plan, aiming to strengthen our State’s foundations, serve our people and ease their hardships while still under occupation. We are grateful for the international community’s full support for these efforts, the progress of which is well-documented by the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee for the Coordination of the International Assistance to Palestinians, the World Bank and the United Nations, despite the constraints caused by Israel’s unlawful actions and the ongoing financial crisis.

“The Palestinian leadership will also continue striving to end the division among our political factions, as demanded by our people and in line with Security Council resolution [1860 \(2009\)](#) and the widespread calls for unity. We continue to seek implementation of the May 2011 Reconciliation Agreement signed in Cairo and the February 2012 Declaration signed in Doha. We appeal for international support for Palestinian reconciliation and express appreciation for the consistent position by the Secretary-General and the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process in this regard and for all their efforts for peace.

“In conclusion, while reflecting on resolution [67/23](#) and urging its implementation, we reiterate gratitude for the efforts of the entire United Nations system to promote realization of the rights of the Palestinian people and a peaceful settlement. We also reiterate gratitude for the principled support of all concerned States and peoples worldwide, and urge that no effort be

spared to achieve long-overdue freedom, justice and dignity for the Palestinian people and Israeli-Palestinian peace.”

7. The note verbale dated 19 June 2013 from the Permanent Mission of Lebanon to the United Nations reads as follows:

“Lebanon is committed to the provisions of General Assembly resolution [67/23](#) of 30 November 2012, entitled ‘Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine’, in accordance with the principles of the United Nations and international law. The firm position of Lebanon is to insist on the implementation of the international resolutions safeguarding the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, to return to its land and to establish its independent State with Jerusalem as its capital. Lebanon supports the right of return and rejects settlements in all its forms. It is committed to the Arab Peace Initiative that was agreed at the Beirut summit of 2002 with a view to upholding Arab rights and the rights of the Palestinian people.”

II. Observations

8. Efforts intensified to achieve the peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine during the latter half of the reporting period. Direct Israeli-Palestinian negotiations, discontinued in September 2010, resumed on 29 July 2013. The situation on the ground remained challenging, in particular for the population living under closure in Gaza while Israel continued to face the threat of rocket fire. In the West Bank, tensions persisted while settlement activity continued to accelerate. The situation on the ground presented a growing cause for concern over the viability of the two-State solution. At the same time, the Palestinians continued to implement an ambitious State-building programme. They also briefly resumed their efforts towards reuniting the West Bank and Gaza, albeit with limited success at reconciliation.

9. In parallel to those developments in the peace process, on 29 November 2012 the General Assembly accorded Palestine non-member observer State status in the United Nations with the adoption of resolution [67/19](#) through a majority of 138 votes in favour. I reported on the steps taken regarding the change of status of Palestine in the United Nations, as well as the progress made, or lack thereof at the time of my report, in resuming the Middle East peace process on 8 March 2013 ([A/67/738](#)). The application for full United Nations membership remains pending before the Security Council.

10. Quartet envoys met in Brussels on 12 December 2012 and again on 10 January 2013 in Amman. They discussed ways to help the parties avoid escalation diplomatically and on the ground in the short term, while also finding a way back to negotiations. Quartet envoys continued to work with the parties to encourage them to step up direct contacts and refrain from provocations, and reminded them of their road map obligations. I also continued to engage with the parties, as well as with key international and regional leaders, both in New York and on the margins of international conferences and events, in order to encourage concerted efforts to forge a way forward.

11. From 20 to 22 March 2013, the President of the United States of America, Barack Obama, visited the region with his Secretary of State, John Kerry. The visit by President Obama marked an important opportunity to reinvigorate efforts

towards a two-State solution. During President Obama's speech on 21 March in Jerusalem he called for an independent, viable Palestine, while emphasizing Israelis' right to insist upon their security. The President also reiterated his earlier suggested principles on territory and security which he believed can be the basis for talks, and called for Arab States to take steps towards normalized relations with Israel. Secretary Kerry remained in the region to meet with Israeli leaders, and in five subsequent visits to the region he continued to meet with both the Palestinian and Israeli leaderships to discuss the resumption of dialogue leading to peace.

12. I met with President Obama on 11 April 2013 in Washington, D.C. We agreed that there is at least a window of opportunity for both Israelis and Palestinians to resume negotiations. I reconfirmed the commitment of the United Nations to support, including through the Quartet, a substantive initiative with a defined political horizon to achieve a two-State solution. I also spoke to the urgency of progress towards peace.

13. In a particularly important visit to Washington, D.C., on 29 April, the Follow-up Committee on the Arab Peace Initiative of the League of Arab States, a delegation of Arab Ministers and leaders including the then-Prime Minister of Qatar, Sheikh Hamad bin Jassim al Thani, and Arab League Secretary-General Nabil Al-Araby, reaffirmed the importance of the Arab Peace Initiative first proposed in 2002, and the Committee declared that a peace agreement should be based on the two-State solution on the basis of the 4 June 1967 line, with the possibility of comparable and mutually agreed minor swaps of land, reviving prospects that its promise of regional stability can become an important part of developing peace efforts.

14. On his sixth trip to the Middle East, Secretary Kerry secured the commitment of both sides, announcing on 19 July in Amman that the parties had established the basis to resume direct final status negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians. It is against this compelling background that I welcomed Secretary Kerry's intense diplomatic efforts in recent months. On 29 and 30 July 2013, Secretary Kerry hosted the first meeting between Palestinian and Israeli officials since September 2010. The Middle East Quartet and I welcomed and supported this engagement.

15. Some very tough choices were required from both sides in the period ahead. Both leaders had to win the support of their domestic constituencies for renewed negotiations. Prime Minister Netanyahu secured his cabinet's approval to release 104 pre-Oslo Palestinian prisoners during the course of an agreed nine month timetable for negotiations. On the eve of the first round of direct negotiations held in Jerusalem, the first group of 26 Palestinian prisoners was released on 13 August. However, I was deeply troubled by the announcement by Israel of approvals of some 3,000 housing units in the West Bank, including in East Jerusalem. A second round of negotiations was held on 20 August in Jericho.

16. It was against this background that I travelled to the region — to Jordan, Palestine and Israel — on 15 and 16 August to lend my personal support to the leaders on both sides. I was encouraged by the seriousness of efforts to bring the parties to the negotiating table after a prolonged political stalemate. I was particularly heartened by the bold decision of President Abbas and Prime Minister Netanyahu to embark on direct dialogue. I found both Palestinian and Israeli leaderships recommitted to the vision of a two-State solution, which is clearly in the best interest of both peoples. It is my firm belief that direct negotiations are the only way through which Palestinians can realize their rightful aspirations for an independent and viable Palestinian State and Israelis can meet their legitimate security needs and finally become a crucial

partner in the development of a stable and prosperous Middle East. For the negotiations to have a chance at success, they need to be meaningful with a clear political horizon and yield early dividends in the immediate period ahead.

17. Palestinians continued to advance their State-building programme, albeit limited to the territory under the Authority's control, which excluded Area C, East Jerusalem and Gaza. This formed an essential component of the political process. Despite strong international consensus that the Palestinian Authority was capable of running a State, the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee for the Coordination of the International Assistance to Palestinians was primarily concerned over the fiscal sustainability and economic viability due to the Palestinian Authority's fiscal difficulties during the reporting period. They also maintained that concerted action was urgently needed to stabilize the fiscal position of the Palestinian Authority and rekindle private sector-led economic growth. Efforts by the Palestinian Authority towards structural reforms including fiscal containment, as well as adequate and predictable assistance to the Palestinian government by donors, were considered essential to manage the deficit projected at \$1.7 billion.

18. Bearing in mind Security Council resolutions [1860 \(2009\)](#) and [1850 \(2008\)](#), I continued to support efforts to advance Palestinian unity within the framework of the commitments of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), the positions of the Quartet and the Arab Peace Initiative. Reconciliation on this basis and on the basis of Israeli-Palestinian peace talks need not be mutually exclusive, and a united Palestinian polity is necessary for the viability of the two-State solution. I welcomed the efforts extended to this effect, notably by Egypt.

19. Despite a series of meetings between members of Fatah and Hamas in Cairo to advance the implementation of existing reconciliation agreements, there has been little progress to date other than the successful voter registration drive conducted, from 11 to 20 February in both the West Bank and Gaza, for the first time since 2007. A total of 450,000 new electors were registered by the Palestinian Central Election Commission, including 350,000 in Gaza. On 2 April, Khaled Meshaal was re-elected Head of the Hamas Political Bureau.

20. The situation in occupied East Jerusalem remained tense. Clashes occurred on 7 and 8 May in East Jerusalem in and around the Old City in the context of what Israelis call "Jerusalem day". Restrictions on access for Palestinians were imposed in connection to visits in the esplanade of the Haram al-Sharif/Temple Mount by right-wing Israeli activists. This was coupled with the temporary detention of the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem for interrogation over reported incitement. Jerusalem is a final status issue that requires a negotiated solution. I have consistently emphasized that a way must be found for the city to emerge, through negotiations, as a capital of two States, Israel and Palestine, with arrangements for holy sites acceptable for all. It is equally important that political and religious authorities on both sides continue to ensure that the cultural and religious rights of all are duly respected.

21. The expansion of settlements, which undermines the territorial basis for a future Palestinian State and the credibility of Palestinian moderates, is of particular concern. I have repeatedly stressed that all settlement activity in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, is illegal under international law. Over the reporting period, the Government of Israel approved tenders for the construction of approximately 18,109 residential units in settlements in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and retroactively legalized others. In July the

Government of Israel announced its intention to issue construction tenders for 854 housing units in the settlements of Har Homa, Nokdim and Modi'in Ilit. Construction in such sensitive areas is of particular concern, as it impedes the natural development of Palestinian urban centres. Moreover, the Israeli authorities did not act effectively against the construction of illegal outposts on private Palestinian land. A report of the Israeli State comptroller issued on 17 July noted that there was little to no criminal law enforcement in the settlements regarding violations of planning and construction law and that administrative procedures for demolitions are rarely implemented.

22. Settler violence decreased slightly from last year. It is deeply troubling that attacks by settlers on Palestinians and their property have become a systematic occurrence — often but not exclusively in the context of anticipated Government action against illegal settlement construction. Attacks by settlers on Palestinians and their properties resulted in 159 Palestinians, including 35 children, being injured during the reporting period.

23. The demolitions and evictions that took place in Area C over the reporting period are of deep concern and were condemned by the international community. Palestinians require access to a fair planning and zoning regime so as not to resort to the building of unauthorized structures that lead to unjustified demolitions, which often impact the most vulnerable people. Throughout the reporting period, demolitions have led to the displacement of some 907 individuals, including 458 children, in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. Overall, more needs to be done to ease access and movement throughout the West Bank, including Area C, the Jordan Valley and Gaza.

24. The situation in Gaza remains precarious. In the wake of the political developments in Egypt, the Egyptian authorities took robust measures against the tunnels into Gaza. As a result of those actions against illegal activity, according to some estimates 80 per cent of the tunnels are now no longer functioning. Gaza experienced serious shortages of fuel and basic building materials for which the tunnels had become the primary entry point owing to severe restrictions on imports via the official crossings and the higher cost of fuel available from the West Bank and Israel. While the only Israeli crossing for goods, Kerem Shalom, has remained open and is handling increased quantities of consumer goods, I am concerned that already difficult economic and humanitarian conditions in Gaza will further deteriorate if access into Gaza through legal crossings of basic commodities such as building materials is not liberalized. I encourage all parties not to forget the precarious situation in Gaza and to take advantage of the improved context between the parties to further lift the remaining closures. These changes must be applied with due consideration for the legitimate security concerns of Israel. Of positive note is the liberalization by Israel of the entry of key construction materials into Gaza, to some extent, by allowing an average of 20 truckloads of construction material per day to enter Gaza for the private sector in December 2012. That has helped the private sector to legally procure those materials to address the infrastructural needs of Gaza.

25. The full implementation of Security Council resolution [1860 \(2009\)](#) and the recovery and long-term economic growth of Gaza remain fundamental objectives of the United Nations. Some significant progress was made towards that goal, but much more needs to be done. In this context, United Nations reconstruction work worth \$450 million in Gaza has been approved by the Government of Israel. That has had a positive effect not only for those receiving services but also on short-term employment; however, the economic benefits of increased employment will end

with the conclusion of those works. Deeper and more fundamental change is therefore required to enable a functioning Gazan economy, beginning with authorizing exports to Israel, as well as transfers to and from the West Bank. Without those essential steps, the future of Gaza will remain tenuous at best.

26. The reporting period witnessed alarming escalations of tension between Gaza and Israel. The fragility of the relative calm was once again demonstrated on a number of occasions throughout the reporting period, and a dangerous escalation took place from 14 to 21 November 2012 during Operation Pillar of Defense. The Israel Defense Forces publicly reported that it had conducted strikes against more than 1,500 targets in Gaza. The devastating impact of the violence during the eight days of fighting includes an estimated 174 Palestinians killed, including 6 who may have been killed by projectiles fired by Palestinian armed groups that fell inside the Gaza Strip. Of the 174 killed, 101 were civilians, including 36 children and 14 women. In a particularly distressing example of civilians bearing the brunt of the suffering, 12 members of the Dalu family were killed in an Israeli air strike on their house on 18 November. A total of 1,046 Palestinians were reported injured. Six Israelis, including four civilians and two soldiers, were reported killed by Palestinian rocket fire. A total of 239 Israelis were injured, the vast majority civilians.

27. In retaliation to the Gaza offensive, a bomb attack took place in Tel Aviv, on 21 November 2012, injuring 29 people, 3 severely. I condemned the attack in the strongest terms. The calm in Gaza, brokered by Egypt on 21 November, has largely held, but it remains tenuous. Preserving calm in Gaza and southern Israel continues to be crucial for improvements there and for the overall political atmosphere.

28. In total, over the reporting period 331 rockets were fired from Gaza, including 43 medium-long-range rockets, as well as 141 mortar shells, separate from the 1,506 rockets and 138 mortar shells fired during the escalation that occurred from 14 to 21 November. Many rockets directed at populated areas in Israel were intercepted by the Iron Dome system. The Israel Defense Forces conducted 62 incursions and 58 airstrikes into Gaza, resulting in the deaths of 121 Palestinian civilians. More than 1,253 Palestinian civilians were injured during the reporting period. Excluding the eight days of conflict in November 2012, a total of 207 Palestinian civilians were injured, including 47 children. Also during the period, 106 Palestinian militants were killed and 22 injured, excluding the November 2012 figures. Again, I unequivocally condemn these indiscriminate rocket attacks from Gaza into Israel and call for their complete cessation. I also urged Israel to show maximum restraint. All concerned should fully observe their obligations regarding the protection of civilians.

29. There are more than 130 Palestinians being held under Israeli administrative detention, which should only be used in the most limited number of cases, for as short a period as possible, and in exceptional cases. Those detained must be charged and brought to trial or released without delay.

30. I remain concerned about the condition of Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails, especially those on hunger strike. International human rights obligations towards all Palestinian detainees and prisoners under Israeli custody must be fully respected.

31. Tensions and violent incidents in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, continued throughout the reporting period. Citing security reasons, the Israel Defense Forces conducted 3,662 search and arrest operations in the West Bank, resulting in the injury of 202 Palestinians, including 51 children, and 4,341

Palestinians were arrested. Overall, during the period, Israeli forces injured 3,918 Palestinians, including 1,179 children. More than 64 Israel Defense Forces personnel were injured by Palestinians.

32. During the reporting period, a total of 338 Palestinians were killed, including 232 civilians, while 5,193 Palestinians were injured throughout the occupied Palestinian territory; 8 Israelis were killed and more than 90 Israel Defense Forces personnel were injured, while 282 Israeli civilians were injured, illustrating the continuing cost of the ongoing conflict. All figures represent a significant increase from the previous reporting period.

33. A final area of concern is the Sinai peninsula, where there have been a growing number of incidents. At least four rockets fired from the Sinai were targeted at the Israeli Red Sea resort of Eilat during the November 2012 escalation. On 17 April 2013, two rockets fired from the Sinai peninsula exploded in open areas of Eilat, causing no casualties or damage. The attack, claimed by the Salafist jihadist group Mujahedeen Shura Council in the Environs of Jerusalem, was the first such rocket firing at Eilat since the November 2012 escalation. On 13 August 2013, the same group fired at least two other rockets at Eilat from the Sinai, of which one was intercepted by the Iron Dome system and the other struck open area. They also conducted a cross-border attack near the Har Harif area on the Israeli-Egyptian border on 21 September 2012, killing an Israel Defense Forces soldier. On 4 July 2013, two explosions were heard in Eilat, without any casualty or damage, reportedly resulting from rockets fired from the Sinai. A Salafist group, Ansar Beit al-Maqdis, took responsibility for the shooting.

34. I recognize that Israel has legitimate security concerns and believe that sustainable security will best be achieved by intensified cooperation, the continued empowerment of the Palestinian Authority's security efforts and performance, the further curtailment of Israel Defense Forces incursions into Palestinian areas, full respect for legitimate non-violent protest, Israeli action to curb settler violence, Palestinian action against incitement and progress in the political negotiations and in economic development.

35. I continue to worry about the state of human rights and freedoms in Gaza. Of particular concern are the reports of arbitrary detention being carried out by Palestinian security forces and the reports of ill-treatment in detention centres in Gaza. I am also deeply concerned about five death sentences passed by military courts in Gaza, between 9 May and 14 July 2013, and two executions carried out on 22 June, without the approval of President Abbas, as is required by Palestinian Basic Law. I call on the de facto authorities in Gaza to refrain from carrying out further executions. I also urge the Palestinian Authority to ensure that it fulfils its responsibilities with full respect for international human rights laws.

36. The Palestinian Authority has achieved what it set out to do three years ago, and this must be noted, preserved and built upon. I am concerned, however, over the ability of the Palestinian Authority to maintain these gains in the light of its increasingly dire financial situation.

37. I strongly encouraged the Government of Israel to take all necessary measures to facilitate economic growth, including the further easing of access and movement within, into and out of the West Bank for both goods and people. In a positive development, Israel provided a considerable number of permits for Palestinian

residents of the West Bank to visit Jerusalem and Israel during Ramadan and applied more flexible regulations at checkpoints and points of passage during the holy month.

38. I would like to express my deep thanks and appreciation to Robert H. Serry, the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, as well as to the Commissioner-General of UNRWA, Filippo Grandi. I also pay tribute to all United Nations staff who work under difficult, at times dangerous, circumstances in the service of the United Nations.

39. I remain hopeful, in the light of recent progress during the latter half of the reporting period, in the search for a negotiated solution which would bring Israel and the Palestinians closer towards durable peace and security, including the realization of the legitimate aspiration of Palestinians to a State of their own, and of Israel to live within recognized and secure borders. What is important now is for the parties to engage seriously on substance. I call on Israeli and Palestinian leaders to show vision, courage and determination to reach a historic peace agreement that would meet the legitimate aspirations of their peoples. I remain convinced that direct and meaningful negotiations are the main avenue towards a comprehensive, fair and lasting solution, including an end to occupation, an end to conflict and a just and agreed solution to the plight of Palestinian refugees.

40. To that end, it is my sincere hope that the parties pursue vigorously all efforts to sustain an environment conducive for the peace process to move forward. In particular, I urge Israel to cease all settlement activity in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and to take concrete steps to further ease the numerous restrictions in place both in the West Bank and Gaza. I also strongly encourage all Palestinians on the path of non-violence and unity in line with past PLO commitments, and call on them to pursue their efforts to improve law and order and combat extremism and incitement against Israel, and to continue building strong and democratic institutions that are essential to a viable, independent Palestinian State. In a highly volatile environment, it is crucial that any outbreaks of violence that could undermine political efforts are prevented, and that the parties refrain from provocative steps on the ground. The international community must also play its role by shaping a legitimate and balanced framework that offers a credible political path forward, combined with far-reaching steps on the ground. The international community should understand that its own efforts in pursuit of this goal will increasingly lack credibility if it continues to fail to take the steps necessary to enable an environment conducive to serious engagement.

41. As Secretary-General, I will continue to ensure that the United Nations works towards the establishment of an independent, democratic, contiguous and viable Palestinian State living side by side in peace with a secure Israel in the framework of a comprehensive regional settlement consistent with Security Council resolutions [242 \(1967\)](#), [338 \(1973\)](#), [1397 \(2002\)](#), [1515 \(2003\)](#) and [1860 \(2009\)](#), and in accordance with the road map, the Arab Peace Initiative and the principle of land for peace.



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The situation in the Middle East

Question of Palestine

Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report is submitted in accordance with General Assembly resolution [68/15](#). It contains replies received from the parties concerned to the notes verbales sent by the Secretary-General pursuant to the request contained in paragraph 25 of the resolution. The report also contains the observations of the Secretary-General on the current state of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and on international efforts to move the peace process forward with a view to achieving a peaceful settlement. The report covers the period from September 2013 to August 2014.

* [A/69/150](#).



I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution [68/15](#).

2. On 21 August 2014, pursuant to the request contained in paragraph 25 of the above-mentioned resolution, I addressed the following letter to the President of the Security Council:

“I have the honour to refer to resolution [68/15](#), which the General Assembly adopted on 26 November 2013, at its sixty-eighth session, under the agenda item ‘Question of Palestine’.

“Paragraph 25 of the resolution ‘requests the Secretary-General to continue his efforts with the parties concerned, and in consultation with the Security Council, towards the attainment of a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine and the promotion of peace in the region and to submit to the General Assembly at its sixty-ninth session a report on these efforts and on developments on this matter’.

“In order to fulfil my reporting responsibilities under this resolution, I should be grateful if you would kindly convey to me the views of the Security Council by 5 September 2014.

“Recalling the Secretariat’s obligation to observe the page limit of its reports, pursuant to General Assembly resolution [52/214](#), I would like to encourage the Security Council to limit its submission to 1,500 words.”

3. As at 5 September, no response had been received to that request.

4. In a note verbale dated 10 May 2014 to the parties concerned, I sought the positions of the Governments of Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic, as well as the State of Palestine, regarding any steps taken by them to implement the relevant provisions of the resolution. As at 31 August 2014, replies had been received from Israel and the State of Palestine.

5. The note verbale dated 4 August 2014 from the Permanent Observer Mission of the State of Palestine to the United Nations reads as follows:

“The State of Palestine reaffirms that the General Assembly resolution ‘Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine’ constitutes a principal contribution by the international community towards justly and comprehensively resolving the question of Palestine and securing a viable peace. The resolution continues to define the parameters for a solution based on international law, the relevant United Nations resolutions, the Madrid peace principles, the Arab Peace Initiative and the Quartet road map.

“This resolution traditionally receives overwhelming support — with 165 votes in favour in the 68th session, underscoring a global consensus in support of a solution that ensures Israel’s withdrawal from the Palestinian territory occupied since June 1967, including East Jerusalem; achievement of the solution of two States: an independent, sovereign, democratic and contiguous State of Palestine, living side by side with Israel in peace and security on the basis of the pre-1967 borders, with Jerusalem the shared capital of the two

States; and a just solution for the Palestine refugees based on General Assembly resolution 194 (III) (1948).

“This consensus has been the long-held position of the Palestinian people and leadership, since formal acceptance of the two-State solution in the 1988 Declaration of Independence of the State of Palestine. This significant compromise to establish the State of Palestine on only 22 per cent of our historic homeland for the sake of restoring our rights, achieving freedom and ending the conflict is among the boldest reflections of the Palestinian commitment to peace. Remarkably, this commitment has prevailed, despite the historic injustice inflicted on the Palestinian people over the decades since the adoption of partition resolution 181 (II) in 1947 and the tragedy of Al-Nakba of 1948, from which our people continue to suffer to this day, particularly the Palestine refugees, who now number over 5 million people and continue to endure untold hardships, including as a result of successive crises in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, such as the brutal military aggression and humanitarian disaster being inflicted on the Gaza Strip by Israel, the occupying Power, at present, as well as the many crises that have plagued the region, including the current grave conflict in Syria.

“This consensus on the parameters of a two-State solution has also been reaffirmed in numerous other resolutions, including resolution [67/19](#) (29 November 2012), which accorded to Palestine non-member observer State status, and in declarations by political and regional groups from around the world. In this regard, resolution [67/19](#), like resolution [68/15](#), constitutes a serious contribution by the international community towards peace and the State of Palestine’s rightful inclusion in the community of nations, pending acceptance of the application for admission to United Nations membership, which remains before the Security Council following submission by President Mahmoud Abbas on 23 September 2011.

“The urgency of salvaging the two-State solution and attaining the Palestinian people’s right to self-determination and independence in their State of Palestine — a right explicitly affirmed by the General Assembly — is further reflected in the call in resolution [68/15](#) for the resumption and acceleration of negotiations in the Middle East peace process towards its stated objectives. It is a call that Palestine has fully respected and actively striven to fulfil in all of its actions, bilaterally, multilaterally and internally. As widely acknowledged, Palestine has consistently upheld its legal obligations and commitments, despite the enormous challenges and manifold crises arising from Israel’s 47-year military occupation, and this includes respect for Security Council and General Assembly resolutions and for agreements reached in the peace process.

“Palestine maintains that respect of the law is the key to resolving the conflict, as it would ensure that negotiations to resolve the final status issues — Jerusalem, Palestine refugees, settlements, borders, security, prisoners and water — actually result in achievement of a just, sustainable peace. Regrettably, however, the exemptions from the law that Israel, the occupying Power, has for so long unfairly enjoyed, never being held accountable for its violations of United Nations resolutions and grave breaches, have prolonged and severely compounded the conflict and

repeatedly caused the peace process to fail and undermined the two-State solution.

“Affirming its respect for international law, on 1 April 2014, the Government of the State of Palestine undertook the historic decision to accede to numerous international conventions, underscoring its intention to avail itself of all peaceful, political, legal and non-violent tools in the international system to achieve the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and to promote the rule of law in Palestine. Those conventions included, inter alia, the four Geneva Conventions and Additional Protocol 1, the International Covenants on Civil and Political Rights and Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and the Conventions on the Rights of the Child, on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, and against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

“Since the adoption of resolution 68/15, Palestine has also exerted efforts to implement the resolution’s provisions and endeavoured to advance conditions amenable for a peace settlement. This has included internal efforts to develop and strengthen national institutions, achieve Palestinian reconciliation, and promote law and order, as well as active engagement, regionally and internationally, in all initiatives aimed at realizing a peaceful solution.

“In specific, from July 2013, the Palestinian leadership engaged in good faith in the negotiations resumed under United States auspices, shepherded by Secretary of State John Kerry, with the support of the other Quartet members of the European Union, the Russian Federation and the United Nations, the League of Arab States Ministerial Committee, and concerned States from around the world. The grave impact of this conflict and, inversely, the multitude of benefits that peace would have for the Palestinian and Israeli peoples, the Middle East region and the international community as a whole are facts widely recognized and propelling these collective efforts.

“For nine months, the Palestinian leadership cooperated fully with these efforts, partaking in multiple rounds of direct negotiations with Israel, the occupying Power. During negotiations, we maintained focus on the goal of peace, mindful of the unsustainability of the status quo and that failed negotiations would entail serious consequences, especially in terms of the diminishing viability of the two-State solution and unstable situation on the ground. Guided by a conviction in international law and the urgency of peace, Palestine committed to negotiations, despite the striking imbalance of power, Israel’s bad faith at the negotiating table, the cyclical distractions, complications and hardships caused by its violations against the Palestinian people, and its deliberate impairment of the Palestinian Government’s authority and Palestinian unity efforts.

“The Palestinian leadership’s commitment to peace was also evidenced in the political restraint exhibited during the July 2013-April 2014 negotiations period, despite constant Israeli provocations. Seeking to foster trust, a decision was made to delay action on rights and privileges gained since the attainment of observer State status. Such restraint was also connected to an agreement for the release of Palestinian prisoners long held captive by Israel, commonly

referred to as “pre-Oslo” prisoners, which Israel had prior agreed to, yet repeatedly reneged on. Significantly, Palestine’s engagement in the negotiations was fully supported by the League of Arab States, which remained active in its efforts to promote peace on the basis of the 2002 Arab Peace Initiative.

“Conversely, during the entire nine-month period, Israel constantly flouted the law, ignoring the global calls for an end to the occupation and preferring to persist with its illegal policies, which it has never ceased during any stage of the peace process, from the 1991 Madrid Conference to the present. Israel’s violations included, inter alia, continuation of its illegal settlement campaign in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, including confiscation of Palestinian land, construction of settlements, transfer of Israeli settlers, and construction of the annexation wall; as well as its military campaign against the Palestinian people, involving all forms of aggression, including air strikes against the Gaza Strip, military raids on civilian areas throughout the West Bank, and excessive force against civilian protesters, causing death and injury to Palestinians, including children; destruction of Palestinian homes and infrastructure; forced displacement of Palestinian civilians, particularly Bedouin families; daily arrests of Palestinians, resulting in the imprisonment and administrative detention of over 6,000 Palestinians, who are enduring untold abuse and torture at the hands of the occupier; permissive policies aiding and abetting settler terror and violence against Palestinians; the illegal blockade of the Gaza Strip in gross collective punishment of the 1.8 million Palestinians there; and innumerable other measures of collective punishment against the Palestinian people, all in flagrant breach of international law, including the Fourth Geneva Convention and the human rights covenants, relevant United Nations resolutions and the International Court of Justice Advisory Opinion (9 July 2004).

“Not only did such unlawful Israeli practices continue in 2014, but most sharply escalated, including, inter alia, settlement activities, with repeated declarations about thousands of new settlement units, and incessant provocations and incitement by Israeli government officials, settlers and extremists, particularly regarding Occupied East Jerusalem and the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound. Israel’s rejection of peace peaked after its decision to renege on releasing the fourth tranche of Palestinian prisoners in March 2014 and its decision to unilaterally suspend negotiations in April 2014 in retaliatory response to the reconciliation between the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and Hamas, leading to a dramatic destabilization of the situation.

“It must be clarified that Palestinian unity is a legitimate, necessary step, long called for by the Palestinian people and by the international community, which has stressed the need for unity for implementation of any peace agreement, with this call for reconciliation reiterated in resolution 68/15. It must also be recognized that, under President Abbas’s leadership, reconciliation has been pursued with utmost responsibility — based on clear reaffirmations of the Palestinian national consensus Government’s commitment to the agreements reached by the PLO, non-violence and recognition of Israel — and has received the broad support of the international community.

“Yet, Israel has used every cynical tactic to incite against and undermine the Palestinian Government and has chosen once again to intensify its illegal practices, fuelling tensions and thwarting peace efforts. Most shockingly, following the formation of the Palestinian national consensus Government on 2 June 2014, and using the killing of three Israeli settlers in the West Bank on 12 June 2014 as a pretext, Israel launched a wide-scale military campaign against the Palestinian people, particularly in the Gaza Strip, the third such violent aggression against the defenceless and besieged civilian population in Gaza in six years.

“As of the writing of this note, the human and physical devastation caused by this aggression against Gaza has been horrific and vast, with war crimes, crimes against humanity, and State terrorism undeniably being perpetrated by Israel, the occupying Power. Attacks have been carried out by Israeli missile strikes, artillery bombardment and live fire by air, land and sea. More than 1,700 Palestinians have been killed, including children, women and elderly persons, with children comprising at least a third of the victims. Numerous families have been massacred in their entirety by the occupying forces. In fact, at least 76 families have lost three or more family members, some as high as 20 family members killed, in Israeli military attacks. More than 9,000 people have been wounded, many severely and permanently disabled. More than 460,000 Palestinians have been displaced by the Israeli aggression, including more than a quarter of a million people that have sought refuge in United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) schools. Regrettably, UNRWA schools have also again been targeted by Israeli attacks that have killed and injured innocent civilians and Agency staff who believed they were safe under the United Nations flag.

“The Israeli onslaught on Gaza, which intensified with a ground invasion on 18 July 2014, has also caused the deliberate destruction of over 5,000 homes, damage to over 30,000 other homes and properties, and mass destruction to civilian infrastructure, including hospitals, schools, mosques, and water, sanitation and electricity networks. This has deepened the humanitarian crisis in Gaza, already dire due to the illegal Israeli blockade and resultant shortages of food, medical, construction and fuel supplies, and led the Palestinian Government to declare Gaza a ‘disaster area’. Despite extraordinary efforts, UNRWA and other United Nations agencies and humanitarian organizations have been unable to keep pace with the crisis, and, again, the international community is being appealed to for emergency assistance to alleviate the human suffering arising from the vast food insecurity, poverty, displacement, and psychological trauma inflicted on the population and what United Nations officials declared, on 2 August 2014, as a ‘health disaster of widespread proportions’ with medical services and facilities on the verge of collapse and inadequate water and sanitation posing serious risks of outbreaks of infections and communicable diseases.

“As of the writing of this note, while President Abbas and the Palestinian leadership have been continuously engaged in the regional and international efforts to secure a comprehensive ceasefire and lifting of the eight-year Israeli blockade, and have remained resolutely committed to the objective of peace, Israel has chosen to continue this depraved war against the Palestinian people

under its occupation. Using a preposterous, baseless pretext of ‘self-defence’, the Israeli Prime Minister and other government and military officials persist in threatening to exact maximum punishment on the Palestinian people and their leadership, and rejecting all calls for an end to the violence and resumption of peace efforts.

“It is not a coincidence that this Israeli aggression was launched amid heightened international pressure on Israel in the peace process; international acceptance of the Palestinian national consensus Government; intense world condemnation of Israeli settlement activities, settler terror, provocations in East Jerusalem, the Gaza blockade and the prisoner crisis; and the growing global calls for boycott, divestment and sanctions against Israel. It is an obvious repeat of the crises created by Israel in the past to divert attention and evade all efforts to advance a peaceful, just, political solution to the conflict, as it clearly prefers to continue its colonization of the Palestinian land and subjugation of the Palestinian people, only paying lip service to peace as it actively sabotages it and acts with total contempt for the international community.

“We have thus turned again to the United Nations, calling on the Security Council to uphold its Charter duties and act forthwith to stop the slaughter of innocent men, women and children, including by ensuring a permanent ceasefire and providing protection to the Palestinian people, and to shoulder its responsibilities to bring a definitive end to this conflict. While Israel, as the occupying Power, is obligated under international humanitarian law to ensure the safety, well-being and protection of the civilian population under its occupation, it has clearly abdicated this right as it wilfully and wantonly causes harm to the population and is the direct source of their insecurity, suffering and vulnerability. We will also continue our efforts in the General Assembly to comprehensively redress this grave injustice and will continue to demand the implementation of all relevant resolutions. Palestine has also called on Switzerland, Depositary of the Geneva Conventions, to convene a conference of High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention to consider measures to enforce the Convention in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, inter alia, to ensure protection for the Palestinian people.

“In conclusion, heeding the calls in resolution [68/15](#), Palestine reaffirms its readiness to make peace, based on the long-standing parameters and principles of justice and human rights. We reiterate our calls on the international community to uphold legal, political and moral obligations in this regard, recalling the permanent responsibility of the United Nations until the question of Palestine is resolved in all its aspects in accordance with international law.

“We are at a critical juncture that will determine whether the solution of two States — the State of Palestine and the State of Israel — living side by side in peace and security on the basis of the pre-1967 borders will be achieved, or whether that solution will meet its demise under the weight of Israel’s illegal policies and entrenchment of its 47-year military occupation. For genuine progress to be made, the precarious reality on the ground and root causes of this conflict must be seriously redressed. Respect for resolution

68/15 and all relevant resolutions would enhance the prospects for realizing peace. If, however, Israel remains intransigent, peace efforts will again fail and we will have to face the failure of the two-State solution and the onset of new collective efforts — political, legal and popular — in pursuit of alternative solutions to end the injustice and realize the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.

“As a last attempt to salvage the two-State solution, the international community must therefore be vigilant in demanding a halt to Israel’s illegal practices and demanding compliance with international law. A firm message must be conveyed to Israel that the price of continued occupation will be immense, while there is much to be gained from peace. This message has been conveyed more clearly in the recent period, including by the European Union and other States that have predicated current and future relations with the parties on respect for the law and a commitment to peace, but it must be reinforced with practical actions, including consequences for continued violations and obstruction of peace efforts.

“On its part, the State of Palestine will continue to responsibly cooperate with all international efforts in this regard, based on its conviction in the rule of law and the resolve to achieve a just solution that will achieve the independence of the State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital, and the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including the Palestine refugees, and establish Palestinian-Israeli peace, security and coexistence.

“We express appreciation for the tireless efforts of the Secretary-General, the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and the entire United Nations system in support of a peaceful solution and in support of Palestinian humanitarian and developmental needs. We also recognize the important role of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People in raising international awareness and support for Palestinian rights and a just solution, especially in this International Year of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. We further reiterate gratitude for the principled support of all concerned States and peoples worldwide, and urge that no effort be spared to achieve long-overdue freedom, justice, peace and dignity for the Palestinian people.”

6. The note verbale dated 24 August 2014 from the Permanent Mission of Israel to the United Nations reads as follows:

“As shown in the meeting records, Israel voted against this resolution, as it has done on similar resolutions adopted in the past by the General Assembly. Resolution 68/15 joins the numerous one-sided resolutions passed annually by the General Assembly which only serve to undermine the credibility of the United Nations as an impartial agent for the advancement of peace.

“The State of Israel continuously strives to attain a peaceful settlement of the conflict with the Palestinians and to promote peace in the region. Time and time again Israel has demonstrated to the international community its commitment to finding a long-lasting conclusion of the conflict. Resolution 68/15 overlooks the steps Israel has taken, and continues to take, to end the conflict. Resolution 68/15 fails to examine the situation objectively,

disregarding the role played by the Palestinians in the difficulties in attaining a peaceful resolution to the conflict, in particular Hamas.

“In August 2005, Israel dismantled its settlements and military presence and disengaged from the Gaza Strip. Rather than using this opportunity for development, Hamas took advantage of Israel’s absence to launch terror attacks from Gaza onto Israeli citizens. Terror activities escalated further after Hamas took control of the Gaza Strip in 2006. Despite Israel’s withdrawal from the Gaza Strip in 2005, Hamas has continued to target Israeli civilians with thousands of rockets. Its unprovoked attacks are not the product of efforts to seek redress of legitimate grievances, as some claim. Rather, they are a product of Hamas’ guiding ideology. Hamas is a virulently anti-Semitic organization, whose very Charter calls on Muslims to kill Jews. Hamas is not dedicated to improving the plight of Gaza. Instead, its goal is nothing less than the destruction of Israel, no matter the cost to the Palestinian population.

“Since 12 June 2014, the State of Israel has been under constant attack as Hamas launched more than 3,500 rockets at civilian populations in Israeli towns and communities. Israel’s south has been the target of bombardment for 14 years, its children constantly subject to indiscriminate attacks from Gaza. The current operation ‘Protective Edge’ was launched as a last resort to reinstate safety and security to its citizens, following the abduction and murder by Hamas of three Israeli teenagers and the barrage of rockets targeting the Israeli population that has followed undiminished since then.

“Despite the relentless and acute threats to its security, Israel has continued to assert its commitment to achieving a permanent peace for Israelis and Palestinians. Accordingly, the State of Israel has gone to great lengths to extend humanitarian assistance and foster conditions for Palestinian economic growth. Throughout 2013, cooperation intensified with the international community and the Palestinian Authority to facilitate sustainable infrastructural and economic development in Gaza, in order to meet both the short- and long-term needs of the civilian population. Two hundred twenty-seven projects have been approved for implementation, alongside various measures aimed at alleviating Palestinian economic hardships. In 2012-2013, an average of 350 people per day entered Israel from Gaza through the Erez crossing, an increase of 238 per cent since 2009. Permits for longer periods of time are granted for humanitarian cases and businessmen.

“Israel has invested 80 million shekels to expand the Kerem Shalom crossing through which commercial goods are transferred, to accommodate up to 450 trucks daily. All civilian goods are allowed into Gaza with the exception of weapons and ‘dual-use’ items that can easily be appropriated for terrorist activities. Nevertheless, many restricted items are approved on a regular basis for use in projects funded by the international community and United Nations agencies. Israel continues to supply 125 MW of electricity to Gaza by means of 10 electrical lines, accounting for 63 per cent of the electricity in the Gaza Strip. Israel provides 5 million cubic metres of water per year to Gaza, facilitates the transfer of water equipment and holds water and sewage training sessions for Palestinian professionals.

“The aforementioned steps taken by the State of Israel attest to its commitment to a peaceful resolution to the conflict, yet Hamas has time and

time again chosen to invest in terror, not peace. The State of Israel reiterates its willingness for an agreement according to the principles of the two-State solution and acknowledges the important role played by the Quartet in this matter. Israel calls on the Palestinian Authority to reaffirm its adherence to the achievement of a permanent and comprehensive resolution of the conflict, by engaging in confidence-building measures and bilateral agreements in lieu of unilateral declarative actions in various multinational forums.”

II. Observations

7. In July 2013, Israelis and Palestinians resumed direct final status negotiations. The resumption of the peace process, for the first time since October 2010, was supported by extensive facilitation efforts led by the United States of America. In a series of preparatory meetings at the end of July in Washington, D.C., the parties set an agenda which covered all core final status issues and agreed on the goal of achieving a comprehensive settlement within a period of nine months. At the same time, the Palestinians continued to implement an ambitious State-building programme.

8. The first formal round of talks was held on 14 August in Jerusalem, after the release of the first tranche of pre-Oslo Palestinian prisoners, in accordance with the agreement for resuming the peace negotiations. On 15 and 16 August, I travelled to Ramallah, Jerusalem and Jordan to lend support to the leaders on both sides embarking on a process towards a negotiated solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

9. In late 2013, dialogue between the Israelis and Palestinians intensified and some 17 rounds of talks were held. The negotiation efforts were, however, complicated by the repeated announcements of settlement expansion with each release of Palestinian prisoners. Israel’s settlement announcements in November 2013, moreover, prompted the resignation of a Palestinian negotiator. In spite of these developments, President Abbas confirmed his intention to continue talks.

10. Since the beginning of 2014, negotiation efforts concentrated on crafting an agreed framework on all core issues as the guiding basis for continued negotiations towards a final status agreement. United States Secretary of State John Kerry supported the process by engaging in active shuttle diplomacy between the sides.

11. The international community has been committed to supporting the renewed peace talks, including through the Quartet and key Arab, regional and other stakeholders. Deliberations at the high-level segment of the sixty-eighth session of the General Assembly focused on advancing the Middle East peace process, with world leaders urging a negotiated settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The Quartet, welcoming the resumption of the peace process, reaffirmed its determination to support the negotiations for achieving a negotiated two-State solution in the prescribed time frame.

12. The United Nations has consistently encouraged the parties to advance the negotiations towards a comprehensive settlement which must be fair and consistent with principles on all core issues outlined in Security Council resolutions, the Madrid principles — including land for peace — the road map and the 2002 Arab Peace Initiative. At the Security Council open debate on the situation in the Middle

East, on 20 January 2014, alarmed by the recurrent violence, I reiterated the need to provide support to Israelis and Palestinians to escape the perilous status quo, as the lack of political progress could exacerbate negative trends on the ground.

13. On 28 March 2014, Israel postponed its decision to release the fourth and final tranche of 30 pre-Oslo Palestinian prisoners, citing lack of progress in the peace talks. In response, on 1 April, and following the announcement on the same day of 708 reissued tenders for settlement units in Gilo, President Abbas announced that the Palestinian leadership had unanimously voted to join 15 international conventions and treaties. President Abbas, nevertheless, remained committed to continuing negotiations until the agreed date of 29 April. The negotiators continued to meet in order to find a way out of the impasse and to agree to an extension of the negotiation period. On 24 April, Israel suspended the talks in response to the announcement a day earlier of an intra-Palestinian unity agreement for the formation of a national consensus government. Israel stated that it would not negotiate with any Palestinian government backed by Hamas, which does not recognize Israel's right to exist.

14. Following the suspension of talks, negative developments on the ground in mid-2014 have severely hampered the prospects for resuming the peace talks. I have appealed to both Israelis and Palestinians to exercise prudence and avoid unilateral steps that would diminish the prospects for a resumption of negotiations for a final settlement. The United Nations remains committed to supporting the Israelis and the Palestinians in the search for a meaningful path forward in the negotiations for a two-State solution.

15. In April, President Abbas deposited the instruments of accession to 13 international conventions and treaties with the United Nations, and submitted applications for the four Geneva conventions and the Hague conventions of 1907. In May, five of the nine core human rights treaties, plus one of the substantive protocols entered into force, while Switzerland accepted Palestine as a party to the four Geneva Conventions and Additional Protocol I (relating to the protection of victims of international armed conflicts), retroactively to the submission date of its application on 2 April. Accession to these treaties brings new obligations, and the United Nations stands ready to assist the Palestinians, at their request, in the implementation and monitoring of its treaty obligations.

16. On 2 June, President Abbas announced the formation of a Government of national consensus headed by Prime Minister Hamdallah. On the basis of assurances by President Abbas that the Government would continue to abide by the PLO commitments with regard to recognition of Israel, non-violence and adherence to previous agreements, I welcomed the formation of the Government and reiterated the readiness of the United Nations to lend its full support to the Government in its effort to reunite the West Bank and Gaza, in line with the intra-Palestinian unity agreement of 23 April, under one legitimate Palestinian authority, including by addressing the serious political, security, humanitarian and economic challenges in Gaza.

17. On 12 June, three Israeli students were reported missing and were believed to have been abducted in the West Bank, which the Government of Israel blamed on Hamas. The incident led to an escalation of tension in Gaza, characterized by an increase in Israeli air strikes and rockets fired from Gaza at Israel, which undermined the November 2012 ceasefire understanding between Israel and Hamas.

Tensions further increased following the discovery of the bodies of the Israeli students on 30 June.

18. The reporting period witnessed alarming escalations of tension between Gaza and Israel. The fragility of the relative calm was once again demonstrated on a number of occasions throughout the reporting period, with a dangerous ongoing escalation as from 8 July 2014 during the Israel Defense Forces so-called Operation Protective Edge, which had the stated aim of destroying Hamas infrastructure and limiting its capabilities to launch rockets into Israel. The Israel Defense Forces carried out intensified air strikes targeting the facilities and private residences of militants. Palestinian militants fired hundreds of rockets and mortars towards Israel, including its main cities. On 17 July, Israel launched the beginning of ground incursions into Gaza with the objective of destroying the tunnel network of Palestinian militants.

19. As at 26 August, Palestinian militants had reportedly fired more than 4,500 rockets and 1,600 mortars. The Israel Defense Forces had reportedly conducted more than 3,800 air strikes, firing more than 5,900 missiles. The Israeli navy had fired some 3,200 shells, and Israel Defense Forces positioned at the border had fired some 17,000 shells.

20. According to preliminary information, at least 2,104 Palestinians have reportedly been killed. That number includes at least 1,462 civilians, of whom 495 were children and 253 were women. Eleven UNRWA staff members have been killed. Some 66 Israel Defense Forces soldiers, four Israeli civilians, one Israeli whose status remains unclear and one foreign national have reportedly been killed. A few dozen Israeli citizens have been directly injured by rockets or shrapnel.

21. At the peak of the crisis, there were approximately 520,000 internally displaced persons, or nearly 30 per cent of Gaza's population. Approximately 16,700 housing units have been destroyed or severely damaged, affecting some 100,000 Palestinians.

22. The fighting has raised serious questions about respect for the principles of distinction and proportionality in international humanitarian law. Six UNRWA schools harbouring civilians were directly hit by shelling or affected by rocket fire in their immediate vicinity, with serious loss of life and injuries. On 29 July, the premises of the Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process in Gaza were hit by a number of projectiles, which caused damage to the main building and to United Nations vehicles. International humanitarian law clearly requires protection by all parties of civilians and civilian facilities, including United Nations staff and premises. Violations must be subject to accountability and justice.

23. From the onset of the crisis in Gaza, the United Nations has deployed every possible effort, including through my personal engagement, to bring about an end to the violence. I have spoken to Prime Minister Netanyahu of Israel and President Abbas of Palestine, calling on both sides to exercise maximum restraint and avoid further escalation. I have also engaged with regional and world leaders, including the King of Saudi Arabia, the Emir of Qatar, the President of Egypt, the President of Turkey, the heads of the League of Arab States and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, the United States Secretary of State and the European Union High Representative, in an effort to stop the fighting.

24. It was in this context that I travelled to the region — Qatar, Kuwait, Egypt, Jerusalem, Ramallah, Jordan and Saudi Arabia — from 20 to 25 July to support mediation efforts to broker a ceasefire. At every stop of my visit, I carried a three-part message: first, stop the fighting; second, start the dialogue; and third, tackle the root causes of the conflict. I emphasized that we cannot merely return to the status quo ante, but must reach a durable ceasefire that addresses the underlying issues of the conflict: ending rocket fire from Gaza and weapons-smuggling, opening the crossings, lifting the blockade and bringing Gaza back under one Palestinian Government that accepts and adheres to the PLO commitments. These issues were captured by core elements of Security Council resolution 1860 (2009), which, unfortunately, remains unimplemented.

25. Part of a solution is a return of the Palestinian Authority to Gaza. The underlying issues plaguing Gaza stand a far better chance of being resolved if they are part of a comprehensive effort to reunite the Palestinian territory under one legitimate Government. Redeployment of the Palestinian Authority security forces to the crossings in south-eastern Gaza, the so-called Philadelphi Corridor, would be a most useful step that would go a long way towards enabling the full reopening of the crossings.

26. On 31 July, United States Secretary of State Kerry and I jointly announced a humanitarian ceasefire for 72 hours to allow civilians to attend to the necessities of their daily lives so disrupted by the hostilities, in the hope that it could be extended and built upon by the parties to allow negotiations for a durable ceasefire to take place. However, the ceasefire was broken only a few hours after it had started. On 5 August, an Egyptian-brokered 72-hour humanitarian ceasefire went into effect while Israel and Palestinian factions commenced indirect talks through Egyptian mediation in Cairo on a durable ceasefire agreement. The ceasefire was extended three times, on 11, 14 and 18 August. I welcomed the announcement on 26 August of an open-ended ceasefire for Gaza, brokered under Egyptian auspices. The ceasefire was still holding at the time of reporting.

27. With the focus understandably on Gaza, we must not lose sight of the bigger picture. The Gaza escalation, coupled with the tense situation in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, is a warning of the negative repercussions on the ground when there is no credible political horizon towards a negotiated end to the occupation and settlement of the conflict. The international community must urge and support both parties in returning to meaningful negotiations and restoring prospects for a two-State solution.

28. Tensions and violence in the West Bank continued throughout the reporting period. The Israel Defense Forces conducted 3,124 search-and-arrest operations, resulting in 5,582 Palestinians being arrested. In the occupied Palestinian territory, excluding the so-called Operation Protective Edge, a total of 96 Palestinians were killed, including 58 civilians, and 5,245 Palestinians were injured. Six Israeli civilians and two Israel Defense Forces personnel were killed, and 79 Israeli civilians and 92 Israeli security forces personnel were injured.

29. The increase in settlements is particularly concerning. I have repeatedly stressed that settlement activity in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, is illegal under international law. During the reporting period, Israel reportedly announced tenders for the construction of approximately 5,083 residential units in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem.

30. Settler violence remained high. Attacks by settlers resulted in one Palestinian being killed and 155 Palestinians, including 38 children, injured during the reporting period. One Israeli settler was killed and 75 Israeli settlers were injured by Palestinians.

31. The demolitions and evictions that were carried out in Area C of the West Bank are of deep concern and were condemned by the international community. Palestinians require access to a fair planning and zoning regime, so as not to resort to the building of unauthorized structures that lead to unjustified demolitions, which often impact the most vulnerable people. During the reporting period, 698 structures were demolished, leading to the displacement of some 1,179 Palestinians, including 624 children. Overall, more needs to be done to ease access and movement throughout the West Bank, including Area C, the Jordan Valley and Gaza.

32. Tension also prevailed in occupied East Jerusalem. Restrictions on access to holy sites in the Old City were imposed on Palestinians, including during the holy month of Ramadan, leading to multiple clashes between worshippers and the Israeli security forces.

33. The abduction and murder of a Palestinian teenager from the Shu'fat neighbourhood on 2 July led to days of violent demonstrations in East Jerusalem. Since July 2014, clashes between Palestinians and the Israeli security forces have spread beyond the traditional hotspots to include Beit Hanina, Shu'fat, Wadi Al-Joz and Jabal Al-Mukaaber.

34. On 24 April, some 90 Palestinian administrative detainees, including several Palestinian Legislative Council members, went on an open-ended hunger strike to protest the Israeli use of administrative detention. They were joined by other Palestinian prisoners in solidarity, including by 5,100 prisoners for one day on 8 May. In late June, the Palestinian detainees suspended their hunger strike after reportedly reaching a preliminary agreement with the Israel Prison Service for the start of negotiations on their demands.

35. There are currently more than 450 Palestinians held under administrative detention, more than twice the number being held in May. I reiterate my long-standing position that administrative detention should be used only in the most limited number of cases, for as short a period as possible, and in exceptional cases. Those detained must either be charged and brought to trial or released without delay.

36. Palestinians continued to advance their State-building programme, albeit limited to the territory under the Authority's control, which excluded Area C, East Jerusalem and Gaza. This formed an essential complement to the political process. Despite strong international consensus that the Palestinian Authority was capable of running a State, the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee was concerned primarily about fiscal sustainability and economic viability, owing to the Palestinian Authority's fiscal difficulties during the reporting period. The Committee also maintained that concerted action was urgently needed to stabilize the fiscal position of the Palestinian Authority and rekindle private-sector-led economic growth. Efforts by the Palestinian Authority towards structural reforms, including fiscal containment, as well as adequate and predictable assistance to the Palestinian Government by donors, were considered essential to managing the deficit.

37. The full implementation of Security Council resolution [1860 \(2009\)](#) and Gaza's recovery and long-term economic growth remain fundamental objectives of

the United Nations. Some significant progress was made towards that goal, but much more needs to be done. In this context, \$380 million worth of United Nations reconstruction work in Gaza has been approved by the Government of Israel. This has had a positive effect, not only for those receiving services, but also on short-term employment. However, the economic benefits of increased employment will end with the conclusion of the work. Deeper and more fundamental change is therefore required to enable a functioning economy in Gaza, beginning with the authorization of exports to Israel, as well as transfers to and from the West Bank. Without these essential steps, Gaza's future will remain tenuous, at best.

38. I continue to worry about the state of human rights and freedoms in Gaza. Of particular concern are reports of arbitrary detention being carried out by Palestinian security forces and reports of ill-treatment in detention centres in Gaza. I am also deeply concerned about reports of multiple executions without the approval of President Abbas, which is required under Palestinian Basic Law. I call upon the de facto authorities in Gaza to refrain from carrying out further executions. I also urge the Palestinian Authority to ensure that it fulfils its responsibilities with full respect for international human rights law.

39. The Palestinian Authority has achieved what it set out to do three years ago, and this must be noted, preserved and built upon. However, I am concerned about the ability of the Palestinian Authority to maintain those gains in the light of its increasingly dire financial situation.

40. I strongly encouraged the Government of Israel to take all measures necessary to facilitate economic growth, including further easing of access and movement within, into and out of the West Bank for both goods and persons. In a positive development, Israel provided a considerable number of permits for Palestinian residents of the West Bank to visit Jerusalem and Israel during Ramadan, and applied more flexible regulations at checkpoints and points of passage during the Holy Month.

41. I would like to express my deep appreciation to Robert H. Serry, the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, as well as to the former and current Commissioners-General of UNRWA, Filippo Grandi and Pierre Krähenbühl. I also pay tribute to all United Nations staff, who work under difficult, and at times dangerous, circumstances in the service of the Organization. In particular, we mourn the 11 UNRWA staff members in Gaza who lost their lives both on and off-duty.

42. I started the reporting period with a great sense of hope that, in the light of the ongoing negotiations towards a two-State solution, we could finally bear witness to two States living side by side in peace and security, but I ended the reporting period seriously concerned about the lack of progress and the return to violence between Israel and Palestinian militants. The search for a negotiated solution which would bring Israel and the Palestinians closer to durable peace and security, including the realization of the legitimate aspiration of Palestinians to a State of their own, and of Israel to live within recognized and secure borders, remains elusive. What is important now is for the parties to engage seriously on substance. I call upon Israeli and Palestinian leaders to show vision, courage and determination to reach a historical peace agreement that would meet the legitimate aspirations of their peoples. I remain convinced that direct and meaningful negotiations are the main avenue towards a comprehensive, fair and lasting solution, including an end to

occupation, an end to conflict, and a just and agreed solution to the plight of Palestinian refugees.

43. To this end, it is my sincere hope that the parties pursue vigorously all efforts to sustain an environment that is conducive to the peace process moving forward. In particular, I urge Israel to cease all settlement activity in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and to take concrete steps to further ease the numerous restrictions in place, both in the West Bank and Gaza. I also strongly encourage all Palestinians on the path of non-violence and unity in line with past PLO commitments, and call upon them to pursue their efforts to improve law and order and combat extremism and incitement against Israel, and to continue building strong and democratic institutions that are essential for a viable, independent Palestinian State. In a highly volatile environment, it is crucial that any outbreaks of violence that could undermine political efforts be prevented, and that the parties refrain from provocative steps on the ground. The international community must also play its role by shaping a legitimate and balanced framework that offers a credible political path forward, combined with far-reaching steps on the ground. The international community should understand that its own efforts in pursuit of this goal will increasingly lack credibility if it continues to fail to take the steps necessary to enable an environment conducive to serious engagement.

44. As Secretary-General, I will continue to ensure that the United Nations works towards the establishment of an independent, democratic, contiguous and viable Palestinian State living side by side in peace with a secure Israel in the framework of a comprehensive regional settlement consistent with Security Council resolutions [242 \(1967\)](#), [338 \(1973\)](#), [1397 \(2002\)](#), [1515 \(2003\)](#) and [1860 \(2009\)](#), and in accordance with the road map, the Arab Peace Initiative and the principle of land for peace.

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The present report is submitted in accordance with General Assembly resolution 69/23. It contains replies received from the parties concerned to the notes verbales sent by the Secretary-General pursuant to the request contained in paragraph 24 of the resolution. The report also contains the observations of the Secretary-General on the current state of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and on international efforts to move the peace process forward with a view to achieving a peaceful settlement. The report covers the period from September 2014 through August 2015.

* A/70/150.



I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 69/23.

2. On 1 July 2015, pursuant to the request contained in paragraph 24 of the above-mentioned resolution, I addressed the following letter to the President of the Security Council:

“I have the honour to refer to resolution 69/23, which the General Assembly adopted on 25 November 2014, at its sixty-ninth session, under the agenda item ‘Question of Palestine’.

“Paragraph 24 of the resolution requests the Secretary-General to continue his efforts with the parties concerned, and in consultation with the Security Council, towards the attainment of a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine and the promotion of peace in the region and to submit to the General Assembly at its seventieth session a report on these efforts and on developments on this matter.

“In order to fulfil my reporting responsibilities under this resolution, I should be grateful if you would kindly convey to me the views of the Security Council by 31 July 2015.

“Recalling the Secretariat’s obligation to observe the page limit of its reports, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 52/214, I would like to encourage the Security Council to limit its submission to 1,500 words.”

3. As at 1 September, no response had been received to that request.

4. In a note verbale dated 14 May 2015 to the parties concerned, I sought the positions of the Governments of Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic, as well as the State of Palestine, regarding any steps taken by them to implement the relevant provisions of the resolution. As at 31 August 2015, replies had been received from Israel and the State of Palestine.

5. The note verbale dated 27 July 2015 from the Permanent Observer Mission of the State of Palestine to the United Nations reads as follows:

“The resolution ‘Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine’ constitutes a longstanding contribution by the General Assembly towards justly, comprehensively and peacefully resolving the question of Palestine based on international law and the relevant United Nations resolutions. The resolution continues to receive overwhelming support, reaffirming the global consensus calling for Israel’s complete withdrawal from the Palestinian territory occupied since June 1967, including East Jerusalem; achievement of the two-State solution of an independent, sovereign, contiguous State of Palestine, living side by side with Israel in peace and security within recognized borders based on the pre-1967 borders; and a just solution for the Palestine refugees based on resolution 194 (III).

“This consensus reflects the long-held position of the Palestinian people and leadership, since formal acceptance of the two-State solution in the 1988 Declaration of Independence of the State of Palestine. This significant compromise to establish the State of Palestine on only 22 per cent of our

historic homeland for the sake of restoring our rights, achieving our self-determination and freedom and ending the conflict is among the boldest confirmations of Palestine's commitment to peace. Remarkably, this commitment has prevailed, despite the historic injustice inflicted on the Palestinian people since the adoption of partition resolution 181 (II) in 1947 and the tragedy of Al-Nakba of 1948, from which our people continue to suffer to this day, particularly the Palestine refugees.

“Here, we underscore the gravity of the plight of the Palestine refugees, who constitute the largest, most protracted refugee problem in the world (5.3 million people) and are enduring immense hardships, which intensified this past year, despite the humanitarian assistance and protection continuously provided to them by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) since it began operations 65 years ago. This is due to the impact of Israel's illegal practices in Occupied Palestine, including, inter alia, the military aggressions and humanitarian crisis inflicted on the Gaza Strip, the latest in July-August 2014; the inhumane blockade of Gaza since 2007; and settlement activities and forced displacement of Palestinians, including refugees and particularly Bedouins, in the West Bank. The refugees' situation has also degenerated due to regional instability, foremost the Syrian conflict, which has inflicted death, destruction and displacement on Palestine refugees, along with Syrian civilians suffering so gravely, and also affected Palestine refugee communities in Lebanon and Jordan, where many refugees have fled. It has also been affected by UNRWA's unprecedented financial shortfalls, which if unmet threaten the Agency's vital services, including schooling for 500,000 children, and its stabilizing role at this precarious time.

“The urgency of achieving a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, in all aspects and of intensifying efforts towards that end is reaffirmed from the outset of the operational paragraphs of resolution 69/23. As reflected in the support for resolution 69/23, the grave impact of this conflict and unsustainability of the situation and, inversely, the manifold benefits peace would bring for the Palestinian and Israeli peoples, the Middle East region and the international community as a whole are facts widely recognized and propelling the collective calls and efforts for peace. However, 2014-2015 witnessed a deepening of the political impasse with a breakdown of American-led peace talks in April 2014 due to Israel's suspension of negotiations, followed by its criminal war against Gaza, exacerbating the fragile situation and casting further doubt on its intentions and commitment to peace and the two-State solution.

“The year also witnessed continued failure of the international community, particularly the Security Council, to uphold its obligations to redress the crisis, salvage the two-State solution and contribute to attainment of peace. This was most notably reflected in the failure of the Security Council to adopt the draft resolution (S/2014/916) presented for a vote on 30 December 2014 by Jordan, which called, inter alia, for achievement of a peaceful solution that brings an end to the Israeli occupation since 1967 and fulfils the vision of two States within a timeframe of no later than 12 months from the resolution's adoption. As of this note's writing, the Council has failed to heed

the calls to uphold its responsibilities vis-à-vis the search for a peaceful solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and efforts in this regard continue to be obstructed or delayed, including the initiative led by France to reaffirm the parameters for peace, based on the relevant United Nations resolutions, the Madrid principles and the Arab Peace Initiative, and establish a timeframe to end the Israeli occupation as well as international monitoring and support for implementation of a peace agreement.

“Nevertheless, we continue calling on the Council to uphold its Charter mandate and adopt a resolution aimed at breaking the political impasse and accelerating realization of peace and security and continue cooperating with all efforts for this objective. The provisions of resolution 69/23 are fully respected by the Palestinian Government, which actively strives to implement the resolution and the other relevant Security Council and General Assembly resolutions in its actions, bilaterally, multilaterally or internally. This is pursued despite the enormous challenges arising from Israel’s 48-year military occupation. We also recognize the necessity of Palestinian unity in this regard and continue efforts to achieve reconciliation and empower the national consensus Government to fulfil its duties, despite the cynical Israeli attempts to thwart unity and entrench the divide.

“Indeed, the State of Palestine has always respected its legal obligations and commitments in accordance with United Nations resolutions. We maintain that respect of the law is the key to resolving the conflict and this has been clearly reaffirmed by Palestine’s recent accessions to the core international humanitarian law and human rights law treaties without reservations, as well as to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC), and its exercise of its rights as well as upholding of obligations in this regard. These accessions — broadly welcomed by the international community — also underscore Palestine’s intention to use all peaceful, political, legal and non-violent tools to achieve the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including the right to self-determination.

“Only international law can ensure that negotiations to resolve the final status issues — Jerusalem, Palestine refugees, settlements, borders, security, prisoners and water — actually result in a just, sustainable peace. The passage of decades has certified that neither justice nor peace can be achieved by military might and illegal actions and that a people can never be coerced to forgo their rights, regardless of the suffering and indignities forced upon them. Unfortunately, however, the impunity that Israel, the occupying Power, has for too long been permitted, never being held accountable for its violations and war crimes, is prolonging the conflict, undermining peace efforts and obstructing achievement of a peaceful settlement to the detriment of our people, the Middle East region and the global community.

“In the past year, Israel has persisted with its illegal policies and practices, provocations and incitement, which it never ceased from the onset of the occupation nearly a half century ago through all stages of the peace process — from the 1991 Madrid Peace Conference to the last incarnation of negotiations held under the auspices of United States Secretary of State John Kerry with the support of the other Quartet members of the European Union, the Russian Federation and the United Nations, the League of Arab States

Ministerial Committee, and concerned States from around the world — and thereafter.

“Israel’s violations include, inter alia, continuation of its illegal settlement campaign in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, involving land confiscation, construction of settlements, the annexation wall, Israeli-only by-pass roads and other related infrastructure and the transfer of more Israeli settlers, as well as its military campaign against the Palestinian people, including the 2014 war on Gaza and daily military raids in the West Bank, causing death and injury to Palestinian civilians; destruction of Palestinian homes and property; forced displacement of Palestinians, particularly Bedouin families; exploitation of natural resources, including water; daily arrest raids, resulting in imprisonment and administrative detention of over 6,000 Palestinians, who are enduring inhumane conditions, abuse and torture at the hands of the occupier; policies aiding and abetting settler terror and violence against Palestinian civilians and destruction of property, including agricultural lands and Muslim and Christian holy sites; the illegal blockade of the Gaza Strip in collective punishment of the 1.8 million Palestinians there and strangulation of the economy and innumerable other measures of collective punishment against the Palestinian people, all in breach of international law, including the Fourth Geneva Convention, relevant United Nations resolutions and the 2004 advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice, and in violation of provisions of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.

“In this regard, we must recall the grave impact of the Israeli military aggression against the Gaza Strip, where the occupying forces slaughtered and injured thousands of Palestinian children, women and men, caused wanton destruction, and terrorized and traumatized the entire population. The disastrous impact of this Israeli onslaught on the defenseless Palestinian civilian population in Gaza has been corroborated by several United Nations reports, including of the Human Rights Council’s Commission of Inquiry and the Secretary-General’s Board of Inquiry and in the Secretary-General’s report on children and armed conflict, in which Israel was wrongly omitted from the list of grave violators of children’s rights. In fact, the Commission of Inquiry found that Israel persisted with its onslaught even after early knowledge of the high casualty figures, indicating a deliberate decision on the part of Israeli officials to inflict such harm, a fact also confirmed by the testimonies of Israeli soldiers, who were instructed to kill anyone they encountered in Gaza.

“By the time of the 26 August 2014 ceasefire, the Israeli occupying forces had killed 2,251 Palestinians, the majority civilians, including 551 children and 299 women, and injured over 11,000 Palestinians, including 3,540 women and 3,436 children, with injuries so severe due to the lethal weaponry and wide-impact explosives used that 10 per cent of the injured will suffer life-long disabilities. A total of 142 families suffered the killing of three or more family members in Israeli attacks and 89 entire families were killed. Eleven UNRWA staff were also killed, along with twenty-three health workers. Civilian casualties continue to be caused by thousands of unexploded Israeli ordnance remaining in Gaza.

“The physical destruction caused by the Israeli occupying forces included destruction and severe damage caused to thousands of homes, schools, businesses, hospitals, United Nations facilities, and civilian infrastructure. At the conflict’s height, over 500,000 people were displaced, the majority sheltering in 90 UNRWA schools, where they sought protection under the United Nations flag, yet where 42 people were killed, including 16 children, in Israeli strikes on the schools. In total, 12,620 homes were totally destroyed by the occupying forces, 6,455 were severely damaged beyond habitation and over 80,000 were damaged. A year later, not a single destroyed home has been rebuilt due to Israel’s blockade and restrictions, with less than 1 per cent of needed construction materials entering Gaza and donor funding for reconstruction insufficient despite generous pledges made at the Cairo Conference. Over 110,000 people remain homeless, the majority Palestine refugees, forced to shelter with host families, in temporary housing or in the ruins of their homes.

“More than 100 United Nations facilities were damaged, 75 hospitals and clinics were damaged and 543 schools were damaged or destroyed, the highest recorded number in the world in 2014. Gaza’s sole power plant was targeted by Israeli strikes, causing persisting blackouts of 12 to 16 hours a day. Sixty-three water facilities were damaged and twenty-three were destroyed, worsening the water crisis in an area where 90 per cent of water is unfit for human consumption. In total, 33,000 meters of water and waste networks and 27 per cent of pumping stations were damaged. In addition, 500 economic and industrial facilities, constituting 60 per cent of Gaza’s production capacity, were destroyed, affecting more than 35,000 jobs, deepening poverty, in addition to livelihoods lost due to the blockade and 2008-2009 Israeli aggression. Unemployment in Gaza now stands above 43 per cent, with youth unemployment at an alarming 60 per cent. Food insecurity is rampant, with 80 per cent of the population aid-dependent.

“Compounding the human insecurity and despair caused by this Israeli aggression is the humanitarian crisis arising from Israel’s illegal eight-year blockade of Gaza. This humanitarian crisis has negatively impacted every single aspect of life, with short- and long-term socioeconomic implications that are depriving and disfiguring Palestinian society. As recognized globally, this unjust situation is unsustainable and volatile, requiring immediate remedy to avert further deterioration and explosion of another cycle of violence.

“One year on, the human and physical wounds remain unhealed in Gaza and hopes are fading for any relief from this appalling injustice and restoration of the rights and dignity of our people. This deplorable situation, coupled with relentless Israeli settlement activities throughout the rest of Occupied Palestine, repression of Palestinian civilians and incitement by Israeli government, military and religious leaders and extremist settlers, particularly regarding Occupied East Jerusalem and the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound, has severely aggravated conditions on the ground, entrenched the political impasse and pushed us farther away from our goal of peace. Clearly, the moment that Israel launched its 2014 offensive, and considering the illegal actions perpetrated since and the declarations by Israeli leaders — including the provocative, anti-two-State remarks by the Prime Minister during the 2015 elections — it aimed to destroy the prospects for peace, intensify its

oppression of the Palestinian people and strip them of hope for an end to this cruel occupation and realization of their inalienable rights.

“It is not coincidental that the Israeli aggression was launched against a backdrop of heightened pressure on Israel in the peace process; international acceptance of the Palestinian national consensus Government; unanimous condemnation of settlement activities and the Gaza blockade; and rising calls for boycott, divestment and sanctions against Israel. It is an obvious repeat of past crises created by Israel to divert attention and evade efforts to advance a peaceful solution to the conflict, by only paying lip-service to peace while it actively sabotages the two-State solution with total disrespect for international law and contempt for the international community.

“That is why — despite the global calls for a just solution based on two States on the pre-1967 borders, the historic compromise made by the Palestinian leadership over a quarter century ago, over two decades of negotiations and the passage of more than 48 years since the adoption of resolution 242 (1967) — the political impasse continues and peace remains elusive. This is why resolution 69/23 remains unimplemented. It is the direct outcome of Israel’s illegal, combative behavior by which it continues to deny Palestinian rights and perpetuate its illegal occupation and of its rejection of peace, bad faith and obstruction of all attempts to revive negotiations based on clear parameters rooted in the Security Council’s resolutions.

“Aiming to prevent further destabilization, stem the human suffering and salvage the prospects for peace, Palestine has repeatedly drawn international attention to this grave situation and called for action in line with international law, the relevant United Nations resolutions and the permanent responsibility towards the question of Palestine until it is resolved justly in all aspects. The Palestinian leadership remains insistent that a just peace is the only remedy for the conflict and the violence, deprivation and instability it engenders, and firmly rejects the claims that “now is not the right time” for a solution. That time is actually long overdue. As we witness the instability in Palestine and throughout the region, we do not have the luxury to continue delaying peace. Moreover, the Palestinian people can no longer delay realization of their human rights, nor accept rationales asking them to endure more violations, suffering and indignities, while the occupying Power is placated and appeased, not even being held accountable for its most egregious crimes.

“Regrettably, our appeals and efforts have been to no avail and the Security Council remains paralyzed and the international community unable to effectively confront Israeli impunity. This makes it more imperative for the General Assembly to act boldly to address this tragic conflict, which has been on the agenda of the Organization since its inception, yet shamefully remains unresolved. Here, in conjunction with the relevant United Nations resolutions, we stress the importance of the Arab Peace Initiative and its promise for opening doors to a new era of peace, stability, cooperation and collective action for our common goals and problems. The international community must call on Israel to reciprocate this historic initiative.

“Palestine seeks peace and coexistence with Israel, but this must be based on freedom and justice. This requires a complete end to the Israeli occupation and the colonial, racist policies that have fueled it for five decades.

Respect for international law and human rights, not military might and violence, must be the core of this peace. Interim solutions or other palliatives to ‘ease’ or manage the situation will not suffice. The root causes and underlying issues of the conflict must be addressed in accordance with international law.

“The plight of the Palestinian people — from Occupied Palestine to our refugee camps in the region, especially in Syria — is an existential crisis urgently demanding a just solution. We appeal to the General Assembly to uphold the legal, political and moral responsibilities in this regard and likewise extend this appeal to the entire United Nations system and Member States to uphold their responsibilities. We also recall relevant declarations by the Conference of High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention, most recently on 17 December 2014, and the obligations in this regard.

“The Security Council in specific is duty-bound to address this conflict, which continues to threaten international peace and security, and must act towards bringing a definitive end to the occupation and conflict and establishing a just and lasting peace. Pending that achievement, action must be taken to ensure protection to the Palestinian people under Israel’s occupation, an obligation that the occupying Power has abdicated as it willfully and wantonly causes harm to the population and is the direct source of their insecurity, suffering and vulnerability.

“The foundations for peace must be firmly set before this opportunity is lost to us and the two-State solution is relegated to the archives of history. The political will must be found to compel Israel to cease all of its illegal policies and measures in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and comply with its legal obligations. Moreover, there must be accountability for Israeli crimes against the Palestinian people. Peace and accountability are not mutually exclusive; both can and must be pursued, for impunity will always obstruct peace and peace cannot exist without justice.

“We also underscore the universal view that failure to achieve a just solution to the conflict and continued denial of Palestinian rights, including Palestine’s rightful place among the community of nations, have severely undermined international law and the international system, including the credibility of the Security Council and the United Nations as a whole. However, despite the failures and setbacks, the Palestinian people still look to the United Nations, with the democratic General Assembly at the forefront, to act with conscience to establish peace and fulfill the covenant made over 67 years ago to the Palestinian people in regard to their inalienable rights, foremost to self-determination. On its part, the Palestinian Government remains ready to make peace, based on the longstanding parameters, and will continue cooperating with all international efforts, based on its conviction in the rule of law and resolve to achieve a just solution that will achieve the independence of the State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital, and the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including the Palestine refugees, and achieve Palestinian-Israeli peace, security and coexistence.

“We are at a crossroads that will determine whether the solution of two States living side by side in peace and security on the basis of the pre-1967 borders will become reality or meet its demise. For genuine progress to be

made, the crisis on the ground and root causes of this conflict must be seriously redressed. Respect for resolution 69/23 and all relevant resolutions would certainly enhance peace prospects. If, however, Israel remains intransigent, peace efforts will continue failing and we will have to face the end of the two-State solution and the onset of new collective efforts — political, legal and popular — for alternative solutions to end the injustice and realize the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.

“We express appreciation for the tireless efforts of the Secretary-General and the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and the United Nations system as a whole in support of a peaceful solution and of Palestinian humanitarian and developmental needs. We also recognize the important role of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People in raising international awareness and support for Palestinian rights and a just solution. We also reiterate gratitude for the principled support of all concerned States and civil society worldwide, and urge that no effort be spared to achieve long-overdue freedom, justice and dignity for the Palestinian people and lasting peace and security for our region.”

6. The note verbale dated 13 August 2015 from the Permanent Mission of Israel to the United Nations reads as follows:

“As shown in the meeting records, Israel voted against this resolution, as it has done on similar resolutions adopted in the past by the General Assembly. Resolution 69/23 joins the numerous one-sided resolutions passed annually, and automatically, by the General Assembly which only serve to undermine the credibility of the United Nations as an impartial agent for the advancement of peace.

“The State of Israel continuously strives to attain a peaceful settlement of the conflict with the Palestinians and to promote peace in the region. Time and time again Israel has demonstrated to the international community its commitment to finding a long-lasting solution to the conflict. Resolution 69/23 overlooks the steps Israel has taken, and continues to take, to end the conflict.

“At the same time, resolution 69/23 fails to examine the situation objectively, disregarding the role played by the Palestinians in making it more difficult to attain a peaceful resolution to the conflict, in particular the role of Hamas.

“In August 2005, Israel dismantled its settlements and military presence and disengaged from the Gaza Strip. Rather than using this opportunity for development, Hamas took advantage of Israel’s absence to launch terror attacks from Gaza against Israeli citizens. Terror activities escalated further after Hamas took control of the Gaza Strip in 2006. Despite Israel’s withdrawal from the Gaza Strip in 2005, Hamas has continued to target Israeli civilians with thousands of rockets. Hamas’ unprovoked attacks are not the consequence of efforts to seek redress of legitimate grievances, as some claim. Rather they are a consequence of Hamas’ guiding ideology.

“Hamas is a virulently anti-Semitic organization, whose very charter calls on Muslims to kill Jews. Hamas is not dedicated to improving the plight

of the people of Gaza. Instead, its goal is nothing less than the destruction of Israel, no matter the cost to the Palestinian population.

“Last summer, the State of Israel faced constant attack as Hamas launched more than 4,500 rockets at civilian populations in Israeli towns and communities. Israel’s south has been the target of bombardment for 15 years, its children constantly subject to indiscriminate attacks from Gaza. Operation ‘Protective Edge’ was launched as a last resort to reinstate safety and security to its citizens, litres following the abduction and murder by Hamas of three Israeli teenagers and the barrage of rockets targeting the Israeli population that followed.

“During the operation, Israel kept the crossing into Gaza open despite the constant rocket attacks, including those targeting the crossings themselves. Over the course of those days (8 July-27 August) 5,779 trucks of goods, 4.58 million litres of diesel fuel for the Gaza power station, 1.73 million litres of diesel fuel for UNRWA, 9.8 million litres of diesel fuel and 4.26 million litres of gasoline for transportation needs entered Gaza from Israel. Throughout the entire conflict, the Erez crossing remained open for medical purposes.

“Despite the relentless and acute threats to its security, Israel is actively working to support reconstruction efforts in the Gaza Strip. Israel has intensified its cooperation with the international community and with the Palestinian Authority to facilitate sustainable infrastructural and economic development in Gaza, in order to meet both the short-term and long-term needs of the civilian population.

“The following are a few of the extensive measures undertaken by Israel to facilitate reconstruction in Gaza.

“The border crossings between Israel and Gaza have been upgraded to allow up to 800 truckloads of building materials and other goods to enter the Gaza Strip on a daily basis. Every single day, approximately 550 truckloads of goods, carrying everything from foodstuffs to vehicles, pass into Gaza from Israel. Israel has also allocated approximately \$10 million to further expand the capacity of the crossings to over 1,000 trucks a day.

“It is important to note that for the past five years, all types of foodstuffs, as well as all consumer and other goods, have been allowed to enter Gaza from Israel. The only prohibited items are weapons and a short list of dual-use items that can be exploited for use in terrorism.

“Israel has facilitated the passage of over 1.2 million tons of materials into Gaza since the end of last summer’s conflict with Hamas. Of these materials, over 260,000 tons were sent for the reconstruction mechanism, over 281,000 tons for international community projects and nearly 650,000 tons for reconstructing roads.

“Israel is facilitating construction projects in Gaza, including housing (sometimes the construction of entire neighborhoods) as well as schools, clinics and infrastructure projects. Such projects may be initiated and funded by international organizations, foreign States, the Palestinian Authority, or private entities. Recent progress in these projects includes laying the

cornerstone for the third stage of a neighborhood in Rafah with 220 housing units, as well as for the al-Zafer Tower project in Gaza City.

“There are currently 367 ongoing construction projects initiated by international organizations, in various stages of implementation. As of June 17, approximately 63 per cent of the Gaza Reconstruction Mechanism (GRM) projects have been completed or are in the implementation stage (with work being carried out or approved yet awaiting the start of work). Ninety-four per cent of the international projects outside GRM have been completed or are in the implementation stage.

“More than 14,000 people enter Israel from the Gaza Strip every single month. This monthly figure includes many thousands of Gazan businessmen, pilgrims to the Muslim holy sites in Jerusalem, medical care patients and their escorts on their way to receive urgent medical treatment in Israel and non-urgent medical treatment in the West Bank, and many more.

“Israel has doubled the number of entry permits from Gaza for members of the business sector.

“Israel has also facilitated the entry of reconstruction personnel into Gaza, issuing more than 1,000 permits since summer 2014 for travel from the West Bank. Likewise, Israel has also facilitated the entry of engineers and other relevant professionals into Gaza for international community projects.

“Above and beyond the reconstruction efforts, Israel has also undertaken measures to strengthen the economy of Gaza and improve the lives of its residents.

“Since October 2014, Israel has facilitated the export of nearly 6 million tons of industrial goods (mainly textiles and furniture) and agricultural produce (including fish) from Gaza, via Israel, and marketed to the West Bank, to Israel and abroad.

“Israel has doubled the amount of water it supplies to Gaza from 5 million to 10 million cubic meters of water annually (2.6 billion United States gallons). This is in addition to the 125 MW of electricity that Israel supplies to the Gaza Strip.

“Other economy boosting measures include: setting the fishing zone off Gaza’s coastline for Palestinian boats at 10 km (6 miles); the establishment of a Coca-Cola factory, with the requested equipment, in the Karni Industrial Estate; and the import of engines and second-hand vehicles into the Gaza Strip.

“Israel has undertaken these measures, and many more, despite the major security risks they pose. In the past, Hamas (an internationally recognized terror organization) has diverted massive amounts of aid and imported goods for use in its terrorist infrastructure. For instance, building materials worth tens of millions of dollars were diverted by Hamas for the construction of their cross-border tunnels, which were used to attack Israel during the summer 2014 conflict. Hamas continues to pursue its efforts to rearm, expand its rocket arsenal and construct the infrastructure it plans to use in its next attack on Israel.

“Despite Israel’s best efforts, some reconstruction is being hindered by forces beyond its control. Delays in reconstruction predominantly stem from the actions of Hamas, which controls Gaza, and the conflict between this terrorist organization and the Palestinian Authority. For example, Hamas refuses to allow the Palestinian Authority to take security and civilian responsibility for the Palestinian side of Gaza’s border crossings with Israel and Egypt. Furthermore, Hamas continues to misappropriate construction materials for use in terrorist infrastructures. For its part, the Palestinian Authority wants to weaken the Hamas regime and this goal appears to be influencing the pace and extent of its reconstruction activities.

“The Palestinian Authority is not only obstructing the reconstruction of the physical infrastructure in Gaza, it has failed to construct a credible political infrastructure. The path to a peaceful settlement requires good governance and leadership responsive to the will of the people. Yet, the president of the Palestinian Authority, Mahmoud Abbas, is in his eleventh year of a five-year term.

“The aforementioned steps taken by the State of Israel attest to its commitment to a peaceful resolution to the conflict. However, this commitment has not been reciprocated. On the one hand, Hamas has, time and time again, chosen to invest in terror, not peace. On the other hand, the Palestinian Authority is avoiding its responsibility for the people it claims to represent, and fails to lay the foundations for good governance.

“The State of Israel reiterates its willingness for an agreement in accord with the principles of the two-State solution and acknowledges the important role played by the Quartet in this matter. Israel calls on the Palestinian Authority to reaffirm its adherence to the achievement of a permanent and comprehensive resolution of the conflict, by engaging in confidence building measures and bilateral agreements in lieu of unilateral declarative actions in various multinational forums.”

II. Observations

7. International efforts to promote the peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine focused on the possibility of creating a framework for the parties’ return to meaningful negotiations. Apart from a meeting between the Israeli and Palestinian chief negotiators in Amman in late July 2015, there were no direct peace process-related talks between the two leaderships.

8. During most of the reporting period, which immediately followed the devastating war in Gaza, the situation on the ground was characterized by relatively low levels of violence, a gradual easing of movement restrictions and a slowdown in settlement activity in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. However, there were periods of heightened tension and violence in October and November 2014 and July 2015. The situation in Gaza remained volatile, owing mainly to worsening socioeconomic conditions, delays in reconstruction, deterioration in internal security, continued movement restrictions and the deepening political divide between the Palestinian authorities in Gaza and the West Bank.

9. On 30 December, a draft Security Council resolution seeking to reach a final status agreement and an end to the occupation by the end of 2017 failed to pass.

10. The following day, President Abbas signed instruments of accession to 18 international treaties, including the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. On 2 January, I accepted the submission of 16 instruments of accession after having ascertained that the instruments received were in due and proper form.

11. On 3 January, in retaliation, Israel, contrary to its obligations under the Paris Protocol of the Oslo Accords, commenced the withholding of tax revenues collected on behalf of the Palestinian Authority for the month of December. An agreement was reached on 27 March between the Palestinian Authority and the Government of Israel under which Israel transferred more than \$470 million in withheld revenues.

12. On 17 March, general elections were held in Israel. I was deeply concerned by many of the hard-line statements made in the final days of campaigning. I urged the incoming Government of Israel to act on Prime Minister Netanyahu's reaffirmations, after his re-election, of his commitment to the two-State solution. The Middle East Quartet met at the principals level on 8 February in Munich. The Quartet prioritized the urgent resumption of negotiations and a strengthening of its engagement to prepare for a revival of the peace process, including through regular and direct outreach to the Arab States and the promotion of the Arab Peace Initiative. It also called for the acceleration of reconstruction in Gaza. In July, Quartet envoys, as part of an active outreach effort, engaged constructively with Egypt, Jordan and the League of Arab States.

13. Last summer's conflict in Gaza — the firing of rockets from Gaza into Israel and the subsequent Israel Defence Forces' so-called "Operation Protective Edge" — led to levels of death and destruction unprecedented in this conflict. I deeply regret the loss of civilian life during the escalation. The intensity and destructiveness of the conflict substantially exacerbated the ongoing humanitarian crisis in Gaza, including the observed deterioration of food security, physical and mental health, access to basic services and economic livelihoods.

14. In the aftermath of the hostilities, efforts were made to strengthen the ceasefire brokered by Egypt on 26 August 2014. Addressing dire conditions of the civilian population in the Gaza Strip remained my priority during the reporting period. To facilitate reconstruction efforts, the United Nations brokered an agreement between Israel and the Palestinian Government of national consensus establishing procedures to enable "dual-use" materials to enter Gaza and their use to be monitored. The Gaza Reconstruction Mechanism was designed as a temporary measure to enable the entry of critical construction materials at scale and for a wide range of stakeholders in the immediate post-conflict period. The ultimate objective of the United Nations in Gaza continues to be the lifting of all closures within the framework of Security Council resolution 1860 (2009) and in a manner which relieves the suffering of the people of Gaza and addresses the legitimate security concerns of Israel.

15. I travelled to Cairo on 12 October for the International Conference on Palestine: Reconstructing Gaza, hosted by Egypt and supported by Norway. The event garnered \$5.4 billion in pledges from some 50 countries, with \$3.5 billion intended to support Gaza. As at 14 April, the World Bank reported that only 27.5 per cent of those pledges had been disbursed. I again urge donors to fulfil the pledges

they made in Cairo last October. From the outset of the conflict in Gaza, I called on all combatants to respect the sanctity of United Nations premises. However, a number of incidents occurred during the hostilities in which United Nations personnel, premises and operations were affected. In response, I established an internal board of inquiry to review and investigate 10 of those incidents. On 27 April, I released a comprehensive summary of the Board's report. The Board found that the seven incidents in which United Nations premises were hit were attributable to Israel.

16. The Board also reviewed three incidents involving weapons found in UNRWA schools. In two instances, the Board found that Palestinian armed groups might have used UNRWA school premises to launch attacks. The Board also made a number of recommendations, including on ways of further improving coordination between the United Nations and the Government of Israel to better ensure the safety and security of United Nations personnel and premises. I am actively pursuing these recommendations.

17. I fully supported the United Nations Independent Commission of Inquiry on the 2014 Gaza Conflict, led by Justice Mary McGowan Davis, pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution S-21/1, and its broad investigation into all alleged human rights and international humanitarian law violations that took place before, during and after the military operations in Gaza between 13 June and 26 August 2014. It is my hope that the report of the Commission will pave the way for justice for all of the victims of last year's fighting.

18. Alarming, unemployment in Gaza reached 43 per cent at the end of 2014. The conditions in an already devastated Gaza will only worsen, and the risks of violence and radicalization increase, if the underlying causes of previous conflicts are not soon addressed.

19. The security implications of the persistent pressures on Gazan society continue to be felt. Worryingly, reports are increasing of extremist elements seeking to gain a greater foothold in Gaza in an attempt to ride on the local wave of discontent.

20. Under the leadership of President Abbas, the Palestinian Government of national consensus — which is fully committed to the principles of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) — must be empowered and enabled to assume its rightful responsibilities in Gaza, including in particular at the crossings with Israel and Egypt. Palestinian unity and civil service integration must be addressed as a priority. The United Nations stands ready to support the President and the Government of Palestine and all factions in their efforts to reunite the West Bank and Gaza, in line with the intra-Palestinian unity agreement of 23 April 2014.

21. I also welcomed Egypt's decision — following consultations with President Abbas — to open the Rafah crossing for an extended period in June. A regular and predictable schedule for the opening of Rafah is needed for the movement of people, especially for humanitarian cases, as the security situation allows.

22. Since the establishment of the temporary Gaza Reconstruction Mechanism, approximately 90,000 households in Gaza have accessed construction material for partially damaged housing. In this regard, on 22 June, the Palestinian Ministry of Public Works and Housing launched the "Residential Stream", which is intended to provide simplified access to construction material for the rebuilding of the approximately 18,000 completely or severely destroyed homes, as well as for the

construction of completely new housing to help offset the pre-war housing deficit of approximately 70,000 units. Some 1,700 beneficiaries have already been cleared and around 600 have purchased the required construction materials. These are positive steps on the long road to meeting Gaza's reconstruction needs. I would like to acknowledge and encourage a continuation of Israel's constructive cooperation with the Gaza Reconstruction Mechanism.

23. There have been a number of other significant achievements since the end of hostilities in August 2014. Notably, the last internally displaced persons left the United Nations collective centres in Gaza on 17 June 2015. Nevertheless, the overall reconstruction of Gaza remains slow, with considerable financing gaps. On 12 February, the United Nations, in partnership with the Government of Palestine, launched the Strategic Response Plan for 2015, which aims to address the humanitarian needs of 1.6 million Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank. The Plan requests \$705 million, 75 per cent of which is for Gaza.

24. The reporting period witnessed one attempt to break the Gaza maritime blockade. The Israeli navy intercepted the *Marianne*, a vessel which was part of the "Gaza Freedom Flotilla", on 29 June in international waters. I reiterate my calls on the Government of Israel to lift all closures, with due consideration of Israel's legitimate security concerns.

25. The Government of Israel has taken several positive steps in that direction, including lifting the eight-year ban on exports from Gaza to Israel and the West Bank, increasing quotas and expanding criteria for the exit of Palestinians from Gaza through the Erez crossing and increasing the capacity of the Kerem Shalom crossing. As a result, we have seen a significant rise in the number of people and goods passing through the crossings. I encourage the Government of Israel to pursue this policy further.

26. I remain worried about the state of human rights and freedoms in Gaza. Of particular concern are the reports of arbitrary detention being carried out by Palestinian security forces and the reports of ill-treatment in detention centres in Gaza. I call on the de facto authorities in Gaza to refrain from carrying out further executions. I also urge the Palestinian Authority to fulfil its responsibilities, with full respect for international human rights laws.

27. In July, the Government of Israel revealed that two of its citizens had entered the Gaza Strip independently, in two separate incidents, since September 2014. I reiterate my call to all relevant Palestinian actors in Gaza to provide information as to the possible whereabouts and conditions of the missing Israelis and to take prompt action to facilitate their safe return to their families.

28. On 30 July, the Palestinian Authority announced a partial reshuffle of the current Government, appointing five new ministers. Hamas rejected the reshuffle, arguing that it was not in line with previous agreements.

29. Violence in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, continued. The causes included Israeli security operations, violence by Jewish extremists, protests and attacks against Israelis by Palestinians and religious tensions associated with the Haram al-Sharif/Temple Mount. The Israel Defense Forces conducted 4,236 search and arrest operations, resulting in 5,638 Palestinians being arrested. In the Occupied Palestinian Territory, a total of 27 Palestinian civilians were killed and 2,755 Palestinians injured. Seven Israeli civilians and one of the Israel Defense

Forces personnel were killed and 112 Israeli civilians and 60 Israeli security forces personnel were injured. The Palestinian Authority continued arrests of suspected Hamas affiliates in the West Bank.

30. Shortly after the beginning of the reporting period, the Government of Israel appeared to put on hold settlement planning and tendering in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. The so-called planning freeze was violated in July by the Government's decision to advance construction and "legalization" of hundreds of units. Settlement activity in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, is illegal under international law.

31. Settler violence has decreased since 2014. As the result of attacks by settlers 2 Palestinians were killed and 86 Palestinians, including 22 children, were injured during the reporting period. Four Israeli settlers were killed and 96 Israeli settlers were injured by Palestinians. The most egregious example of settler violence during the reporting period took place on 31 July, when Ali Dawabsha, a Palestinian toddler, was murdered and the members of his family severely injured during an attack on their home in the West Bank. Ali's father, Sa'ad Dawabsha, died from his wounds on 8 August. I condemned this despicable act of terror, as did the Security Council and the leadership of Israel. The incident led to violent demonstrations, resulting in clashes between Palestinians in the West Bank and the Israel Defense Forces, as well as attacks on Israeli civilians by Palestinians. In addition, rockets were fired at Israel from Gaza and subsequent Israeli airstrikes were conducted. As I have stated numerous times, the indiscriminate firing of rockets against Israeli civilian targets by Hamas and other militant groups in Gaza is a violation of international law.

32. The demolitions and evictions that took place in Area C of the West Bank are of deep concern and were condemned by the international community. Palestinians require access to a fair planning and zoning regime if they are not to resort to the building of unauthorized structures that lead to unjustified demolitions. During the reporting period, 441 structures were demolished, causing the displacement of some 632 Palestinians, including 344 children. I reiterate my concern about the fate of 7,000 Palestinian Bedouins and herders in the occupied West Bank, who may be at risk of forcible transfer as Israel advances its plan to relocate these communities in three sites in Area C. This plan, which may be linked to settlement expansion in E1 and other areas, would seriously jeopardize the realization of the two-State solution. Similarly, I repeat my deep concern over the Israeli demolition orders for Susiya. I am also concerned about the risk of a forcible transfer of the Um al-Kheir Bedouin refugee community after the recent demolition of five dwellings next to an Israeli settlement near Hebron. Demolitions and forcible transfers contravene international humanitarian law and international human rights law.

33. Tensions also continued in occupied East Jerusalem, especially in the autumn months of 2014. Escalating tensions surrounding access to the holy sites contributed significantly to the spike in violence. The shooting of a campaigner for Jewish prayer rights on the Haram al-Sharif/Temple Mount on 29 October was followed by a series of attacks in East Jerusalem, including clashes at the Noble Sanctuary. Restrictions on access to holy sites in the Old City were imposed on the Palestinians, leading to multiple clashes between worshippers and the Israeli security forces. King Abdullah of Jordan and United States Secretary of State Kerry organized separate meetings with President Abbas and Prime Minister Netanyahu in

Amman on 13 November. Both sides announced firm commitments to maintain the status quo regarding the holy sites.

34. As of August 2015, 370 Palestinians were held by Israeli authorities in administrative detention, compared with 477 at the beginning of the reporting period. I reiterate my long-standing position that those detained must be charged and brought to trial or released without delay. The Government's decision on 14 June, which was subsequently approved by the Knesset, to permit force-feeding of prisoners on hunger strike under certain conditions is in contravention of international conventions.

35. Palestinians continued to advance their State-building programme. Despite a strong international consensus that the Palestinian Authority was capable of running a State, the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee was concerned about its economic viability during the reporting period. It maintained that concerted action was urgently required to stabilize the fiscal position of the Palestinian Authority, which faces a deficit of approximately \$500 million for 2015, and to rekindle private sector-led economic growth. Efforts towards structural reform by the Palestinian Authority, including fiscal containment, and adequate and predictable assistance to the Government of Palestine by donors were considered essential to manage the deficit. The International Monetary Fund reported on 29 January that Palestinian economic activity had contracted in 2014 for the first time since 2006.

36. Israel has taken several steps to ease movement restrictions in the West Bank, including allowing entry into Israel without permit for Palestinian men over 55 and women over 50. Further measures were implemented during Ramadan, although they were later retracted owing to an escalation in violence. I also note positively that the number of Palestinians from the West Bank employed in Israel continued its rise of the past few years and is today at its highest since the beginning of the peace process in the early 1990s. I strongly encourage the Government of Israel to continue implementing measures that would facilitate sustainable growth and job creation for the Palestinian economy.

37. As noted in my last report, I remain seriously concerned about the lack of political progress and the high risk of an outbreak of violence between Israel and Palestinian militants. What is important now is for the international community to work together with the parties on the ground and in the region to create the conditions for a return to meaningful negotiations. In particular, I urge Israel to cease all settlement activity in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and to take further steps to ease the restrictions in place in the West Bank and Gaza. I also strongly encourage all Palestinians to pursue the path of non-violence and unity, in line with the PLO commitments, and call on them to make efforts to improve law and order, to combat extremism and incitement against Israel and to continue building strong and democratic institutions, which are essential to a viable, independent Palestinian State.

38. I would like to express my deep appreciation to the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Nickolay Mladenov, whom I appointed on 5 February, and his predecessor, Robert H. Serry, whom I thank for his outstanding performance during his seven-year tenure. I am also grateful to Pierre Krähenbühl for his able leadership as Commissioner-General of UNRWA. I pay tribute, too, to all United Nations staff who work in this area under difficult, at times dangerous, circumstances in the service of the United Nations. In May, Tony

Blair stepped down from his position as Quartet Representative for the Middle East. I reiterate my appreciation for his leadership over eight years.

39. As Secretary-General, I will continue to ensure that the United Nations works towards the establishment of an independent, democratic, contiguous and viable Palestinian State, living side by side in peace with a secure Israel, within the framework of a comprehensive regional settlement consistent with Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973), 1397 (2002), 1515 (2003) and 1860 (2009), and in accordance with the road map, the Arab Peace Initiative and the principle of land for peace.

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The present report is submitted in accordance with General Assembly resolution 70/15. It contains replies received from the parties concerned to the notes verbales sent by the Secretary-General pursuant to the request contained in paragraph 24 of the resolution. The report also contains the observations of the Secretary-General on the current state of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and on international efforts to move the peace process forward with a view to achieving a peaceful settlement. The report covers the period from September 2015 to August 2016.

* A/71/150.



I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 70/15.

2. On 1 July 2016, pursuant to the request contained in paragraph 24 of the above-mentioned resolution, I addressed the following letter to the President of the Security Council:

“I have the honour to refer to resolution 70/15, which the General Assembly adopted on 24 November 2015, at its seventieth session, under the agenda item ‘Question of Palestine’.

“Paragraph 24 of the resolution requests the Secretary-General to continue his efforts with the parties concerned, and in consultation with the Security Council, towards the attainment of a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine and the promotion of peace in the region and to submit to the General Assembly at its seventieth session a report on these efforts and on developments on this matter.

“In order to fulfil my reporting responsibilities under this resolution, I should be grateful if you would kindly convey to me the views of the Security Council by 31 July 2016.

“Recalling the Secretariat’s obligation to observe the page limit of its reports, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 52/214, I would like to encourage the Security Council to limit its submission to 1,500 words.”

3. As at 23 August, no response had been received to that request.

4. In a note verbale dated 23 May 2016 to the parties concerned, I sought the positions of the Governments of Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic, as well as the State of Palestine, regarding any steps taken by them to implement the relevant provisions of the resolution. As at 31 July 2016, replies had been received from Israel and the State of Palestine.

5. The note verbale dated 8 July 2016 from the Permanent Observer Mission of the State of Palestine to the United Nations reads as follows:

“General Assembly resolution 70/15, “Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine”, represents the latest contribution by the Assembly towards a just, comprehensive and peaceful solution to the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, based on international law and the relevant United Nations resolutions. The principles enshrined therein have been committed to by the international community for decades and continue to receive overwhelming support. The resolution reaffirms the global consensus calling for, inter alia, Israel’s complete withdrawal from the Palestinian territory occupied since June 1967, including East Jerusalem; achievement of the two-State solution of an independent, sovereign, contiguous and viable State of Palestine, living side by side with Israel in peace and security within recognized borders based on the pre-1967 borders; and a just solution for the Palestine refugees based on resolution 194 (III).

“The Palestinian commitment to the principles and objectives of the resolution has been firm and consistent; the Palestinian leadership has

continuously called for the implementation of its provisions and of other relevant United Nations resolutions, striving at every juncture to promote a just peace. For over a quarter century, Palestine's position has mirrored this global consensus, beginning with the Palestine National Council's formal acceptance of the two-State solution in the 1988 Declaration of Independence of the State of Palestine through all legislative efforts and peace initiatives thereafter to the present day, as attested to by ongoing Palestinian calls and efforts for peace. This major compromise to establish the State of Palestine on only 22 per cent of our historic homeland, for the sake of realizing the Palestinian right to self-determination and our people's other inalienable rights and ending the conflict, is indeed the primary testament to Palestine's commitment to peace.

"This commitment has held, in spite of the grave trials faced by the Palestinian people in the long years of their plight, in spite of the fact that the injustice inflicted upon them in the first half of the twentieth century — marked most dramatically by the adoption of the partition resolution, General Assembly resolution 181 (II), in 1947 and the tragedy of Al-Nakba of 1948 and followed by the onset of the Israeli foreign military occupation of the remainder of Palestine in June 1967 — continues to this day with striking intensity. Indeed, in a year marking several regrettable anniversaries, including the forty-ninth year of the Israeli occupation and the onset of its fiftieth year and the ninth year of the Israeli blockade of the Gaza Strip and the onset of its tenth year, peace remains as elusive as ever.

"While international support and solidarity for the Palestinian people and their just cause has been constant, the political courage and will to implement the relevant Security Council and General Assembly resolutions have regrettably been absent in the face of Israel's total disrespect for international law, including international humanitarian law and human rights law. The failure to hold Israel accountable and compel its compliance with the law has undermined all peace initiatives and further destabilized the situation on the ground, exacerbating a deplorable humanitarian, socioeconomic and security situation and compounding the conflict.

"The prolonged occupation and conflict have caused vast suffering for the Palestinian people, scarring one generation after another, among them millions of Palestine refugees denied their right of return. Over 5.3 million Palestinians, spanning more than three generations, are registered with the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, with millions of them continuing to live in the camps originally established in the region following Al-Nakba, including in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and the Occupied Palestinian Territory, and millions of them are dependent on the Agency's assistance for their survival and well-being. While the volatility and unsustainability of the situation are widely acknowledged, this has regrettably not compelled the necessary international response.

"As the Security Council has failed to uphold its duties under the Charter of the United Nations on this issue and the Quartet has equally failed to uphold its declared commitments, the Israeli Government has taken full advantage of the international paralysis. Israel has entrenched its occupation, particularly by means of its illegal settlement campaign throughout Occupied Palestine,

including and especially in and around occupied East Jerusalem. Jerusalem also continues to be subjected to incitement by Israeli officials and religious leaders and provocations and violence by Israeli settlers and Jewish extremists against Muslim and Christian holy sites, particularly targeting the Haram al-Sharif, which houses the Al-Aqsa Mosque, further inflaming tensions and threatening to precipitate a dangerous religious conflict.

“At the same time, Israel has intensified its measures of repression against the Palestinian civilian population under its control, most flagrantly by its illegal, inhumane blockade of Gaza, in collective punishment of the entire Palestinian civilian population there, gravely breaching its obligations under the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War (Fourth Geneva Convention) to ensure their safety, protection and well-being. These also constitute violations of the relevant United Nations resolutions, the applicable provisions of human rights conventions and of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, and the 2004 advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice.

“Palestinian hardships have multiplied as Palestinians have tragically been left unprotected, denied their rights and exposed to systematic human rights violations. In the past year, such violations have included, but are not limited to, the loss of more than 210 civilian lives and the injury of thousands in violent Israeli military raids, with young people in particular being viciously targeted since the recent cycle of violence began in October 2015; daily arrest and detention operations and the continued imprisonment of thousands of Palestinians, including children and women, who are routinely exposed to physical and psychological abuse and torture; and severe restrictions on movement and other fundamental freedoms; as well as countless other violations, including those stemming from Israel’s active colonization of the Occupied Palestinian Territory by means of its construction and expansion of settlements and the wall, demolition of Palestinian homes and measures to dispossess them of their private property and agricultural lands, forced displacement and exploitation of their natural resources. These violations are being perpetrated jointly and non-stop by the occupying Power and its military occupying forces and extremist, terrorist settlers.

“Despite all the above, and the diminishing faith of the Palestinian people in the international system in general and the possibility of the two-State solution in particular, Palestine’s commitment to peace persists, rooted in a deep conviction in international law, the inevitability of justice and the imperatives of peace and security. The Palestinian Government, led by President Mahmoud Abbas, has continued in the past year to appeal for international action to advance a peaceful solution and to cooperate with regional and international efforts to overcome the political deadlock and create a credible horizon for resolving the conflict. The urgency of achieving a peaceful settlement and creating the conditions conducive for its realization are clearly set forth in the provisions of resolution 70/15, and those provisions are fully respected by Palestine, which actively strives for its implementation in its actions, multilaterally and bilaterally, and in its internal governance efforts.

“This has included, inter alia, Palestine’s accessions in recent years to numerous international treaties and covenants, reconfirming its commitment to the rule of law at the international and national levels and underscoring Palestine’s intention to use all peaceful, political, legal and non-violent tools to achieve the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including to self-determination. It has also involved Palestine’s full cooperation with regional efforts to advance peace in line with the Arab Peace Initiative and its support for the initiative of France, along with regional and international partners, to convene an international support group for Palestinian-Israeli peace and organize an international peace conference to that end. It has additionally included steps to restore Palestinian unity, as attempts continue to promote reconciliation and empower the national consensus government to fulfil its duties, recognizing the importance of unity for achieving peace.

“Such efforts have been consistently pursued despite the innumerable challenges arising from Israel’s half-century foreign occupation. In this regard, it must be noted that, aside from its illegal plans and practices aimed at repression of the Palestinian population and de facto annexation of the Palestinian land, the occupying Power has also acted to deliberately undermine the functioning of the Palestinian Government, including by withholding tax revenues, inciting against the Palestinian leadership and inflammatory rhetoric and cynical actions to thwart Palestinian unity.

“Consequently, despite efforts by Palestine, States from around the world, inter-governmental organizations and civil society partners in the past year, the political impasse, which began in April 2014 with the breakdown of American-led peace talks, following Israel’s suspension of negotiations, continues to the present. That impasse has been hardened by the intransigence of the Israeli Government, which continues its rejection and obstruction of all peace efforts, casting serious doubts on its intentions and claimed commitment to peace, continues to settle and colonize Palestine, effectively destroying the two-State solution and continues its blockade of Gaza and its isolation from the West Bank and the rest of the world, imprisoning the entire population and impeding reconstruction and recovery from its criminal military aggressions of recent years.

“Here, it is relevant to recall that Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu publicly pledged in 2015 that there would be no Palestinian State as long as he was Prime Minister, a position he has clearly adhered to. This position, along with even more negative, virulent sentiments, has been reiterated by Israeli Government officials in repeated provocative declarations, inflammatory and racist rhetoric and incitement against the Palestinian people and their leadership. Moreover, Israel continues to fabricate empty and false pretexts, focused mainly on its own security narrative and disregard for the Palestinian right to security, and continues to impose unjust, unilateral conditions, all designed to maintain its illegal occupation, rather than reversing it and advancing peace efforts on the basis of the parameters rooted in the Security Council resolutions. The past year has again proven that Israel only pays lip service to peace while it vigorously sabotages the two-State solution with blatant disrespect for the law and contempt for the international community.

“While stoking tensions and deepening anger and mistrust, this has not, however, undermined Palestine’s adherence to the path of peace or inhibited its constant outreach urging the international community, foremost the Security Council, to act in line with international legal obligations and commitments, as prescribed by the relevant United Nations resolutions, including resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), the Madrid principles, including the principle of ‘land for peace’, and the Arab Peace Initiative. The Palestinian leadership has been unrelenting in its appeals to the international community to help the parties to make peace based on the longstanding parameters of the two-State solution, repeatedly calling for setting a time frame to end the Israeli occupation that began in 1967 and achieve the independence of the State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital, a just solution for the plight of the Palestine refugees and guarantees of international support for the implementation of a future peace agreement.

“In every single official communication to the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Secretary-General we have sought to draw urgent attention to the grave breaches of international law being perpetrated by Israel and have equally appealed for action to compel a halt to its crimes and violations. Simultaneously, we have acted to galvanize international efforts to salvage peace prospects and preserve the two-State solution, in conformity with the international consensus, as enshrined in resolution 70/15 and other relevant United Nations resolutions. Our appeals are in full accord with the law and requirements of peace and justice, not baseless claims or desires.

“But, after five decades of occupation and the steep decline of the situation, Palestinian patience, hopes and convictions in peace are fading away, especially among our young people. After years of restraint — years witnessing the deterioration of conditions to dangerous levels, years of unquantifiable loss and suffering for the Palestinian people, years of the two-State solution’s erosion and years of direct damage to Security Council credibility and the rule of law — we can no longer wait and must sound an alarm; the opportunities for peace are slipping away and the international community must act before it is too late. We cannot accept pretexts, domestic or otherwise, that attempt to rationalize the irrational and sanctify the illegitimate, permitting the violation of the law and our people’s rights with total impunity. The Israeli Government is making a mockery of international law and the international calls for an end to its occupation of Palestine and is intentionally thwarting a peaceful settlement, to the detriment of our people, the Middle East region and the global community, and it must be held accountable. Peace is contingent on this.

“We will thus continue calling upon the Security Council to uphold its duties under the Charter of the United Nations and implement its own resolutions. The Council must answer the global calls to redress this open, bleeding wound by upholding international law and its own obligations to advance a peaceful solution to assist the Palestinian people to finally realize the freedom, rights and justice they have been denied and help to establish Palestinian-Israeli peace and security. Palestine pledges cooperation with all efforts for this objective, stressing the international responsibilities in this regard and the need for collective efforts and genuine multilateral processes and support to bring this to fruition.

“Only international law can ensure that negotiations aimed at resolving the final status issues — Jerusalem, Palestine refugees, settlements, borders, security, prisoners and water — actually result in a just, sustainable peace. Cycles of failed negotiations and initiatives have taught hard lessons that must be heeded. Peace can never be achieved by military might, illegal practices and bad faith, and a people can never be coerced to forgo their rights, regardless of the misery, indignities and deprivation forced upon them.

“To prevent further destabilization in a region experiencing great turmoil, to stem the human suffering and keep the window open for peace, Palestine will continue to act and call for measures in line with international law, the relevant United Nations resolutions and the permanent international responsibility towards the question of Palestine until it is resolved justly in all aspects. Peace requires a human rights perspective and a justice perspective, not just a security perspective. The occupying Power cannot continue to be appeased while the occupied people continue to suffer and to be denied inalienable human rights, including to self-determination and freedom. The root causes and underlying issues of the conflict must be redressed. Accountability for crimes is imperative.

“The plight of the Palestinian people — from Occupied Palestine to our refugee camps in the region, especially in Syria — is an existential crisis urgently demanding a just solution. The Security Council in particular is duty-bound to address this conflict, which continues to threaten international peace and security, and must act towards bringing a definitive end to the occupation and conflict and securing a just and lasting peace. Until then, as political efforts continue to be exerted, action must also be taken to ensure protection for the Palestinian people under Israel’s occupation and alleviate their humanitarian plight, as the occupying Power continues to violate its obligations to ensure their safety and well-being and is the source of their insecurity and suffering.

“While calling upon the Security Council, we also reiterate our appeal to the General Assembly to uphold its legal, political and moral responsibilities, as reflected in resolution 70/15 and prior resolutions. We also recall relevant declarations by the conference of High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention and obligations in this regard. Moreover, we reaffirm the importance of the Arab Peace Initiative and its promise for opening doors to a new era of peace, stability and cooperation for our shared aspirations and challenges. Israel must be called upon to cease obstructing peace and to reciprocate this historic initiative.

“The Palestinian Government remains ready to make peace, based on resolution 70/15 and all other relevant United Nations resolutions. On this basis, we will continue cooperating with international efforts to promote a just solution that will achieve the independence of the State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital, and the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including the Palestine refugees, and achieve lasting Palestinian-Israeli peace, security and coexistence.”

6. The note verbale dated 15 July 2016 from the Permanent Mission of Israel to the United Nations reads as follows:

“As shown in the meeting records, Israel voted against this resolution, as it has done on similar resolutions adopted in the past by the General Assembly. Assembly resolution 70/15 joins the numerous one-sided resolutions passed annually, and automatically, by the General Assembly, which only serve to undermine the credibility of the United Nations as an impartial agent for the advancement of peace.

“The State of Israel continuously strives to attain a peaceful settlement of the conflict with the Palestinians and to promote peace in the region. Time and time again, Israel has demonstrated to the international community its commitment to finding a long-lasting solution to the conflict. General Assembly resolution 70/15 overlooks the steps Israel has taken, and continues to take, to end the conflict.

“At the same time, General Assembly resolution 70/15 fails to examine the situation objectively, disregarding the role played by the Palestinians in making it more difficult to attain a peaceful resolution to the conflict, in particular Palestinian incitement to violence.

“Since 13 September 2015, 40 people have been killed in Palestinian terrorist attacks in Israel and 517 people (including 4 Palestinians) have been injured. There have been 156 stabbing attacks (including 76 attempted attacks), 98 shootings, 46 vehicular (ramming) attacks and one bus bombing.

“These acts of terrorism did not take place in a vacuum. They are a direct result of the continuous Palestinian incitement. The report of the Middle East Quartet emphasized that continuing violence, recent acts of terrorism against Israelis and incitement to violence is fundamentally incompatible with advancing a peaceful two-State solution.

“The hateful rhetoric of the Palestinian leadership begins at the top. In his recent speech to the European Parliament, on 23 June 2016, President Abbas himself repeated an outrageous lie that Israel seeks to poison the Palestinians’ water supply. He said that certain rabbis in Israel have said very clearly to their government that our water should be poisoned in order to have Palestinians killed. This vicious slander is rooted in centuries-old fabricated accusations against Jews for poisoning wells. It is a blood libel.

“There cannot be any progress for peace, unless the Palestinian leadership puts an end to terror and incitement and finally agrees to direct, face-to-face negotiations. Prime Minister Netanyahu has said repeatedly that he would meet with President Abbas, any time, any place, to work to end the conflict, yet Abbas has made his refusal clear.

“The only way to achieve peace for the region is by building a strong foundation. This foundation must consist of three pillars, an end to all terrorism and incitement, ending the Palestinian refusal to recognize Israel as the nation State of the Jewish people and Palestinian willingness to directly negotiate with Israel.

“In August 2005, Israel dismantled its settlements and military presence and disengaged from the Gaza Strip. Rather than using this opportunity for

development, Hamas took advantage of Israel's absence to launch terror attacks from Gaza against Israeli citizens. Terror activities escalated further after Hamas took control of the Gaza Strip in 2006. Despite Israel's withdrawal from the Gaza Strip in 2005, Hamas has continued to target Israeli civilians with thousands of rockets. Hamas' unprovoked attacks are not the consequence of efforts to seek redress of legitimate grievances, as some claim. Rather, they are a consequence of Hamas' guiding ideology.

"Hamas is a virulently anti-Semitic organization, whose very charter calls upon Muslims to kill Jews. Hamas is not dedicated to improving the plight of the people of Gaza. Instead, its goal is nothing less than the destruction of Israel, no matter the cost to the Palestinian population.

"Despite the relentless and acute threats to its security, Israel is actively working to support reconstruction efforts in the Gaza Strip. Israel has intensified its cooperation with the international community in general, and with the United Nations in particular, and with the Palestinian Authority to facilitate sustainable infrastructural and economic development in Gaza, in order to meet both the short-term and long-term needs of the civilian population. Since October 2014, over 5 million tons of building material have been transferred to Gaza, within the United Nations sponsored Gaza Reconstruction Mechanism, including 872,000 tons of cement and 157,000 tons of iron.

"Israel continues its enabling policy towards the Palestinian population, in spite of the ongoing Palestinian violence. This policy is based on the conviction that developing economic growth and good governance capabilities not only gives support to the sustainability of the Palestinian Authority but can boost the hope for a better future for both parties, as well as encourage the security and stability of all countries in the region.

"During the past year, since the formation of the current Israeli Government in May 2015, the Ministry of Finance has dramatically increased its efforts to promote economic cooperation and development with the Palestinian Authority. Those efforts include high-level meetings between ministers and high ranking officials. For example, there have been a series of four direct meetings between Palestinian Authority Finance Minister Bishara and Israeli Finance Minister Kahlon. These meetings, which were held in a pragmatic atmosphere, tackled some of the issues that were raised in the latest World Bank and International Monetary Fund reports and launched an intensive promotion of new plans for economic development and the forwarding of substantial funds; an amount of \$130 million was transferred to the Palestinian Authority in order to build trust and help it to achieve fiscal stability. In addition, the Prime Minister of Israel has authorized the connection of the first power station, to be established in Jenin, to Israeli gas infrastructure. Israel is also following the implementation of the 3G frequencies allocation agreement, signed with the Palestinian Authority last November.

"The year 2015 was a year of increased movement of people and merchandise from the West Bank in to Israel to Jordan and the rest of the world. In 2015, an increase of 27 per cent in truck crossings on the Allenby Bridge was registered; over 43,000 trucks have crossed from the West Bank into Jordan and beyond, exporting and importing. The movement of people on

the bridge has surpassed 2 million crossings and an increase of 4.3 per cent was registered. Additionally, 15 million entries of Palestinian residents from the West Bank into Israel were registered last year — a number which indicates an increase of 30 per cent.

“Israel has been making tremendous efforts, while taking tremendous risks, towards the reconstruction of Gaza and the improvement of the humanitarian situation of its civilian population, putting emphasis on infrastructure issues such as water and energy, as well as employment issues.

“Due to the centrality of water and energy issues, Israel has expressed its support for the establishment of a desalination plant in the Gaza Strip, and has issued two letters to that effect, both to the Palestinian Authority and to the international community.

“In parallel, Israel is cooperating with the Quartet task force on the connection of Gaza to Israeli gas sources, aiming at having these two projects, a desalination plant and a connection to gas sources, developed together so that one can provide for the other. Until the long-term solution of a desalination plant is operational, for the medium term, Israel supports the establishment of small-scale desalination units.

“Regarding Gaza’s reconstruction, great progress has been made. Over 5 million tons of construction materials have entered Gaza through the Gaza Reconstruction Mechanism, of which there were over 4 million tons of aggregates, 872,000 tons of cement and 157,000 tons of iron. A total of 130,000 homes that were partially damaged during Operation Protective Edge were approved for repair. Of these, repairs have already been completed on over 80,000 homes, and more than 20,000 are under way.

“The second stage of Gaza’s reconstruction has begun, with almost 13,000 residential units authorized for complete reconstruction, and over 2,500 of them have already purchased all the necessary building material to start work. Additionally, 790 public projects such as roads, schools, clinics and mosques have been approved, with 124 of them already completed.

“Israel is investing \$10 million in the expansion of the Kerem Shalom commercial crossing to increase its capacity to 1,000 truck crossings per day. The enlarged capacity will enable the expansion of exports from Gaza, which currently include agricultural products both to Israel and to the West Bank, fish, textiles, metal scraps and furniture.

“In line with the intention to increase exports from Gaza, for the first time in a decade, Israel has extended the fishing zone in the south of Gaza to 9 miles. This will enable Gazan fishermen to exhaust the fishing season, which will boost Gaza’s economy with an additional estimated income of \$100,000.

“Recently, the construction of a second commercial crossing between Israel and the Gaza Strip was approved, and a work crew has embarked upon planning the establishment of such a crossing, as part of the Erez crossing. This project will significantly improve the efficiency of the movement of goods to and from Gaza. Israel is taking all these measures and making the Gaza Reconstruction Mechanism a more efficient and enabling mechanism for the benefit and welfare of the people of the Gaza Strip.

“Israel will not, however, tolerate the abuse of the Gaza Reconstruction Mechanism by the terror organization Hamas, which is stealing and confiscating building materials meant for the reconstruction of Gaza. Those stolen materials are being diverted for the construction of tunnels used in attacks against Israel, rearmament and rocket experiments, in preparing their next assault on Israel. We demand that the 7,000 tons of cement stolen by Hamas be returned so that it can be used for its original purpose.

“As part of the humanitarian effort, and parallel to the increase in the number of crossings of commercial goods, there was an increase in the number of people crossing at the Erez crossing in 2015. Over 360,000 movements, including of patients going for treatment in Israel, students, worshipers going for Friday prayers on Temple Mount, family members of prisoners going for visits and an increased number of 5,000 businessmen with daily permits, entered Israel. All this is taking place while the Egyptian Rafah crossing is closed during most of the year, due to the Palestinian Authority’s refusal to assume its responsibilities.

“It is important to note that for the past five years, all types of foodstuffs, as well as all consumer and other goods, have been allowed to enter Gaza from Israel. The only prohibited items are weapons and a short list of dual-use items that can be exploited for use in terrorist acts.

“Israel is facilitating construction projects in Gaza, including housing (since Operation Protective Edge, over 127,000 houses have been approved for repair, of which 81,000 have been completed) and schools, clinics and infrastructure projects. Such projects may be initiated and funded by international organizations, foreign States, the Palestinian Authority or private entities.

“Israel has undertaken these measures, and many more, despite the major security risks they pose. In the past, Hamas (an internationally recognized terror organization) has diverted massive amounts of aid and imported goods for use in its terrorist infrastructure. For instance, building materials worth tens of millions of dollars were diverted by Hamas for the construction of their cross-border tunnels, which were used to attack Israel during the summer 2014 conflict. Hamas continues to pursue its efforts to rearm, expand its rocket arsenal and construct the infrastructure it plans to use in its next attack on Israel.

“Despite Israel’s best efforts, some reconstruction is being hindered by forces beyond its control. Delays in reconstruction predominantly stem from the actions of Hamas, which controls Gaza, and the conflict between this terrorist organization and the Palestinian Authority. For example, Hamas refuses to allow the Palestinian Authority to take security and civilian responsibility for the Palestinian side of Gaza’s border crossings with Israel and Egypt. Furthermore, Hamas continues to misappropriate construction materials for use in terrorist infrastructure. For its part, the Palestinian Authority wants to weaken the Hamas regime, and this goal appears to be influencing the pace and extent of its reconstruction activities.

“The Palestinian Authority is not only obstructing the reconstruction of the physical infrastructure in Gaza, it has failed to construct a credible

political infrastructure. The path to a peaceful settlement requires good governance and leadership responsive to the will of the people, yet the President of the Palestinian Authority, Mahmoud Abbas, is in his eleventh year of a five-year term.

“The aforementioned steps taken by the State of Israel attest to its commitment to a peaceful resolution to the conflict. However, this commitment has not been reciprocated. On the one hand, Hamas has, time and time again, chosen to invest in terror, not peace. On the other hand, the Palestinian Authority is avoiding its responsibility for the people it claims to represent and fails to lay the foundations for good governance and peace.

“The State of Israel reiterates its willingness for an agreement in accord with the principles of two States for two Peoples and acknowledges the important role played by the Quartet in this matter. Israel calls upon the Palestinian Authority to reaffirm its adherence to the achievement of a permanent and comprehensive resolution of the conflict, by engaging in confidence-building measures and bilateral agreements in lieu of unilateral declarative actions in various multinational forums.”

II. Observations

7. International efforts to promote the peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine continued to focus on creating a framework for the parties' return to meaningful negotiations, in particular through the renewed efforts of the Quartet and other international initiatives. There were no direct peace process-related talks between the two leaderships, which continued to disagree over the terms for a resumption of formal negotiations.

8. During most of the reporting period, the situation on the ground was characterized by heightened tensions and higher levels of violence than in the previous year, as well as by a rise in demolitions and settlement activity in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. In Gaza, a fragile ceasefire largely held, but the situation remained volatile, mostly owing to worsening socioeconomic conditions, delays in reconstruction, deterioration in the internal security situation, continued restrictions in movement and the deepening political divide between the Palestinian authorities in Gaza and the West Bank.

9. On 10 September, the General Assembly adopted resolution 69/320, in which it decided that the flags of non-member observer States at the United Nations maintaining permanent observer missions at Headquarters should be raised at Headquarters and United Nations offices. I witnessed, with the President of the State of Palestine, Mahmoud Abbas, the raising of the Palestinian flag for the first time at Headquarters, on 30 September.

10. Over the past year, the Quartet has been actively engaged in seeking a way forward out of the deadlock in negotiations between Israel and the State of Palestine. Quartet envoys held consultations with Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, the Arab League, the Gulf Cooperation Council and key international partners on how to preserve the two-State solution and establish conditions for the parties to return to meaningful negotiations. The determination of those regional partners to play a constructive role was highlighted in all discussions.

11. The Quartet principals met on 30 September in New York, joined by a number of interested regional and international stakeholders, including France, Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and the Arab League. At that meeting, participants expressed serious concern about the trends unfolding on the ground and strong support for taking significant steps that would help to stabilize the situation, show meaningful progress towards a two-State solution and restore the belief among Palestinians and Israelis that a negotiated peace remained possible. The Quartet principals met on 23 October in Vienna to discuss ways to de-escalate tensions in the aftermath of clashes at holy sites in Jerusalem. On 17 December, Quartet envoys met Israeli and Palestinian officials in Jerusalem and reiterated the urgent need for taking significant steps to strengthen Palestinian institutions, security and economic prospects, while addressing Israel's security concerns. The principals met again on 12 February in Munich, Germany, and agreed that the envoys should prepare a report on the status quo and threats to the two-State solution, including recommendations on the way forward.

12. The report of the Quartet (S/2016/595, annex) was issued on 7 July. In its conclusions, the Quartet noted the three current trends that are dangerously imperilling the viability of a two-State solution: (1) continuing violence, terrorism and incitement; (2) continuing settlement expansion, land designations and denial of Palestinian development; and (3) situation in Gaza and the lack of control of Gaza by the Palestinian Authority. The report contains recommendations for both sides on all three trends with a view to building international consensus on the way forward. Although both sides have criticized the report's content, I urge the parties to engage with the Quartet on its implementation, given that it presents a path to restoring hope for a negotiated settlement.

13. In the report, the Quartet also welcomed the efforts of France to pursue peace as complementary to its own work. On 3 June, I joined the ministerial conference held in Paris to reaffirm the Organization's commitment to a negotiated two-State solution and to discuss how the United Nations can support constructively both parties in achieving that goal. I welcome the efforts of Egypt in the context of the Arab Peace Initiative, including the visit in July by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Egypt to the State of Palestine and Israel. It is critical to ensure that all international initiatives are closely synchronized with and complementary to the work of the Quartet.

14. My visit to Israel and the State of Palestine on 27 and 28 June aimed at encouraging positive progress in that direction. I urged both leaders to take definitive and courageous steps to restore a political horizon and stressed that continued violence and incitement were incompatible with advancing a negotiated two-State solution.

15. Violence in the West Bank, including in occupied East Jerusalem, increased significantly from October 2015 onward owing to escalating tensions surrounding access to the holy sites. On 13 September, the Israeli police entered the area outside the Haram al-Sharif/Temple Mount allegedly to head off attempts by extremists to disrupt visits by non-Muslim tourists. Clashes ensued and continued for three days in the compound. Accounts of those incidents were widely shared, across the Muslim world and beyond, with regional and international calls for the preservation of the historic status quo and law and order at the compound, in line with the

agreements between Israel and Jordan, as custodian of the Islamic holy sites in Jerusalem.

16. The Security Council held an emergency session on 16 October, when the State of Palestine reiterated its request for action to ensure the protection of Palestinians, calling for the implementation of Security Council resolution 904 (1994) and all other pertinent resolutions. At the request of Council members, I circulated a compendium, prepared by the Office of Legal Affairs, of historical examples of territories administered by the League of Nations and the United Nations (see [S/2015/809](#), annex).

17. Subsequent to my visit to the region, on 20 and 21 October, and the meeting between the Secretary of State of the United States of America, John Kerry, and the Prime Minister of Israel, Benjamin Netanyahu, the Prime Minister of Israel reiterated Israel's commitment to uphold the status quo with regard to the holy sites, agreeing to strengthen security arrangements with the Hashemite custodianship of the Islamic holy sites in Jerusalem (Jordanian Waqf). I appreciate the continued role and support of Jordan, as custodian of the Islamic holy sites in Jerusalem.

18. High levels of violence and a polarized public discourse across the spectrum in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory continued throughout the reporting period. Stabbings, vehicle attacks and shootings by Palestinians targeting Israeli civilians and clashes between Palestinians and Israeli security forces continued to claim lives. During the reporting period, a total of 224 Palestinians were killed, 159 of whom were perpetrators or alleged perpetrators of attacks. A total of 16,873 Palestinians were injured (1,518 in Gaza, 15,346 in the West Bank and 9 in Israel), many from smoke inhalation during demonstrations. Thirty-one Israeli civilians and 15 security forces personnel were killed, and 255 Israeli civilians and 89 security forces personnel were injured.

19. The level of force used in countering some of the violence is also a matter of concern. A number of incidents, some of which were captured on video and widely disseminated, call into question the nature of the response of Israeli security forces, including the apparent disproportionate use of lethal force as a first resort. I have consistently reminded Israeli authorities that live fire should be used only as a last resort, in situations of imminent threat to life or serious injury. It is their duty to ensure a prompt and independent investigation into incidents in which use of force resulted in death or injury and accountability where there is evidence of wrongdoing.

20. I reiterate the firm condemnation by the United Nations of all terrorist attacks. Leaders on all sides have the responsibility to stop incitement and to consistently and unequivocally stand against acts of terror and violence in all forms.

21. Settler violence has decreased since my previous report ([A/70/354-S/2015/677](#)). During the reporting period, there were 145 settler-related incidents that resulted in Palestinian injuries, marking a 5 per cent decrease compared with the previous year. There were 77 settler-related incidents resulting in damage to Palestinian property, also marking a decrease, of 47 per cent, compared with the previous year.

22. Throughout the reporting period, the Israeli Defense Force conducted 4,662 search and arrest operations, resulting in the arrest of 7,013 Palestinians. The

Palestinian Authority continued arrests of suspected Hamas affiliates in the West Bank.

23. After almost a year of a so-called “planning freeze” for settlements in 2014, the rates of settlement planning and issuance of tenders for construction in the West Bank and East Jerusalem rose in the past year. During the reporting period, Israeli authorities advanced plans for 3,219 housing units in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, with 544 of them having reached the final stage of approval. The Government declared 580 acres in the West Bank as “State land” on 10 March 2016. Settlement activity in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, is illegal under international law. The continued making of settlement plans and the retroactive legalizations of settlements signal that Israel’s strategic settlement enterprise continues to expand into land intended for a future Palestinian State.

24. Demolitions of Palestinian homes in Area C of the occupied West Bank continue. The total number of demolitions spiked during the first three months of 2016. During the reporting period, 856 structures were demolished, leading to the displacement of 1,413 Palestinians, including 665 children. Although many of the demolished structures were not dwellings, the loss of water wells, solar panels and animal shelters had an impact on the livelihoods of over 5,120 people. The Bedouin community, in particular, is paying a heavy price. I reiterate the call of the United Nations for an immediate end to those Israeli plans, which, if implemented, may amount to the forcible transfer of the Bedouin communities currently living within the Occupied Palestinian Territory on the periphery of Jerusalem. Palestinians require access to a fair planning and zoning regime, so as not to resort to the building of unauthorized structures that lead to unjustified demolitions by Israeli authorities, which often affect the most vulnerable people. Demolitions and forcible transfers contravene international humanitarian and human rights law.

25. As at April 2016, 692 Palestinians were being held by Israeli authorities under administrative detention, compared with 370 at the beginning of the reporting period. For the first time since 2011, in October 2015, Israel resumed its use of administrative detention against Palestinian minor children. Israel is currently holding over 400 Palestinian children on security grounds. This figure, the highest since January 2008 when the Israeli Prison Service began releasing data, has more than doubled since the outbreak of violence in October 2015. I am troubled by the high participation of Palestinian young people and children in the recent wave of violence, however, any response by Israeli security forces must adhere to international legal standards. I am especially concerned about the reports of detainees on a hunger strike. I reiterate my call to end the practice of administrative detention and to either charge all detainees or immediately release them.

26. I am also concerned by the continued punitive demolitions of homes belonging to families of Palestinian perpetrators or alleged perpetrators of attacks against Israelis. Punitive demolitions are a form of collective punishment, which is prohibited under international law. They are unproven as a deterrent, and they fuel tensions by exacerbating feelings of injustice and hatred.

27. Palestinians continued to advance their State-building programme, albeit limited to the territory under the Palestinian Authority’s control, which excludes Area C, East Jerusalem and Gaza. Notwithstanding strong international consensus that the Palestinian Authority was capable of running a State, the Ad Hoc Liaison

Committee for the Coordination of the International Assistance to Palestinians remains concerned about its fiscal and economic viability. With a deficit of \$480 million in June, the World Bank projects that the Palestine Authority's total deficit for 2016 will reach \$1.327 billion or 9.8 per cent of gross domestic product. In its meeting on 19 April 2016, the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee committed to developing a two-year strategy to address the Palestinian Authority's fiscal and long-term economic sustainability.

28. On 21 June, the Government of the State of Palestine called for municipal elections to be held 8 October. On 15 July, Hamas announced its participation and asked for guarantees that the results would be recognized and that elected councils in Gaza and West Bank would be entitled to budget allocations and projects by the donor community.

29. I strongly encourage Israel to continue implementing measures that would facilitate sustainable growth and job creation for the Palestinian economy. The Quartet has consistently called upon Israel to implement positive and significant policy shifts, in particular in Area C, consistent with the transition to greater Palestinian civil authority contemplated by prior agreements. Progress in the areas of housing, water, energy, communications, agriculture and natural resources can be made while respecting Israel's legitimate security needs.

30. In Gaza, the humanitarian situation remains dire. Approximately 66,000 people remain internally displaced in transitional shelters. A total of 47 per cent of Palestinian households in the Gaza Strip are food insecure, and ongoing water deficiencies result in 40 per cent of the population receiving access to the water supply for only 5 to 8 hours every three to four days. In addition, electricity is unavailable for 16 to 18 hours each day. Palestinian access to depart and enter Gaza remains insufficient, which especially affects access to medical treatment. These conditions exacerbate the record high unemployment rates and chronic aid dependency.

31. Persistent security and governance challenges and funding shortages notwithstanding, the reconstruction process has continued. More than 90 per cent of damaged schools and hospitals have been repaired, while repairs have either been completed or are under way on about half of all partially damaged homes. Notwithstanding those improvements, the reconstruction of homes that were completely destroyed during the 2014 hostilities remains slow. I strongly encourage all Member States to fulfil their commitments to support the reconstruction and development of Gaza. I welcome and encourage the continuation of Israel's constructive cooperation with the Gaza Reconstruction Mechanism. I reiterate that the Mechanism was designed as a temporary measure and that the ultimate objective of the United Nations in Gaza continues to be the lifting of all closures within the framework of Security Council resolution 1860 (2009) and in a manner that addresses Israel's legitimate security concerns.

32. Repairing damage from the most recent hostilities, however, will not fix the underlying chronic problems of Gaza. The Palestinian Government has set out an ambitious \$3.8 billion plan for repairing damage from the 2014 conflict and getting recovery under way in Gaza. To implement the humanitarian response plan for 2016, which aims at addressing the humanitarian needs of 1.6 million Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank, it has requested \$571 million. The appeal represents a 19 per cent reduction from 2015, but remains elevated owing largely to Gaza's

significant humanitarian needs. I strongly encourage all Member States that have not done so to fulfil their commitments without delay. I remain concerned that limited crossing capacity and a range of other restrictions, along with a lack of Palestinian unity, mean that significant improvement in Gaza's humanitarian situation and overall economy remains unlikely.

33. If the underlying causes of previous conflicts are not addressed, conditions in Gaza will only worsen with the risk of further violence and radicalization. The security implications of the persistent pressures continue to be felt. As at 22 August, Palestinian militants in Gaza fired a total of 92 rockets at Israel, 27 of which impacted in Israel, none of which caused injuries during the reporting period. The Israel Defense Force reportedly retaliated with a total of 56 air strikes in Gaza, causing five deaths and nine injuries. I call upon all Palestinian factions on the ground not to engage in activities that risk destabilizing the situation and undermining the reconstruction process.

34. I welcomed the decision of Egypt to open the Rafah crossing on four occasions, from 14 to 16 February, 11 to 12 May, 1 to 6 June and 29 June to 2 July. I encourage Egypt to explore ways to facilitate more frequent and predictable openings of the crossing, in particular for humanitarian purposes, while respecting Egypt's legitimate and pressing security concerns in the Sinai.

35. I remain worried about the state of human rights and freedoms in Gaza. Of particular concern are the reports of arbitrary detention and ill treatment in detention centres in Gaza. In May, Hamas announced plans to implement a number of death sentences and carried out three executions of Palestinians. Such actions were condemned by my Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, who called for a moratorium on the death penalty. I call upon the de facto authorities in Gaza to refrain from carrying out further executions. I also urge the Palestinian Authority to fulfil its responsibilities with full respect for international human rights laws.

36. During my recent visit to Israel and the State of Palestine on 27 and 28 June, I also travelled to Gaza, where I noted the resilience of the Gazan people under enormously difficult conditions and emphasised that, until Gaza and the West Bank are united under a single, democratic and legitimate Palestinian government, based on the rule of law and the principles of the Palestine Liberation Organization, Gaza's prospects for full recovery will be limited.

37. The Palestinian Government of National Consensus must be empowered and enabled to assume its rightful responsibilities in Gaza, including in particular at the crossings with Israel and Egypt. I strongly urge Palestinian factions to advance genuine Palestinian unity on the basis of democracy and the principles of the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Quartet. Genuine unity will also improve the Government's ability to meet the pressing economic problems, which are adding to Palestinians' frustration and anger. I welcome the resumption of unity talks held in Qatar and urge all sides to continue discussions and implement previous agreements. I strongly encourage the factions not to squander this important opportunity to reach a consensus that can enable the advancement of long-term Palestinian national goals, as well as near-term fiscal and development goals, for the Palestinian people. The United Nations stands ready to support all efforts in this direction.

38. As noted in my previous report, I remain seriously concerned by the lack of political progress and the high risk of further violence and radicalization. The international community must come together in cooperation with the parties on the ground and in the region to create the conditions for a return to meaningful negotiations. Israelis and Palestinians must face the stark realities that continue to drive the violence and hold hostage the two-State solution. The report of the Quartet has made clear that Israel's settlement enterprise continues to be an impediment to peace. Furthermore, the issue of incitement runs to the heart of the current climate of tension and fear. I am particularly concerned that some Palestinian factions continue to glorify violence and terror and that the Palestinian Authority has consistently refrained from condemning specific terror attacks against Israelis. By the same token, Israel should understand that heavy-handed responses play into the hands of extremists, undermine moderate voices and further deepen the rift between the two sides. It remains clear that security measures alone will not contain the forces that perpetuate violence. Both sides must actively take steps that will demonstrate their commitment to, and create the conditions for, an eventual return to negotiations to achieve a viable Palestinian State and ensure Israel's long-term security.

39. I would like to express my deep appreciation to my Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Nickolay Mladenov, for his outstanding service during the first year of his tenure. I am also grateful to the Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, Pierre Krähenbühl, and the remarkable work on behalf of Palestine refugees carried out by the staff of the Agency. I pay tribute, too, to all United Nations staff who work under difficult, and at times dangerous, circumstances in the service of the Organization.

40. Until the last day of my tenure, I will continue to ensure that the United Nations works towards the establishment of an independent, democratic, contiguous and viable Palestinian State, existing side by side in peace with a secure Israel, within the framework of a comprehensive regional settlement consistent with Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973), 1397 (2002), 1515 (2003) and 1860 (2009) and in accordance with the road map, the Arab Peace Initiative and the principle of land for peace.



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The situation in the Middle East

Question of Palestine

Security Council
Seventy-second year

Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine

Report of the Secretary-General**

Summary

The present report is submitted in accordance with General Assembly resolution [71/23](#). It contains replies received from the parties concerned to the notes verbales sent by the Secretary-General pursuant to the request contained in paragraph 25 of the resolution. The report also contains the observations of the Secretary-General on the current state of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and on international efforts to move the peace process forward with a view to achieving a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine. The report covers the period from September 2016 to August 2017.

* [A/72/150](#).

** The present report was submitted late, owing to the fact that additional time was required to ensure that important developments taking place during the reporting period were adequately documented.



I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution [71/23](#).
2. On 1 July 2017, pursuant to the request contained in paragraph 25 of the above-mentioned resolution, I addressed the following letter to the President of the Security Council:

“I have the honour to refer to resolution [71/23](#), which the General Assembly adopted on 30 November 2016, at its seventy-first session, under the agenda item ‘Question of Palestine’.

“Paragraph 25 of the resolution requests the Secretary-General to continue his efforts with the parties concerned, and in consultation with the Security Council, towards the attainment of a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine and the promotion of peace in the region and to submit to the General Assembly at its seventy-second session a report on these efforts and on developments on this matter.

“In order to fulfil my reporting responsibilities under this resolution, I should be grateful if you would kindly convey to me the views of the Security Council by 31 July 2017.

“Recalling the Secretariat’s obligation to observe the page limit of its reports, pursuant to General Assembly resolution [52/214](#), I would like to encourage the Security Council to limit its submission to 1,500 words.”

3. As at 23 August, no response had been received to that request.
4. In a note verbale dated 23 May 2017 to the parties concerned, I sought the positions of the Governments of Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic, as well as the State of Palestine, regarding any steps taken by them to implement the relevant provisions of the resolution. As at 31 July 2017, replies had been received from Israel and the State of Palestine.
5. The note verbale dated 28 June 2017 from the Permanent Observer Mission of the State of Palestine to the United Nations reads as follows:

“Resolution [71/23](#), ‘Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine’, constitutes the General Assembly’s comprehensive, authoritative stance regarding the question of Palestine and the historic efforts to achieve a just, lasting, peaceful solution. The principles affirmed therein, in conformity with international law and other relevant resolutions, constitute the pillars of a solution, and the broad support granted annually for the resolution confirms the international consensus in this regard.

“On the eve of the fiftieth anniversary of Israel’s occupation of Palestinian and Arab territories in 1967, the Assembly again resoundingly supported this resolution. This was a clear rejection of Israel’s cynical narrative denying the occupation, while actively entrenching it by all illegal means, and obstructing the efforts to peacefully resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which remains the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

“Upholding its political, legal and moral responsibilities, including the obligations stemming from resolution 181 (II), the Assembly has reiterated its calls for, inter alia, Israel’s complete withdrawal from the Palestinian territory occupied since June 1967, including East Jerusalem; realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, primarily the right to self-determination and the right to their independent State; achievement of the two-State solution of Palestine and Israel, living side by side in peace and security

within recognized borders based on the pre-1967 borders; and a just solution for the Palestine refugee question based on resolution 194 (III).

“The Assembly’s reaffirmation of the requirements for a just solution was considerably reinforced by the Security Council’s adoption of resolution 2334 (2016). That resolution, pursued earnestly by the State of Palestine with conscientious Council members, reflects the international community’s long-standing commitment to peace via implementation, inter alia, of the relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973), 446 (1979), 452 (1979), 465 (1980), 476 (1980), 1397 (2002), 1515 (2003) and 1850 (2008), and full respect for the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, including the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force.

“The Council’s demands in resolution 2334 (2016) echo the Assembly’s demands in resolution 71/23, underscoring the international consensus and exigency of peace efforts. This action has helped restore some credibility to the Council, which has been impaired by the failure to implement its resolutions and hold Israel, the occupying Power, accountable for its violations. It has also provided renewed hope for a solution, critical for alleviating the despair of Palestine’s youth and reviving belief in the possibility of a better future, free from occupation, fear and want.

“Resolution 2334 (2016) was welcomed globally. It was viewed as urgent in light of the deteriorating situation on the ground; escalation of tensions and cycles of violence; erosion of the two-State solution on the 1967 lines due to Israel’s unrelenting entrenchment of the occupation and annexation attempts, mainly through settlement activities flagrantly violating international law; and lack of a political horizon to bring an end to the Israeli occupation, ensure Palestinian rights and secure a just peace.

“While the Council explicitly reiterated the demand that Israel cease all settlement activities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and fully respect its legal obligations, it further underlined that it ‘will not recognize any changes to the 4 June 1967 lines, including with regard to Jerusalem, other than those agreed by the parties through negotiations’, and called upon all States ‘to distinguish, in their relevant dealings, between the territory of the State of Israel and the territories occupied since 1967’. Palestine has consistently made these calls in its bilateral and multilateral outreach, viewing them as fundamental for salvaging the two-State solution and advancing its realization.

“Considering the obligation to protect civilians, the Council’s call for cessation of all acts of violence against civilians, including acts of terror, and all acts of provocation, incitement and destruction, and for accountability, has also been widely supported.

“Also welcomed were the Council’s call for the launch of credible negotiations on all final status issues and for collective efforts to promote peace, ‘aimed at achieving, without delay, a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East on the basis of the relevant United Nations resolutions, the Madrid terms of reference, including the principle of land for peace, the Arab Peace Initiative and the Quartet road map and an end to the Israeli occupation that began in 1967’.

“The Palestinian leadership has affirmed readiness to abide by resolution 2334 (2016) in its entirety and commitment to its implementation, just as it has strived to uphold all relevant resolutions, including resolution 71/23. This

includes the commitment to non-violence and peaceful, political, diplomatic, legal means for attainment of Palestinian rights and a just, lasting solution and cooperation with all international and regional efforts to this end.

“Israel, on the other hand, reacted with blatant hostility and contempt towards the Security Council following the resolution’s adoption, publicly declaring its disrespect of the Council’s authoritative decisions and demands. The Israeli Government proceeded to violate the resolution aggressively in the months thereafter with advancement of plans for construction of thousands more settlement units across the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem; continuation of virulent rhetoric and incitement against the Palestinian people and leadership; and continued complicity in and lack of accountability for the violence, terror and crimes committed by its settlers and soldiers against Palestinian civilians.

“Yet, despite Israel’s violations — whether in times of peace process or political stalemate — the Palestinian leadership has adhered to the peace path. For nearly 30 years, Palestine’s position has mirrored the global consensus on the two-State solution. This began with the Palestine National Council’s acceptance of the solution in the 1988 Declaration of Independence, a major compromise agreeing to establish the Palestinian State on only 22 per cent of our historic homeland, for the sake of realizing Palestinian rights, including to independence, and establishing a just peace. This compromise remains the primary testament to our commitment to peace and, with the 2002 Arab Peace Initiative, represents the boldest contribution towards solving the conflict and should be recognized as such.

“Commitment to this compromise has been clearly affirmed, including at the highest levels by President Mahmoud Abbas and the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization. Moreover, it has been bolstered by repeated pledges to peacefully resolve the conflict, in accordance with the Charter and the relevant United Nations resolutions, as confirmed, inter alia, in the 28 September 2011 application by the State of Palestine for admission to United Nations membership, and with international law, as reflected in Palestine’s accession to numerous international treaties and conventions.

“It has also been the mainstay of Palestine’s regional and international engagement, through every peace initiative and United Nations endeavour and all other multilateral and bilateral engagement, including as reflected in the relevant declarations by the League of Arab States, the Non-Aligned Movement, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and the Group of 77, and in diplomatic and cooperation agreements concluded with many States that have recognized Palestine.

“In the period since the adoption of resolution [71/23](#), this commitment has been borne out in the Palestinian leadership’s cooperation with, inter alia, the French initiative, including in regard to the Paris Peace Conference on 15 January 2017; efforts by the new United States administration of President Donald J. Trump to advance peace, including affirmation of readiness to engage in negotiations; efforts by the Quartet members, collectively and individually, as reflected in the series of meetings held by President Abbas and other high-level Palestinian officials in Brussels, Moscow, Washington, Cairo and Riyadh, among others; and Arab States’ efforts, including reaffirmation of the Arab Peace Initiative by the Arab Summit Conference in Jordan in March 2017.

“It should be considered extraordinary that this commitment to a peaceful path has endured despite continuous exacerbation of the injustice

inflicted on the Palestinian people by the decision to partition Mandate Palestine by resolution 181 (II) in 1947 and the ensuing tragedy of the 1948 Nakba through 50 years of Israel's foreign occupation since 1967. The consequences have been grave for our people, who have withstood incessant human rights violations, violence and terror, and war crimes under this half-century occupation, in breach of international law, including humanitarian and human rights law, relevant United Nations resolutions, the relevant provisions of the Rome Statute, and the 2004 advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice.

“The reality is that Israel's occupation has only subsisted — and can only subsist — on violations. It is illegal in every dimension and manifestation, causing immeasurable suffering, indignity and insecurity for the Palestinian people, amounting to a constant protection crisis.

“These violations include, inter alia: military raids by the occupying forces causing Palestinian civilian casualties, including loss of life; arbitrary arrest and detention operations and imprisonment of 6,500 Palestinians, including children and women, who are routinely exposed to physical and psychological abuse and torture, with the male population most severely affected; restrictions on movement and other fundamental freedoms, including to worship, education, health care, development and water; and imposition of a 10-year blockade on Gaza, isolating and collectively punishing the 2 million Palestinians there. Such actions constitute grave breaches of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War and are compounding dire humanitarian and socioeconomic conditions, which, the United Nations country team has determined, will lead to Gaza being uninhabitable by 2020 if the situation is not immediately remedied.

“Also severely affecting the civilian population's well-being, as well as the contiguity and unity of the Palestinian land and the chances for realizing the two-State solution on the 1967 lines, are the violations committed in the context of Israel's unlawful colonization campaign through its construction and expansion of colonial settlements, the wall and military infrastructure in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. This has also involved countless military orders, so-called ‘legislative schemes’ and other illegal practices aimed at facilitating settlement activities, including confiscation of land, demolition of homes and structures, forced displacement of civilians and exploitation of natural resources, altering the demographic and geographic situation on the ground and dragging us ever closer to a one-State reality of apartheid.

“Israeli incitement and inflammatory rhetoric on Jerusalem and provocations and violence by Jewish extremists against Muslim and Christian holy sites, particularly targeting the Haram al-Sharif, also continue to stoke sensitivities and threaten to trigger a religious conflict. Such violations are being perpetrated jointly and non-stop by the Government of Israel, the occupying Power, its military occupying forces and extremist settlers.

“Against this backdrop, Palestine's contribution to the implementation of relevant resolutions and the objective of peace and stability must also be measured by all that the Palestinian Government and national institutions have done over the decades to mitigate the occupation's devastating consequences and preserve peace prospects. Confronted by perpetual decline of the humanitarian, socioeconomic and security situation, we have exerted all efforts to alleviate our people's suffering, allay tensions, ensure calm and security, promote reconciliation and give hope to our people that a better

future is within reach and that not another generation will have to suffer the fate of occupation, oppression, dispossession and exile that their forefathers have borne. Such hope is vital for pushing against the radicalism and extremism plaguing the region, especially among youth.

“While unusual in a situation of occupation — perhaps unprecedented — we have pursued these objectives continuously in every sector, as reflected in the priorities set in successive Palestinian National Development Plans presented by Prime Minister Rami Hamdallah and preceding Governments, and also in the United Nations Development Assistance Framework. The programmes of United Nations agencies, with the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) at the forefront, along with the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the United Nations Children’s Fund, the United Nations Development Programme, the Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and numerous other organizations, have been instrumental in this regard, as have been the assistance and solidarity extended to Palestine by concerned States from every corner of the globe.

“Such support has been exemplary in the case of UNRWA, which has received generous voluntary funding from donor countries since its establishment in 1949. As of this note’s writing, efforts continue with stakeholders and partners, including host countries, to foster more predictable, sufficient and sustained support to UNRWA to effectively implement its mandate. This support is vital for over 5.3 million Palestine refugees registered with UNRWA, millions of whom still live in 58 camps in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and Occupied Palestine. These efforts recognize the indispensability of the humanitarian and development aid of UNRWA; its critical stabilizing role in the region; the commitment made in the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants to ensure sufficient funding to the Agency; and the fact that for millions of refugees, UNRWA is the only lifeline, pending a just solution. Our engagement on this also constitutes a substantial contribution to the peace we seek.

“While our efforts and international support have been constant, what remains absent is the political will to implement the relevant Security Council and General Assembly resolutions, imperative for achievement of a peaceful settlement. Despite all good-faith intentions, the international community continues to fail to fulfil its legal, political and moral obligations in the face of Israel’s total disrespect for the law. This failure is even more striking in this fiftieth year of Israel’s occupation, with no viable political horizon for its end.

“The cycle of Israeli impunity and lack of accountability continue to thwart peace efforts, deepening the political impasse. Since Israel’s suspension of American-led peace talks in 2014, insufficient pressure has been exerted on the Israeli Government to cease its violations and destruction of the two-State solution. Even after the Council’s adoption of resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#), there has been no meaningful effort to compel Israeli compliance; rather, it continues its violation without consequence.

“As called for in resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#), Israel must, inter alia, demonstrate through policies and actions a genuine commitment to the two-State solution and create conditions necessary for promoting peace. It is time for Israel to cease its lip service to the two-State solution; its propaganda distorting the reality of its unlawful occupation; its incitement against the Palestinian people and leadership; and its mockery of the United Nations. Its respect for the law must be demanded without exceptions or conditions.

“Only international law can ensure that the negotiations on final status issues — Jerusalem, Palestine refugees, settlements, borders, security, prisoners and water — result in a just, sustainable peace. As reflected in the Secretary-General’s agenda for the United Nations, peaceful resolution of conflicts requires a human rights perspective, a justice perspective, a development perspective, and not just a security perspective, and the root causes of the conflict must be addressed.

“In line with the permanent responsibility of the United Nations towards the question of Palestine, we appeal again for serious efforts to implement the relevant resolutions towards realizing Palestinian rights, including of the Palestine refugees; ending the Israeli occupation that began in 1967 and finally achieving the independence of the State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital; and establishing lasting peace, security and coexistence between the Palestinian and Israeli peoples on the basis of the two-State solution on the 1967 lines. The Palestinian leadership reaffirms its commitment to a peaceful and just solution, and likewise urges the international community to uphold its obligations and commitments.”

6. The note verbale dated 31 July 2017 from the Permanent Mission of Israel to the United Nations reads as follows:

“Over the course of the past year, the wave of deadly terror attacks against the people of Israel has continued unabated. One of the most recent such attacks took place on 21 July, when a Palestinian terrorist infiltrated the home of the Solomon family in Chalamish and slaughtered three members of the family as they sat together for the traditional Friday night Sabbath meal. This heinous crime was preceded, just a week before, by the killing of two Israeli policemen on the Temple Mount by terrorists who took advantage of Israel’s policy of open entry to the Temple Mount, smuggling in weapons and hiding them in the Holy Compound. Using the compound as a staging ground, they attacked and killed the two police officers, desecrating the holy site and turning it into an arena of bloodshed and terror.

“It must be clear that such appalling terrorist attacks do not occur in a vacuum. They are a result of the constant Palestinian incitement to violence and glorification of terror, which are fundamentally incompatible with advancing peace. The incitement starts from the top; Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas has publicly endorsed the payment of salaries to convicted terrorists and their families. As part of this incessant incitement to terror, public spaces are regularly named after mass murderers. To name but one timely example, in the West Bank town of Burqa, a youth centre for women was recently named after Dalal Mughrabi, the Palestinian terrorist who, in 1978, led a group of terrorists who hijacked a civilian bus and killed 37 Israelis, including 12 children.

“A clear and unequivocal message must be delivered to the Palestinian leadership: stop encouraging terrorism, stop hate speech and stop educating children to hate. Above all, they must stop offering cash rewards and publicly honouring those who commit acts of terrorism. Such glorification of violence against innocent people and adulation of those who commit these horrific acts are utterly incompatible with the commitment to coexistence and peaceful relations with Israel, which must be at the foundation of a future Palestinian State.

“Israel also believes that a sound and developing Palestinian economy is a prerequisite for stability and security and, as such, is an Israeli interest as well. Despite the ongoing Palestinian violence, Israel is moving ahead with

steps to improve the Palestinian economic situation and the standard of living of the Palestinian population. In this context, the first commercial agreement between the Israel Electric Corporation and the Palestinian Authority was reached recently (10 July 2017) to increase the supply of electricity to Jenin in northern Samaria, to ensure a sufficient supply for the summer months and the entire year.

“Furthermore, on 13 July 2017, it was announced that Israel, Jordan and the Palestinian Authority, through the facilitation of the United States, have reached an agreement, as part of the Red Sea-Dead Sea project, on a large water infrastructure project which will provide billions of gallons of additional water supply for each of the three parties.

“Under the agreement, it is expected that the Palestinian Authority will be able to purchase up to 32 million cubic metres of fresh water from Israel at preferential prices, substantially increasing the amount of water provided to the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

“At the same time, Israel is continuing its dialogue with the Palestinian Authority on economic issues. At the end of May, Israeli Finance Minister Moshe Kahlon met with Palestinian Authority Prime Minister Rami Hamdallah in Ramallah, to brief him on recent steps decided upon by the Israeli Cabinet to improve the economic situation in the Palestinian Authority. Furthermore, the bilateral dialogue between the respective Ministries of Finance has been resumed at the level of Director General of Ministry of Finance.

“In Gaza, Israel is facing a more complex and challenging security and political environment than ever, but is nonetheless undertaking extensive efforts to improve the humanitarian and economic conditions of the people of Gaza, while striving to safeguard the basic and legitimate security needs of Israeli citizens.

“Israel has been continuing to facilitate the reconstruction of Gaza through the Gaza Reconstruction Mechanism. Since October 2014, the joint mechanism with the Palestinian Authority and the United Nations has enabled the entry of over 8.2 million tons of various types of construction materials into the Gaza Strip. As of January of this year, 102,331 damaged housing units had been renovated, out of a total of 130,000. More than 11,500 new housing units are in advanced stages of construction, while hundreds are ready for occupancy. Hundreds of public projects, including schools, clinics, mosques and parks, have been completed or are near completion.

“The past year also witnessed an increase of exports from Gaza to the West Bank, Israel and abroad. It is important to note that, last March alone, 372 loads of marketed goods were carried by truck from Gaza, a record total since Hamas took over more than a decade ago. In addition, an aggregate conveyor is currently being built in the Kerem Shalom crossing and is expected to become operational soon. The conveyor is expected to substantially increase the capacity to export goods from the Gaza Strip.

“Unfortunately, alongside these positive developments, the terror organization Hamas continues to steal and confiscate building materials intended for the reconstruction of Gaza and the humanitarian development needs of its residents, and repurpose them for their own military objectives: for the digging and construction of terror tunnels, rearmament and rocket manufacturing. Israel will not tolerate this abuse of the Gaza Reconstruction Mechanism or other attempts by Hamas to bolster its terror infrastructure.

“In parallel, there has also been an alarming increase in the number of attempts to smuggle prohibited goods into the Gaza Strip during 2016, including small unmanned aerial vehicles, lasers and military uniforms. During the past year, Israeli security forces thwarted 1,226 such attempts, which constitutes a 165 per cent increase in comparison with 2015.

“The Gaza Strip is suffering from a chronic and acute shortage of energy. The electricity crisis in the Strip is a matter of an internal dispute between the Palestinian Authority and Hamas. Since Hamas’s takeover of the Gaza strip in 2007, the Palestinian Authority has been paying the cost of electricity for the Gaza Strip. This year, the Palestinian Authority announced its refusal to continue to make the necessary payments.

“In order to meet all of Gaza's electricity needs, a constant supply of 400 MW is required. Supply from Egypt accounts for 25 MW (6.25 per cent). The power station in Gaza has the capacity to supply 120 MW (about 30 per cent); prior to stopping payment completely, the Palestinian Authority usually purchased only enough fuel to supply 60 MW (about 15 per cent of demand). The Palestinian Authority has been paying Israel for providing for approximately one third of the Gaza Strip’s electricity demand (approximately 125 MW). As per the agreement with the Palestinian Authority, this sum of money is deducted from tax revenues that Israel collects for the Palestinian Authority.

“Due to the current dispute between Hamas and the Palestinian Authority, the latter has stopped purchasing fuel for the Gaza power station. Therefore, the power station is not producing electricity.

“Furthermore, on April 30, the Palestinian Authority announced that, as of May 22, 2017, it would reduce its payments to Israel for electricity to the Gaza Strip from approximately \$11.4 million a month to approximately \$7.1 million.

“It must also be emphasized that the reason Hamas refuses to pay its own electricity bill is not for lack of money. Hamas prefers to budget its financial resources to enhance terrorism and terror capabilities, rather than civilian infrastructure that would benefit Gaza residents, such as a steady supply of electricity. Unless and until the Palestinian Authority and Hamas change their policy, significant power shortages are expected to continue, and Gaza’s residents will continue to pay the price of the feud between Hamas and the Palestinian Authority.

“Israel is not interested in any escalation of the situation in the Gaza Strip and is making every effort to prevent deterioration in the daily lives of Gaza’s residents.

“In addition, Israel is also undertaking efforts to improve the economic situation in the West Bank. Last year, there was a significant increase in the number of truckloads crossing to and from Jordan via the Allenby Bridge. Over 49,000 truckloads filled with goods crossed the bridge — an increase of over 22 per cent compared with 2015.

“The number of people crossing the bridge, the primary crossing point for Palestinians, also set a new record in 2016 at over 2.2 million, most of them Palestinian civilians — an increase of more than 10 per cent compared with 2015.

“As part of the effort to ease access for the Palestinian population, Israel decided to expand the operating hours of the Allenby Bridge. As of 20 June

and through 10 September, the bridge will be open for crossing 24 hours a day, and beginning in 2018, the Allenby Bridge will be open 24/7 all year round.

“The decision to expand the operating hours of the Allenby Bridge is one part of a comprehensive plan to upgrade the crossing, which includes structural improvements, upgraded parking and other measures designed to facilitate ease of travel and increase the commercial activity.

“In this context, it is also important to mention the approval of construction plans to pave roads from the Japanese industrial zone in Jericho to Highway 90 and to Allenby Bridge. The project, funded by the Japan International Cooperation Agency, will provide better access for trucks transporting products, manufactured goods and equipment from the Japanese industrial zone in order to promote trade and commerce.

“The aforementioned steps taken by the State of Israel attest to its commitment to a peaceful resolution to the conflict. Israel aspires for peace. It is our sincere hope that creating the environment for enhanced economic activity will encourage the resumption of direct negotiations, leading to the realization of the vision of two nations living side by side, in security and in peace.

“The Israeli-Palestinian conflict will be resolved only through direct bilateral negotiations without preconditions. Attempts to impose solutions or to dictate parameters and timetables will only drive peace further away. Thus, Israel utterly rejects Security Council resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#). The resolution is unequivocally hostile to Israel and will only make peace harder, not easier, to achieve.

“Finally, it is imperative to reiterate, once again, Israel’s right to exist as the nation State of the Jewish people, in peace, with secure borders, and our steadfast opposition to any attempt to undermine Israel’s legitimacy. The Palestinian refusal to recognize Israel as a Jewish State — based, inter alia, on a continued denial of any historic Jewish connection to its land — remains one of the main obstacles to peace between Israel and the Palestinians.”

II. Observations

7. International efforts to promote the peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine continued to focus on the possibility of creating a framework for the parties’ return to meaningful negotiations. The Quartet principals met in New York on 23 September 2016, agreeing on the importance of close and continuing coordination of all efforts to achieve the common goal of the two-State solution and reiterating their call on the parties to implement the recommendations of the Quartet Report of 1 July 2016. Quartet envoys also released statements twice in response to heightened tensions on the ground. As they met in Jerusalem on 13 July, they expressed serious concern over the worsening humanitarian situation in Gaza. Soon after, on 22 July, in response to the heightened tensions in Jerusalem, they called on all to de-escalate the situation while upholding the status quo at the holy sites.

8. On 23 December 2016, the Security Council adopted its resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#), in which it reiterated some of the key obstacles to achieving a negotiated two-State solution that had been identified in the report of the Middle East Quartet in July 2016: the continuing policy of settlement construction and expansion; continued acts of violence and terrorism; incitement to violence; and the situation in Gaza. In the resolution, the Council also called on both sides to take steps on the ground to create the conditions for successful final status negotiations.

9. On 15 January 2017, France hosted a conference in Paris at which some 70 countries and international organizations reaffirmed their support for the two-State solution and their readiness to continue encouraging both parties to return to meaningful negotiations. On the same date, the Russian Federation hosted representatives of Palestinian factions in Moscow and stressed the need to overcome divisions so as to create the conditions for meaningful negotiations. On 29 March in Jordan, Arab leaders committed to relaunching peace negotiations and reaffirmed their commitment to the 2002 Arab Peace Initiative. The new United States administration has also focused on efforts to restart negotiations and advance peace.

10. The situation on the ground was characterized by continued tensions, with spikes of violence and a sharp rise in settlement activity in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem. A polarized public discourse across the political spectrum in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory continued. Tensions rose in East Jerusalem in July, after an attack in the Old City on 14 July, which left two Israeli police officers and their assailants dead. In response to the attack, Israel installed metal detectors and security cameras at the entrances to the Holy Esplanade, which was immediately condemned by Muslim religious authorities and the Palestinian leadership as unilateral actions violating the historical status quo in the holy sites. Despite international calls for calm, protests and violence erupted after Friday prayers on 21 July, with four Palestinian protesters dying as a result of the response of Israeli security forces. The same night, a Palestinian stabbed to death three members of an Israeli family living in the Israeli settlement of Halamish. The situation eased after Israel withdrew the new security measures; Muslim religious authorities and the Palestinian leadership subsequently instructed worshippers to return to the Al-Aqsa Mosque for prayers.

11. In Gaza, a fragile ceasefire largely held but the situation remained volatile, owing mostly to worsening socioeconomic conditions, delays in reconstruction, continued restrictions on movement and the deepening political divide between the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank and the de facto authorities in Gaza.

12. Stabbings, vehicle attacks and shootings by Palestinians targeting Israelis and clashes between Palestinians and the Israeli security forces continued to claim lives. During the reporting period, a total of 73 Palestinians were killed, 38 of whom were perpetrators or alleged perpetrators of attacks, and more than 3,800 Palestinians were injured. Five Israeli civilians and 8 security forces personnel were killed, and at least 176 Israelis, civilians and security forces personnel were injured.

13. The level of force used in countering some of the violence remains a matter of concern. A number of Palestinian fatalities call into question the nature of the response of the Israeli security forces, including the apparent disproportionate use of lethal force. I once again call for necessary precautions to be taken when decisions to use force are made; in particular, live fire should be used only as a last resort, with any resulting death or injury properly investigated. Between October 2015 and March 2017, some 270 Palestinians were killed, nearly 180 of them while carrying out or allegedly carrying out attacks against Israelis. According to the Ministry of Justice, the Israel Defense Forces opened 24 investigations into suspected unlawful use of force, of which only 1 resulted in an 18-month sentence for manslaughter. It is the duty of Israel to ensure a prompt and independent investigation into incidents in which the use of force has resulted in death or injury, and to ensure accountability where there is evidence of wrongdoing.

14. I reiterate the firm condemnation by the United Nations of all terrorist attacks. While the Security Council, in resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#), called upon both parties to refrain from provocative actions, incitement and inflammatory rhetoric, such actions continued. Official media and social media outlets affiliated with Fatah continued to

praise perpetrators of past terrorist attacks against Israeli civilians, while Hamas leaders continued their unacceptable practice of celebrating recent attacks against Israeli civilians as “heroic”. Israeli officials have also employed provocative rhetoric and promoted legislation that has the potential to inflame tensions on the ground. Leaders on all sides must stop incitement and consistently and unequivocally stand against acts of terror and violence in all its forms.

15. Throughout the reporting period, the Israel Defense Forces continued to conduct search and arrest operations, while the Palestinian Authority continued to arrest suspected Hamas affiliates in the West Bank. At the end of July, 450 Palestinians were held by Israeli authorities under administrative detention, compared with 700 at the beginning of the reporting period. I am especially concerned about the continued reports of detainees on hunger strikes. On 17 April, an estimated 1,500 Palestinian prisoners and detainees started a hunger strike to protest their conditions in Israeli prisons. Their fast lasted until the start of Ramadan, when some of their requests were met. I reiterate my call to end the practice of administrative detention and to either charge all detainees or immediately release them.

16. At the end of May, Israel held 331 Palestinian children in detention on security grounds. This is down from a peak of 444 cases in March 2016, but double the numbers recorded in May 2015, when 163 children were held in Israeli prisons. All children should be treated with due consideration to their age and may be detained only in situations that are justified under international humanitarian law or applicable human rights norms.

17. After a three-year decline in incidents of settler violence, there has been a noticeable increase in 2017. According to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 124 such incidents have been documented, resulting in the deaths of 4 Palestinians¹ and the injury of 69, as well as property damage.

18. In resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#), the Security Council calls on Israel to take steps to cease all settlement activities in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem. Instead, settlement activities have risen sharply. During the reporting period, and particularly after the adoption of the resolution, Israeli authorities announced tenders for the construction of some 3,000 housing units in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem. In addition, since the beginning of 2017 the Government has approved the advancement of plans for the construction of more than 7,000 units in West Bank settlements. On 1 February, the Government announced its intention to establish a new settlement for the residents of the illegal Amona outpost, following its demolition by order of the Supreme Court of Israel. In late March, the Government declared 241 acres in the West Bank as “State land”.

19. On 6 February, the Israeli Parliament approved the so-called Regularization Law, which, if implemented, would permit houses that had been built in settlements on land privately owned by Palestinians to remain in place, while offering the landowners only a choice between compensation through payment and compensation in the form of alternative land. The legal framework created by the law is estimated to have the potential to retroactively “regularize” thousands of housing units and remove significant legal obstacles to the “legalization” of dozens of settlement outposts currently considered illegal by the Government of Israel. The law marks the first time that the Knesset has extended its jurisdiction to matters concerning property of Palestinians living in the West Bank, reflecting a significant shift in the long-standing government position concerning the legal status of the

¹ Two were persons shot by settlers during alleged stabbing and ramming attacks.

territory and the applicability of Israeli law therein. It contravenes international law and, according to the Attorney General of Israel, is unconstitutional.

20. The continued settlement plans, new legislation, retroactive legalizations and official statements signal that the strategic settlement enterprise of Israel continues to expand. In the first seven months of 2017, the number of plans advanced was already 60 per cent higher than the number for all of 2016, with the number of tenders eight times the annual total for that year. Such activities undermine the chances for the establishment of a viable, contiguous Palestinian State as part of a two-State solution. I reiterate that settlements are illegal under international law and an obstacle to peace, and undermine the two-State solution.

21. Demolitions of Palestinian homes in Area C of the occupied West Bank continued, with a significant decline having occurred since February 2017. During the reporting period, 388 structures were demolished, leading to the displacement of some 462 Palestinians, half of them children. In addition, the loss of water wells, solar panels and animal shelters has had an impact on the livelihoods of more than 5,500 people. The Bedouin community in particular is paying a heavy price, with some facing even an imminent threat of being forced to relocate. Unlike in Area C, demolitions in East Jerusalem continued at a fast pace throughout the reporting period, with 155 structures demolished and nearly 300 people displaced as a result. Palestinians require access to a fair planning and zoning regime, so that they do not resort to the building of unauthorized structures that lead to unjustified demolitions, which often have an impact on the most vulnerable people. Demolitions and forcible evictions, carried out when there is no military necessity, contravene international humanitarian law and international human rights law.

22. Also of concern are the continued punitive demolitions of the family homes of Palestinian perpetrators or alleged perpetrators of attacks against Israelis. The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights has previously reported that punitive home demolitions have an impact on the entire family, constitute a form of collective penalty in breach of article 33 of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War and breach the obligation of Israel to ensure Palestinians' rights to adequate housing and to freedom from arbitrary or unlawful interference with privacy, family or home, and other relevant norms. As an Israeli military committee concluded in 2005, such demolitions are unproven as a deterrent and fuel tension by exacerbating feelings of injustice and hatred.

23. Palestinians continued to advance their State-building programme, although it was limited to the territory under the control of the Palestinian Authority, which excludes Area C, East Jerusalem and Gaza. Despite the progress made in building the governance capacities of the Palestinian Authority, the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee for the Coordination of the International Assistance to Palestinians remains concerned about its fiscal and economic viability. At its meeting held in Brussels on 4 May, the Committee discussed the key socioeconomic challenges faced by the Palestinian Authority. Regrettably, a number of issues remained unresolved between the parties, including those relating to access and movement, energy, water and fiscal sustainability.

24. I am encouraged that the Israeli and Palestinian Ministers of Finance have since come together to move a number of issues forward, and that they have made progress in discussions on value-added tax clearance revenues. In early June, in accordance with the electricity agreement signed in September 2016, Israel transferred \$30 million to the Palestinian Authority in lieu of equalization levies and health stamps and agreed to conduct monthly transfers in the future. The meeting of the Israeli-Palestinian Joint Water Committee held in May (the first such meeting in seven years) and the 13 July agreement for an increase in water supply for

Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza are positive steps that need to be supported. The signing on 10 July of an interim power-purchasing agreement, which will allow for the first Palestinian-owned and -operated substation in Jenin, is also encouraging.

25. The Middle East Quartet has consistently called on Israel to implement positive and significant policy shifts, particularly in Area C, consistent with the transition to greater Palestinian civil authority contemplated by prior agreements. In May, Israel announced measures designed to help the Palestinian economy in the West Bank, including the proposed reprioritization of the enforcement of zoning laws in parts of Area C adjacent to several Palestinian cities potentially allowing for their residential, industrial and agricultural use; the development of industrial zones in Tarkumiya and Hebron; and the expansion of the hours of operation of the Allenby Bridge crossing into Jordan. I strongly encourage Israel to continue to implement measures of this nature, in order to facilitate sustainable growth and job creation for the Palestinian economy.

26. In February, the Palestinian Authority took a significant step towards strengthening its institutions and improving governance, by finalizing the Palestinian National Policy Agenda: National Priorities, Policies and Policy Interventions (2017-2022), which reiterates its commitment to State-building and guaranteeing the rule of law. In January, the Palestinian Authority approved its general budget for 2017 and, owing to the strong fiscal performance in the previous year, was able to reduce its budget deficit to approximately \$580 million. Continued fiscal discipline and a push for revenue growth will be essential, as economic and financial conditions are likely to remain restrictive, in particular given the continued trend of decreasing international support.

27. On 13 May, the Government of the State of Palestine held municipal elections, albeit only in the West Bank. Local elections, if held simultaneously in both Gaza and the West Bank and conducted in line with international standards, can contribute to the advancement of Palestinian reconciliation. Gaza and the West Bank should be reunified under a single, legitimate and democratic Palestinian Authority on the basis of the principles of the Palestine Liberation Organization and the rule of law, in accordance with existing agreements.

28. In Gaza, the humanitarian situation remains dire. Three years after the latest round of hostilities, approximately 25,500 people remain internally displaced and 47 per cent of households are food-insecure or vulnerable to food insecurity. The chronic energy shortage and water deficiencies became even more acute during the reporting period. Movement in and out of Gaza remains extremely limited for its residents, a reality that is particularly harmful to those seeking medical treatment. These conditions exacerbate record-high unemployment rates and chronic aid dependency. In a report released on 11 July, the United Nations country team underscored that most of the projections for 2020 made in an earlier report in which Gaza had been deemed unlivable had come to pass, with conditions deteriorating even further and faster than anticipated.

29. In March, as a result of an internal vote, Hamas elected a new leadership and formed an administrative committee, which was seen by many as a direct challenge to the legitimate Palestinian Government of national consensus. In response, the Palestinian Authority reduced payments to thousands of its employees in the Gaza Strip in April and decided to cap its purchase of electricity from Israel for Gaza, leading Israel to reduce the supply of electricity that it provides to the Strip by some 30 per cent as from 22 June. This cut came in addition to the earlier temporary shutdown of the Gaza power plant, which supplies another 30 per cent of the electricity for Gaza, due to a dispute between the Palestinian Authority and Hamas over the taxation of fuel.

30. At the time of reporting, electricity was unavailable for an average of 20 hours daily in Gaza. Hospitals were forced to postpone elective surgeries and to reduce cleaning, catering and sterilization services by 80 per cent. Desalination plants were functioning at 15 per cent of capacity, and the majority of Palestinians in Gaza received water for only a few hours every three to four days. As much as 100,000 cubic metres of raw sewage was discharged into the Mediterranean Sea on a daily basis. As at 21 June, Egypt had facilitated the entry of fuel that allowed the Gaza power plant to be brought back into use. I welcome the support provided by Egypt to the people of Gaza at a moment of need. In addition, the United Nations is providing nearly 900,000 litres of emergency fuel per month for critical health, water and waste management infrastructure. These measures provide a temporary lifeline to the residents of Gaza, but they are not sustainable solutions. The parties must come to a sustainable agreement, or the population of Gaza will continue to suffer.

31. I also welcome the decision by Egypt to open the Rafah crossing for travellers on 43 occasions and its ongoing steps to facilitate more frequent and predictable openings of the crossing, while respecting the legitimate security concerns of Egypt with regard to the Sinai Peninsula.

32. Despite persistent security and governance challenges and funding shortages, the reconstruction process in Gaza has continued. Three years after the escalation of hostilities, almost all damaged or destroyed schools, hospitals and water and energy facilities have been or are being repaired or rebuilt. While significant progress has also been made on housing, nearly 3,800 totally destroyed homes and more than 57,000 damaged homes have yet to be reconstructed or repaired. Complete reconstruction is within sight but requires that donors fulfil their funding commitments. A large funding gap with respect to the rehabilitation of productive sectors in Gaza also inhibits recovery, and I strongly encourage all Member States to fulfil their commitments to support the reconstruction and development of Gaza. The temporary Gaza Reconstruction Mechanism has allowed much of this reconstruction to take place. I reiterate that the Mechanism was designed as a temporary measure and that the ultimate objective of the United Nations in Gaza continues to be the lifting of all closures within the framework of Security Council resolution [1860 \(2009\)](#) and in a manner that addresses the legitimate security concerns of Israel.

33. The 2017 Humanitarian Response Plan, which is aimed at addressing the humanitarian needs of 2 million Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank, requests \$552 million. This represents a 3 per cent reduction compared with 2016, but remains elevated owing largely to the significant humanitarian needs in Gaza. In July, the humanitarian country team issued a new \$25 million appeal in response to the energy crisis. The appeal highlights key unfunded projects, along with a few new interventions that have been added to address the changing humanitarian context. I strongly encourage all Member States that have not done so to fulfil their commitments without delay.

34. I remain concerned that limited crossing capacity and a range of other restrictions, along with a lack of Palestinian unity, mean that significant improvement in the humanitarian situation and overall economy of Gaza remains unlikely. In that context, the risk of violent escalation remains ever present in Gaza as underlying causes of previous conflicts remain unaddressed. The effects of these persistent pressures on security continue to be felt. As at 23 August, Palestinian militants in Gaza had fired a total of 23 rockets at Israel, 14 of which had impacted Israel, none of them causing injuries. The Israel Defense Forces had reportedly responded with a total of 27 air strikes in Gaza, causing injuries to three Palestinians. I call on all Palestinian factions to ensure respect for international law

and not to engage in activities that risk destabilizing the situation and the reconstruction process. Similarly, I call on Israel to ensure that any military actions comply with the principles of distinction, proportionality and military necessity.

35. Lasting progress in Gaza can be realized only on the basis of Palestinian unity, an end to the illicit arms build-up and militant activities, and a full lifting of movement and access restrictions in line with Security Council resolution [1860 \(2009\)](#).

36. I remain worried about the state of human rights and freedoms in Gaza. Of particular concern are reports of arbitrary detention and ill-treatment in detention centres. On 3 April and 3 May, Hamas carried out six executions of Palestinians, bringing to 28 the number of death sentences carried out since its takeover in 2007. I condemned those actions and remain deeply concerned that further executions are anticipated. I call on the de facto authorities to refrain from carrying out further executions. I also urge the Palestinian Authority to fulfil its responsibilities with full respect for international human rights law.

37. The Palestinian Government of national consensus must be empowered and enabled to assume its rightful responsibilities in Gaza, including in particular at the crossings with Israel and Egypt. I strongly urge Palestinian factions to advance genuine Palestinian unity on the basis of democracy and the Palestinian Liberation Organization and Quartet principles. Genuine unity will also improve the ability of the Palestinian Government to meet the pressing economic problems that are adding to the frustration and anger of Palestinians. The United Nations stands ready to support all efforts in that direction.

38. I remain seriously concerned about the lack of political progress and the high risk of further violence and radicalization. The 50-year anniversary of the 1967 Arab-Israeli war and the occupation of the Palestinian territory is a stark reminder: for too long, leaders on both sides have failed to take the difficult steps needed for peace. There is no alternative to the two-State solution for the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. The proponents of the status quo and the critics of the two-State solution offer no viable alternative that meets the legitimate aspirations of both Israelis and Palestinians.

39. The report of the Middle East Quartet and Security Council resolutions have clearly outlined what is needed for the advancement of a sustainable and just peace. Israel can take the necessary steps to stop settlement expansion and construction in order to preserve this prospect, while the Palestinian leadership can demonstrate its commitment to tackling the challenges of violence and incitement on its side. This will create an environment that will facilitate bilateral final status negotiations that the international community can support. We remain resolute in our commitment to help Palestinians and Israelis overcome these challenges.

40. I would like to express my deep appreciation to the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Nickolay Mladenov, for his outstanding service in what remains a challenging context. I am also most grateful to the Commissioner General of UNRWA, Pierre Krähenbühl, for his unwavering commitment and the remarkable work carried out by his staff for Palestinian refugees. In addition, I pay tribute to all staff who work under difficult, and at times dangerous, circumstances in the service of the United Nations.

41. I will continue to ensure that the United Nations works towards the establishment of an independent, democratic, contiguous and viable Palestinian State living side by side in peace with a secure Israel in the framework of a comprehensive regional settlement consistent with Security Council resolutions [242 \(1967\)](#), [338 \(1973\)](#), [1397 \(2002\)](#), [1515 \(2003\)](#), [1860 \(2009\)](#) and [2334 \(2016\)](#) and in accordance with the Quartet road map, the Arab Peace Initiative, the Quartet report and the principle of land for peace.



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The situation in the Middle East

Question of Palestine

Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report is submitted in accordance with the request of the General Assembly in paragraph 27 of its resolution [72/14](#). The report, which covers the period from September 2017 through August 2018, contains a reply received from one of the parties concerned to the note verbale sent by the Secretary-General pursuant to the request contained in resolution [72/14](#), as well as the observations of the Secretary-General on the current state of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and on international efforts to move the peace process forward, with a view to achieving a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine.

* [A/73/150](#).



I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution [72/14](#).
2. On 5 July 2018, pursuant to the request contained in paragraph 27 of resolution [72/14](#), I addressed the following letter to the President of the Security Council:

“I have the honour to refer to resolution [72/14](#), which the General Assembly adopted on 30 November 2017, at its seventy-second session, under the agenda item ‘Question of Palestine’.

“Paragraph 27 of the resolution requested the Secretary-General to continue his efforts with the parties concerned, and in consultation with the Security Council, including with regard to the reporting required pursuant to resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#), towards the attainment of a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine and the promotion of peace in the region and to submit to the General Assembly at its seventy-third session a report on these efforts and on developments on this matter.

“In order to fulfil my reporting responsibilities under this resolution, I should be grateful if you would kindly convey to me the views of the Security Council by 20 July 2018.

“Recalling the Secretariat’s obligation to observe the page limit of its reports, pursuant to General Assembly resolution [52/214](#), I would like to encourage the Security Council to limit its submission to 1,500 words.”

3. As at 22 August 2018, no response had been received to that request.
4. In a note verbale dated 21 May 2018, I sought the positions of States Members of the United Nations, in particular the concerned Governments of Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic, as well as the State of Palestine, regarding any steps taken by them to implement the relevant provisions of the resolution. As at 22 August 2018, replies had been received from the Permanent Missions of Cuba and Japan and from the Permanent Observer Mission of the State of Palestine.
5. The note verbale dated 13 July 2018 from the Permanent Observer Mission of the State of Palestine to the United Nations reads as follows:

“By its resolution [72/14](#), the General Assembly reaffirmed its longstanding, authoritative stance on the question of Palestine in all its dimensions and reflected on the efforts of the international community to achieve a just, lasting, peaceful solution. The principles affirmed therein, in line with international law and other relevant resolutions, continue to comprise the fundamental pillars of a solution, and the support given to the resolution reaffirms the international consensus in this regard.

“In a year marking the fiftieth year of Israel’s occupation of Palestinian and Arab territories and the seventieth year since the adoption of General Assembly resolution 181 (II) partitioning Mandate Palestine, the Assembly overwhelmingly supported the adoption of resolution [72/14](#); the debate was characterized by repeated calls for an end to the Israeli occupation that began in 1967; for measures to ensure the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, foremost to self-determination; and for responsible international action to peacefully resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, in line with the relevant resolutions, including Security Council resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#) and General Assembly resolution 194 (III). Numerous delegations stressed that this conflict remains a primary source of instability and insecurity in the region and that the

question of Palestine remains the key to peace and a litmus test for the capacities of the Security Council and General Assembly to ensure the rule of law and accountability for its violation.

“The demands of the General Assembly in resolution 72/14, underscoring the international consensus and exigency of peace efforts, echo the demands of the Security Council in resolution 2334 (2016).

“Council resolution 2334 (2016), which was welcomed globally, was also welcomed and endorsed by the Palestinian leadership, which remains steadfast in its commitment to the path of peace and achieving freedom, rights and justice on this path, and consistently strives to uphold all relevant United Nations resolutions. This includes a firm commitment to non-violence and the pursuit of peaceful, political, diplomatic and legal means for the attainment of Palestinian rights and a just solution, and cooperation with all international and regional efforts to that end.

“Regrettably, in contrast to the global welcome and importance accorded to resolution 2334 (2016), we continue to witness the extremely hostile reaction of Israel, the occupying Power, to the Security Council’s action, and indeed to any General Assembly action in this regard, including the adoption of resolution 72/14. Despite the fact that the resolution was adopted in full conformity and consistency with the Charter of the United Nations, international law, the relevant resolutions and the longstanding consensus on this matter, the Israeli Government has vehemently rejected it, aggressively pursuing its illegal policies and measures in Occupied Palestine, including East Jerusalem, in blatant contempt of resolutions 2334 (2016), 72/14 and other core resolutions, in grave violation of its legal obligations, including under Article 25 of the Charter, and in total contradiction to the two-State solution, which is dependent on the full, immediate cessation and reversal of such illegal activities.

“Since the adoption of resolution 72/14, Israel’s settlement and land grab activities have continued unabated, including: announcements and decisions on the construction of further settlements, including wall construction; the forced displacement of thousands more Palestinians, including Bedouin families, particularly in the areas of Occupied East Jerusalem and the Jordan Valley, including in the sensitive so-called “E-1” area; the confiscation of huge tracts of land; and the destruction of hundreds more Palestinian homes and properties to facilitate the expansion of Israeli settlements and the illegal wall. Members of the Israeli Government, along with other extremist voices, have also pushed for Israeli annexation plans, with some Israeli politicians explicitly calling for annexation of the West Bank.

“Yet, despite Israel’s flagrant violations, the Palestinian leadership continues to adhere to a peaceful path and has repeatedly reaffirmed its readiness to engage in good faith in peace efforts based on the rule of law and United Nations resolutions, as it has done throughout the decades of the Middle East peace process at every stage. It must be restated here: for nearly 30 years, Palestine’s position has mirrored the global consensus on the two-State solution. This began with the acceptance by the Palestine National Council of the solution set out in the 1988 Declaration of Independence, a major compromise agreement to establish the Palestinian State on only 22 per cent of its historic homeland, for the sake of realizing Palestinian rights, including to freedom and independence, and the establishment of a lasting peace. This compromise remains the primary testament to our commitment to peace and, with the 2002 Arab Peace Initiative, represents the boldest contribution towards solving the conflict and should be recognized as such.

“The Palestinian commitment to a solution of two-States, based on the pre-1967 borders in accordance with international law, United Nations resolutions, the Madrid principle of land for peace, the Arab Peace Initiative and the Quartet road map, has been clearly reaffirmed, including at the highest levels by President Mahmoud Abbas and the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization. In his address to the Security Council, on 20 February 2018, President Abbas reiterated the calls for a multilateral political process to achieve the two-State solution, based on those longstanding parameters and international consensus, and reaffirmed his readiness to engage, including in an international peace conference. We have appealed to the Security Council and to members of the Quartet to uphold their obligations and to exert every possible effort to this end, in cooperation with concerned regional partners and the League of Arab States and with the vital support of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and all peace-loving nations.

“This commitment has been further bolstered by repeated pledges to peacefully resolve the conflict, in accordance with the Charter, international law and the relevant United Nations resolutions, as confirmed, inter alia, in the application by the State of Palestine on 28 September 2011 for membership in the United Nations; in Palestine’s accession to numerous international treaties and conventions; in our bilateral and multilateral engagement with the international community, including in the context of diplomatic and cooperation agreements concluded with many States that have recognized Palestine; in all of Palestine’s official communications and interventions at the United Nations; and as reflected in the relevant provisions of declarations by the League of Arab States, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and the Group of 77.

“Furthermore, this commitment has been borne out by the cooperation of the Palestinian leadership with, inter alia, efforts by the members of the Quartet, collectively and individually, as reflected in the series of meetings held by President Abbas and other high-level Palestinian officials throughout 2017 and 2018. This also includes support for the reaffirmation of the Arab Peace Initiative by the Arab Summit, held in Riyadh in April 2018, despite the failure of Israel to respond to or to reciprocate with regard to the Initiative since it was first adopted in 2002.

“Despite all obstacles and Israel’s consistently bad-faith engagement, Palestine has also engaged for over two decades in good-faith negotiations to end the occupation and achieve a just and comprehensive peace agreement and the rights of the Palestinian people. The Palestinian leadership has even engaged in efforts with the new United States administration of President Donald J. Trump to advance peace, including affirmation of its readiness to engage in negotiations, up until the extremely regrettable decision by the United States administration, on 6 December 2017, to recognize ‘Jerusalem as the capital of Israel’ and to transfer the United States Embassy to the city, in contravention of Security Council resolutions and the solid international consensus.

“Prior to the decision of the United States, and immediately thereafter, Palestine affirmed that any decision or action by whomever, and whenever contrary to the numerous Security Council resolutions on Jerusalem, including resolutions 476 (1980) and 478 (1980) and [2334 \(2016\)](#), would not be accepted, either by Palestine or by the international community. We also recall the Council’s affirmation in resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#) that ‘it will not recognize any changes to the 4 June 1967 lines, including with regard to Jerusalem, other than those agreed by the parties through negotiations,’ as well as the clear

acknowledgment of the legitimate interest of the international community as a whole in the question of Jerusalem, and the unequivocal prohibition on the acquisition of territory by force.

“The provocative decision by the United States, obviously intended to prejudge the outcome of negotiations for a solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, totally contradicts ongoing international and regional efforts to create the conditions conducive for meaningful negotiations for a peaceful solution, and has undermined the role of the United States in the pursuit of peace and as a credible and impartial broker. The Palestinian leadership remains insistent that a comprehensive and just solution to the question of Palestine cannot be achieved without a just solution to the question of Jerusalem, and without East Jerusalem as the capital of Palestine.

“Moreover, peace cannot be achieved without restoring the primacy of international law to efforts to resolve the conflict. A solution must be based on international law and the relevant United Nations resolutions: negotiations on that basis, including on the final status issues, not unilateral, unlawful imposition of facts on the ground, are the means to achieve such a just, peaceful solution. As reflected in the Secretary-General’s agenda for the United Nations, the peaceful resolution of conflicts requires a human rights, justice and development perspective, not just a security perspective, and the root causes of conflict must be addressed.

“We have never sought, and do not assume to be able, to force a solution, as the occupying Power and its supporters do; we have simply and transparently sought the application of the law to bring an end to the conflict and achieve our rights. At every juncture and in every appeal, this is all we have asked for; nothing beyond what we are entitled to as a people according to international law, and nothing beyond what is legislated in United Nations resolutions and affirmed in the advisory opinion rendered by the International Court of Justice on 9 July 2004.

“In this regard, we recall that the international consensus was again reaffirmed in the Security Council following the announcement by the President of the United States on Jerusalem. The overwhelming majority of the Council, 14 Member States, stood firm in rejection of this decision and in compliance with relevant resolutions and their Charter obligations, despite the United States veto of the draft resolution presented for a vote on 18 December 2017. The General Assembly, in its resumed tenth emergency special session on 21 December 2017, adopted resolution ES-10/19, which also stressed the longstanding international position on Jerusalem, reaffirming the Assembly’s compendium of relevant resolutions along with those of the Security Council.

“Unfortunately, the decision of the United States has emboldened Israel’s illegal actions in Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, effectively rewarding its intransigence and supporting its impunity, and has emboldened other States, including Guatemala and Paraguay, to flout the law and United Nations resolutions, undermining efforts to achieve a peaceful settlement.

“As briefly reflected in resolution [72/14](#), these Israeli violations include: an unlawful colonization campaign and actions aimed at facilitating settlement activities; Israeli settler violence and terrorism, with a weekly average of five attacks since the beginning of 2018; military raids causing Palestinian civilian casualties; arbitrary arrest and detention operations and imprisonment of 5,900 Palestinians, including children and women, who are routinely exposed to physical and psychological abuse and torture, with the male population most

severely affected; restrictions on movement and other fundamental freedoms, including to worship, education, health care, development and water; imposition of an 11-year blockade on Gaza, isolating and collectively punishing the 2 million Palestinians living there; and regular military aggressions against the densely-populated enclave.

“Despite the calls to lift its inhumane, illegal blockade of Gaza, Israel continues to unleash its wrath against the population living there. Since the adoption of resolution 72/14, and particularly during the “Great Return March”, a large-scale peaceful civilian protest against Israel’s illegal occupation, oppression and dispossession of the Palestinian people, which launched on 30 March 2018, lethal, indiscriminate force has been routinely used by occupying forces against Palestinian civilians, causing wilful and wanton death and injury, including the massacre of 69 Palestinian civilians on 14 May, in grave violation of international law. Overall, more than 140 Palestinians have been killed by the occupying forces since 30 March, including 19 children, and 15,200 people have been injured.

“Israeli incitement and inflammatory rhetoric regarding Jerusalem and provocations and violence by Jewish extremists against Muslim and Christian holy sites, particularly targeting Al-Haram Al-Sharif, also continue to stoke sensitivities and threaten to trigger a dangerous religious conflict. Such violations are being perpetrated jointly by the occupying Power, its occupying forces and extremist settlers.

“Against this backdrop, it should be considered extraordinary that our commitment to a peaceful path has endured. Over the decades, the Palestinian Government and national institutions have also taken measures to mitigate the occupation’s devastating consequences, allay tensions, ensure calm and security, restore hope and preserve peace prospects in every sector, as reflected in the priorities set out in successive Palestinian National Development Plans presented by Prime Minister Rami Hamdallah and preceding Governments, and also in the United Nations Development Assistance Framework. The programmes of United Nations agencies, with the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) at the forefront, along with the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) and other organizations, have been instrumental in this regard, as has been the assistance and solidarity extended to Palestine by concerned States from every corner of the globe. Our work with the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee for the Coordination of the International Assistance to Palestinians is also relevant in this regard.

“Such support has been exemplary in the case of UNRWA, which has received generous voluntary funding from donor countries since its establishment in 1949. Throughout the year, and in the light of the sudden, dramatic funding cut to UNRWA by the United States administration in January 2018, Palestine has persisted with efforts to foster more predictable, sufficient and sustained support for UNRWA to assist it in effectively carrying out its mandate. These efforts recognize the indispensability of the humanitarian and development aid provided by UNRWA; its critical stabilizing role in the region; and the commitment made in the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants to ensure sufficient funding to the Agency, pending a just solution. Our engagement on this also constitutes a substantial contribution to the just peace we seek.

“We have also repeatedly underscored the international obligation to ensure the protection of the Palestinian people, in accordance with international humanitarian and human rights law and the many relevant resolutions aimed at protecting and ensuring the safety and well-being of civilians, for this obligation has not only been abdicated by Israel, the occupying Power, but it is being intentionally, grossly and systematically violated by it. Moreover, it is unquestionable that the de-escalation of the situation and efforts to ensure civilian protection and well-being can only contribute to peace efforts.

“Thus, despite the failure of the Security Council to address the protection crisis, due to the veto cast by the United States on 1 June 2018 on a draft resolution presented by Kuwait in its capacity as the Arab representative on the Council, we persisted in our efforts to address the Palestinian people’s protection needs. We welcome the adoption of resolution ES-10/20 by the General Assembly on 13 June 2018, as a contribution to defusing tensions, deterring violence against civilians and advancing consideration of measures to ensure the safety, well-being and protection of the Palestinian civilian population, beginning with a request that the Secretary-General submit a report containing proposals on means towards this end, including recommendations regarding an international protection mechanism.

“While our efforts and international support have been constant, what remains absent is the political will to implement the relevant Security Council and General Assembly resolutions central to achieving a peaceful settlement. The continued failure of the Security Council on this issue has been a direct result of both Israeli intransigence and disrespect and the paralysis caused by the veto power of one permanent member. Insufficient pressure has been exerted on the Israeli Government to cease its violations and destruction of the two-State solution, and the prospect of a peaceful future for the Palestinian and Israeli peoples will continue to remain an illusion as long as the occupying Power feels shielded from accountability in this regard.

“Among recent steps in the right direction, including efforts undertaken in the General Assembly and the Security Council, was the decision of the Human Rights Council, on 18 May 2018, to establish an independent, international commission of inquiry, with a mandate to investigate all cases of death and injury since 30 March and to ensure accountability for the violations of international law that took place in the context of the large-scale civilian protests in Gaza.

“This investigation must reinforce serious, collective efforts at the United Nations during this period to bring the monumental injustice faced by the Palestinian people to an end. As reaffirmed in General Assembly resolution [72/14](#), the United Nations has a permanent responsibility towards the question of Palestine until it is justly resolved in all aspects, and it must act accordingly. The Security Council, in particular, has the authority and legal tools to remedy this situation and it must act immediately to uphold its duties under the Charter and to implement its resolutions towards realization of a just, peaceful solution.

“It must be signaled to the occupying Power that its defiance will no longer be tolerated and that it must halt all violations. This is critical for creating an environment conducive to the credible dialogue and negotiations needed to bring about an end to the Israeli occupation that began in 1967; to finally achieve the independence of the State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital; and to establish lasting peace, security and coexistence between the Palestinian and Israeli peoples on the basis of the two-State solution and in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions, including resolution [72/14](#).”

II. Observations

6. International efforts to promote the peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine continued during the reporting period. The Middle East Quartet envoys met on two occasions and consulted throughout the year. On 31 January 2018, Norway and the European Union convened an extraordinary ministerial meeting of the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee for the Coordination of the International Assistance to Palestinians, at which members reiterated support for the two-State solution in line with relevant United Nations resolutions. At its meetings, the League of Arab States also reiterated its support for a peaceful resolution of the Question of Palestine.

7. On 6 December 2017, the United States recognized Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, while calling on all parties to maintain the status quo at Jerusalem's holy sites and stating that final status issues remain up to the parties. On 21 December, the General Assembly held a special session on the status of Jerusalem and adopted resolution ES-10/19, affirming that "any decisions and actions which purport to have altered the character, status or demographic composition of the Holy City of Jerusalem have no legal effect, are null and void and must be rescinded in compliance with relevant resolutions of the Security Council". The United States opened its Embassy to Israel in Jerusalem on 14 May 2018. This move, followed on 16 and 21 May by similar actions by Guatemala and Paraguay, was objected to by the Palestinian Authority and members of the international community, including several other States, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and the League of Arab States.

8. The Palestinian leadership has since ceased its engagement with the United States, and has called for the establishment of a new international mechanism to oversee the peace process, stating that it will continue to pursue State recognition and full membership in international organizations. On 20 February 2018, the President of the Palestinian Authority, Mahmoud Abbas, addressed the Security Council and called for an international peace conference, to be held by mid-2018, that would form a multilateral mechanism to assist the two parties in the negotiations to resolve all permanent status issues. During the reporting period, the State of Palestine acceded to a number of international treaties, conventions, including the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on their Destruction, and organizations, including the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization.

9. With regard to Security Council resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#), I delivered four reports to the Security Council on the implementation of the resolution, in which I noted with concern the lack of implementation of particular provisions. I remain committed to working with all concerned parties to find a peaceful, negotiated solution to the conflict based on the two-State solution. I have reiterated the well-known position of the United Nations that Jerusalem is one of the key final status issues that must be resolved, based on relevant United Nations resolutions and previous agreements, taking into account the legitimate concerns of both sides, to realize the national aspirations of Palestinians and Israelis.

10. On 12 October 2017, Palestinian factions signed an agreement, facilitated by Egypt, to allow the return of the Palestinian Government to Gaza, which could lead to reconciliation. The Gaza crossings were nominally handed over to the Palestinian Authority on 1 November, and public-sector employees recruited by the Palestinian Authority prior to 2007 registered in preparation for the establishment of a unified work force. Obstacles arose in subsequent talks, however, including over questions related to the full empowerment of the Palestinian Government in Gaza, the integration of public sector employees and the collection of revenue in Gaza. The

process was also seriously challenged on 13 March 2018, when the convoy of Palestinian Authority Prime Minister Rami Hamdallah came under attack by the detonation of a roadside bomb in Gaza, which, lightly injured six people. I strongly condemned this attack and commended Prime Minister Hamdallah for remaining committed to the peace process. I welcome the continued engagement of Egypt in this regard and call on Palestinian factions to move forward with implementing the intra-Palestinian agreement of 12 October 2017 and advancing genuine Palestinian unity on the basis of democracy and the principles set out by the Palestine Liberation Organization and the members of the Quartet. I reiterate that Palestinian unity is a key step in reaching the larger objective of a Palestinian State and lasting peace.

11. During the reporting period, the situation on the ground was characterized by the most significant violence in Gaza since the hostilities of 2014. The situation deteriorated following the start of the “Great March of Return” protests on 30 March 2018, with tens of thousands of Palestinians protesting at or near the perimeter fence between Israel and the Gaza Strip. During the reporting period, 194 Palestinians, including 29 children, were killed in Gaza, 59 on 14 May alone, and an additional 13 Palestinians died of wounds sustained that day, the peak of the protests. Hamas and Islamic Jihad have publicly acknowledged that a number of their members were among those killed in the protests and other incidents. According to the Gaza Ministry of Public Health, during the protests, more than 3,700 Palestinians were wounded by live ammunition resulting in life-altering injuries. One Israeli soldier was killed by sniper fire from Gaza, the first such Israeli fatality since 2014, and five Israeli soldiers were injured near the perimeter fence.

12. Among the thousands of peaceful demonstrators, hundreds reportedly attempted to breach the fence, burned tires, threw rocks and fire bombs at Israeli forces or their posts, launched incendiary kites and balloons and laid improvised explosive devices, at least two of which exploded at or near the fence. According to the Israeli authorities, incendiary kites and balloons caused large fires that burned and damaged thousands of acres of agricultural fields and nature reserves. On three occasions, Palestinian protesters attacked the Kerem Shalom crossing and severely damaged the infrastructure on the Palestinian side, temporarily hampering the delivery of urgently needed humanitarian assistance.

13. This period also constituted the most serious escalation in Gaza since the war in 2014. On 29 May alone, reportedly in response to the deaths in Gaza, nearly 200 rockets and mortars rounds were fired from the Gaza Strip towards Israel. The majority of the projectiles were intercepted by Israel’s Iron Dome defence system, while one mortar reportedly landed in the grounds of a kindergarten in the Eshkol Regional Council, causing no injury. Three Israeli soldiers and two civilians were reportedly injured in other incidents. The Israeli Defense Forces responded by striking targets it attributed to both Hamas and the Islamic Jihad, who had claimed joint responsibility for the attacks.

14. On 14 and 15 July 2018, another military escalation ensued between Palestinian militants and the Israeli Defense Forces. Two Palestinian teenagers were killed in an airstrike in Gaza city and 25 were injured by Israeli strikes. Three Israelis were also wounded from a rocket that landed on a residential home in the Israeli town of Sderot.

15. My Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process has been in communication with both sides and with Egypt throughout the crisis. In a press conference in Gaza on 15 July, he warned that Gaza was on the brink of what could be a devastating war. I repeat my unequivocal condemnation of all the actions that have cost so many lives and urge all sides to urgently step back from the brink of another devastating conflict.

16. Following the demonstrations in Gaza, the Security Council held three extraordinary sessions; the Organization of Islamic Cooperation held an extraordinary summit in Istanbul on 18 May; and the League of Arab States Foreign Ministers met in Cairo on 17 May. On 18 May, the Human Rights Council adopted resolution S-28/1, in which it decided “to urgently dispatch an independent, international commission of inquiry, to be appointed by the President of the Human Rights Council, to investigate all alleged violations and abuses of international humanitarian law and international human rights law in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, particularly in the occupied Gaza Strip, in the context of the military assaults on the large-scale civilian protests that began on 30 March 2018”.

17. On 22 May 2018, pursuant to articles 13 (a) and 14 of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, the State of Palestine asked the Prosecutor of the Court to investigate, in accordance with the temporal jurisdiction of the Court, past, ongoing and future crimes within the court's jurisdiction, committed in all parts of the territory of the State of Palestine. Following the referral, in a statement on 22 May, the Prosecutor, Fatou Bensouda, noted that since 16 January 2015, the situation in Palestine had been subject to a preliminary examination in order to ascertain whether the criteria for opening an investigation had been met. She also noted that the preliminary examination had seen important progress and that the investigation would continue to follow its normal course, strictly guided by the requirements of the Rome Statute.

18. On 13 June 2018, at the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, resumed at the request of Algeria (as Chair of the Arab Group) and Turkey (as Chair of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation), the Assembly adopted resolution ES-10/20, entitled "Protection of the Palestinian Civilian Population", by a vote of 120 in favour, 8 against and 45 abstentions. The resolution was adopted after a failed attempt to adopt a similar resolution in the Security Council put forward by Kuwait on 1 June 2018. In resolution ES-10/20, the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to examine the situation and to submit a written report within 60 days containing his proposals on ways and means of ensuring the safety, protection and well-being of the Palestinian civilian population under Israeli occupation, including recommendations regarding an international protection mechanism. I submitted my report on the protection of the Palestinian civilian population to the General-Assembly on 14 August. ([A/ES-10/794](#))

19. I reiterate that Israel has a responsibility to exercise maximum restraint in the use of live fire and not to use lethal force, except as a last resort, against imminent threat of death or serious injury. It must protect its citizens, but it must do so with due respect for international humanitarian law.

20. The actions by Hamas, Palestinian Islamic Jihad and other militant groups in Gaza put at risk not only the lives of Israelis and Palestinians, but also the efforts to ensure a liveable future for the people of Gaza. The indiscriminate firing of rockets at civilian populations may constitute a violation of international humanitarian law. Such activities must cease; escalation only costs more precious lives.

21. While Security Council resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#) called upon both parties “to refrain from provocative actions, incitement, and inflammatory rhetoric”, such actions and statements continued during the reporting period. I urge leaders on all sides to stop the incitement and to stand, consistently and unequivocally, against acts of terror and violence in all its forms.

22. On 30 April 2018, during his opening speech at the Palestinian National Council, the President of the State of Palestine, Mahmoud Abbas, made statements that included the unacceptable suggestion that the social behaviour of Jews was the cause of the Holocaust. Those statements were widely condemned by the international

community, and Mr. Abbas subsequently apologized. At the height of the Gaza protests, a senior Hamas official called on protestors to “take down the border and tear out their [Israelis] hearts”, one of several public calls by Hamas leaders inciting protestors to violence, including on social media. Meanwhile, Fatah’s official social media pages continued to glorify the perpetrators of past terror attacks.

23. Israeli officials also made provocative statements, with one Member of Knesset saying that Palestinian teenager Ahed Tamimi, who was tried and imprisoned for slapping a soldier, should have “gotten a bullet, at least in the kneecap”. Others called for the killing of civilians in Gaza who launch incendiary kites, annexing the settlements and openly rejecting Palestinian statehood.

24. Stabbings and shootings by Palestinians targeting Israelis and clashes between Palestinians and Internal Security Forces, also continued to claim lives. Aside from the demonstrations in Gaza, 87 Palestinians were killed throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory, four were perpetrators or alleged perpetrators of attacks in the West Bank and more than 3,000 Palestinians were injured during the reporting period. Five Israeli civilians and six security forces personnel were killed, and more than 70 Israelis, civilians and security forces personnel were injured.

25. I remain concerned about the general state of human rights and freedoms in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Throughout the reporting period the Israeli Defense Forces continued to conduct search and arrest operations, while the Palestinian Authority continued arrests of suspected Hamas affiliates in the West Bank. At the end of May 2018, 440 Palestinians were being held by Israeli authorities under administrative detention. I reiterate my earlier calls to end the practice of administrative detention and either to charge all detainees, or to release them immediately.

26. As at the end of June 2018, 446 Palestinians were being held in administrative detention, including 4 children. All children should be treated with due consideration for their age, and they should only be detained in situations justified under international humanitarian law or applicable human rights norms.

27. The shrinking space for civil society organizations and human rights defenders remains a cause for concern. There have been incidents where the Palestinian Authority and Hamas have taken actions that have resulted in limits on freedom of expression and, in some cases, arbitrary arrests and the violent suppression of protests. Israel has imposed new restrictions and requirements that could have an impact on Israeli human rights organizations, including some that carry out advocacy work or provide direct humanitarian or legal assistance to Palestinians in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. The Israeli authorities have also detained or restricted the movement of Palestinians for exercising their right to freedom of expression. In its resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#), the Security Council called on Israel to take steps “to cease all settlement activities in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem”. No such steps have been taken during the reporting period. Instead, settlement activities have continued. During the reporting period, Israeli authorities advanced or approved plans and announced tenders for over 6,000 housing units in settlements in Area C of the occupied West Bank.

28. On 30 May 2018, Israel decided to advance, approve and tender some 3,500 housing units in the occupied West Bank, the largest number of advancements granted at one time since June 2017. One third of those units are in settlements in outlying locations deep in the West Bank. On 1 August, the Israeli Civil Administration confirmed its intention to expand the municipal boundaries of the Amichai settlement to include the outpost of Adei Ad. If implemented, this would result in the first outpost legalization, under Israeli law, since 2014. On 14 August, Israeli authorities announced they would publish a tender for 603 units in the Ramat Shlomo settlement

in East Jerusalem, the first such announcement since 2016. In Area C, a tender for an additional 511 housing units was published, and construction based on previously approved plans continued. I reiterate the long-standing position of the United Nations that all settlement activities are illegal under international law and an obstacle to peace. Settlements create yet more obstacles to advancing a negotiated two-State solution. I reiterate that all settlement activity in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, constitutes a flagrant violation under international law, as stated in resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#), and must cease immediately and completely.

29. In January 2018, the Knesset passed an amendment to the “Basic Law: Jerusalem, Capital of Israel.” This change would make it more difficult for Israel to transfer territories that are currently within the Israeli-defined Jerusalem municipality boundaries to a future Palestinian State by requiring a super-majority of 80 votes in the Knesset. The amendment also lowers the threshold required by the Knesset to make changes to Jerusalem’s municipal boundaries to a simple majority. On 7 March, the Knesset also approved an amendment to the “Entry to Israel Law”, allowing the revocation of permanent residency status of Palestinians in East Jerusalem involved in terrorist activities, treason or espionage, as defined in Israeli law.

30. Demolitions and seizures of Palestinian-owned structures continued across the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem. During the reporting period Israeli authorities demolished or seized 326 structures, citing the absence of building permits, which are extremely difficult to obtain in Area C and East Jerusalem. Over 350 people, including 185 children, were displaced and the livelihoods of over 7,160 people were affected.

31. Throughout the reporting period, the United Nations continued warning about the heightened risk of demolition and displacement of several Bedouin communities. On 1 August 2018, Israel’s High Court of Justice indicated it did not find sufficient reason to prevent the demolition of the Bedouin village of Khan al-Ahmar. It instructed the State to present an alternative relocation site, on which the parties have not agreed. Demolition is on hold while the Court considers the case. I reiterate that demolitions and forcible evictions, carried out when there is no military need, contravene international humanitarian law and international human rights law.

32. According to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, and reflecting an increase in the number of incidents, 203 violent incidents involving Israeli settlers and resulting in Palestinian casualties or property damage were documented during the reporting period, resulting in 3 Palestinians killed and 92 injured, as well as damage to property.

33. Palestinians continued to advance their State-building programme, albeit limited to the territory under the control of the Palestinian Authority, which excludes Area C, East Jerusalem and Gaza. The United Nations continued its assistance to the Palestinian people throughout the reporting period (see [A/73/84–E/2018/72](#)). In December 2017, the 2018–2020 Humanitarian Response Plan for the occupied Palestinian territory was finalized, including, for the first time, a three-year planning-horizon. The plan requires \$539.7 million for 2018 to address urgent humanitarian needs throughout the occupied Palestinian territory, but to date it is only funded by 23 per cent.

34. On 2 July 2018, the Knesset passed a new law reducing the clearance revenues Israel collects on behalf of the Palestinian Authority by an amount equal to the sums paid by the Authority, “directly or indirectly”, to certain Palestinian prisoners and their families, as well as to the families of Palestinians killed or injured in attacks or alleged attacks against Israelis. According to the law, the withheld funds will be frozen and can only be released to the Authority if the Israeli Minister of Defense certifies that no such payments were made in a particular year. Implementation of this

law is expected to have a significant negative impact on the fiscal sustainability of the Authority. On 17 July, the Knesset passed an amendment transferring jurisdiction over certain petitions related to decisions by Israeli authorities in the West Bank from the High Court of Justice to the Administrative Affairs Court in Jerusalem.

35. On 30 April 2018, the Palestinian National Council convened in Ramallah for the first time in 22 years, re-electing President Abbas as Chairman. The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine and Hamas boycotted the meeting. In its final statement, the Council reiterated its commitment to a peaceful solution based on longstanding parameters and United Nations resolutions. The statement further mandated the Executive Committee “to suspend the recognition of Israel until it recognizes the State of Palestine on the borders of 4 June 1967 and repeals the decision to annex East Jerusalem and stop the settlements”, It also endorsed the move to join various international treaties and to seek international protection for the Palestinian people.

36. Electricity outages of up to 20 hours a day continued to undermine the provision of basic services in Gaza, including a health system on the verge of collapse. Given the mass casualties and injuries in the wake of the “Great March of Return” demonstrations, alongside a chronic shortage of medicines and the limited capacities of health facilities, this situation is particularly difficult for the residents of Gaza. The majority of Palestinians in Gaza receive water for only a few hours every three to four days, with significant quantities of raw sewage discharged into the Mediterranean Sea on a daily basis. The United Nations is providing nearly 950,000 litres of emergency fuel per month for critical health, water and waste management infrastructure, constituting a temporary lifeline to the residents of Gaza.

37. The United Nations has actively tried to promote short, medium and long-term interventions to improve the economy and the deteriorating humanitarian situation in Gaza. These need for these services was the basis for discussions at the meetings of the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee in Cairo, Washington, D.C. and Brussels, on 8, 13 and 20 March 2018, respectively. The Committee worked to develop a series of priority engagements aimed at improving the electricity, water and health situations in Gaza.

38. I commend Egypt’s decision to open the Rafah crossing for over 80 days during the reporting period, including the extended opening during the month of Ramadan, making it the longest uninterrupted opening of the Rafah crossing since October 2014. I hope for more regular movement through the crossing in future.

39. While playing a key role in ensuring that the Kerem Shalom crossing was kept open almost continuously despite tensions, the Government of Israel imposed a series of severe restrictions on the movement of goods on 9 and 16 July 2018 (imposed on 10 July and 17 July), in response to the launching of incendiary kites and balloons from Gaza towards Israel. On 24 July, the Israeli Ministry of Defense partially lifted the restrictions and allowed additional fuel, food and medicine to pass through the crossing, before reimposing full restrictions on 2 August. The crossing was fully reopened on 15 August. While recognizing Israel’s security concerns, the full lifting of all closures within the framework of Security Council resolution [1860 \(2009\)](#) is critical for the further development of the Strip. I also reiterate my call on the de facto authorities to provide full information on the two Israeli soldiers and two civilians who are being held in Gaza and to ensure their immediate release, as required under international humanitarian law.

40. The reconstruction process in Gaza continued during the reporting period, and nearly 13,500 of the 17,800 houses totally destroyed during the 2014 hostilities have now been rebuilt. The temporary Gaza Reconstruction Mechanism continues to play an important role in this regard. However, despite significant improvement since the beginning of 2018 in the number of Israeli approvals for materials to enter Gaza, there

was no significant increase in imports and the number of new submissions to the Mechanism has also declined. This is largely due to the drop in purchasing power and international assistance for reconstruction.

41. The precarious financial situation of UNRWA remains of serious concern. On 15 March 2018, the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Egypt, Jordan and Sweden co-chaired an extraordinary ministerial conference to provide sufficient, predictable and sustained funding to UNRWA, reaffirming support for its mandate and for overcoming the Agency's unprecedented shortfall of \$446 million. Despite recent crucial contributions, the shortfall remains at \$217 million. I have warned that failing to address its funding shortfall will not only have serious humanitarian and developmental consequences, but also implications for regional stability. I call on all Member States to further support UNRWA in this regard.

42. The recent escalation of violence in Gaza is a painful reminder of the devastating consequences of prolonged conflict. In response to requests by Security Council members for specific actions to help prevent renewed conflict, my Special Coordinator has outlined a strategy for Gaza that includes: (a) support for the Egyptian-brokered Palestinian reconciliation process and the return of the Palestinian Authority to Gaza; (b) advancement of urgent interventions to bolster water, energy and health networks in Gaza, alongside employment-generation schemes; (c) enhancement of the capacity of the United Nations to support and to fast track project implementation; (d) and strengthening of coordination between the United Nations, the Palestinian Authority, Israel and Egypt. This approach was welcomed by the Palestinian Authority, members of the Security Council and donor countries engaged in activities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

43. I remain deeply concerned by the state of our collective efforts to advance a lasting political resolution to the conflict, which is now critical, and I urge key regional and international partners to re-engage and to remain steadfast in the pursuit of a two-State solution. The Middle East Quartet remains the best mechanism for achieving this goal. The 2016 report of the Quartet, which remains relevant today, clearly outlines what is needed to advance a sustainable and just peace.

44. I express my deep appreciation to my Special Coordinator, Nickolay Mladenov, for his outstanding service in what remains a challenging context. I am also most grateful to UNRWA Commissioner-General Pierre Krähenbühl for his unwavering commitment and the remarkable work carried out by his staff on behalf of Palestine refugees. I pay tribute, too, to all staff who work under difficult circumstances in the service of the United Nations.

45. I will continue to ensure that the United Nations works towards ending the Israeli occupation that began in 1967 and establishing an independent, democratic, contiguous and viable Palestinian State living side by side with Israel in peace, security and mutual recognition, with Jerusalem as the capital of both States, within the framework of a comprehensive regional settlement consistent with Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973), [1397 \(2002\)](#), [1515 \(2003\)](#), [1860 \(2009\)](#) and [2334 \(2016\)](#) and in accordance with the Quartet road map, the Arab Peace Initiative, the principle of land for peace and international law.



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The situation in the Middle East

Question of Palestine

Security Council
Seventy-fourth year

Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report is submitted in accordance with the request of the General Assembly in paragraph 26 of its resolution [73/19](#). The report, which covers the period from September 2018 to 15 August 2019, contains replies received from the parties concerned to the note verbale sent by the Secretary-General pursuant to the request contained in resolution [73/19](#), as well as the observations of the Secretary-General on the current state of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and on international efforts to move the peace process forward, with a view to achieving a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine.

* [A/74/150](#).



I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution [73/19](#).
2. On 10 July 2019, pursuant to the request contained in paragraph 26 of resolution [73/19](#), I addressed the following letter to the President of the Security Council:

“I have the honour of referring to resolution [73/19](#), which the General Assembly adopted on 30 November 2018, at its seventy-third session, under the agenda item ‘Question of Palestine’.

“Paragraph 26 of the resolution requests the Secretary-General to continue his efforts with the parties concerned, and in consultation with the Security Council, including with regard to the reporting required pursuant to resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#), towards the attainment of a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine and the promotion of peace in the region and to submit to the General Assembly at its seventy-fourth session a report on these efforts and on developments on this matter.

“In order to fulfil my reporting responsibilities under this resolution, I should be grateful if you would kindly convey to me the views of the Security Council by 20 July 2019.

“Recalling the Secretariat’s obligation to observe the page limit of its reports, pursuant to General Assembly resolution [52/214](#), I would like to encourage the Security Council to limit its submission to 1,500 words.”

3. As at 15 August 2019, no response to that request had been received.
4. In a note verbale dated 21 May 2019, I sought the positions of States Members of the United Nations, in particular the Governments of Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic, as well as the State of Palestine, regarding any steps taken by them to implement the relevant provisions of the resolution. As at 22 August 2019, replies had been received from Iraq, Israel, the Philippines, the Russian Federation and the Permanent Observer Mission of the State of Palestine.
5. The note verbale dated 8 July 2019 from the Permanent Observer Mission of the State of Palestine to the United Nations reads as follows:

“The Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations presents his compliments to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and, in reference to note DPPA/DPO/MED/357 on General Assembly resolution [73/19](#) of 30 November 2018, ‘Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine’, has the honour to convey the State of Palestine’s views on the efforts to implement its provisions.

“For decades, the General Assembly has affirmed its stance on the question of Palestine by adoption of an annual resolution entitled ‘Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine’, most recently adopted by the Assembly as resolution [73/19](#). The resolution’s provisions and the principles reaffirmed therein reflect the long-standing international consensus on the fundamental pillars and requirements for achieving a just and lasting solution to the question of Palestine in all its dimensions. Regrettably, the failure to uphold these principles and follow through on those provisions – most starkly reflected in the profound disrespect of the resolution and grave violations that continue to be perpetrated by Israel, the occupying Power – have prevented implementation of this resolution towards realization of a peaceful, permanent solution.

“At its seventy-third session, the Assembly again overwhelmingly supported this resolution and reiterated the calls for: ending the Israeli

occupation that began in 1967; ensuring the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including to self-determination and independence; and responsible international action to peacefully resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, in line with international law, the relevant resolutions and the permanent responsibility of the United Nations towards the question of Palestine, which remains unfulfilled since the Assembly's adoption of resolution 181 (II) in 1947 and the decision to partition Mandate Palestine.

"States continued to express deep regret that the Palestine question remains unresolved. Many characterized it as a stain on the global conscience and a litmus test for the viability of the rules-based order. Most deemed the failure to justly resolve it as undermining the international system's credibility, particularly that of the Security Council. States broadly condemned Israel's non-compliance with General Assembly and Security Council resolutions and its ongoing violations, including, in particular, human rights violations against the Palestinian people, settlement colonization policies and practices, measures of collective punishment and de facto annexation attempts in breach of the Charter prohibition on the acquisition of territory by force.

"The majority stressed that the conflict remains a primary source of regional and global instability and called for intensification of efforts to advance a just solution in line with international law, United Nations resolutions, the Madrid principles, the Arab Peace Initiative and the Quartet road map, as repeatedly called for by the Assembly and the Security Council, most recently in resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#). Calls were made for urgent efforts to salvage and actualize the two-State solution of Palestine and Israel, living side by side in peace and security within recognized borders based on the pre-1967 borders, and to ensure a just solution for the Palestine refugee question based on resolution 194 (III), with a near-unanimous call for support to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) to ensure continuity of needed assistance to over 5.4 million refugees pending a just solution.

"While the State of Palestine is grateful for the principled positions and support extended by the great majority in the General Assembly, unfortunately, such reaffirmations are insufficient in a situation where the law continues to be grossly breached and an entire people continue to be deprived of their inalienable rights. After the passage of over 71 years since the 1948 Nakba that continues to be suffered by the Palestinian people and 52 years of Israel's illegal foreign occupation of the remainder of Palestine, including East Jerusalem, since 1967, more than words of principle, condemnation and calls for compliance are needed.

"Implementation and tangible follow-up action are vital. Absent serious, practical efforts to implement resolution [73/19](#) and all other relevant United Nations resolutions, this conflict will continue to worsen and mutate, the Palestinian people will continue suffering the grave consequences of this historic injustice and future generations of Palestinians and Israelis, and the region itself, will continue to be harmed as peace and security cannot be truly realized for as long as the Palestine question remains unresolved, as the passage of decades has shown.

"Despite the situation's steep deterioration and further setbacks since the adoption of resolution [73/19](#), the Palestinian leadership remains committed to the path of peace and international law as the guarantor of justice. At every juncture, it has reaffirmed its commitment to non-violence and pursuit of political, diplomatic, legal and popular means for attainment of Palestinian

rights and a sustainable solution that would ensure peaceful coexistence between the State of Palestine and Israel, and has striven to uphold all relevant United Nations resolutions and cooperated with international and regional efforts to this end, including with all credible peace initiatives across nearly three decades, in line with the long-standing parameters and international consensus on a just solution, as reflected in resolution 73/19.

“It is regrettable that the current United States administration, in alignment with Israel, the occupying Power, has pursued ‘peace efforts’ that disregard those parameters, are completely detached from the global consensus, and undermine the rule of law, the authority of the General Assembly and the Security Council and fundamental principles of human rights and justice. It is for these reasons, and particularly following the United States decision in regard to Jerusalem on 6 December 2017 and transfer of its embassy to the City, in explicit contravention of United Nations resolutions, the rights, presence and legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people in the City and the international consensus, that the Palestinian leadership has deemed it unacceptable to engage with these efforts.

“Such actions, preceded and accompanied by incessant and escalating Israeli violations in Occupied Palestine, including East Jerusalem, have hardened the political deadlock, further harmed peace prospects and exacerbated despair among Palestinians, diminishing belief that a solution can ever be found. The Palestinian leadership remains insistent that a comprehensive and just solution to the question of Palestine cannot be achieved without a just solution to the question of Jerusalem and without East Jerusalem as the capital of Palestine.

“Despite such negative developments, the Palestinian people and Government continue to seek a political horizon that can lead them to freedom and a just solution and continue to look to the international community to fulfil its responsibilities in this regard. Palestine continues to actively engage and advocate at the multilateral and bilateral levels towards facilitating that political horizon. The call on the international community has been constant and consistent: to act to ensure compliance with international law and United Nations resolutions, including through concrete measures of accountability, to compel Israel to respect its legal obligations, including under the Charter and as an occupying Power in respect of the Fourth Geneva Convention. Such steps are deemed vital to de-escalate tensions, reverse negative trends on the ground, including the destructive colonization of Palestine, and ultimately bring an end to the occupation, secure Palestinian rights, and achieve peace.

“While the global consensus is that there is no alternative to the two-State solution on the 1967 lines, there is equal consensus that its viability may soon be nullified by the situation on the ground imposed by the occupying Power. Salvaging the two-State solution requires full, immediate cessation and reversal of illegal Israeli settlement activities. Yet, the Israeli Government persists, in rhetoric and actions, with its contempt for international law and the international community, actively destroying that solution and undermining all efforts by regional and international partners to create the conditions and political horizon for its achievement. In the recent period, this has included explicit threats, including by the Prime Minister and other right-wing Israeli officials, to annex parts or all of the West Bank and more aggressive colonization measures. This has been particularly intense in Occupied East Jerusalem, where home demolitions, settlement activities and other pressures on the City’s Palestinian inhabitants have dramatically increased and where extremist officials and settlers continue to provoke and incite, including in regard to the holy sites, and

particularly Haram al-Sharif, undermining the historic status quo and aggravating religious sensitivities and risking a triggering of a dangerous religious conflagration.

“Blatantly ignoring the Assembly and Council, Israel’s settlement activities and land grab have continued unabated, including, inter alia, settlement and Wall construction; transfer to Occupied Palestine of thousands more Israeli settlers; forced displacement of thousands more Palestinians, including Bedouin families, and particularly in the areas of Occupied East Jerusalem and the Jordan Valley, including in the so-called ‘E-1’ area; confiscation of large land parcels; exploitation of natural resources; and demolition of hundreds more Palestinian homes and properties to facilitate Israel’s colonization and annexation schemes.

“In the absence of accountability and with the full support of the current United States administration, Israel’s impunity has become even more flagrant. Despite international demands to cease its illegal behaviour, it continues to entrench its illegal foreign occupation and to oppress the Palestinian people, forcibly denying and violently violating their rights, including via military campaigns resulting in the wilful and wanton killing and injury of civilians, including children, and the detention and imprisonment of thousands of civilians, amounting to war crimes. It also persists with its illegal blockade of 2 million Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, isolating and virtually imprisoning them and imposing on them immeasurable suffering, indignity and insecurity under humanitarian conditions deemed by most to be dire, if not inhuman and unliveable. Moreover, before the eyes of the world, it is feverishly attempting to superimpose ‘Greater Israel’ on all of historic Palestine. Such unlawful, unilateral actions are prejudging the outcome of negotiations, destroying the two-State solution and imposing a one-State reality of apartheid that precludes the possibility of peaceful coexistence and with far-reaching consequences.

“Yet, despite this dismal reality, the Palestinian leadership remains adherent to a peaceful path and ready to engage in credible peace efforts based on the rule of law and United Nations resolutions, as it has done throughout the decades of the Middle East peace process at every stage, including by engaging in good faith in negotiations, as it has done, beginning at the Madrid Peace Conference in 1991, to the Oslo Process that launched in 1993, to every negotiation process thereafter. For decades, Palestine’s position has mirrored the global consensus on two States. This began with the Palestine National Council’s acceptance of the solution in the 1988 Declaration of Independence, a major compromise agreeing to establish the Palestinian State on only 22 per cent of our historic homeland, for the sake of realizing Palestinian rights and establishing lasting peace and security. This compromise remains the primary testament of our peace commitment and, with the 2002 Arab Peace Initiative, represents the boldest contribution to solving the conflict and should be recognized as such and not belittled or demeaned, as Israel continues to do.

“The State of Palestine continues to call for a multilateral political process to achieve the two-State solution based on the long-standing terms of reference and parameters, including via an international peace conference. We have appealed to the Security Council and Quartet members – the Russian Federation and the United States, along with the European Union and the United Nations as a whole – to uphold their obligations and exert serious efforts to this end, in cooperation with concerned regional partners and the League of Arab States and with the vital support of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and all peace-loving nations. On our part, we have consistently sought reaffirmation of the Arab Peace Initiative through

successive Arab Summits and cooperated with Quartet members, collectively and individually, and urged other States to make their contributions in support of peacemaking efforts, as reflected in the meetings held by President Abbas and other high-level Palestinian officials throughout 2018–2019.

“This commitment to a peaceful settlement is further bolstered by our constant pledges to resolve the conflict in line with the Charter, international law and the relevant United Nations resolutions, as confirmed, *inter alia*, in the 28 September 2011 application by the State of Palestine for admission to United Nations membership; in Palestine’s accession to numerous international treaties and conventions; in our bilateral and multilateral relations with the international community, including numerous diplomatic and cooperation agreements concluded with States that have recognized Palestine; in Palestine’s official communications and interventions at the United Nations; and in relevant provisions of declarations by the League of Arab States, NAM, OIC, and the Group of 77 and China.

“The Palestinian Government and national institutions continue to take measures to mitigate the occupation’s devastating consequences, even in the midst of the severe financial crisis and instability caused by Israel’s illegal seizure of Palestinian tax revenues. In response to deteriorating humanitarian, socioeconomic and security conditions, we continue to exert efforts to alleviate our people’s suffering, bolster resilience, promote reconciliation and restore hope that a better future is within reach. Such hope is vital for pushing against the radicalism and extremism plaguing the region, especially among youth. The programmes of United Nations agencies, with UNRWA at the forefront, along with the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the United Nations Children’s Fund, the United Nations Development Programme, the Office of the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General to the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Palestinian Authority, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) and other organizations, have been instrumental in supporting Palestinian efforts to this end, including in line with the Palestinian National Development Plan and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework, as has been the assistance and solidarity extended to Palestine by concerned States from every corner of the globe. Our work with the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee for the Coordination of the International Assistance to Palestinians is also relevant in this regard.

“We have also repeatedly called for action to uphold the international obligation to protect civilians, an obligation not only abdicated by Israel, the occupying Power, but being intentionally and systematically violated by it. The Palestinian people are in need of protection, as per international humanitarian and human rights law and the many relevant resolutions aimed at ensuring the safety and well-being of civilians in situations of armed conflict. The Palestinian civilian population being held captive under Israel’s foreign occupation and blockade should not be denied such protection. Moreover, protection measures and de-escalation clearly contribute to peace efforts and do not detract from them.

“The State of Palestine is firm in the conviction that peace cannot be achieved without restoring the primacy of international law to the efforts to resolve the conflict. A solution must be based on international law and the relevant United Nations resolutions; only on that basis can negotiations on the final status issues – Jerusalem, Palestine refugees, settlements, borders, security, prisoners and water – arrive at a just, peaceful solution. As affirmed in the Secretary-General’s agenda, peaceful resolution of conflicts requires a human

rights, justice and development perspective, and not just a security perspective, and the root causes of the conflict must be fully and properly addressed.

“We have never sought to impose a solution, as Israel and its supporters do; rather, we have transparently sought application of the law to bring an end to the conflict and achieve our rights. In every encounter and in every appeal, this is all we have asked for; nothing beyond what we are entitled to as a people, as per international law, and nothing beyond that legislated in United Nations resolutions and affirmed in the July 2004 International Court of Justice advisory opinion. Insinuations that we seek anything beyond what is rightfully ours, and even as we have made monumental compromises, are offensive and ignore the history of our principled engagement in every international and regional initiative and cycle of negotiations, despite being the aggrieved party. Should the two-State solution collapse and cease to be a viable means of establishing a just solution, this will have been the result of Israel’s policies and actions, and not those of the State of Palestine.

“What is urgently needed is political will to implement the relevant Security Council and General Assembly resolutions central to the achievement of a peaceful settlement. Despite all good-faith intentions, including as reflected in the adoption of resolution 73/19, the international community continues to fail to fulfil its legal, political and moral obligations in the face of Israel’s total disrespect for the law.

“The Security Council’s continued failure on this issue is a result of both Israeli disrespect of the law and the paralysis caused by a permanent member’s use of the veto. But this cannot be accepted as the norm. The prospect of a peaceful future for the Palestinian and Israeli peoples will remain elusive for as long as the occupying Power is shielded from accountability, even as it breaches the law, including through the perpetration of war crimes, destroys the two-State solution, and thwarts peace efforts. It is time for accountability measures, including by the Security Council and the General Assembly, in line with the permanent responsibility of the United Nations towards the question of Palestine until it is justly resolved in all aspects, and concrete action by States to uphold third-party obligations, in line with article 1 common to the Geneva Conventions, Security Council resolution 2334 (2016) and other relevant provisions of international law and United Nations resolutions.

“It is high time to firmly convey to Israel, the occupying Power, that its defiance will no longer be tolerated and that it must halt all violations or bear the consequences. This is critical for creating an environment conducive to the credible dialogue and negotiations needed to bring about an end to the Israeli occupation that began in 1967; to finally achieve the independence of the State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital; and to establish lasting peace, security and coexistence between the Palestinian and Israeli peoples on the basis of the two-State solution and in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions, including resolution 73/19.”

6. The note verbale dated 8 August 2019 from the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations reads as follows:

“The Permanent Mission of Israel to the United Nations presents its compliments to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and has the honour to refer to his note concerning resolution 73/19, adopted by the General Assembly on 30 November 2018 under the agenda item ‘Question of Palestine’.

“The State of Israel has demonstrated its aspiration and commitment to achieving peace via negotiation. Historic peace was indeed achieved between

Israel and Egypt and between Israel and Jordan. Israel continues to seek peace with all the Arab and Muslim world and to promote coexistence and fruitful cooperation with all its neighbours.

“Today, Israel hopes to renew direct bilateral negotiations, without preconditions, with its Palestinian neighbours and to find a mutually agreed upon and lasting solution.

“The Palestinians’ refusal to compromise is reflected in their rejection of the numerous peace offers made to them by Israel, despite the fact that Israel already has peace treaties with two of its neighbours and evolving relations with other Arab States. The Palestinian rejections were not merely political and were often accompanied by terrorism and violence against Israeli civilians. The violence reached new heights in 2018–2019, with an astonishing number of rockets launched from Gaza – in two incidents numbering hundreds a day – aimed at the Israeli civilian population, causing property damage and loss of life. Incendiary and explosive balloons and kites are launched with the sole purpose of causing fires and destruction to Israel’s civilian infrastructure, agriculture, nature and people.

“The Palestinian leadership gave de facto endorsement to these acts when, at the United Nations, it pushed for the rejection of a United Nations resolution condemning the use of rockets against the civilian population.

“This violence is a result not only of the extremism spreading throughout the region but also of the constant incitement to violence and the glorification of terror by the Palestinian leadership. It stands in stark contrast to this very resolution, endorsed and promoted by the Palestinians, that specifically calls upon the parties to observe calm and restraint and to refrain from provocative actions, incitement and inflammatory rhetoric. The incitement starts from the top; Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas has publicly endorsed the payment of salaries to convicted terrorists and their families. Reflecting the Palestinian Authority’s official condonation of terror, public spaces are regularly named after mass murderers. Indeed, the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#) mentioned that officials from Fatah and the Palestinian Authority continued to glorify perpetrators of attacks against Israelis, including on social media accounts, by regularly referring to them as ‘heroes’ or a ‘source of pride’, and welcoming attacks when they occurred.

“Palestinian children are indoctrinated against Israel from grade 1. Textbooks published by the Palestinian Authority are built around the same three principles that appeared in previous textbooks: delegitimization of Israel’s existence, demonization of Israel and Jews, and indoctrination to war and violence instead of education for peace. Peace and coexistence are not mentioned; violence is advocated and praised.

“The constant atmosphere of hate and the inflammatory rhetoric used by both the Palestinian leadership in Ramallah and the Hamas terrorist regime in Gaza have led to horrible attacks against Israelis. The examples are, unfortunately, numerous, such as the case of 19-year-old Ori Ansbacher, who, on 19 February 2019, was viciously attacked in a forest next to her home, where she used to go to find solitude. Her Palestinian attacker, Arafat Irfaiya, spotted her and stabbed her numerous times. Then, ignoring her cries, he dragged her, bleeding and in pain, 150 metres. He tied her up, stripped her, and then raped her. When he was done, he left her alone to die. After he was arrested, her Palestinian attacker explained his acts: ‘I left my house to kill Jews’.

“Ori was not the only victim of Palestinian incitement. In October 2018, Kim Levengrond-Yehzekel (28 years old), a mother of an 18-month-old baby and aspiring lawyer-to-be, and Ziv Hajbi (35 years old), a father of three, were murdered at their workplace in Barkan Industrial Park. The industrial park prides itself on being a place where Palestinians and Israelis work side by side. The Palestinian murderer was a former employee there, which didn’t stop him from shooting Kim at close range. The family of the murderer, who was killed in a gunfight with the Israeli police during his apprehension, was and still is being rewarded by the Palestinian Authority for his ‘heroic actions’.

“A clear and unequivocal message must be delivered to the Palestinian leadership: stop encouraging terrorism, stop hate speech and stop educating children to hate. Above all, stop offering cash rewards and publicly honouring those who commit acts of terrorism. Such glorification of violence against innocent people and adulation of those who commit these horrific acts is utterly incompatible with the commitment to coexistence and peaceful relations with Israel that must be at the foundation of a future Palestinian State.

“The Israeli-Palestinian conflict will be resolved only through direct bilateral negotiations without preconditions. Attempts to impose solutions or to dictate parameters and timetables will only drive peace farther away. Thus, Israel utterly rejects Security Council resolution 2334 (2016). The resolution is unreservedly hostile to Israel and will only make peace harder, not easier, to achieve.

“It is imperative to reiterate Israel’s right to exist as the nation State of the Jewish people, in peace and with secure borders, and our steadfast opposition to any attempt to undermine Israel’s legitimacy. The Palestinian refusal to recognize Israel as a Jewish State – based, inter alia, on the continued denial of any historical connection between the Jewish people and its land – remains one of the main obstacles to peace between Israel and the Palestinians.”

II. Observations

7. International efforts to promote the peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine continued during the reporting period. The envoys of the Middle East Quartet consulted one another informally throughout the year. On 27 September 2018 and 30 April 2019, Norway convened biannual meetings of the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee for the Coordination of the International Assistance to Palestinians. At both meetings, members reiterated support for the two-State solution, in line with relevant United Nations resolutions, and called for urgent and enhanced efforts to support the Palestinian economy and improve the humanitarian situation.

8. The United States has repeatedly stated that it is continuing its efforts aimed at a comprehensive peace plan. In August 2018, the United States suspended more than \$200 million in economic support funds for the West Bank and Gaza in fiscal year 2017 and a further \$25 million for the East Jerusalem Hospital Network. In October 2018, it closed the Washington office of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), citing the organization’s failure to take steps towards meaningful negotiations with Israel and concerns about Palestinian attempts to prompt an investigation of Israel by the International Criminal Court. The PLO Central Council convened in August 2018 and ratified the continued severance of political relations with the United States until that country revisits its decisions regarding Jerusalem, Palestine refugees and settlements. On 25 and 26 June 2019, the United States organized an economic workshop in Bahrain under its Peace to Prosperity programme. Humanitarian and economic support is important for the Palestinian people and critical for creating an

environment conducive to viable negotiations. Such measures should be complemented by a comprehensive peace agreement that addresses all final status issues.

9. On 28 and 29 October 2018, the PLO Central Council reaffirmed the decisions that it had taken to suspend recognition of the State of Israel until that country recognizes the State of Palestine with regard to the borders of 4 June 1967 with East Jerusalem as its capital, to end security coordination in all its forms and to disengage economically from Israel. On 25 July 2019, following the demolition of Palestinian homes in Areas A, B and C of the West Bank, on the East Jerusalem side of the barrier, the President of the State of Palestine, Mahmoud Abbas, stated that the Palestinian leadership had decided to suspend compliance with agreements signed with Israel and to start putting in place mechanisms to form a committee to implement this, in accordance with the resolutions of the PLO Central Council. Mr. Abbas is reported to have signed 11 instruments of accession to international agreements on 15 November 2018.

10. Four reports to the Security Council on the implementation of resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#) were delivered during the reporting period. They expressed my concern regarding the continued lack of implementation of the provisions of the resolution, including those regarding settlement activity in the Occupied Palestinian Territory; violence against civilians; provocative actions, incitement and inflammatory rhetoric; negative trends imperilling the two-State solution; Member States' distinctions, in their relevant dealings, between the territory of the State of Israel and the territories occupied since 1967; and collective efforts to launch credible negotiations. I have stated that efforts must be refocused on ultimately returning to meaningful negotiations to end the occupation and bring a just, lasting and comprehensive resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. It is only by realizing the vision of two States living side by side in peace, security and mutual recognition, with Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and Palestine and all final status issues resolved permanently through negotiations, that the legitimate aspirations of both peoples will be achieved. I remain committed to working with all concerned parties to achieve this goal.

11. The extremely dire economic and humanitarian situation in Gaza remained a major concern during the reporting period. The security situation also remained fragile. Following the start of the "Great March of Return" protests on 30 March 2018, demonstrations continued along the perimeter fence. During protests throughout the reporting period, 76 Palestinians were killed or died of wounds sustained previously, including 20 children and 1 woman. Some 2,853 persons were injured by live ammunition, including 37 women. At least one Israeli soldier was killed and nine were injured. In successive rounds of hostilities, Hamas and other Palestinian militants fired some 1,500 rockets, Grad missiles and mortars from Gaza towards Israel. In response, the Israel Defense Forces fired some 1,200 missiles and tank shells at targets inside Gaza. The Israel Defense Forces also destroyed three tunnels leading from Gaza into Israel. A total of 44 Palestinians were killed by fire from the Israel Defense Forces, including 7 children and 3 women, and 181 were injured, including 30 women. A total of 4 Israeli civilians were killed and 200 were injured as a result of the exchanges, according to the Israel Defense Forces. In the same period, hundreds of fires were started in Israel by incendiary devices, balloons and kites launched from Gaza.

12. On 11 November 2018, in an exchange of fire following the discovery of an undercover Israel Defense Forces unit in Gaza, seven members of the military wing of Hamas and an Israel Defense Forces officer were killed. Militants in Gaza immediately launched 18 rockets and mortars. In the following 24 hours, some 450 projectiles were indiscriminately fired towards Israeli cities and towns, more than in the entire period since the conflict of 2014. One Palestinian civilian was killed by a

Hamas rocket in the Israeli city of Ashqelon. An Israel Defense Forces soldier was also seriously wounded by a missile strike that hit a military bus. The Israel Defense Forces responded by striking 160 targets identified as militant sites. Seven Palestinians were killed, at least four of whom were reported to have been members of armed groups.

13. In May 2019, the most serious escalation since the hostilities of 2014 took place in Gaza. On 3 May, thousands of Palestinians participated in the weekly demonstrations at the Gaza perimeter fence. Incendiary balloons were launched, and stones and pipe bombs were thrown at Israeli soldiers, who responded with live fire, rubber bullets and tear gas, killing 2 Palestinians and injuring 49. A sniper reportedly from Palestinian Islamic Jihad fired across the fence, injuring two Israeli soldiers. In response to the sniper attack, the Israel Defense Forces launched several tank shells, and the Israeli Air Force targeted military sites in Gaza, killing two Palestinian militants and injuring two civilians. From 3 to 5 May, 650 rockets were fired from Gaza. While some 240 projectiles were intercepted by the Iron Dome system, several houses, two kindergartens, a school and a hospital in Israel were hit directly. A total of 4 Israeli civilians were killed and more than 200 were injured, according to the Israel Defense Forces. The Israel Defense Forces reported that, during the same period, it had hit more than 300 Palestinian militant targets in Gaza, including a senior Hamas official, who had been targeted and killed by an air strike. According to sources in Gaza, 25 Palestinians were killed and more than 150 were injured. As a result of efforts made by the United Nations and Egypt, a cessation of hostilities was established on 6 May 2019.

14. Since the escalation of tensions in Gaza, the United Nations has engaged in unprecedented efforts, together with the Government of Egypt and other international partners, to prevent another outbreak of hostilities. That included efforts to improve living conditions and the delivery of services, as well as to facilitate increased efforts to meet the most urgent humanitarian needs and support the return of the legitimate Palestinian Government to Gaza and intra-Palestinian reconciliation, a crucial element in any political effort to resolve the wider conflict. The Russian Federation has also continued its efforts to facilitate Palestinian reconciliation, including by hosting a meeting to that end in Moscow from 11 to 13 February 2019.

15. As the situation in Gaza was at its most volatile during the reporting period, there was also a rise in violent incidents in the West Bank, which led to the deaths of both Israelis and Palestinians. A total of 7 Israelis, including 3 civilian men and 1 woman, and 38 Palestinians, including 1 woman, were killed in various incidents, including terrorist attacks, clashes and military operations.

16. The rise in the number of incidents was apparent in October and December 2018. On 12 October 2018, a Palestinian woman was killed south of Nablus by Israeli assailants throwing stones at her car. On 4 December, in the Tulkarm refugee camp, a 22-year-old Palestinian man with a psychosocial disability was shot and killed by the Israeli security forces in circumstances that would seem to indicate that he posed no threat to security personnel or others. On 9 December, in a drive-by shooting near the West Bank settlement of Ofra, seven Israelis were injured, including four children and a pregnant woman, whose baby was delivered prematurely and subsequently died. Hamas praised the attack and identified one of the perpetrators, who was later killed in an Israeli security forces operation north of Ramallah, as one of their own. I strongly condemn this attack and reiterate that there is no justification for terrorism. In the operations to apprehend the perpetrators of the attack, dozens of Israel Defense Forces troops entered Ramallah, where they raided the offices of the Palestinian News and Information Agency and seized surveillance video. Two Palestinians were reportedly injured by live fire during ensuing clashes, and more than 150 were injured in related incidents in the West Bank in subsequent days.

17. On 13 December 2018, in another drive-by shooting, this one near the Givat Assaf settlement, two Israeli soldiers were killed, and another was severely wounded together with an Israeli woman. The alleged perpetrator was arrested by the Israeli security forces on 8 January 2019 in a village north of Ramallah. In a statement issued on the day of the attack, the Prime Minister of Israel, Benjamin Netanyahu, announced a series of measures in response to the wave of attacks, including revoking the permits of family members and demolishing the houses of the perpetrators of the attacks, increasing the number of checkpoints and administrative detentions and intensifying efforts to capture assailants still at large. He also announced that some 2,000 houses built on Palestinian private land in settlements would be legalized retroactively and that steps had been taken to advance the construction of 82 new housing units in Ofra and in two industrial zones in the settlements of Avnei Hefetz and Beitar Illit.

18. The situation at the holy sites in East Jerusalem was tense during the reporting period. Tensions erupted at the Haram al-Sharif/Temple Mount on 16 February 2019, when Israeli police installed a metal fence and a lock at the top of the stairs leading to the Bab al-Rahmah (Gate of Mercy) two days after prayers were held there for the first time since 2003, when an Israeli court had banned the Islamic World Heritage Committee from obtaining access to it owing to claims that the site was being used for illicit activities. Between 17 and 21 February, Israeli police and Palestinian worshippers clashed repeatedly when worshippers tried to remove the metal fence to gain access and conduct prayers in the Bab al-Rahmah area. Tensions between Palestinian worshippers and the Israeli police have continued since that time, in particular as a result of the overlap of the celebration in Israel of Jerusalem Day, 2 June, with one of the final days of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, as well as that of the Jewish observance of Tisha B'Av with the start of the Muslim festival of Eid al-Adha (10 August). Israeli authorities allowed Jewish visitors to obtain access to the Haram al-Sharif/Temple Mount on both occasions under Israeli police protection, amid tensions and clashes between the Israeli police and Muslim worshippers. I urge all parties to work towards a de-escalation of tensions. I urge Israel and Jordan to work together to uphold the status quo at the holy sites, noting the special and historic role of Jordan as custodian of the Muslim and Christian holy sites in Jerusalem.

19. On 17 February 2019, the Government of Israel began implementing the law entitled "The Freezing of Funds Paid by the Palestinian Authority in Connection with Terrorism from Revenues Transferred by the Government of Israel", passed by the Knesset in July 2018. The law requires the Government of Israel to freeze from the clearance revenues that it collects on behalf of and transfers to the Palestinian Authority an amount equal to the sums paid by the Palestinian Authority directly or indirectly to Palestinians, or to the families of Palestinians, convicted by Israeli courts of involvement in alleged terrorist activities or other security-related offences, as defined in Israeli law, or who were killed while carrying out such activities. On 21 February, the Palestinian Authority informed the Government of Israel of its rejection of the unilateral decision and emphasized the official Palestinian Authority position that, under the Protocol on Economic Relations between the Government of the State of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization, no amount may be deducted without the consent of both parties. On 28 February, the Prime Minister of the State of Palestine, Rami Hamdallah, conveyed to key donors and international partners that the Palestinian Authority would not accept any transfers from Israel of funds that were less than the full amount owed to it. As at March 2019, Israel had begun deducting 12 monthly instalments, totalling \$140 million, equivalent to some 6 per cent of the clearance revenues from its transfers to the Palestinian Authority. I am deeply concerned about developments relating to the clearance revenues of the Palestinian Authority, in particular the political, economic and security implications

for both Palestinians and Israelis, which undermine the Oslo framework and the chance of achieving a two-State solution. At \$2.3 billion, clearance revenues account for more than 65 per cent of the total annual revenue of the Palestinian Authority. Both sides need to engage constructively with the goal of restoring the revenue transfers in full, in line with the Paris Protocol. They must do their utmost to prevent a further deterioration and to recommit themselves, with the support of the international community, to the basic tenets enshrined in long-standing bilateral agreements. I call upon all parties to refrain from unilateral steps that undermine the prospects for a two-State solution.

20. Although the Security Council, in its resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#), called upon both parties to refrain from provocative actions, incitement and inflammatory rhetoric, such actions and statements continued during the reporting period. I urge leaders on all sides to stop the incitement and to condemn, consistently and unequivocally, acts of terror and violence in all their forms.

21. Hamas continued to use inciteful and inflammatory rhetoric: its officials praised the stabbing and shooting attacks that killed Israeli civilians as heroic, and they mourned the killers. Fatah, including on its official social media accounts, also glorified the perpetrators of such attacks. In addition, senior Palestinian religious leaders made inflammatory speeches alleging Israeli intentions to destroy the Aqsa Mosque or change the status quo at the holy sites in Jerusalem. On 17 March 2019, both Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad praised the attack near the Ari'el settlement, which Hamas called a heroic operation, while Fatah praised the perpetrator as a heroic martyr. On 15 May, a senior Hamas official addressed a rally in Gaza, warning Israelis that the day of their slaughter, extermination and annihilation was near and calling upon them to leave and search for a place for themselves in Europe, hell or the sea. The official Hamas television channel also repeatedly continued to glorify perpetrators of terror attacks against Israelis, and it broadcast songs with graphic lyrics encouraging viewers to blow up Jews.

22. Israeli officials have also made provocative and highly problematic statements encouraging violence and undermining the two-State solution. In the wake of violent incidents in the West Bank in December 2018, politicians called for the deportation of the families of attackers. Separately, there have been calls for targeted assassinations of Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad officials, as well as for a shoot-to-kill policy in Gaza. One politician has gone as far as to call for Mr. Abbas to be assassinated. Others have continued to reject Palestinians' right to statehood and to openly support widespread settlement expansion and the annexation of all or part of the West Bank. An outgoing member of the Knesset confronted families of Palestinian prisoners, threatening to eliminate them and bury them with pigs. Another politician called upon Mr. Netanyahu to allow Palestinian prisoners on a hunger strike to die, while many boasted about the damage that Israel was causing through strikes on Gaza in response to rocket attacks.

23. I remain concerned about the general state of human rights and freedoms in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Throughout the reporting period, the Israel Defense Forces continued to conduct search and arrest operations, while the Palestinian Authority continued its arrests of suspected Hamas affiliates in the West Bank. Hamas also arrested and used violence against protestors in the Gaza Strip. At the end of July 2019, 454 Palestinians were being held by Israeli authorities under administrative detention, including 2 women. I reiterate my call to end the practice of administrative detention and to either charge all detainees or immediately release them. As at 31 July, Israel held 210 Palestinian children in Israeli prisons. All children should be treated with due consideration for their age, and they should be detained only in situations justified under international humanitarian law or applicable human rights norms.

24. In its resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#), the Security Council reiterated its demand that Israel immediately and completely cease all settlement activities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and that it fully respect all of its legal obligations in that regard. During the reporting period, Israeli authorities advanced, approved or tendered more than 12,000 housing units in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, a sharp increase since the most recent reporting period. I reiterate that all settlement activity in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, has no legal effect and constitutes a flagrant violation under international law, as stated in resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#), and must cease immediately and completely.

25. The situation in Hebron grew more tense during the reporting period. In October 2018, the Government of Israel approved the allocation of \$6 million for advancing the construction of 31 housing units in Hebron, which would be the first new construction there in 16 years. On 28 January 2019, Mr. Netanyahu announced that Israel would not extend beyond 31 January 2019 the mandate of the Temporary International Presence in Hebron, which had been established pursuant to the provisions of the Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip of 1995 (Oslo II Accords) between Israel and PLO. The situation of the Palestinian population, protective presence actors and human rights defenders in the H2 zone of Hebron following the withdrawal of the Temporary International Presence in Hebron is worrying. In addition, United Nations staff and the diplomatic community have frequently been harassed and intimidated by Israeli settlers since the departure of the Temporary International Presence in Hebron. Humanitarian actors and human rights defenders must be allowed to carry out their activities freely and safely and to ensure that any attack is thoroughly, impartially and independently investigated and the perpetrators held accountable. The United Nations continues to engage with relevant Member States and the parties on the ground to ensure the protection, safety and well-being of civilians in Hebron and in the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

26. In Security Council resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#), all States are called upon to distinguish, in their relevant dealings, between the territory of the State of Israel and the territories occupied since 1967. On 28 November 2018, the parliament of Chile approved a resolution in which the Government was called upon to examine all of its agreements with Israel to ascertain that they apply solely to the territory of the State of Israel and not to the territories occupied since 1967. Ireland advanced in the upper house of parliament the Control of Economic Activity (Occupied Territories) Bill 2018, which, if passed into law, would, inter alia, prohibit trade with and economic support for the settlements.

27. Demolitions and seizures of Palestinian-owned structures by Israeli authorities continued across the West Bank and East Jerusalem. Citing the absence of Israel-issued building permits, which are nearly impossible for Palestinians to obtain, Israeli authorities demolished or seized 536 structures, 344 in Area C and 192 in East Jerusalem, between 1 September 2018 and 15 August 2019. According to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, this resulted in the displacement of 597 Palestinians, including 287 children, and affected the livelihoods of some 48,700 persons.

28. In Khan al-Ahmar/Abu al-Helu, a Bedouin community of 181 people, Israeli authorities requisitioned land, levelled access routes and temporarily declared the area a closed military zone, in advance of the expected demolition of its structures. On 5 September 2018, the High Court of Justice denied several petitions by residents to prevent the demolition. On 21 October 2018, the Israeli authorities announced the delay of the demolition to allow for negotiations with the community to relocate it with its consent.

29. On 11 June 2019, the High Court of Israel dismissed a petition by the Palestinian residents of Wadi al-Hummus, near the Sur Bahir neighbourhood of East Jerusalem, giving them until 18 July 2019 to demolish nine buildings, citing the violation of a military order banning construction in the area owing to its proximity to the separation barrier. The structures were demolished by the Israeli authorities on 22 July, resulting in the displacement of 24 Palestinians, including 14 children. The forced eviction of Palestinians from their homes in East Jerusalem and the risk of high numbers of further evictions to facilitate the expansion of future settlements highlight the growing problem of Palestinians in East Jerusalem facing displacement. The policy of Israel of destroying Palestinian property is not compatible with its obligations under international humanitarian law. Among other issues, the destruction of private property in occupied territory is permissible only when rendered absolutely necessary for military operations, which is not applicable. Furthermore, it results in forced evictions and contributes to the risk of forcible transfer facing many Palestinians in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. Such policies must be reversed, and Israel should abide by its obligations under international law.

30. According to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, at least 300 violent incidents involving Israeli settlers and resulting in Palestinian casualties or property damage were documented during the reporting period, resulting in 3 Palestinians killed, including 1 woman, and 113 injured, including 6 women. In the same period, 4 Israelis, including 1 woman, were killed, and 34, including 8 women, were injured as a result of stone throwing, the use of live ammunition and stabbing attacks.

31. UNRWA continued to face financial challenges during the reporting period. The Agency's unprecedented funding shortfall, which stood at \$446 million in January 2018, had been fully covered by December 2018, following a number of significant new contributions from an expanded donor base. On 25 June 2019, the Agency held its annual pledging conference, in which I once again participated, after which it announced that its remaining funding shortfall for 2019 stood at \$151 million. I welcome the generous support of donors in assisting UNRWA during this challenging period. I call upon all Member States to continue to support this important humanitarian agency, which is not only a lifeline to millions of Palestine refugees but an important stabilizing entity in a vulnerable region.

32. In Gaza, the international community has taken a number of steps to improve the lives of 2 million people who live under the control of Hamas and suffer from Israeli closures. In this context, the United Nations has enhanced its project implementation capacity by establishing a project management unit to work with all relevant stakeholders to support the implementation of projects, including the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee package of urgent economic and humanitarian interventions. Thanks to the generous funding from Qatar, the United Nations has been able to import urgently needed fuel to operate the Gaza power plant. The daily electricity supply has increased to more than 11 hours, the highest in more than two years. There have also been significant improvements to the humanitarian situation, as well as increased availability of drinkable water and sewage treatment. However, finding sustainable solutions to the electricity crisis in Gaza remains critical. Critical job creation schemes have been initiated and have created more than 10,000 new jobs during the reporting period. Urgent interventions of this nature have been critical to preventing further violent escalations and must be followed by more sustainable efforts in support of the infrastructure and economic situation of Gaza.

33. On 4 December 2018, the United Nations concluded a comprehensive review of the Gaza Reconstruction Mechanism along with the Palestinian Authority and Israel. It resulted in several important changes that were implemented as of 1 January 2019.

They will allow the Mechanism to better respond to Gaza's changing needs and increase its functionality, transparency and predictability.

34. The humanitarian, economic and political crisis in Gaza continues and, notwithstanding the sustained efforts of Egypt, no progress has been made towards implementing the intra-Palestinian agreement of October 2017. The goal remains that Gaza and the West Bank be reunited under a single, democratic, national Government. Fatah and Hamas must engage in earnest with Egypt in order to ensure the return of legitimate government to Gaza. I reiterate that Palestinian unity is a key step towards reaching the larger objective of a Palestinian State and lasting peace. Gaza is, and must remain, an integral part of a future Palestinian State, as part of a two-State solution.

35. I remain seriously concerned about the lack of political progress to achieve an end to the occupation and the realization of a negotiated two-State resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, in line with relevant United Nations resolutions, previous agreements and international law. I reiterate that the report of the Middle East Quartet of 2016 and Security Council resolutions have outlined what is needed to advance a sustainable and just peace. I urge key regional and international partners to remain steadfast in the pursuit of a two-State solution for the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, for which there is no alternative.

36. I would like to express my deep appreciation to my Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Nickolay Mladenov, for his outstanding service in what remains a challenging context. I am also grateful to the Commissioner-General of UNRWA, Pierre Krähenbühl, for his commitment, and for the remarkable work on behalf of Palestinian refugees carried out by the staff of the Agency. I pay tribute, too, to all United Nations staff who work under difficult circumstances in the service of the Organization.

37. I will continue to ensure that the United Nations works towards ending the Israeli occupation that began in 1967 and establishing an independent, democratic, contiguous and viable Palestinian State living side by side with Israel in peace, security and mutual recognition, with Jerusalem as the capital of both States, within the framework of a comprehensive regional settlement, consistent with Security Council resolutions [242 \(1967\)](#), [338 \(1973\)](#), [1397 \(2002\)](#), [1515 \(2003\)](#), [1860 \(2009\)](#) and [2334 \(2016\)](#) and in accordance with the Quartet road map, the Arab Peace Initiative, the principle of land for peace and international law.



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The situation in the Middle East

Question of Palestine

**Security Council
Seventy-fifth year**

Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report is submitted in accordance with the request of the General Assembly in paragraph 15 of its resolution [74/11](#). The report, which covers the period from September 2019 to August 2020, contains replies received from the parties concerned to the note verbale sent by the Secretary-General pursuant to the request contained in resolution [74/11](#), as well as the observations of the Secretary-General on the current state of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and on international efforts to move the peace process forward, with a view to achieving a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine.

* [A/75/150](#).



I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 74/11.
2. On 2 July 2020, pursuant to the request contained in paragraph 15 of resolution 74/11, I addressed the following letter to the President of the Security Council:

“I have the honour to refer to resolution 74/11, which the General Assembly adopted on 3 December 2019, at its seventy-fourth session, under the agenda item ‘Question of Palestine’.

“Paragraph 15 of the resolution requests the Secretary-General, including through his Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and Personal Representative to the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Palestinian Authority, to continue his efforts with the parties concerned, and in consultation with the Security Council, including with regard to the reporting required pursuant to resolution 2334 (2016), towards the attainment of a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine and the promotion of peace in the region and to submit to the General Assembly at its seventy-fifth session a report on these efforts and on developments on this matter.

“In order to fulfil my reporting responsibilities under this resolution, I should be grateful if you would kindly convey to me the views of the Security Council by 20 July 2020.”

3. As at 15 August 2020, no response to that request had been received.
4. In a note verbale dated 22 May 2020, I sought the positions of States Members of the United Nations, in particular the Governments of Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic, as well as the State of Palestine, regarding any steps taken by them to implement the relevant provisions of the resolution. As at 15 August 2020, replies had been received from Israel, Namibia, the Philippines, Qatar and the Permanent Observer Mission of the State of Palestine.
5. The note verbale dated 29 May 2020 from the Permanent Observer Mission of the State of Palestine to the United Nations reads as follows:

“For decades, the General Assembly has affirmed its authoritative stance on the question of Palestine by adoption of its annual resolution ‘Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine’, most recently resolution 74/11. The provisions and principles reaffirmed therein reflect the fundamental parameters for achieving a just solution. Overwhelming support for the resolution confirms the long-standing international consensus in this regard.

“At its seventy-fourth session, the Assembly’s debate was again characterized by calls for ending the Israeli occupation that began in 1967; realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including to self-determination and independence; and responsible international action to justly resolve the Palestine question in all aspects, in accordance with international law, the relevant resolutions and the permanent responsibility of the United Nations, which remains unfulfilled since the adoption of resolution 181 (II) (1947) and the decision to partition Mandate Palestine, the consequences of which persist to this day.

“The international community reaffirmed its resolve to end the Israeli-Palestinian conflict through actualization of the two-State solution of Palestine and Israel, living side by side in peace and security within recognized borders based on the pre-1967 borders, based on international law, United Nations resolutions, the Madrid principles and the Arab Peace Initiative, and a just solution for the Palestine refugee question based on resolution 194 (III).

Moreover, near-unanimous support was reaffirmed for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and the imperative to ensure continuity of its vital assistance to over 5.6 million Palestine refugees in the Agency's fields of operation in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, pending achievement of a just solution.

“Palestine is grateful for such principled positions by the global majority. Yet, the passage of time and compounding of the conflict show starkly that statements and resolutions alone cannot end this historic injustice and the grave violations and hardships that the Palestinian people continue to endure, nor will they prevent Israel, the occupying Power, from further advancing its illegal colonial ambitions. Only concrete action to uphold international law, implement those resolutions and hold Israel accountable for its violations can change this dismal equation.

“After 53 years of Israel's occupation and 72 years of the dispossession, displacement and oppression of Palestinians in an ongoing Nakba since 1948, collective, practical efforts are urgently needed to implement resolution 74/11 and all relevant resolutions. Otherwise, the occupying Power will continue flouting the law, violating human rights and solidifying its illegal occupation, eroding the two-State solution and entrenching a one-State reality of apartheid, with grave consequences for the prospects for a peaceful settlement.

“Since the adoption of resolution 74/11, Israeli violations have only escalated, as have provocative declarations by Israeli officials of plans to commit more crimes in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, including threats to annex parts or all of the West Bank, beginning with the illegal settlements and the Jordan Valley, in flagrant breach of the Charter prohibition on the acquisition of territory by force. Whereas the international community calls for the complete, immediate cessation and reversal of settlement activities, Israel instead aggressively pursues such illegal actions. This includes plans for the construction of thousands more settlement units, particularly in areas in and around Occupied East Jerusalem and Bethlehem, including in the sensitive so-called ‘E-1’ area; construction of the Wall; confiscation of large parcels of land and exploitation of natural resources; demolition of hundreds more Palestinian homes and properties; and forced displacement of thousands more Palestinians, further fragmenting the contiguity of the Palestinian territory and destroying the viability of the two-State solution.

“Israel's Prime Minister, right-wing Israeli officials and extremists are escalating their annexation push. Calls for annexation of all or parts of the West Bank have shockingly become commonplace, including as fodder in Israel's election campaigns in 2019–2020. Many politicians openly declare intent to destroy the two-State solution and obstruct the Palestinian right to self-determination. Such actions further confirm Israel's rejection of the peace that the Palestinian leadership remains committed to achieving, alongside the rest of the international community, and undermine efforts by regional and international partners to foster the conditions and political horizon for its achievement.

“These developments are not occurring in a vacuum. Israel's hostile rhetoric and annexation measures reveal how far it has been emboldened by the lack of accountability for its crimes and a permissive political environment, particularly under the current United States administration, which offers unbridled support for Israel and its occupation while acting punitively against the Palestinian people and leadership.

“The Israeli non-governmental organization Peace Now estimates that, since President Donald Trump took office, Israel’s average annual settlement construction rate has risen by 25 per cent. His administration’s support has extended to declaring that it does not consider settlements illegal under international law; unilaterally declaring Jerusalem as Israel’s capital on 6 December 2017 and transferring its embassy to the city; and refusing to acknowledge Israel’s presence in Palestinian territory as an occupation, contravening the law, United Nations resolutions and global consensus on the two-State solution on the 1967 lines.

“Regrettably, these moves were followed, on 28 January 2020, by President Trump’s presentation of a ‘plan’ to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict that departs from the internationally endorsed terms of reference and parameters for a just, comprehensive and lasting solution and dismisses the rule of law and the Palestinian people’s inalienable rights. The United States Ambassador to Israel is even now heading a joint United States-Israel ‘Committee’ to ‘map out’ areas of the Occupied West Bank slated for illegal annexation. This plan thus attempts to legitimize Israel’s illegal occupation and colonization of Palestinian land, deeming crimes such as the settlements, the wall and the forced displacement of thousands of Palestinians as mere ‘realities’ that must be accepted; endorses Israel’s illegal annexation of Occupied East Jerusalem; and validates further annexation schemes, effectively dismantling the two-State solution and turning the rules-based order on its head.

“This plan has rightly been rejected by the international community. This was reflected in statements issued by many capitals and in the 11 February 2020 meeting of the Security Council, which was addressed by President Mahmoud Abbas, who reaffirmed Palestine’s commitment to the terms of reference and parameters of a just solution, in line with the relevant United Nations resolutions, the Madrid principles and the Arab Peace Initiative. This position, consistent with the provisions and principles enshrined in resolution 74/11, is starkly contrasted by the combative positions and illegal practices of Israel, the occupying Power, which continues violating resolution 74/11 and all relevant resolutions, gravely breaching the Fourth Geneva Convention and disparaging the General Assembly, the Security Council and the entire international community, ridiculing efforts to uphold the law vis-à-vis the conflict.

“Israel clearly perceives the Trump plan as a green light for its annexationist agenda. Settlement plans in and around East Jerusalem previously frozen due to international pressure have been boastfully relaunched, as the Israeli government exploits the circumstances – whether international inaction or distraction due to the grave challenges of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic – to move forward with these illegal schemes. Extremist Israeli settlers have equally been emboldened, demanding full annexation of the West Bank, seizing Palestinian land and escalating attacks against Palestinian civilians.

“Against this backdrop, Israel continues its military operations and raids, wilfully killing and injuring Palestinian civilians; detention and imprisonment of thousands of civilians, including children; restrictions on movement and other fundamental freedoms and rights, including to education, health care, worship, development and water; imposition of a 13-year blockade on Gaza, isolating and collectively punishing the 2 million Palestinians under humanitarian conditions deemed to be dire, if not inhuman and unliveable; incitement and inflammatory rhetoric on Jerusalem and provocations against Muslim and Christian holy sites, particularly targeting Haram al-Sharif and violating the historic status quo.

“Absent tangible steps by the international community to hold Israel accountable, such actions have further hardened the political deadlock, undermined peace prospects and deepened despair among Palestinians, diminishing belief that a just solution can be found and that the international community will live up to its responsibilities to assist them in attaining their inalienable rights, foremost their *erga omnes* right to self-determination.

“Despite this dismal reality, the Palestinian leadership remains committed to the path of peace and international law as the guarantor of justice. This includes a firm commitment to non-violence and the pursuit of peaceful, political, diplomatic, legal and popular means to realize the Palestinian people’s rights and a sustainable solution that would ensure peaceful coexistence and security. The Palestinian commitment to the two-State solution on the pre-1967 borders based on international law and all relevant United Nations resolutions has been repeatedly reaffirmed, including at the highest levels by President Abbas and the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization.

“For over 30 years, Palestine’s position has mirrored the global consensus on the two-State solution. This began with the Palestine National Council’s acceptance of the solution in the 1988 Declaration of Independence, a major compromise agreeing to establish the Palestinian State on only 22 per cent of our historic homeland, for the sake of realizing Palestinian rights and establishing lasting peace. This compromise remains the primary testament of our commitment to peace and, with the Arab Peace Initiative, the boldest contribution to solving the conflict.

“This commitment is reinforced by our abiding pledge to respect the Charter, international law and the relevant United Nations resolutions, as confirmed, *inter alia*, in the 28 September 2011 application by the State of Palestine for admission to United Nations membership; in Palestine’s accession to international treaties and conventions; in Palestine’s official communications and interventions at the United Nations; in relevant provisions of declarations by the League of Arab States, the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and the Group of 77 and China; and in the 2019 chairmanship of the State of Palestine of the Group of 77, which reaffirmed its adherence to multilateralism and the core principles of international development, peace and stability.

“Palestine has consistently striven to uphold United Nations resolutions and urged the international community to fulfil its obligations and demand compliance towards tangibly contributing to de-escalating tensions, protecting civilian life, reversing negative trends on the ground and advancing peace prospects. Despite significant setbacks and Israel’s persistent bad faith, Palestine’s leadership has cooperated with all credible international and regional efforts for nearly three decades, beginning with the Madrid Peace Conference in 1991, to the Oslo Process that began in 1993, to every negotiation process thereafter, engaging in good faith and respecting the long-standing parameters of a just solution, as reflected in resolution [74/11](#).

“For the sake of peace, Palestine’s leadership also engaged with the current United States administration from the start, affirming readiness to partake in negotiations, until the December 2017 decision by President Trump on Jerusalem and the subsequent transfer of the United States embassy to the city, in violation of United Nations resolutions. The United States administration’s so-called ‘peace to prosperity’ plan, which contradicts the global consensus and the fundamental legal principles underpinning it, has further hampered efforts

to create conditions conducive to meaningful negotiations and undermined the United States role as a credible, impartial peace broker.

“The State of Palestine stresses that peace cannot be achieved without restoring the primacy of international law to efforts to resolve the conflict, including all final status issues – Jerusalem, Palestine refugees, settlements, borders, security, prisoners and water. Unlawful imposition of facts on the ground will never create peace. As affirmed in the Secretary-General’s agenda, peaceful resolution of conflicts requires a human rights, justice and development perspective, not just a security perspective, and the root causes of the conflict must be fully, properly addressed.

“Palestine does not seek anything beyond what we are entitled to as a people, as per international law, as legislated in United Nations resolutions and affirmed in the July 2004 advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice. We will accept nothing less.

“It is for this reason that we, along with the vast majority of the international community, rejected the United States plan as unacceptable as a basis for peace and only prolonging the conflict and injustice. This message was conveyed by President Abbas in his address to the Security Council and echoed by nearly all Council members, who reaffirmed the global consensus on the established terms of reference and parameters for a just solution. President Abbas has reiterated the call for a multilateral process in the form of an international peace conference to achieve a just solution, and we have continually prioritized peace efforts in all engagements with regional and international partners, bilaterally and multilaterally.

“In this regard, we have consistently engaged with the Security Council members and Quartet members – the Russian Federation, the European Union, the United States and the United Nations – individually and collectively, appealing for respect of obligations and exertion of serious efforts, in cooperation with the League of Arab States and with the vital support of OIC, NAM and all peace-loving nations, with the latest communications with the Quartet members conveyed in May 2020, yet to no avail. We have also fully adhered to the Arab Peace Initiative and continue to call for its reciprocation and implementation.

“Palestine also continues efforts to confront the occupation’s humanitarian, socioeconomic and security consequences to prevent further destabilization and preserve peace prospects. We seek to serve the needs of our people, including in health care and education, alleviate hardships, ensure calm and security, promote reconciliation and restore hope that the occupation will end, that rights and dignity will be realized and that a better, peaceful future is within reach. Such hope is critical for shoring up public support for peace efforts and for countering the extremism plaguing the region, especially among youth.

“These efforts are being undertaken in cooperation with international partners and with their solidarity and generous support to Palestine, its national institutions and civil society, and with United Nations agencies that are providing vital assistance to the Palestinian people, including the Palestine refugees. UNRWA, along with the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the United Nations Children’s Fund, the United Nations Development Programme, the Office of the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General to the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Palestinian Authority, the World Health Organization, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) and other humanitarian organizations,

along with the United Nations Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and the Division for Palestinian Rights, has been instrumental in assisting the Palestinian people in line with international humanitarian law and the Palestinian National Development Plan and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework. The Ad Hoc Liaison Committee for the Coordination of the International Assistance to Palestinians also remains highly relevant in this regard.

“At this time, such efforts have regrettably been complicated by the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic and the additional vulnerability and needs it has imposed and by the occupation’s illegal practices undermining these efforts. Moreover, while Palestine supports the Secretary-General’s responsible call for a global ceasefire, Israel has regrettably ignored it, exploiting this time of pandemic to instead advance its illegal plans to annex more Palestinian land.

“Palestine also continues to underscore the obligation to ensure the protection of civilians, an obligation being grossly and systematically violated by Israel. The Palestinian civilian population under its occupation and blockade is in need of protection, as per the Fourth Geneva Convention and international human rights law and resolutions concerning the safety and well-being of civilians in all situations of armed conflict. Protection measures contribute to peace efforts; they do not detract from them.

“Yet, beyond alleviating the human suffering and insecurity caused by this situation, action must be taken to bring an end to this travesty of justice. Despite all good-faith intentions, the international community is failing to fulfil its legal, political and moral obligations in the face of Israel’s total disrespect of the law. It is high time to mobilize the political will to implement the United Nations resolutions central to achievement of a peace settlement and to enact measures to compel Israel’s compliance.

“While Israel’s disrespect for the law and contempt for the Security Council’s authority are central to this failure, so is the paralysis caused by use of the veto by one permanent member. The prospect of a peaceful future for the Palestinian and Israeli peoples will remain elusive as long as the occupying Power is shielded from accountability, even as it breaches the law and destroys the two-State solution.

“It is time for accountability measures, including by the Security Council and the General Assembly, and concrete action by States to uphold third-party obligations, in line with article 1 common to the Geneva Conventions, Security Council resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#) and all other relevant provisions of international law and United Nations resolutions. This is also vital for restoring the credibility of the United Nations and the authority of the international rules-based order, which is under threat.

“The 12 February publication of a database of businesses engaged in Israeli settlements by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), as mandated by the Human Rights Council, was a recent step in the right direction. It is also hoped that accountability efforts being pursued by the State of Palestine at the International Criminal Court will soon lead to an official investigation towards bringing perpetrators to justice, deterring further war crimes and paving the path for a just solution.

“It must be clearly signalled to Israel that its continued defiance will not be tolerated and that it must halt all violations or bear the consequences. This is critical for fostering an environment conducive to the credible dialogue and efforts needed to bring an end to the Israeli occupation that began in 1967; to

help the Palestinian people finally realize freedom and the independence of the State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital; and to establish lasting peace, security and coexistence between the Palestinian and Israeli peoples on the basis of the two-State solution and in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions, including resolution [74/11](#).”

6. The note verbale dated 29 July 2020 from the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations reads as follows:

“Even before Israel declared its independence, its people sought to live in peace beside their Arab neighbours. This vision of a shared future was reflected in the Jewish people’s embracement of multiple endeavours, such as the Balfour Declaration (1917), the Royal Commission of Inquiry to Palestine (1936) and the Palestine Plan of Partition (1947). Since declaring independence, Israel has maintained a pragmatic and constructive posture, paving the way for the signing of historical peace agreements with Egypt in 1979 and Jordan in 1994.

“Unfortunately, the Israeli approach, which led to the normalization of relations with two neighbours, has been met with repeated refusal by the Palestinians, accompanied by surges of violence and terrorism against Israeli civilians, many times with the implicit support of the Palestinian leadership. This aforementioned Palestinian support for violence is well documented and includes the financing of terrorist activities, the use of violent rhetoric by leaders and the indoctrination to hatred in its education system.

“Since the adoption of resolution [74/11](#) in December last year, two major events have transpired, affecting the global and regional landscape – the outbreak of COVID-19 and the unveiling of President Trump’s peace initiative. These events, though distinct in nature and impact, have perfectly exemplified the tragic situation highlighted in the above paragraph, in which Israel faces outright Palestinian ‘rejectionism’.

“Following the outbreak of COVID-19, Israel tightened and strengthened its humanitarian and medical cooperation with the Palestinian Authority and relevant United Nations agencies in order to mitigate the effects of the COVID-19 outbreak. This unique cooperation was welcomed by the international community, the Security Council and relevant United Nations officials. However, the Palestinian Authority has chosen not only to minimize this achievement, but also to politicize the issue in a bid to delegitimize and demonize Israel.

“President Trump’s peace initiative, presented on 28 January 2020, presented another historic opportunity to revitalize Israeli-Palestinian negotiations. The plan was repeatedly referred to, by both American and allied countries, as a valuable starting point and guideline for peace talks, and was embraced as such by Israel. Unsurprisingly, the Palestinian Authority chose to reject it and has since embarked on an international campaign to counter any deliberations or follow-ups regarding the initiative. This latest rejection by the Palestinian Authority to begin negotiations highlights its unwillingness to break the deadlock on the Israel-Palestinian conflict.

“The ongoing attempts by the Palestinian Authority to internationalize the conflict by calling on international institutions for recognition and promoting one-sided resolutions, such as resolution [74/11](#), is yet another attempt to avoid direct negotiations while maintaining legitimacy. Security Council resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#), which Israel rejects, is another example. The resolution is unreservedly hostile towards Israel and will only make peace harder to achieve.

“The Palestinian Authority’s refusal to negotiate is accompanied by its refusal to recognize Israel as a Jewish state – based, inter alia, on its continued denial of any historical connection between the Jewish people and its land, which remains one of the main obstacles to peace.

“Israel continues to extend its hand in peace and believes that the conflict will be resolved only through direct bilateral negotiations without preconditions. Attempts to impose solutions or to dictate parameters and timetables will only drive peace farther away.

“If the international community wishes to support a solution to the Israel-Palestinian conflict, it must reject the Palestinian Authority’s attempts to avoid negotiations by internationalizing the conflict and encourage the Authority to come to the negotiating table. It must also echo Israel’s right to exist in peace as the nation State of the Jewish people and oppose any attempt to undermine Israel’s legitimacy.”

II. Developments

7. International efforts to promote the peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine continued during the reporting period. The envoys of the Middle East Quartet (the Russian Federation, the United States of America, the European Union and the United Nations) consulted one another informally throughout the year and, on 26 March and 22 May, held conference calls to discuss the prospect of Israeli-Palestinian peace. The United Nations reaffirmed its commitment to achieving a negotiated two-State solution, in line with relevant United Nations resolutions, international law and bilateral agreements, and reiterated its call to all stakeholders to refrain from any unilateral action that harms the prospects of meaningful negotiations and peace. Discussions are ongoing, notwithstanding substantial differences among Quartet members regarding the way forward.

8. On 28 January, the United States released its proposal entitled “Peace to prosperity: a vision to improve the lives of the Palestinian and Israeli people”. Senior Israeli officials welcomed the proposal, saying that they would be willing to use it as the basis for direct negotiations. The Palestinian Government has rejected the proposal. The League of Arab States and OIC also released statements rejecting the proposal, saying that it did not meet the minimum rights and aspirations of the Palestinian people. The High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy said that the proposal departed from “internationally agreed parameters”. Some Member States expressed their hope that the release of the vision would be an opportunity to bring the parties back to the negotiating table, in the interest of advancing a two-State solution.

9. Throughout the reporting period, Israeli officials continued to make statements regarding the potential annexation of parts of the occupied West Bank. On 10 September 2019, the Prime Minister of Israel declared his intention, if re-elected, to “apply Israeli sovereignty over the Jordan Valley and the northern Dead Sea” as a first step towards applying Israeli sovereignty over “settlements in Judea and Samaria, as well as additional areas with significance for [the country’s] security, heritage and future”. Following the release by the United States of its vision, senior Israeli officials vowed to unilaterally annex large portions of the West Bank, including all Israeli settlements and the Jordan Valley. On 17 May 2020, a new emergency national unity Government was sworn into office in Israel following a year of political uncertainty that included three general elections. The new coalition Government was formed on the basis of an agreement signed on 20 April, which stipulates that, from 1 July, and following consultation with the Alternate Prime Minister, the Prime

Minister of Israel can present “the agreement to be reached with the United States on the application of sovereignty” over parts of the occupied West Bank for approval in the Government or Knesset. The agreement also calls for the promotion of peace agreements with the country’s neighbours and regional cooperation. On 13 August, Israel, the United Arab Emirates and the United States issued a joint statement announcing “the full normalization of relations between Israel and the United Arab Emirates” and stating that “Israel will suspend declaring sovereignty over areas outlined in the [United States] President’s vision for peace”.

10. On 19 May, in response to the stated intentions of the Government of Israel to annex parts of the occupied West Bank, the Palestinian Authority announced that it considered itself absolved “of all the agreements and understandings with the American and Israeli Governments and of all the obligations based on these understandings and agreements, including the security ones” and called upon Israel to assume its obligations as the occupying Power. In the statement, the President of the State of Palestine, Mahmoud Abbas, also reaffirmed the Palestinian “commitment to a solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict based on the two-State solution ... on the condition that negotiations will be held to achieve that under international auspices (the Quartet plus) and through an international peace conference based on international legitimacy”. He reaffirmed the Palestinian leadership’s willingness to “achieve a just and comprehensive peace”, on basis of the Arab Peace Initiative and United Nations resolutions, including Security Council resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#). On 20 May, the Palestinian Prime Minister instructed Cabinet members to immediately commence implementation of the Palestinian leadership’s announcement, while making assurances that the Palestinian Authority would not allow security to deteriorate. On the same day, Palestinian officials formally notified Israeli counterparts of the termination of security coordination. On 3 June, the Palestinian Authority announced that it would refuse to receive the clearance revenues that Israel collects on its behalf under the Protocol on Economic Relations between the Government of the State of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization, as part of the decision to disengage from bilateral agreements. The Palestinian leadership has repeatedly stated its willingness to resume negotiations on the basis of international resolutions, calling for the convening of an international peace conference.

11. In the period from 27 February to 17 March, the Russian Federation hosted a series of bilateral discussions with representatives of various Palestinian factions. On 2 July, leaders from Fatah and Hamas held a rare joint video press conference in an effort to set aside their differences and commit themselves to a unified Palestinian front against annexation. Palestinian factions welcomed the move, hoping that it would pave the way to advancing reconciliation. However, intra-Palestinian divisions remain entrenched.

12. Against the backdrop of continued Israeli closures and the absence of a political horizon, the security situation in Gaza remained volatile. However, there was a significant decline in violence and the number of casualties compared with the two preceding years, due largely to the end of the weekly protests and clashes along the perimeter fence in late December and the overall maintenance of a fragile calm between Israel and Hamas as a result of mediation efforts led by the United Nations and Egypt. Overall, 49 Palestinians, including 13 children and 3 women, were killed by Israeli security forces as a result of air strikes and during demonstrations, clashes, security operations and other incidents, and 2,304 Palestinians were injured, including some 434 by live ammunition. A total of 37 Israeli civilians were injured in attacks, clashes and other incidents. In addition, one Israeli woman died on 17 September as a result of wounds that she sustained when a rocket hit her house in the town of Ashqelon on 12 November 2018.

13. On 1 November 2019, 10 rockets were launched from Gaza towards Israel, 1 of which hit a house in Sderot, causing damage but no injuries. In response, the Israel Defense Forces targeted what they identified as various Hamas military sites across Gaza. One Palestinian militant was killed and two others were injured.

14. Over a 48-hour period of escalation, from 12 to 14 November, following the targeted killing by Israel of a commander of Palestinian Islamic Jihad in Gaza, Palestinian Islamic Jihad launched more than 500 rockets towards Israel. According to the Israel Defense Forces, the interception rate by the Iron Dome system was 90 per cent, while some rockets landed in Israeli towns and cities, causing property damage. Shelters across large parts of the country were activated, schools and businesses remained closed for at least a day, and 78 Israelis were treated for injuries or shock. In response, the Israel Defense Forces conducted a number of strikes against what they identified as Palestinian Islamic Jihad and other militant targets in Gaza, killing 33 Palestinians, including 3 women and 8 children, and injuring 109 others, including 51 children and 11 women. Approximately 25 of those killed were identified by the Israel Defense Forces as Palestinian Islamic Jihad militants. Eight members of a family, including five children, were killed in a single Israeli strike in Dayr al-Balah. Another family member succumbed to his wounds a few days later. In addition, one Palestinian was reportedly killed by a rocket launched by Palestinian Islamic Jihad that had fallen short inside Gaza. Following an intense mediation effort, calm in Gaza was restored.

15. The situation escalated briefly again on 26 November, when two rockets were fired by Palestinian militants towards Israel. According to the Israel Defense Forces, one rocket was intercepted by the Iron Dome system and the other landed in an open area in southern Israel. In response, the Israel Defense Forces struck a number of what they identified as militant targets in Gaza. No injuries were reported.

16. On 23 February 2020, two Palestinian Islamic Jihad militants attempted to place an explosive device along the fence. One was killed by the Israel Defense Forces, who retrieved his body using a bulldozer inside Gaza and withheld it in an incident that caused outrage and a serious escalation. In the following two days, Palestinian Islamic Jihad launched over 100 rockets and mortar shells towards Israel, including one that landed in a playground. Israel responded by firing at what it identified as Palestinian Islamic Jihad targets in the Gaza Strip. Overall, 18 Palestinians and 16 Israelis were injured in the exchanges before mediation efforts succeeded in restoring calm on 24 February.

17. On 27 March and 6 May, Palestinian militants launched one and two rockets, respectively, which landed in open areas of Israel. In response, the Israel Defense Forces fired nine tank shells, reportedly targeting an alleged military observation post in Gaza. Israeli drones furthermore fired three missiles reportedly targeting Hamas military sites in Gaza. No injuries were reported.

18. Over several days in mid-August, Palestinian militants launched incendiary balloons and rockets from Gaza, which caused fires and material damage in southern Israel. In response, the Israel Defense Forces targeted what they identified as Hamas military targets in the Gaza Strip. No injuries were reported. However, damages were reported to UNRWA schools in Bayt Hanun and near Gaza City. In response to the incendiary balloons, Israel also shut the Gaza fishing zone and closed down the Kerem Shalom crossing, including for fuel, prompting the halt of the Gaza power station and bringing electricity supply down to three to four hours per day.

19. During the reporting period, in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, 22 Palestinians were shot and killed, including 1 woman, and 3,802 Palestinians were injured, including 801 children, by Israeli security forces during demonstrations, clashes, security operations and other incidents. In addition, a woman

was killed during a search-and-arrest operation in Janin city in still unclear circumstances. Some 60 Israelis, including 16 members of the Israeli security forces, were also injured, according to Israeli sources.

20. In East Jerusalem, the situation remained relatively tense, with violent incidents, protests, operations by Israeli security forces, arrests by Israeli police of Palestinian officials and clashes between them and Palestinian residents, in particular in the Isawiyah neighbourhood and in the Old City. On 6 February, a Palestinian shot and wounded an Israeli soldier at the Lion's Gate in the Old City, and on 22 February, another Palestinian reportedly carried out a stabbing attack in the same place. Both were killed by Israeli security forces. On 30 May, Israeli security forces shot and killed an unarmed autistic 31-year-old Palestinian man in the Old City. Senior Israeli officials expressed regret over the incident, and an internal investigation into the killing was opened. During the reporting period, the Palestinian Authority Minister of Jerusalem Affairs and the Palestinian Authority Governor of Jerusalem were detained several times and interrogated over allegations of violating an Israeli law prohibiting Palestinian Authority activities in Jerusalem without coordination.

21. On 12 May, the Israeli authorities approved the seizure of municipal planning authority at the Ibrahimi Mosque/Tomb of the Patriarchs from the Palestinian Municipality in Hebron. The Israeli authorities justified the decision as necessary in order to make the site accessible to those with disabilities, while stating that the project "will not change prayer arrangements or the status quo". The Palestinian leadership, the Hebron Municipality, the Waqf and the Islamic authorities, among others, have condemned this move, arguing that it violates the 1997 Protocol concerning the Redeployment in Hebron.

22. Throughout the reporting period, the Israel Defense Forces continued to conduct search and arrest operations and to detain Palestinians, including children. The Palestinian Authority continued its arrests of suspected Hamas affiliates in the West Bank, and the de facto authorities in Gaza summoned and, in some cases, detained Fatah affiliates in Gaza. At the end of June 2020, at least 357 Palestinians, including 2 children and 1 woman, were being held by Israeli authorities under administrative detention. OHCHR has raised serious concerns over the legality of the detentions, fair trial standards and the risk of ill-treatment in and outside detention.

23. In a statement released on 20 December 2019, the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court announced that the Court's preliminary examination into the Situation in Palestine "has concluded with the determination that all the statutory criteria under the Rome Statute for the opening of an investigation have been met". She expressed her view that, among other things, "war crimes have been or are being committed in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip". She also stated her position that the Court's jurisdiction applies to the Occupied Palestinian Territory. She nonetheless sought a ruling from the Pre-Trial Chamber on the territorial scope of the Court's jurisdiction in the situation in hand. The Court adjourned in July without a decision on this point.

24. During the reporting period, Israeli authorities advanced or approved some 8,000 housing units in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, marking a decrease compared with some 12,000 units during the previous reporting period. Demolitions and seizures of Palestinian-owned structures also continued across the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem. As at 15 August, citing the absence of Israeli-issued building permits, which remain almost impossible for Palestinians to obtain, Israeli authorities demolished or seized 593 structures, resulting in the displacement of 687 people, including 347 children and 177 women, and leaving about 18,860 others affected. A further 73 structures were demolished by their owners, leaving 238 people displaced, including 122 children and 55 women.

Demolitions and seizures continued despite the COVID-19 outbreak and some indications from Israeli authorities of a temporary freeze on the demolition of inhabited buildings in the light of the pandemic. During the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, 42 structures were demolished, which is a significant increase compared with previous years (13 in 2019; one in 2018; none in 2017). Israeli authorities also demolished structures and homes built by settlers in unauthorized settlement outposts.

25. On 12 November 2019, the Court of Justice of the European Union issued a ruling determining that “foodstuffs originating in the territories occupied by the State of Israel must bear the indication of their territory of origin, accompanied, where those foodstuffs come from an Israeli settlement within that territory, by the indication of that provenance”, in order for the indication of origin to be correct and not misleading for the consumer. On 12 February 2020, OHCHR issued a report on the database of all businesses involved in activities related to settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (A/HRC/43/71), as requested by the Human Rights Council in its resolution 31/36, adopted on 24 March 2016. As noted in paragraph 19 of the report, the work done by OHCHR to produce the database “does not purport to constitute a judicial or quasi-judicial process of any kind or to provide any legal characterization of the listed activities or business enterprises’ involvement in them”. Proceedings are ongoing in the Federal Court of Canada related to the labelling of products originating in Israel and the territories occupied since 1967.

26. During the reporting period, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs recorded 80 violent incidents involving Israeli settlers, resulting in 139 Palestinians injured, including 14 women, and property damage. In the same period, according to Israeli sources, 44 Israelis, including 10 women, were injured as a result of stone throwing, the use of live ammunition and stabbing attacks. A high number of incidents were also recorded in relation to the olive and wheat harvesting season, including the physical assault and harassment of Palestinian farmers by Israeli settlers, as well as damage to thousands of olive trees and saplings and dozens of dunams of agricultural land.

27. In Gaza, the United Nations and its partners continued to implement the package of urgent humanitarian and economic interventions endorsed by the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee in September 2018. With these efforts, the energy supply to households in Gaza has significantly increased, and some improvements were felt in the economy. Qatar funded the supply of fuel for the Gaza power plant, and the daily availability of electricity more than doubled during the reporting period, leading in turn to an increased supply of desalinated water and a significant reduction in the amounts of untreated wastewater pumped into the sea.

28. During the reporting period, Palestinians faced immense socioeconomic impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic, as did Israelis. Tens of thousands of Palestinians have lost their jobs, small and medium-sized enterprises are unable to operate, and violence against women and children has increased. Several expert analyses, including from the World Bank, estimate that the Palestinian economy will contract by approximately 10 per cent in 2020, depending on the severity of the pandemic and the length of the necessary shutdowns.

29. The COVID-19 pandemic has compounded the already dire humanitarian, economic and political situation in Gaza. Recent job losses come on top of an already high unemployment rate in Gaza of 45 per cent at the end of 2019. The fragile and underfunded health-care system in Gaza is particularly worrying in the context of the spread of COVID-19 in the region. Furthermore, Gaza is one of the most densely populated areas in the world, which makes it a particularly high-risk case for the COVID-19 pandemic. The United Nations is working to increase its support for the health-care system in Gaza, including in the context of the COVID-19 response.

III. Observations

30. During the reporting period, I delivered four reports to the Security Council on the implementation of Security Council resolution 2334 (2016) (S/PV.8625, S/2019/938, S/2020/263 and S/2020/555), in which I expressed my concern regarding the continued lack of implementation of the provisions of the resolution. In my reports, I took note of international efforts and reiterated the commitment of the United Nations to supporting Palestinians and Israelis to resolve the conflict and end the occupation, in line with relevant United Nations resolutions, international law and bilateral agreements, and to realizing the vision of two States – Israel and Palestine – living side by side in peace and security within recognized borders on the basis of the pre-1967 lines, with Jerusalem as the capital of both States.

31. I welcome the suspension of the implementation of the plans of Israel to annex parts of the occupied West Bank in the context of the announcement by Israel, the United Arab Emirates and the United States on 13 August regarding the normalization of relations between Israel and the United Arab Emirates. This agreement will hopefully create an opportunity for Israeli and Palestinian leaders to re-engage in meaningful negotiations that will end the occupation and realize a two-State solution, in line with relevant United Nations resolutions, international law and bilateral agreements. I have consistently called upon Israel to abandon its annexation plans. Annexation would constitute a most serious violation of international law, including the Charter of the United Nations. It would be devastating to the two-State solution and threaten efforts to advance regional peace and broader efforts to maintain international peace and security. Concern and opposition to annexation are widespread and shared throughout the region and the international community.

32. The implementation of the announcement of 19 May by the Palestinian leadership could alter local dynamics and trigger instability across the Occupied Palestinian Territory and beyond. Particularly worrying is the decision to stop accepting clearance revenues that Israel collects on behalf of the Palestinian Authority. Combined with the fiscal impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the lack of clearance revenues has caused an overall reduction in Palestinian Authority revenues of approximately 80 per cent. Given the economic uncertainty caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and the reduced donor support, this decision contributes only to the hardship of the Palestinian people and threatens the viability of Palestinian institutions. The parties must quickly find a way out of the present fiscal emergency. Moreover, it is critical that humanitarian and other assistance not be delayed or stopped as a result of such policies. In the longer term, however, modernizing the outdated framework governing the Israeli and Palestinian economic and administrative relationships would be warranted.

33. Discussions on holding Palestinian general elections should continue. If held, these would be the first since 2006, renewing the legitimacy of national institutions. The international community should support this process, with a view to strengthening national unity rather than division. It is critical that the important Egyptian-led intra-Palestinian reconciliation efforts also continue. The United Nations stands firm in its support of the efforts by Egypt in this regard, and I call upon all Palestinian factions to make serious efforts to ensure the reunification of Gaza and the occupied West Bank under a single, democratic, national Government. Gaza is and must remain an integral part of a future Palestinian State as part of a two-State solution.

34. Reports of violent incidents throughout the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, remain of concern. I unequivocally condemn all attacks on Palestinian and Israeli civilians and call upon all sides to refrain from violence and to clearly and

unequivocally condemn attacks when they occur. All perpetrators must be held accountable for their crimes.

35. The dispute over the construction work planned by the Israeli authorities at the Ibrahimi Mosque/Tomb of the Patriarchs in Hebron risks fuelling tensions in a highly sensitive part of the occupied West Bank. Any changes to the delicate balance at holy sites not agreed to by all stakeholders threaten stability and should not be taken unilaterally. I urge both parties to resolve this issue through dialogue and in a coordinated and respectful manner.

36. I reiterate the call for the status quo at the holy sites to be upheld in line with the special and historical role of Jordan as custodian of the Muslim and Christian holy sites in Jerusalem.

37. As stated in my reports to the Security Council on the implementation of resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#), I continue to urge leaders on all sides to stop incitement and to condemn, consistently and unequivocally, acts of terror and violence in all their forms.

38. The general state of human rights and freedoms in the Occupied Palestinian Territory remains of concern. I reiterate my earlier calls to end the practice of administrative detention and either to charge all detainees or to release them immediately. All children should be treated with due consideration for their age, and they should be detained only in situations justified under applicable rules of international humanitarian law and international or applicable human rights law.

39. I remain deeply troubled by the continued settlement activities in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem. I reiterate that Israeli settlements in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, have no legal validity and constitute a flagrant violation under international law. The establishment and expansion of settlements fuel resentment, hopelessness and disillusionment among Palestinians, are key drivers of human rights violations and significantly heighten Israeli-Palestinian tensions. They entrench the military occupation of Israel and undermine the prospect of achieving a viable two-State solution by systematically eroding the possibility of establishing a contiguous, independent and sovereign Palestinian State. I urge the Government of Israel to stop the advancement of all settlement plans immediately.

40. Continued settler-related violence in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, is of deep concern. I urge Israel, as the occupying Power, to ensure the safety and security of the Palestinian population and to investigate and hold the perpetrators of attacks accountable.

41. Despite the efforts of the United Nations and its partners to implement urgent humanitarian and economic interventions in Gaza, the situation remains dire, and the health system in Gaza remains on the brink of collapse. Despite some positive steps by Israel in the reporting period, it is not possible to genuinely and sustainably improve the socioeconomic situation without significantly easing restrictions on the movement and access of goods and people to and from Gaza. It is critical for the Palestinian Authority to increase the support to the health system in Gaza, in particular in relation to COVID-19 response. The ultimate goal remains the lifting of all restrictions in line with Security Council resolution [1860 \(2009\)](#) and the reunification of Gaza and the West Bank under a single, democratic, national Government. At the same time, it is crucial to ensure sustained calm in order to gradually introduce longer-term projects that will support the development of Gaza. I reiterate my call upon Hamas to provide full information regarding the Israeli nationals who are being held in Gaza. I also remain deeply concerned at the continued Israeli practice of holding the bodies of killed Palestinians and call upon Israel to

return withheld bodies to their families, in line with international humanitarian law and human rights law.

42. The increased violence in Gaza and southern Israel precipitated by the launching of incendiary balloons by Palestinian militants is of concern. The indiscriminate launching of rockets and mortars towards Israeli civilian population centres is prohibited by international humanitarian law and must cease immediately. Israeli security forces have the responsibility to exercise maximum restraint and to use intentional lethal force only when strictly unavoidable in order to protect life.

43. The impact on women of the ongoing humanitarian and economic crisis in Gaza is of particular concern. The participation of women in the labour force in Gaza is among the lowest in the world, and some 70 per cent of women are unemployed. These poor employment prospects result in female-headed households facing greater poverty and food insecurity. In turn, poverty and a lack of economic opportunities are key factors driving violence against women in Gaza, while the humanitarian crisis has resulted in a large number of health issues for women. The United Nations continues to assist Palestinian women and girls across a broad range of areas, but much more needs to be done to address their needs and vulnerabilities.

44. The United Nations response to COVID-19 in the Occupied Palestinian Territory has been swift and effective and has directly supported the Palestinian Government's own efforts. The humanitarian country team's inter-agency response plan and the United Nations country team's development system response plan, as well as the Palestinian Government's own response plans, urgently need donor support. Israeli-Palestinian cooperation to respond and mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory during the first months of the pandemic is commendable. It is critical that humanitarian and other assistance and cooperation continue to address the current surge of infections.

45. The financial situation of UNRWA remained a serious concern during the reporting period, with the lowest ever cash flow levels and a significant outstanding funding shortfall. I applaud the leadership that Jordan and Sweden have shown in mobilizing support for the Agency. I urge Member States to continue their support for UNRWA, which is not only a lifeline for millions of Palestine refugees, but is also critical for regional stability.

46. I would like to express my deep appreciation to my Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Nickolay Mladenov, for his outstanding service in what remains a challenging context. I am also grateful to the outgoing Commissioner-General of UNRWA, Pierre Krähenbühl, and his successor, Philippe Lazzarini, and for the remarkable work on behalf of Palestinian refugees carried out by the staff of the Agency. I pay tribute, too, to all United Nations staff who work under difficult circumstances in the service of the Organization.

47. I will continue to ensure that the United Nations works towards a resolution of the conflict that would end the Israeli occupation that began in 1967 and establish an independent, democratic, contiguous, sovereign and viable Palestinian State living side by side with Israel in peace, security and mutual recognition, with Jerusalem as the capital of both States, within the framework of a comprehensive regional settlement, consistent with Security Council resolutions [242 \(1967\)](#), [338 \(1973\)](#), [425 \(1978\)](#), [1397 \(2002\)](#), [1515 \(2003\)](#), [1850 \(2008\)](#), [1860 \(2009\)](#) and [2334 \(2016\)](#) and in accordance with the Madrid terms of reference, including the principle of land for peace, the Arab Peace Initiative, the Quartet road map and international law.



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The situation in the Middle East

Question of Palestine

Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report is submitted in accordance with the request of the General Assembly in paragraph 15 of its resolution [75/22](#). The report, which covers the period from September 2020 to August 2021, contains replies received from the parties concerned to the note verbale sent by the Secretary-General pursuant to the request contained in resolution [75/22](#), as well as the observations of the Secretary-General on the current state of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and on international efforts to move the peace process forward, with a view to achieving a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine.

* [A/76/150](#).



I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution [75/22](#).
2. On 2 July 2021, pursuant to the request contained in paragraph 15 of resolution [75/22](#), I addressed the following letter to the President of the Security Council:

“I have the honour of referring to resolution [75/22](#), which the General Assembly adopted on 2 December 2020, at its seventy-fifth session, under the agenda item ‘Question of Palestine’.

“Paragraph 15 of the resolution requests the Secretary-General, including through his Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and Personal Representative to the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Palestinian Authority, to continue his efforts with the parties concerned, and in consultation with the Security Council, including with regard to the reporting required pursuant to resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#), towards the attainment of a peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine and the promotion of peace in the region and to submit to the General Assembly at its seventy-sixth session a report on these efforts and on developments on this matter.

“In order to fulfil my reporting responsibilities under this resolution, I should be grateful if you would kindly convey to me the views of the Security Council by 19 July 2021.”

3. As at 18 August 2021, no response to that request had been received.
4. In a note verbale dated 24 May 2021, I sought the positions of States Members of the United Nations, in particular the Governments of Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic, as well as the State of Palestine, regarding any steps taken by them to implement the relevant provisions of the resolution. As at 18 August 2021, replies had been received from Argentina, Bahrain, Cuba, the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, Ecuador and the Permanent Observer Mission of the State of Palestine.
5. The note verbale dated 12 July 2021 from the Permanent Observer Mission of the State of Palestine to the United Nations reads as follows:

“For decades, the General Assembly has affirmed its stance on the question of Palestine by adoption of an annual resolution entitled ‘Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine’, most recently reaffirmed as resolution [75/22](#). The resolution’s provisions and the principles enshrined therein reflect the long-standing international consensus on the fundamental pillars and requirements for achieving a just and lasting solution to the question of Palestine in all its dimensions. Regrettably, the failure to uphold these principles and implement those provisions – most starkly reflected in the profound disrespect and grave violations that continue to be perpetrated by Israel, the occupying Power – have obstructed the intended contribution of this resolution towards a just and peaceful solution.

“At its seventy-fifth session, the General Assembly again overwhelmingly supported this resolution and reiterated the calls for ending the Israeli occupation that began in 1967; ensuring the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including to self-determination and independence; and responsible international action to peacefully resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, in line with international law, the relevant resolutions and the permanent responsibility of the United Nations towards the question of Palestine, which remains unfulfilled since the adoption of resolution [181 \(II\)](#) in 1947 and the decision to partition Palestine and the Nakba that ensued in 1948, resulting in the forced

dispossession of the majority of the Palestinian people and their expulsion from their homeland, an injustice that the Palestinian people continue to suffer to this day, denied their right to return and their most basic human rights, including to live in freedom and dignity.

“The lack of respect for international law by Israel, the occupying Power, and inaction by the international community, which has failed to uphold and implement its relevant resolutions, have prolonged and compounded this injustice, enabling Israel’s impunity and entrenchment of its illegal colonial occupation, now in its fifty-fourth year. Many characterize this as a stain on the global conscience and a litmus test for the viability of the rules-based order, maintaining that the failure to justly resolve it has severely undermined the international system’s credibility and authority, particularly that of the Security Council.

“Regrettably, while States have long condemned Israel’s non-compliance with United Nations resolutions and its ongoing violations in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, with many amounting to war crimes, crimes against humanity and the crimes of apartheid and persecution, as affirmed by numerous independent human rights and humanitarian organizations, legal scholars and academics, and as also recognized by numerous Governments and parliamentarians worldwide, little has been done concretely to hold Israel accountable for its violations and to compel compliance with its international legal obligations.

“But it is also evident that justly resolving the Palestine question remains a priority for the international community, as reaffirmed by countless delegations in General Assembly and Security Council debates and in the resolutions and declarations endorsed by political and regional groups, including, inter alia, the League of Arab States, the Non-Aligned Movement, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, the African Union and the G-77 and China, including in the period since adoption of resolution [75/22](#).

“The overwhelming majority of States underscore the urgency of ending this injustice, which remains a primary source of regional and global instability, and consistently call for: ending the Israeli occupation that began in 1967; Palestinian self-determination; salvaging and actualizing the two-State solution of Palestine and Israel living side by side in peace and security, in sovereignty and independence, within recognized borders based on the pre-1967 borders; and a just solution for the Palestine refugee question based on resolution [194 \(III\)](#), with a near-unanimous call for support to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East to ensure continuity of needed humanitarian and development assistance to over 5.7 million refugees pending a just solution. Moreover, calls are continually made for the intensification of international and regional efforts to promote that just solution in line with international law, relevant United Nations resolutions, the Madrid principles, the Arab Peace Initiative and the Quartet road map, as repeatedly called for by the General Assembly and the Security Council, most recently in resolutions [75/22](#) and [2334 \(2016\)](#) respectively.

“While the State of Palestine is grateful for such principled positions and global support, unfortunately this has proven insufficient, as Israel, the occupying Power, carries on in contempt and mockery of the international community, disrespecting its will and trampling the law with its illegal occupation and deliberate, systematic deprivation of the Palestinian people’s inalienable rights, including those of Palestine refugees. After 73 years of Nakba and over half a century of colonial military occupation and apartheid policies,

it is clear that statements and condemnations are not enough to end this historic injustice and the longest belligerent occupation in modern history. As Israel intensifies its violations before the world's eyes, it is high time to translate such positions into immediate action aimed at upholding the Charter of the United Nations, enforcing legal obligations and ensuring accountability for the violations being perpetrated, including war crimes.

“Israel has proven beyond a doubt that it is not willing to end this illegal occupation but is instead willing to use all illegal means to fortify and prolong its control of our land and subjugation of our people indefinitely. Ending such impunity and ending the occupation therefore require the activation of all available diplomatic, political, legal mechanisms to ensure justice under the law, uphold human rights and thus ultimately realize a just peace. The absence of accountability only serves the occupation, enabling impunity at the expense of Palestinian rights, inflicting mass suffering, destroying peace prospects and devastating generations more.

“Despite continued setbacks and the deterioration of conditions in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, since the adoption of resolution [75/22](#), the State of Palestine remains committed to the path of peace and international law as the guarantor of justice, in stark contradiction to the occupying Power, which persists in its contempt of the law. At the same time, the Palestinian people and Government reiterate the appeal to all States to uphold the law and implement the provisions and commitments affirmed in United Nations resolutions, stressing shared responsibilities and the imperative of multilateral efforts to address this grave situation and realize a just solution.

“A glimpse of the Palestinian people's reality in the reporting period exposes the depth and gravity of this injustice. In just a matter of months, the world has witnessed a glaring display of Israel's impunity as the Israeli Government, military and settlers have proceeded apace with: rabid settler colonization and acts of de facto annexation; myriad measures aimed at mass dispossession of Palestinian families in occupied East Jerusalem, including in the Sheikh Jarrah and Silwan neighbourhoods, and elsewhere throughout Occupied Palestine, forcibly displacing hundreds of Palestinians; provocations and incursions against the city's holy sites, including the Aqsa Mosque/Haram al-Sharif, with repeated violations of the historic and legal status quo, as well as assaults on Muslim and Christian worshippers; another violent military aggression against the Gaza Strip, killing and injuring over 250 Palestinians, including 66 children and 41 women; the wanton destruction of Palestinian homes and properties, land expropriation and exploitation of natural resources; arrest, detention and imprisonment of thousands of Palestinians, including children; intensification of a racist, discriminatory apartheid regime; dangerous incitement, extremism and terror against Palestinians; tightening of the 14-year Israeli blockade on the Gaza Strip, exacerbating dire socioeconomic conditions and the humanitarian suffering of 2 million Palestinians besieged there; and countless other measures of collective punishment, all aimed at oppressing, coercing and dispossessing our people and cementing the occupation.

“The escalation of these illegal, aggressive and destructive Israeli policies and practices has inflicted vast harm on the Palestinian people, provoking continual instability and decline of the situation on the ground on all fronts – political, security, socioeconomic and humanitarian; aggravating religious sensitivities, risking a religious conflagration; and further diminishing the viability of the two-State solution based on the pre-1967 lines. Last year, the international community warned Israel against annexation and demanded an end to its illegal policies and practices, perhaps believing that Israel would abide in

good faith. The reality has proven otherwise and reaffirmed that, without action that imposes consequences for violations, Israel will continue undaunted with its crimes against the Palestinian people.

“The international community must demand a halt to all illegal Israeli policies and practices in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and demand full respect for international law. The path to a just solution is clear, as enshrined in resolution 75/22 and all other relevant United Nations resolutions, including Security Council resolution 2334 (2016), which charts a clear path to peace and must be implemented in full. Although the Council regrettably remains paralysed on this issue, States themselves must uphold obligations to pursue accountability, reasserting the applicability of international law in all circumstances and contributing towards ending this injustice.

“International action must include support for accountability mechanisms, including legal action in courts such as the International Criminal Court and the International Court of Justice, as their rulings and decisions are and will remain a primary determination of international law. The decision taken by the Office of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court to initiate an investigation on the situation in Palestine must be supported and undertaken forthwith as a means of enforcing the law and ensuring justice. Diplomatic and political support for the Court is urgent in the light of attacks aimed at undermining its credibility and authority in an attempt to obstruct accountability. International courts must be able to carry out their mandate and work without interference, to end impunity in the face of serious international crimes.

“The State of Palestine also continues to call for a multilateral political process to achieve a just and peaceful solution based on the internationally endorsed terms of reference and parameters, in accordance with international law and relevant United Nations resolutions. We have appealed to the Security Council and the Quartet members – the Russian Federation and the United States along with the European Union and the United Nations – to uphold their obligations and exert serious efforts to this end, in cooperation with the League of Arab States and concerned regional and other partners and with the vital support of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, the Non-Aligned Movement and all peace-loving nations. We reiterate our call for the convening of an international peace conference based on the international consensus.

“The international community must realize that the demographic composition, character, status and identity of the Palestinian Territory occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem, is being aggressively altered and the Palestinian people’s inalienable rights, including to self-determination and independence, are being perpetually obstructed absent any accountability for Israel’s crimes. This is not hearsay, but has been thoroughly documented, including by United Nations agencies, bodies and mandate holders, including the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967 and numerous international, Palestinian and Israeli humanitarian and human rights organizations. Only accountability and implementation of the law can remedy this wrongful situation and give genuine meaning to the global efforts to promote justice and peace.

“The international community, including the Security Council, is not being asked to resort to extraordinary lengths to hold Israel accountable, but to simply muster the will to respect and follow through on existing frameworks and rules of law and affirmed obligations and commitments to end this injustice. Continued inaction has rewarded Israel, the occupying Power, with automatic

impunity and an abundance of time to pursue evermore criminal policies at zero cost to its international standing and relations, but with incalculable repercussions for the Palestinian people and for the viability of peace prospects and international law itself. Unless rectified, such gross violations and grave breaches, including of the *erga omnes* right to self-determination and the absolute prohibition of the acquisition of territory by force, will persist, to the detriment of the Palestinian people, the Israeli people and a future of peace, stability and security in the Middle East region and globally.

“The calls to compel Israel to respect its international law and the human rights of the Palestinian people is reaching unprecedented levels, as Governments and citizens worldwide can no longer ignore or tolerate the abhorrent reality created by Israel’s 54-year colonial occupation and apartheid regime. This was apparent in the wide support given again to resolution [75/22](#) in 2020 and in the global demonstrations held in solidarity with Palestine in 2021.

“It is past time for the international community to act on these long-standing calls. We urge strengthened support for the General Assembly’s efforts to contribute to justly resolving the Palestine question, including support for the vital efforts of the United Nations Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and the Division for Palestinian Rights, important mechanisms mandated by the Assembly to advance the achievement of Palestinian rights, including self-determination, and a just solution based on a two-State solution based on the pre-1967 borders, in accordance with international law and the relevant United Nations resolutions. We appeal to all States, intergovernmental organizations and civil society for their support and solidarity and fulfilment of their obligations and commitments to make 2021 a year that ushers in a new era of justice, freedom, equality and peace.”

II. Developments

6. International efforts to promote the peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine continued during the reporting period. The envoys of the Middle East Quartet (the Russian Federation, the United States of America, the European Union and the United Nations) consulted one another informally throughout the year and held monthly conference calls to discuss the situation on the ground and prospects for advancing Israeli-Palestinian peace. The United Nations reaffirmed its commitment to ending the occupation and achieving a negotiated two-State solution, in line with relevant United Nations resolutions, international law and bilateral agreements, within secure and recognized borders on the basis of the pre-1967 lines and with Jerusalem as the capital of both States, and reiterated its call to all stakeholders to refrain from any unilateral action that harms the prospects of meaningful negotiations and peace. Discussions are ongoing among Quartet members regarding the way forward.

7. On 25 September 2020, in his statement to the General Assembly, the President of the State of Palestine, Mahmoud Abbas, called for the convening of an international conference in early 2021 to engage in a genuine peace process, based on international law, United Nations resolutions and the relevant terms of reference, leading to an end to the occupation and the achievement by the Palestinian people of their freedom and independence within their State, with East Jerusalem as its capital, on the 1967 borders.

8. Agreements between Israel and Bahrain and between Israel and the United Arab Emirates were formalized in a signing ceremony at the White House on 15 September.

On 23 October, the leaders of the United States, Israel and the Sudan announced that the Governments of Israel and the Sudan had agreed to end the state of belligerence between their countries and normalize relations. On 22 December, the Governments of Israel and Morocco agreed to establish full diplomatic, peaceful and friendly relations in a signing ceremony in Rabat. On 22 July 2021, the Chairperson of the African Union Commission received credentials from the Ambassador of Israel to Burundi, Chad and Ethiopia as an observer of the African Union.

9. On 17 November, the Palestinian leadership announced its decision to resume security and civilian coordination with Israel and accept the clearance revenues Israel collects on its behalf, after Israel suspended its annexation plans as part of the agreements it had signed with several Arab States.

10. From September to November, Fatah and Hamas held bilateral discussions in Istanbul, Turkey, and, subsequently, in Cairo. On 15 January, President Abbas issued a decree calling for legislative, presidential and Palestinian National Council elections in 2021. On 9 February, Palestinian factions concluded additional talks in Cairo, thereby resolving several long-standing differences. On 17 February, the Palestinian Central Elections Commission concluded the registration of voters and announced that over 90 per cent of eligible voters had been registered. On 30 April, President Abbas said that he was indefinitely postponing the legislative, presidential and Palestinian National Council elections scheduled for 2021 until the participation of Palestinians in occupied East Jerusalem was guaranteed by Israel. Preparations for the Palestinian Legislative Council elections scheduled for 22 May were at an advanced stage. Some 90 per cent of eligible voters (equal to more than 2.5 million Palestinians) had registered to participate, some 50 per cent of whom were women and more than 40 per cent of whom would have been first-time voters. Thirty-six candidate lists, comprising a total of 1,389 candidates, had been cleared to participate by the Central Elections Commission, and the campaign period was set to begin on 1 May.

11. The reporting period was marked by an increase in violence throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory and Israel. Against the backdrop of tensions in Jerusalem, violence erupted between Israel and Palestinian armed groups based in the Gaza Strip in May, leading to the worst escalation of armed hostilities since 2014. Overall, 321 Palestinians, including 80 children and 44 women, were killed by Israeli security forces as a result of air strikes and during demonstrations, clashes, security operations and other incidents, and 14,823 Palestinians were injured, including some 1,079 by live ammunition. A total of 11 Israeli civilians, including two children and six women, were killed in attacks, clashes and other incidents and 789 Israelis were injured in the course of these events. In addition, three non-Israeli civilians and one Israeli soldier were killed in Israel during the hostilities.

12. The Israeli authorities' planned forced eviction of four extended Palestine refugee families, approximately 75 people, from their homes in the Sheikh Jarrah neighbourhood heightened tensions between Palestinians and Israeli security forces, resulting in increasingly tense protests beginning in April. In early April, videos went viral on social media depicting violent attacks by Palestinians against ultra-Orthodox Jews and attacks against Palestinians by extreme right-wing groups. Following the start of Ramadan on 13 April, there was a marked increase in unrest after the Israeli authorities installed metal barriers outside Damascus Gate in the Old City of Jerusalem, blocking access to a public area used by Palestinians. Following the installation of the barriers, widespread protests and violent clashes between Palestinians and Israeli security forces occurred in occupied East Jerusalem, in particular in the vicinity of the Aqsa Mosque and Damascus Gate, as well as in Sheikh Jarrah.

13. The unrest increased further on 22 April, when Israeli civilians marched towards Damascus Gate chanting “death to Arabs” and other anti-Arab slogans and clashed with Palestinians, who were also chanting inflammatory rhetoric, before both groups were dispersed by Israeli security forces. The removal by those forces of the barriers, on 25 April, temporarily restored a relative calm to the area. Beginning on 28 April, Palestinians held daily protests in the Sheikh Jarrah area, which, combined with a continued heavy presence of Israeli security forces and provocation by Israeli civilians, including settlers and Knesset members, triggered repeated clashes throughout East Jerusalem.

14. On 10 May, Jerusalem Day, the situation escalated further when clashes erupted in Haram al-Sharif/Temple Mount as Palestinians threw stones from the compound and Israeli security forces entered the Aqsa Mosque compound, launching stun grenades, using tear gas and firing rubber-coated metal bullets. Subsequently, the Israeli authorities took steps to reduce tensions, including by rerouting a scheduled demonstration, organized by right-wing Israeli activists to mark Jerusalem Day, away from the Muslim quarter of the Old City, postponing a Supreme Court hearing on the Sheikh Jarrah evictions and barring Jewish visits to the holy sites. Nevertheless, the violence and heavy security presence continued within the Old City.

15. On 14 May, the deadliest day in the occupied West Bank in over a decade, 10 Palestinians were killed by Israeli security forces in demonstrations and clashes and about 250 were injured by live bullets, raising concerns that Israeli security forces had employed excessive use of force. A total of 8,217 Palestinians were injured, 4,703 of them from tear gas inhalation. Most of the fatalities resulted from the use by Israeli security forces of live ammunition in the context of demonstrations or clashes or in response to attacks or attempted attacks.

16. On 10 May, late in the afternoon, a spokesperson for the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades of Hamas published a statement giving Israel “an ultimatum until six in the evening today to withdraw its forces from the blessed Al Aqsa Mosque and Sheikh Jarrah neighbourhood and release all detainees from the recent events in Jerusalem”. That evening, Palestinian armed groups indiscriminately fired 191 rockets and mortars towards Israel, including some towards Jerusalem, to which the Israel Defense Forces responded with 60 missiles and shells, hitting Gaza. For the next 10 days, Israel continued intensive air strikes and shelling, reportedly targeting armed groups and their infrastructure, while Palestinian armed groups in Gaza continued to launch rockets and mortars on an unprecedented scale towards Israel, including from highly populated civilian neighbourhoods. The inner compound yard of one United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) school was struck by two Israeli missiles despite the school having been designated an emergency shelter for civilians during the hostilities. In the context of a subsequent investigation aimed at finding a way to better secure the building, UNRWA discovered a tunnel under the school and subsequently condemned the existence and potential use by Palestinian armed groups of such tunnels underneath its schools in the strongest possible terms. There is no indication of the existence of any entry or exit points for the tunnel on the premises. Initial risk assessments of UNRWA premises by the United Nations Mine Action Service confirmed the existence of unexploded ordnance that could have led to further damage. Continuing assessments and activities were initially halted by Hamas authorities. After UNRWA protested these steps, highlighting the inviolability and neutrality of UNRWA premises and the need to ensure the safe return of children to their schools, Hamas vacated the school. The United Nations Mine Action Service continued to remove any remaining explosive ordnance as quickly as possible.

17. Between 10 and 21 May, Palestinian armed groups fired over 4,000 rockets and projectiles towards Israel, with over 600 falling in the Gaza Strip, reportedly

accounting for some Palestinian casualties. According to Israeli sources, Israeli forces carried out over 1,500 strikes from the air, land and sea across the Gaza Strip. Israeli air strikes and shelling, directed at what Israel said were targets containing militant installations, caused extensive damage to civilian property and infrastructure, including public buildings, residential homes and commercial units, including four high-rise towers, one of which hosted international media outlets. Damage was also inflicted on humanitarian assets, medical facilities and roads. Rockets from Gaza reached as far as the outskirts of Jerusalem, Tel Aviv and its suburbs and Ben Gurion Airport. The rockets struck multiple locations, causing damage to residential and commercial property, as well as to schools and a crude oil pipeline.

18. During the escalation in Gaza, the Security Council held four extraordinary sessions on 10, 12, 16 and 18 May, the General Assembly held an urgent meeting to address the situation on 20 May, and the Human Rights Council held a special session on 27 May.

19. Throughout the hostilities, the United Nations worked with all sides to restore calm, de-escalate the situation and prevent any further loss of life. The escalation continued until both sides announced a cessation of hostilities, which began at 2 a.m. on 21 May.

20. The armed hostilities took a severe toll on the civilian population. Between 10 and 21 May, 259 Palestinians were killed in Gaza, including 66 children and 41 women (4 of whom were pregnant), with 248 of them, including 63 children, killed in air strikes and by falling rockets. According to the Gaza Ministry of Health, 1,948 Palestinians were injured. At least 129 of those killed were civilians. In some cases, families, including women, children and infants, were killed in their homes by Israeli air strikes. Over 40 people are estimated to have been killed in a series of air strikes reportedly targeting tunnels under residential areas in Gaza City overnight on 15 May. The fatalities included the head of internal medicine at Al-Shifa Hospital, the main hospital in the Gaza Strip, and one of just a few neurologists in Gaza, as well as members of their families, and nine members of a family – two women and seven children – from the Al-Shati refugee camp.

21. In Israel, a 5-year-old boy was killed by a rocket in Sderot and a 16-year-old girl and her father were killed in Lod. Nine Israelis, including two children, four women and one soldier, and three foreign nationals were killed, and hundreds of Israelis were injured during the hostilities. Throughout the 11 days of hostilities, hundreds of thousands of Israelis across much of the south and centre of the country repeatedly had to run for shelter amid rocket barrages. In addition, incendiary balloons and kites launched from Gaza sparked dozens of fires in southern Israel during the period.

22. While the cessation of hostilities agreed between Israel and Hamas has largely held, there have subsequently been 62 incidents in which Palestinian armed groups have launched incendiary balloons towards Israel since the cessation of hostilities came into effect, causing fires. In retaliation, the Israeli Defense Forces carried out 22 strikes and fired 49 missiles against what they said were Hamas targets in the Gaza Strip, injuring two women and damaging property. On 16 August, armed groups fired at least one rocket from Gaza towards Israel. No injuries or damages were reported.

23. Beyond the human tragedy for both Palestinians and Israelis, and the physical damage of 11 days of fighting, the economic impact of the hostilities in May further exacerbated the existing humanitarian crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and severely weakened the economy of Gaza. On 6 July, the United Nations, the World Bank and the European Union published the Rapid Damage and Needs Assessment. According to the Assessment, damages in Gaza are estimated at between \$290 million and \$380 million, while economic losses may reach nearly \$200 million. The social

sector was hit hardest, significantly weakening the safety net of the most vulnerable. The immediate and short-term recovery and reconstruction needs, over the first 24 months, are estimated at between \$345 million and \$485 million. Also on 6 July, a technical meeting of the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee for the Coordination of the International Assistance to Palestinians was held to align donor efforts to help address both the aftermath of the May escalation and the significant fiscal crisis facing the Palestinian Authority.

24. By 2021, 9,566 of 11,000 houses destroyed during the 2014 conflict in Gaza had been rebuilt and the construction of another 639 houses was under way. Overall, it is estimated that the May conflict resulted in damages to approximately 4,100 housing units, 1,600 of which were destroyed and 2,500 of which were partially damaged. Total damages are assessed at between \$130 million and \$160 million. Over 113,000 Palestinians were temporarily displaced in UNRWA schools or with host families during the hostilities, heightening the risk of the spread of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) owing to overcrowding. Approximately 600 families (3,600 individuals) have remained internally displaced for more than six years, since the 2014 conflict.

25. During the May conflict, damage was inflicted on 181 schools, including 41 UNRWA schools, in addition to 116 kindergartens and 16 health facilities. Electricity supply across the Gaza Strip was further reduced from an average of 15 hours a day to 5–6 hours per day owing to damage to key electricity feeder lines, transformers and networks, as well as to Israel barring entry for fuel delivered through the United Nations for the Gaza power plant, causing disruptions to the provision of basic services, including water, sanitation and health care. About 800,000 people temporarily lacked regular access to safe piped water as a result of damage to infrastructure and the reduced electricity supply. Israel reopened the Kerem Shalom crossing on 17 May to facilitate the entry of a shipment from Jordan of medical aid and of medical personnel. The crossing came under mortar fire from Gaza, however, and was closed.

26. Following the ceasefire, Israel gradually lifted some restrictions on the import and export of goods. On 28 June, fuel deliveries for the Gaza Power Plant again resumed through the Kerem Shalom crossing under the existing United Nations framework overseen by the United Nations Office for Project Services with support from Qatar, returning electricity supply to its previous level, roughly 14 hours per day, at the end of July. The entry of construction material is still restricted, preventing urgent repairs to hundreds of sites, including schools, hospitals and water facilities. In addition, Israel reinstated the designated fishing zone off the coast of Gaza, which, as of 18 August, stands at 12 nautical miles.

27. In the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, clashes, attacks, search-and-arrest operations and other incidents resulted in the death of 66 Palestinians, including 14 children, and injuries to 13,011 Palestinians, including at least 696 children and 48 women. Two Israelis, including one woman, were killed and 109 were injured in the course of these events.

28. Throughout the reporting period, protests and violent clashes took place throughout the occupied West Bank almost daily. During clashes in May, Israeli security forces regularly used live ammunition against Palestinian protesters, resulting in the killing of 24 Palestinians and injuries to 744 others. Israeli security forces also continued to conduct search-and-arrest operations and to detain Palestinians, including children. The Palestinian Authority continued to arrest individuals associated with Hamas and political parties other than Fatah, intensifying such actions in April, prior to scheduled Palestinian elections, and again in May, following the postponement of elections on 30 April. Hamas authorities in Gaza also summoned and, in some cases, detained Fatah affiliates. Since September 2020, the

Israel Prison Service has not responded to freedom-of-information requests by Israeli non-governmental organizations for monthly statistics concerning Palestinians held in Israeli detention. According to Palestinian sources, however, as of 5 August, 540 Palestinians were being held by the Israeli authorities in administrative detention.

29. Increasingly, Israel restricted freedom of expression, peaceful assembly and association, including by arresting and prosecuting through the military courts Palestinian civil society actors, human rights defenders, students and political figures. Of particular concern was the detention, including administrative detention, of members of Palestinian civil society organizations on broad charges of membership of “unlawful” or terrorist organizations, and other attempts to discredit the work of civil society organizations and undercut their funding. OHCHR has raised serious concerns about allegations of ill-treatment during the arrest, interrogation and detention of Palestinians.

30. On 24 June, Nizar Banat, a prominent political activist and former parliamentary candidate, died following his arrest and detention by the Palestinian Security Forces. According to his family, he was severely beaten during his arrest. Following the incident, Palestinians held demonstrations across the occupied West Bank. In Ramallah, on 26 June and 5 July, the Palestinian Security Forces beat protesters with batons and indiscriminately fired tear gas and stun grenades. On 26 June, the Palestinian Security Forces also failed to stop violent acts by groups of persons not in uniform reportedly acting in a coordinated manner with security personnel. Those acts resulted in violence targeting journalists and human rights monitors, including one United Nations staff member. Women present at the demonstrations reported having been subjected to sexual harassment and gender-based threats on social media afterwards. In the following weeks, several prominent activists, electoral candidates, journalists, human rights defenders and lawyers were also arrested by Palestinian forces. All were subsequently released.

31. During the reporting period, the Israeli authorities advanced or approved plans for some 6,600 housing units in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, marking a decrease compared with some 8,000 units during the previous reporting period. On 14 and 15 October, in one of the largest collective advancements in recent years, the Israeli authorities approved plans for the construction of some 5,000 housing units in Area C, approximately 80 per cent of which are planned to be built in settlements in outlying locations, deep inside the occupied West Bank, in areas further impeding the contiguity of a future Palestinian State. As at 18 August, citing the absence of Israeli-issued building permits, which remain almost impossible for Palestinians to obtain, the Israeli authorities demolished or seized 908 structures, displacing 1,084 people, including 608 children and 239 women, and otherwise affecting about 9,500 others. During the reporting period, a total of 79 newly built structures were demolished on the basis of Military Order 1797, which authorizes an expedited process for the removal of structures. Structures can thus be demolished as early as 96 hours after the delivery of a notice, thereby preventing most owners from being heard before a judicial body. An additional 72 structures were demolished by their owners, displacing 140 people, including 69 children and 35 women. The Israeli authorities also demolished structures and homes built by settlers in unauthorized settlement outposts.

32. On 2 August, the High Court of Justice of Israel again adjourned an appeal hearing requested by four Palestinian families that were under threat of eviction from their homes in the Sheikh Jarrah neighbourhood in East Jerusalem. The hearing had originally been scheduled for 10 May but was postponed amid heightened tensions in East Jerusalem. In addition, several judicial proceedings related to the eviction of Palestinian families in the East Jerusalem neighbourhood of Silwan were under way. Additional legal developments are expected towards the end of 2021.

33. During the reporting period, 133 violent incidents involving Israeli settlers were recorded, resulting in 485 Palestinians being injured, including 13 women and 304 children. Of the total, 136 injuries were attributed to Israeli settlers and the remainder to subsequent clashes with the Israel Defense Forces. There were also 304 incidents by Israeli settlers which involved damage to Palestinian property. During the same period, there were 49 violent incidents by Palestinians against Israeli settlers and other civilians in the occupied West Bank, resulting in the killing of two Israelis and injuries to 69 Israelis.

34. On 5 February, the Pre-Trial Chamber of the International Criminal Court decided that the Court's territorial jurisdiction in *Situation in the State of Palestine* extends to the Occupied Palestinian Territory. On 3 March, the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court confirmed in a statement that her office had initiated an investigation regarding the situation in the State of Palestine covering crimes within the jurisdiction of the Court alleged to have been committed since 13 June 2014.

35. In its resolution [S-30/1](#), the Human Rights Council decided to establish an ongoing independent, international commission of inquiry to investigate in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and in Israel all alleged violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law leading up to and since 13 April 2021, and to investigate also the underlying root causes of recurrent tensions, instability and protraction of conflict, including systematic discrimination and repression based on national, ethnic, racial or religious identity.

36. The fiscal situation of the Palestinian Authority continued to be a source of significant concern. The budget gap for the current budget year is expected to be of more than \$1 billion. On 11 July, the Government of Israel approved the freezing of approximately \$180 million in annual clearance revenues collected by Israel on behalf of the Palestinian Authority in monthly instalments. The amount to be withheld is equal to the amount that the Israeli authorities allege that the Palestinian Authority paid during 2020 to security prisoners, detainees and the families of Palestinians killed while carrying out attacks against Israelis.

37. The socioeconomic situation of Palestinians was further compounded by COVID-19. The rising number of infections continues to pose grave risks in Gaza and the occupied West Bank. The impact of COVID-19 on populations in these areas was exacerbated by the overall political climate, which presented challenges to response efforts, and by the imposed closures on Gaza.

38. During the reporting period, the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the humanitarian partners of the United Nations supported COVID-19-related diagnoses, case management, infection prevention and control, communication on the risk posed by COVID-19, community engagement and vaccine strategy development and roll-out. With support from WHO and UNICEF through the global COVAX Facility, the Palestinian Authority was able to deliver a first batch of some 60,000 vaccines to the West Bank and Gaza on 17 March. By 25 July, the Palestinian Ministry of Health had received 1,541,620 vaccines through the COVAX Facility (supported by WHO, UNICEF and the Gavi Alliance) and bilateral arrangements, and had vaccinated 495,621 people in the West Bank and Gaza by 2 August. Israel also vaccinated East Jerusalemites and approximately 100,000 Palestinians holding permits to enter Israel.

III. Observations

39. During the reporting period, I delivered four reports to the Security Council on the implementation of Security Council resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#), in which I expressed

my concern regarding the continued lack of implementation of the provisions of the resolution. In my reports, I took note of international efforts and reiterated the commitment of the United Nations to supporting Palestinians and Israelis to resolve the conflict and end the occupation, in line with relevant United Nations resolutions, international law and bilateral agreements, and to realizing the vision of two States – Israel and Palestine – living side by side in peace within secured and recognized borders on the basis of the pre-1967 lines, with Jerusalem as the capital of both States.

40. The rapid escalation of violence in May, the violent attacks against Palestinian and Israeli civilians and the incitement to violence spiralled quickly out of control and into a devastating exchange between Israel and armed groups in Gaza on a scale not seen in years. These events have only deepened the divisions between Israelis and Palestinians and made progress towards peace an even greater challenge.

41. The indiscriminate launching of rockets, mortars and incendiary devices towards Israeli civilian population centres, including from highly populated civilian neighbourhoods, by Hamas, Palestinian Islamic Jihad and others must cease. I recall that international humanitarian law prohibits indiscriminate attacks and requires parties to a conflict to distinguish between civilians and combatants, and between civilian objects and military objectives. Although Israel took a number of precautions, such as giving advance warning of attacks in some cases, air strikes in densely populated areas resulted in a high level of civilian fatalities and injuries and in the widespread destruction of civilian infrastructure. Such strikes raise concerns about compliance by Israel with the principles of distinction and proportionality under international humanitarian law. Israel must abide by its obligations under international humanitarian law and take all feasible precautions to spare the civilian population and civilian objects in the conduct of military operations.

42. I am particularly appalled that children continue to be victims of violence. I reiterate that children should not be the target of violence or be put in harm's way. They should be afforded special protection from any form of violence and be detained only as a measure of last resort and for the shortest appropriate period of time.

43. I am deeply concerned by the multiple instances in which officials exacerbated the tensions and violence through unacceptable rhetoric or provocative actions. Some such statements and actions contributed to the deadly escalation. As stated in my reports to the Security Council on the implementation of resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#), I continue to urge leaders on all sides to refrain from incitement and to condemn, consistently and unequivocally, acts of terror and violence in all their forms.

44. I welcome the cessation of hostilities agreed on 21 May and recognize the important efforts of Egypt, Qatar and the United States in support of ending the violence. I also wish to thank my Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process for his efforts. Nevertheless, the situation in Gaza remains deeply worrying, including in respect of the severe emotional trauma and suffering experienced by the people of Gaza owing to years of prolonged Israeli closures and severe economic and movement restrictions, the nature of Hamas rule and the ongoing threat of violence. Although the agreement on the cessation of hostilities continues to hold, it is fragile and the risk of a major escalation is ever present.

45. On 27 May, the Deputy Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and United Nations Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator for the Occupied Palestinian Territory launched an inter-agency flash appeal, having identified a need for around \$95 million for critical programming. As at 18 August, some \$45 million have been raised. I thank donors for their generous support and encourage additional contributions so that pressing humanitarian needs can be addressed. I also encourage support to be provided to meet the immediate and short-term recovery and reconstruction needs, estimated at between \$345 million and

\$485 million over 24 months. More support, including from Israel, is also needed for the Palestinian response to COVID-19, to ensure that Palestinians throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory receive a fair and timely share of the vaccines.

46. Humanitarian and economic support alone, however, will not help to overcome the challenges in Gaza. These challenges require political solutions and the will to pursue them. It is vital that Hamas and other factions end their militant activities and military build-up. Taking into consideration its legitimate security concerns, I urge Israel to ease restrictions on the movement of goods and people to and from Gaza, in line with Security Council resolution 1860 (2009), with the goal of ultimately lifting them. Only by fully lifting the debilitating closures can we hope to sustainably resolve the humanitarian crisis. Meanwhile, the Gaza Reconstruction Mechanism remains critical for facilitating reconstruction and supporting vital infrastructure projects to bolster water and energy networks in Gaza.

47. Reports of violent incidents throughout the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, remain of concern. I unequivocally condemn all attacks on Palestinian and Israeli civilians and call upon all sides to refrain from violence and to clearly and unequivocally condemn attacks when they occur. All perpetrators must be held accountable for their crimes.

48. I reiterate the call for the status quo at the holy sites to be respected and upheld in line with the special and historical role of Jordan as custodian of the Muslim and Christian holy sites in Jerusalem.

49. The postponement of the Palestinian election process has had significant implications, both for the security situation on the ground and the future of the Palestinian national project. I commend the tireless efforts of the Palestinian Central Elections Commission, which, throughout the process, ensured that all the technical aspects were effectively implemented. The holding of elections in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and Gaza would be a crucial step towards Palestinian unity, giving renewed legitimacy to national institutions, including a democratically elected Parliament and Government. Moreover, setting a new and timely date for elections would be important for reassuring the Palestinian people that their voices will be heard. I reiterate that Palestinian unity is crucial for reaching the larger objective of a Palestinian State and lasting peace.

50. The general state of human rights and freedoms in the Occupied Palestinian Territory remains of concern. I reiterate my earlier calls to end the practice of administrative detention and either to charge detainees, where there are grounds to do so, or to release them immediately. All children should be treated with due consideration for their age and be detained only in situations justified under the applicable rules of international humanitarian law and international or applicable human rights law. Freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly must be respected by Israel and any restriction must be imposed in accordance with the relevant provisions of international human rights law. Accusations of terrorism must be made in accordance with the framework defined in article 14 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, including respect of fair trial guarantees.

51. I call upon the Palestinian Authority to ensure that allegations of disproportionate use of force by the Palestinian Security Forces are investigated and that all perpetrators are held to account. The Palestinian people must be able to exercise their rights to freedom of expression, opinion and peaceful assembly. Arbitrary and politically motivated arrests must cease.

52. I remain deeply troubled by the continued settlement activities in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem. I reiterate that the establishment by Israel of settlements in the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem,

has no legal validity and constitutes a flagrant violation of international law. I urge the Government of Israel to stop the advancement of all settlement plans immediately.

53. Continued violence between Palestinians and Israeli settlers and other civilians in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, is of deep concern. I urge Israel, as the occupying Power, to ensure the safety and security of the Palestinian population. All incidents must be investigated and those responsible must be held accountable.

54. The impact on women of the ongoing humanitarian and economic crisis in Gaza is of particular concern. The proportion of women participating in the labour force in Gaza, where about 70 per cent of women are unemployed, is among the lowest in the world. These poor employment prospects result in female-headed households facing greater poverty and food insecurity. In turn, poverty and a lack of economic opportunities are key factors driving violence against women in Gaza, while the humanitarian crisis has resulted in numerous health issues for women. According to the Palestinian Ministry of Women's Affairs, gender-based violence has soared by 300 per cent since the COVID-19 pandemic began; the proportion of women participating in the labour force has shrunk to 16 per cent and only 14 per cent of senior positions in the public sector are held by women. The United Nations continues to assist Palestinian women and girls in a broad range of areas, but much more needs to be done to address their needs and vulnerabilities.

55. I would like to reiterate that the fate of two Israeli civilians and the bodies of two Israel Defense Force soldiers held by Hamas in Gaza remains an important humanitarian concern. I call upon Hamas to provide the family members of those civilians with any information it has on their fate, as required by international humanitarian law. I also remain deeply concerned at the continued Israeli practice of holding the bodies of Palestinians killed while carrying out or allegedly carrying out attacks against Israelis and call upon Israel to return withheld bodies to their families.

56. I remain extremely concerned by the shortfall of \$100 million in the UNRWA programme budget. I welcome the resumption of funding from the United States last April and call upon Member States to ensure that the agency has the liquidity to conduct operations. UNRWA is vital to the region's stability, especially in the aftermath of a devastating conflict. I also welcome efforts by Jordan and Sweden to organize an international conference on UNRWA in October. Investing in UNRWA remains indispensable for achieving regional stability and peace in the Middle East.

57. I would like to express my deep appreciation to my Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Tor Wennesland, for his outstanding service in what remains a challenging context. I am also grateful to the Commissioner-General of UNRWA, Philippe Lazzarini, and to UNRWA staff for the remarkable work carried out on behalf of Palestine refugees. I pay tribute too to all United Nations staff who work under difficult circumstances in the service of the Organization.

58. I will continue to ensure that the United Nations works towards a resolution of the conflict that would end the Israeli occupation that began in 1967 and establish an independent, democratic, contiguous, sovereign and viable Palestinian State living side by side with Israel in peace, security and mutual recognition, with Jerusalem as the capital of both States, in line with United Nations resolutions, international law and previous agreements.

3. *Calls* for the scrupulous respect for and faithful implementation of the Agreements by all parties concerned who should fully abide by their letter and spirit;

4. *Notes* the continuing process of withdrawal of foreign troops from Afghanistan and expresses its expectation that the withdrawal will be completed in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Agreements;

5. *Reiterates* that the preservation of the sovereignty, territorial integrity, political independence and non-aligned character of Afghanistan is essential for a peaceful solution of the Afghanistan problem;

6. *Reaffirms* the right of the Afghan people to determine their own form of government and to choose their economic, political and social system free from outside intervention, subversion, coercion or constraint of any kind whatsoever;

7. *Calls upon* all parties concerned to work for the urgent achievement of a comprehensive political solution and the creation of the necessary conditions of peace and normalcy that would enable the Afghan refugees to return voluntarily to their homeland in safety and honour;

8. *Emphasizes* the need for an intra-Afghan dialogue for the establishment of a broad-based government to ensure the broadest support and immediate participation of all segments of the Afghan people;

9. *Requests* the Secretary-General and his Representative to encourage and facilitate the early realization of a comprehensive political settlement in Afghanistan in accordance with the provisions of the Agreements and of the present resolution;

10. *Renews its appeal* to all States and national and international organizations to continue to extend humanitarian relief assistance with a view to alleviating the hardship of the Afghan refugees, in co-ordination with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees;

11. *Welcomes* the appointment of a special co-ordinator for channelling economic and humanitarian assistance to the people of Afghanistan;

12. *Calls upon* all States to provide adequate financial and material resources to the Co-ordinator for Humanitarian and Economic Assistance Programmes Relating to Afghanistan for the purposes of achieving the speedy repatriation and rehabilitation of the Afghan refugees, as well as for the economic and social reconstruction of the country;

13. *Requests* the Secretary-General to keep Member States and the Security Council informed of progress towards the implementation of the present resolution and to submit to the General Assembly at its forty-fourth session a report on the situation in Afghanistan, on progress achieved in the implementation of the Agreements and the political settlement relating to Afghanistan;

14. *Decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its forty-fourth session the item entitled "The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security".

*45th plenary meeting
3 November 1988*

43/21. The uprising (*intifadah*) of the Palestinian people

The General Assembly,

Aware of the uprising (*intifadah*) of the Palestinian people since 9 December 1987 against Israeli occupation,

which has received significant attention and sympathy from world public opinion,

Deeply concerned at the alarming situation in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, as well as in the other occupied Arab territories, as a result of the continued occupation by Israel, the occupying Power, and of its persistent policies and practices against the Palestinian people,

Reaffirming that the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949,⁴⁷ is applicable to all the Palestinian and other Arab territories occupied by Israel since 1967, including Jerusalem,

Recalling its relevant resolutions as well as Security Council resolutions 605 (1987) of 22 December 1987, 607 (1988) of 5 January 1988 and 608 (1988) of 14 January 1988,

Recognizing the need for increased support and aid for, and solidarity with, the Palestinian people under Israeli occupation,

Conscious of the urgent need to resolve the underlying problem through a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement, including a solution to the Palestinian problem in all its aspects,

1. *Condemns* Israel's persistent policies and practices violating the human rights of the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territories, including Jerusalem, and, in particular, such acts as the opening of fire by the Israeli army and settlers that result in the killing and wounding of defenceless Palestinian civilians, the beating and breaking of bones, the deportation of Palestinian civilians, the imposition of restrictive economic measures, the demolition of houses, collective punishment and detentions, as well as denial of access to the media;

2. *Strongly deplores* the continuing disregard by Israel, the occupying Power, of the relevant decisions of the Security Council;

3. *Reaffirms* that the occupation by Israel of the Palestinian territories since 1967, including Jerusalem, in no way changes the legal status of those territories;

4. *Demands* that Israel, the occupying Power, abide immediately and scrupulously by the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, and desist forthwith from its policies and practices that are in violation of the provisions of the Convention;

5. *Calls upon* all the High Contracting Parties to the Convention to take appropriate measures to ensure respect by Israel, the occupying Power, for the Convention in all circumstances, in conformity with their obligation under article 1 thereof;

6. *Invites* Member States, the organizations of the United Nations system, governmental, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, and the mass communications media to continue and enhance their support for the Palestinian people;

7. *Urges* the Security Council to consider the current situation in the occupied Palestinian territories, taking into account the recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General;⁴⁸

8. *Requests* the Secretary-General to examine the present situation in the occupied Palestinian territories by all

⁴⁷ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 75, No. 973.

⁴⁸ *Official Records of the Security Council, Forty-third Year, Supplement for January, February and March 1988*, document S/19443.

means available to him and to submit periodic reports thereon, the first such report no later than 17 November 1988.

*45th plenary meeting
3 November 1988*

43/22. Right of peoples to peace

The General Assembly,

Recalling its Declaration on the Right of Peoples to Peace, approved on 12 November 1984,⁴⁹

Referring to its resolutions 40/11 of 11 November 1985 and 41/10 of 24 October 1986,

Having in mind the Universal Declaration on Human Rights⁵⁰ which emphasizes that recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world,

Recognizing the strong resolve of peoples to strengthen international peace and security and promote economic and social development,

Noting with satisfaction the positive events and trends in the field of disarmament, the resolution of crisis situations and the strengthening of international peace and security,

Reaffirming that the implementation of the right of peoples to peace constitutes a fundamental concern of each State,

Having considered the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the Declaration on the Right of Peoples to Peace,⁵¹

- 1. Takes note with appreciation of the report of the Secretary-General;*
- 2. Reaffirms the lasting importance and validity of the Declaration on the Right of Peoples to Peace;*
- 3. Considers that the efforts of non-governmental organizations and world public opinion play an important role in the implementation of the Declaration;*
- 4. Invites all States and international organizations to continue their efforts towards the implementation of the Declaration at the national and international levels;*
- 5. Calls upon all States and relevant organizations of the United Nations system, as well as non-governmental organizations, to inform the Secretary-General about the measures taken to implement the Declaration;*
- 6. Requests the Secretary-General to submit a report to the General Assembly at its forty-fifth session on the basis of replies received;*
- 7. Decides to include in the provisional agenda of its forty-fifth session an item entitled "Implementation of the Declaration on the Right of Peoples to Peace".*

*46th plenary meeting
11 November 1988*

43/23. Zone of peace and co-operation of the South Atlantic

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 41/11 of 27 October 1986, in which it solemnly declared the Atlantic Ocean, in the re-

gion situated between Africa and South America, the "Zone of peace and co-operation of the South Atlantic",

Affirming that the questions of peace and security and those of development are interrelated and inseparable, and considering that co-operation among all States, in particular those of the region, for peace and development is essential to promote the objectives of the zone of peace and co-operation of the South Atlantic,

Recalling also its resolution 42/16 of 10 November 1987, in which it urged States of the region to continue their actions aiming at fulfilling the goals of the declaration, specially through the adoption and implementation of specific programmes for this purpose,

Noting with appreciation the efforts of States of the zone towards fulfilling the goals of the declaration,

- 1. Takes note of the report submitted by the Secretary-General in accordance with resolution 42/16;⁵²*
- 2. Welcomes the holding of the first meeting of States of the Zone of Peace and Co-operation of the South Atlantic at Rio de Janeiro, from 25 to 29 July 1988, and takes note of the Final Document of the meeting;⁵³*
- 3. Commends initiatives by States of the zone to promote peace and regional co-operation in the South Atlantic;*
- 4. Calls upon all States to co-operate in the promotion of the objectives of peace and co-operation established in the declaration of the zone of peace and co-operation of the South Atlantic and to refrain from any action inconsistent with those objectives, particularly actions which aggravate or may create situations of tension and potential conflict in the region;*
- 5. Requests the relevant organizations, organs and bodies of the United Nations system to render all necessary assistance that States of the zone may seek in their joint efforts to implement the declaration of the zone of peace and co-operation of the South Atlantic;*
- 6. Requests the Secretary-General to keep the implementation of resolution 41/11 under review and to submit a report to the General Assembly at its forty-fourth session, taking into account, *inter alia*, the views expressed by Member States;*
- 7. Decides to include in the provisional agenda of its forty-fourth session the item entitled "Zone of peace and co-operation of the South Atlantic".*

*47th plenary meeting
14 November 1988*

43/24. The situation in Central America: threats to international peace and security and peace initiatives

The General Assembly,

Recalling Security Council resolutions 530 (1983) of 19 May 1983 and 562 (1985) of 10 May 1985 and its resolutions 38/10 of 11 November 1983, 39/4 of 26 October 1984, 41/37 of 18 November 1986 and 42/1 of 7 October 1987, as well as the initiative of the Secretaries-General of the United Nations and of the Organization of American States of 18 November 1986,

Taking note of the report of the Secretary-General submitted in pursuance of General Assembly resolution 42/1,⁵⁴

⁴⁹ Resolution 39/11, annex.

⁵⁰ Resolution 217 A (III).

⁵¹ A/43/602.

⁵² A/43/576 and Add.1.

⁵³ A/43/512.

⁵⁴ A/42/127-S/18686. For the printed text, see *Official Records of the*

Resolution No.	Title	Item	Date of adoption	Page
	D. Imposition, co-ordination and strict monitoring of measures against racist South Africa (A/44/L.29 and Add.1)	28	22 November 1989	35
	E. International financial pressure on the <i>apartheid</i> economy of South Africa (A/44/L.30 and Add.1)	28	22 November 1989	36
	F. Relations between South Africa and Israel (A/44/L.31 and Add.1)	28	22 November 1989	36
	G. Programme of work of the Special Committee against <i>Apartheid</i> (A/44/L.32 and Add.1)	28	22 November 1989	37
	H. Oil embargo against South Africa (A/44/L.33 and Add.1)	28	22 November 1989	37
	I. Military collaboration with South Africa (A/44/L.34/Rev.1 and Rev.1/Add.1)	28	22 November 1989	38
	J. United Nations Trust Fund for South Africa (A/44/L.35 and Add.1)	28	22 November 1989	38
	K. Concerted international action for the elimination of <i>apartheid</i> (A/44/L.36 and Add.1)	28	22 November 1989	39
	L. Support for the work of the Commission against <i>Apartheid</i> in Sports (A/44/L.40 and Add.1)	28	22 November 1989	40
44/40	The situation in the Middle East			
	Resolution A (A/44/L.47 and Add.1)	37	4 December 1989	41
	Resolution B (A/44/L.48 and Add.1)	37	4 December 1989	43
	Resolution C (A/44/L.49 and Add.1)	37	4 December 1989	44
44/41	Question of Palestine			
	Resolution A (A/44/L.43 and Add.1)	39	6 December 1989	44
	Resolution B (A/44/L.44 and Add.1)	39	6 December 1989	45
	Resolution C (A/44/L.45 and Add.1)	39	6 December 1989	45
44/42	Question of Palestine (A/44/L.51/Rev.1 and Rev.1/Add.1)	39	6 December 1989	45
44/43	Judgment of the International Court of Justice of 27 June 1986 concerning military and paramilitary activities in and against Nicaragua: need for immediate compliance (A/44/L.52)	26	7 December 1989	46
44/100	Programme of Activities in Observance of the Thirtieth Anniversary of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples (A/44/23, chapter II)	18	11 December 1989	46
44/101	Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples (A/44/L.55 and Add.1)	18	11 December 1989	48
44/102	Dissemination of information on decolonization (A/44/L.56 and Add.1)	18	11 December 1989	49
44/103	Restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic and social fields (A/44/L.58)	38	11 December 1989	50
44/168	International assistance for the economic rehabilitation of Angola (A/44/L.60/Rev.1)	160	15 December 1989	51
44/239	Emergency humanitarian assistance to Romania (A/44/L.64)	161	28 December 1989	51
44/240	Effects of the military intervention by the United States of America in Panama on the situation in Central America (A/44/L.63 and Add.1)	34	29 December 1989	52

44/1. Death sentence passed on a South African patriot

The General Assembly,

Having considered the question of the death sentence passed in October 1988 at Grahamstown, South Africa, on Mangena Jeffrey Boesman, a member of the African National Congress of South Africa,

Gravely concerned about the decision of the South African authorities on 22 September 1989 to refuse executive clemency in respect of the appeal against the death sentence,

Conscious that the carrying out of this death sentence would aggravate the situation in South Africa and thereby deal a severe blow to the prospects for negotiations to end *apartheid*,

1. Calls upon the South African authorities as a matter of urgency to commute the death sentence imposed on Mangena Jeffrey Boesman;

2. Urges all States and organizations to use their influence and to take urgent measures, in conformity with the Charter of the United Nations, the resolutions of the Security Council and relevant international instruments to save the life of Mangena Jeffrey Boesman;

3. Also calls upon the South African authorities to commute the death sentences passed on all political pris-

oners as a means of creating an environment conducive to the peaceful resolution of the situation in South Africa.

*11th plenary meeting
28 September 1989*

44/2. The uprising (*intifadah*) of the Palestinian people

The General Assembly,

Aware of the uprising (*intifadah*) of the Palestinian people since 9 December 1987 against Israeli occupation, which has received significant attention and sympathy from world public opinion,

Deeply concerned at the alarming situation in the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, as a result of the continued occupation by Israel, the occupying Power, and of its persistent policies and practices against the Palestinian people,

Reaffirming that the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949,² is applicable to the Palestinian territory occupied by Israel since 1967, including Jerusalem, and to the other occupied Arab territories,

Expressing its profound shock at the continued measures by Israel, the occupying Power, including the killing and

² United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 75, No. 973.

wounding of Palestinian civilians and the recent action of ransacking the houses of defenceless civilians in the Palestinian town of Beit Sahour.

Stressing the need to promote international protection to the Palestinian civilians in the occupied Palestinian territory,

Recognizing the need for increased support to, aid for and solidarity with the Palestinian people under Israeli occupation,

Having considered the recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General,³

Recalling its relevant resolutions as well as the relevant Security Council resolutions,

1. *Condemns* those policies and practices of Israel, the occupying Power, which violate the human rights of the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and, in particular, such acts as the opening of fire by the Israeli army and settlers that result in the killing and wounding of defenceless Palestinian civilians, the beating and breaking of bones, the deportation of Palestinian civilians, the imposition of restrictive economic measures, the demolition of houses, the ransacking of real or personal property belonging individually or collectively to private persons, collective punishment and detentions, and so forth;

2. *Demands* that Israel, the occupying Power, abide scrupulously by the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, and desist immediately from those policies and practices which are in violation of the provisions of the Convention;

3. *Calls upon* all the High Contracting Parties to the Convention to ensure respect by Israel, the occupying Power, for the Convention in all circumstances, in conformity with their obligation under article 1 thereof;

4. *Strongly deplores* the continuing disregard by Israel, the occupying Power, of the relevant decisions of the Security Council;

5. *Reaffirms* that the occupation by Israel of the Palestinian territory since 1967, including Jerusalem, and of the other Arab territories in no way changes the legal status of those territories;

6. *Requests* the Security Council to examine with urgency the situation in the occupied Palestinian territory with a view to considering measures needed to provide international protection to the Palestinian civilians in the Palestinian territory occupied by Israel since 1967, including Jerusalem;

7. *Invites* Member States, the organizations of the United Nations system, governmental, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, and the mass communications media to continue and enhance their support for the Palestinian people;

8. *Requests* the Secretary-General to examine the present situation in the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, by all means available to him and to submit periodic reports thereon, the first such report as soon as possible.

*23rd plenary meeting
6 October 1989*

44/3. Emergency assistance to Antigua and Barbuda, the British Virgin Islands, Dominica, Montserrat and Saint Kitts and Nevis

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 43/202 of 20 December 1988 on the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction and its resolution 35/56 of 5 December 1980, the annex to which contains the International Development Strategy for the Third United Nations Development Decade,

Deeply distressed by the large number of afflicted persons and the destruction wrought by hurricane Hugo, which, on 16 September 1989, devastated Antigua and Barbuda, the British Virgin Islands, Dominica, Montserrat and Saint Kitts and Nevis

Conscious of the efforts of the Governments and peoples of Antigua and Barbuda, the British Virgin Islands, Dominica, Montserrat and Saint Kitts and Nevis to save lives and alleviate the sufferings of the victims of hurricane Hugo,

Noting the enormous effort that will be required to alleviate the grave situation caused by this natural disaster,

Conscious also of the prompt response being made by Governments, the bodies and agencies of the United Nations system, international and regional agencies, non-governmental organizations and private individuals to provide relief,

Recognizing that the magnitude of the disaster and its medium-term and long-term effects will require, as a complement to the efforts being made by the peoples and Governments of Antigua and Barbuda, the British Virgin Islands, Dominica, Montserrat and Saint Kitts and Nevis, a demonstration of international solidarity and humanitarian concern to ensure broad multilateral cooperation in order to meet the immediate emergency situation in the affected areas and to initiate the process of reconstruction,

1. *Expresses its solidarity and support* to the Governments and peoples of Antigua and Barbuda, the British Virgin Islands, Dominica, Montserrat and Saint Kitts and Nevis;

2. *Expresses its appreciation* to all States of the international community, international agencies and non-governmental organizations that are providing emergency relief to the affected countries;

3. *Urge*s all States of the international community, as a matter of urgency, to contribute generously to the relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts in the affected countries;

4. *Requests* the Secretary-General, in collaboration with the international financial institutions and the bodies and agencies of the United Nations system, to assist the Governments of Antigua and Barbuda, the British Virgin Islands, Dominica, Montserrat and Saint Kitts and Nevis in identifying the medium-term and long-term needs and in mobilizing resources, as well as to help with the task of reconstruction of the affected countries undertaken by their respective Governments.

*31st plenary meeting
12 October 1989*

³ S/19443; see *Official Records of the Security Council, Forty-third Year, Supplement for January, February and March 1988* document S/19443.

(III) of 11 December 1948, and subsequent relevant resolutions;

(d) Dismantling the Israeli settlements in the territories occupied since 1967;

(e) Guaranteeing freedom of access to Holy Places, religious buildings and sites;

4. *Notes* the expressed desire and endeavours to place the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, under the supervision of the United Nations for a limited period, as part of the peace process;

5. *Once again invites* the Security Council to consider measures needed to convene the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, including the establishment of a preparatory committee, and to consider guarantees for security measures agreed upon by the Conference for all States in the region;

6. *Requests* the Secretary-General to continue his efforts with the parties concerned, and in consultation with the Security Council, to facilitate the convening of the Conference, and to submit progress reports on developments in this matter.

*59th plenary meeting
6 December 1990*

45/69. The uprising (*intifadah*) of the Palestinian people

The General Assembly,

Aware of the uprising (*intifadah*) of the Palestinian people since 9 December 1987 against Israeli occupation, which has received significant attention and sympathy from world public opinion,

Deeply concerned at the alarming situation in the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, as a result of the continued occupation by Israel, the occupying Power, and of its persistent policies and practices against the Palestinian people,

Reaffirming that the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949,⁶⁴ is applicable to the Palestinian territory occupied by Israel since 1967, including Jerusalem, and to the other occupied Arab territories,

Expressing its profound shock at the continued measures by Israel, the occupying Power, including the killing and wounding of Palestinian civilians, and at the recent acts of violence committed by the Israeli security forces, which took place on 8 October 1990 at the Haram al-Sharif in Jerusalem, resulting in injuries and loss of human lives,

Stressing the need to promote international protection to the Palestinian civilians in the occupied Palestinian territory,

Recognizing the need for increased support to, aid for and solidarity with the Palestinian people under Israeli occupation,

⁶⁴ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 75, No. 973.

Having considered the recommendations contained in the reports of the Secretary-General of 21 January 1988⁶⁵ and 31 October 1990,⁶⁶

Recalling its relevant resolutions as well as the relevant Security Council resolutions,

1. *Condemns* those policies and practices of Israel, the occupying Power, which violate the human rights of the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and, in particular, such acts as the opening of fire by the Israeli army and settlers that result in the killing and wounding of defenceless Palestinian civilians, the beating and breaking of bones, the deportation of Palestinian civilians, the imposition of restrictive economic measures, the demolition of houses, the ransacking of real or personal property belonging individually or collectively to private persons, collective punishment and detentions, and so forth;

2. *Demands* that Israel, the occupying Power, abide scrupulously by the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, and desist immediately from those policies and practices which are in violation of the provisions of the Convention;

3. *Calls upon* all the High Contracting Parties to the Convention to ensure respect by Israel, the occupying Power, for the Convention in all circumstances, in conformity with their obligation under article 1 thereof;

4. *Strongly deplores* the continuing disregard by Israel, the occupying Power, of the relevant decisions of the Security Council;

5. *Reaffirms* that the occupation by Israel of the Palestinian territory since 1967, including Jerusalem, and of the other Arab territories in no way changes the legal status of those territories;

6. *Requests* the Security Council to examine with urgency the situation in the occupied Palestinian territory with a view to considering measures needed to provide international protection to the Palestinian civilians in the Palestinian territory occupied by Israel since 1967, including Jerusalem;

7. *Invites* Member States, the organizations of the United Nations system, governmental, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, and the mass communications media to continue and enhance their support for the Palestinian people;

8. *Requests* the Secretary-General to examine the present situation in the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, by all means available to him and to submit periodic reports thereon, the first such report as soon as possible.

*59th plenary meeting
6 December 1990*

⁶⁵ S/19443; see *Official Records of the Security Council, Forty-third Year, Supplement for January, February and March 1988*, document S/19443.

⁶⁶ S/21919 and Corr.1; see *Official Records of the Security Council, Forty-fifth Year, Supplement for October, November and December 1990*, document S/21919.

2. *Considers* that the convening of an International Peace Conference on the Middle East, under the auspices of the United Nations, with the participation of all parties to the conflict, including the Palestine Liberation Organization, on an equal footing, and the five permanent members of the Security Council, based on Council resolutions 242 (1967) of 22 November 1967 and 338 (1973) of 22 October 1973 and the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people, primarily the right to self-determination, would contribute to the promotion of peace in the region;

3. *Reaffirms* the following principles for the achievement of comprehensive peace:

(a) The withdrawal of Israel from the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, and from the other occupied Arab territories;

(b) Guaranteeing arrangements for security of all States in the region, including those named in resolution 181 (II) of 29 November 1947, within secure and internationally recognized boundaries;

(c) Resolving the problem of the Palestine refugees in conformity with General Assembly resolution 194 (III) of 11 December 1948, and subsequent relevant resolutions;

(d) Dismantling the Israeli settlements in the territories occupied since 1967;

(e) Guaranteeing freedom of access to Holy Places, religious buildings and sites;

4. *Welcomes* the convening at Madrid, on 30 October 1991, of the Peace Conference on the Middle East, which constitutes a significant step towards the establishment of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the region;

5. *Notes* the expressed desire and endeavours to place the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, under the supervision of the United Nations for a transitional period, as part of the peace process;

6. *Requests* the Secretary-General to continue his efforts with the parties concerned, and in consultation with the Security Council, for the promotion of peace in the region, and to submit progress reports on developments in this matter.

69th plenary meeting
11 December 1991

46/76. The uprising (*intifadah*) of the Palestinian people

The General Assembly,

Aware of the uprising (*intifadah*) of the Palestinian people since 9 December 1987 against Israeli occupation, which has received significant attention and sympathy from world public opinion,

Deeply concerned about the alarming situation in the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, as a result of the continued occupation by Israel, the occupying Power, and of its persistent policies and practices against the Palestinian people,

Reaffirming that the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949,⁶¹ is applicable to the Palestinian territory occupied by Israel since 1967, including Jerusalem, and to the other occupied Arab territories,

Expressing its profound shock at the continued measures

by Israel, the occupying Power, including the killing and wounding of Palestinian civilians, and at the acts of violence committed by the Israeli security forces, which took place on 8 October 1990 at the Haram al-Sharif in Jerusalem, resulting in injuries and loss of human lives, and on 29 December 1990 at Rafah,

Stressing the need to promote international protection to the Palestinian civilians in the occupied Palestinian territory,

Recognizing the need for increased support to, and aid for and solidarity with, the Palestinian people under Israeli occupation,

Having considered the recommendations contained in the reports of the Secretary-General of 21 January 1988,⁶² 31 October 1990⁶³ and 9 April 1991,⁶⁴

Recalling its relevant resolutions as well as the relevant Security Council resolutions, in particular Council resolution 681 (1990) of 20 December 1990, in paragraph 6 of which the Council requested "the Secretary-General, in cooperation with the International Committee of the Red Cross, to develop further the idea, expressed in his report, of convening a meeting of the High Contracting Parties to the said Convention to discuss possible measures that might be taken by them under the Convention and, for this purpose, to invite the Parties to submit their views on how the idea could contribute to the goals of the Convention, as well as on other relevant matters, and to report thereon to the Council",

1. *Condemns* those policies and practices of Israel, the occupying Power, which violate the human rights of the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and, in particular, such acts as the opening of fire by the Israeli army and settlers that result in the killing and wounding of defenceless Palestinian civilians, the beating and breaking of bones, the deportation of Palestinian civilians, the imposition of restrictive economic measures, the demolition of houses, the ransacking of real or personal property belonging individually or collectively to private persons, collective punishment and detentions, and so forth;

2. *Demands* that Israel, the occupying Power, abide scrupulously by the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, and desist immediately from those policies and practices which are in violation of the provisions of the Convention;

3. *Calls upon* all the High Contracting Parties to the Convention to ensure respect by Israel, the occupying Power, for the Convention in all circumstances, in conformity with their obligation under article 1 thereof;

4. *Urges* all the High Contracting Parties to the Geneva Convention to respond to the note verbale submitted to them by the Secretary-General in accordance with paragraph 6 of Security Council resolution 681 (1990);

5. *Strongly deploras* the continuing disregard by Israel, the occupying Power, of the relevant decisions of the Security Council;

6. *Reaffirms* that the occupation by Israel of the Palestinian territory since 1967, including Jerusalem, and of the other Arab territories in no way changes the legal status of those territories;

7. *Requests* the Security Council to examine with urgency the situation in the occupied Palestinian territory with a view to considering measures needed to provide in-

ternational protection to the Palestinian civilians in the Palestinian territory occupied by Israel since 1967, including Jerusalem;

8. *Invites* Member States, the organizations of the United Nations system, governmental, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, and the mass communications media to continue and enhance their support for the Palestinian people;

9. *Requests* the Secretary-General to examine the present situation in the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, by all means available to him and to submit periodic reports thereon, the first such report as soon as possible.

*69th plenary meeting
11 December 1991*

46/77. Revitalization of the work of the General Assembly

The General Assembly,

Conscious of the need to enhance its capability to fulfil the role envisaged for it under the Charter of the United Nations,

Recognizing the role of the President of the General Assembly and of the Secretariat in dealing with the affairs of the General Assembly,

Recognizing that the President of the Assembly needs to be available for the duration of the session,

1. *Reaffirms* the functions and the responsibilities of the President of the General Assembly in accordance with the rules of procedure of the General Assembly;

2. *Invites* the President of the Assembly and the Secretary-General to undertake consultations to ensure that adequate staff is assigned and facilities provided to enable the President of the Assembly to carry out his functions and responsibilities and to report thereon as appropriate to the General Assembly;

3. *Decides* that such arrangements will have no financial implications under the regular budget of the United Nations.

*70th plenary meeting
12 December 1991*

46/78. Law of the sea

The General Assembly,

Recalling its previous resolutions, including resolution 45/145 of 14 December 1990, on the law of the sea,

Recognizing that, as stated in the third preambular paragraph of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea,³⁵ the problems of ocean space are closely interrelated and need to be considered as a whole,

Convinced that it is important to safeguard the unified character of the Convention and related resolutions adopted therewith and to apply them in a manner consistent with that character and with their object and purpose,

Emphasizing the need for States to ensure consistent application of the Convention, as well as the need for harmonization of national legislation with the provisions of the Convention,

Considering that, in its resolution 2749 (XXV) of 17 December 1970, it proclaimed that the seabed and ocean floor, and the subsoil thereof, beyond the limits of national jurisdiction (hereinafter referred to as "the Area"), as well as the resources of the Area, are the common heritage of mankind,

Recalling that the Convention provides the regime to be applied to the Area and its resources,

Recalling with satisfaction the expressions of willingness to explore all possibilities of addressing issues of concern to some States in order to secure universal participation in the Convention,⁶⁵

Recognizing the need for cooperation in the early and effective implementation by the Preparatory Commission of resolution II of the Third United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea,⁶⁶

Noting with satisfaction the progress made in the Preparatory Commission since its inception, including the registration of six pioneer investors⁶⁷ and the designation by the Preparatory Commission of reserved areas for the International Seabed Authority from the application areas submitted by the pioneer investors pursuant to resolution II, bearing in mind that such registration entails both rights and obligations for pioneer investors,

Noting the increasing needs of countries, especially developing countries, for information, advice and assistance in the implementation of the Convention and in their developmental process for the full realization of the benefits of the comprehensive legal regime established by the Convention,

Concerned that the developing countries are as yet unable to take effective measures for the full realization of these benefits owing to the lack of resources and of the necessary scientific and technological capabilities,

Recognizing the need to enhance and supplement the efforts of States and competent international organizations aimed at enabling developing countries to acquire such capabilities,

Recognizing also that the Convention encompasses all uses and resources of the sea and that all related activities within the United Nations system need to be implemented in a manner consistent with it,

Deeply concerned about the current state of the marine environment,

Mindful of the importance of the Convention for the protection of the marine environment,

Noting with concern the use of fishing methods and practices, including those aimed at evading regulations and controls, which can have an adverse impact on the conservation and management of marine living resources,

Considering the need for effective and balanced conservation and management of marine living resources, giving full effect to the relevant provisions in the Convention,

Taking note of activities carried out in 1991 under the major programme on marine affairs, set forth in chapter 25 of the medium-term plan for the period 1984-1989 and extended for the period 1990-1991, in accordance with the report of the Secretary-General,⁶⁸ as approved in General Assembly resolution 38/59 A of 14 December 1983, and of the report of the Secretary-General,⁶⁹ as well as of programme 10 (Law of the sea and ocean affairs) in the medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997,⁷⁰



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REPORT OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE TO INVESTIGATE ISRAELI
PRACTICES AFFECTING THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF THE POPULATION
OF THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES

Report by the Secretary-General

(in pursuance of General Assembly resolution 43/21)

1. On 3 November 1988, the General Assembly adopted resolution 43/21 entitled "The uprising (intifadah) of the Palestinian people", the operative paragraphs of which read as follows:

"1. Condemns Israel's persistent policies and practices violating the human rights of the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territories, including Jerusalem, and, in particular, such acts as the opening of fire by the Israeli army and settlers that result in the killing and wounding of defenceless Palestinian civilians, the beating and breaking of bones, the deportation of Palestinian civilians, the imposition of restrictive economic measures, the demolition of houses, collective punishment and detentions, as well as denial of access to the media;

"2. Strongly deplores the continuing disregard by Israel, the occupying Power, of the relevant decisions of the Security Council;

"3. Reaffirms that the occupation by Israel of the Palestinian territories since 1967, including Jerusalem, in no way changes the legal status of those territories;

"4. Demands that Israel, the occupying Power, abide immediately and scrupulously by the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, and desist forthwith from its policies and practices that are in violation of the provisions of the Convention;

"5. Calls upon all the High Contracting Parties to the Convention to take appropriate measures to ensure respect by Israel, the occupying Power, for the Convention in all circumstances in conformity with their obligation under article 1 thereof;

"6. Invites Member States, the organizations of the United Nations system, governmental, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, and the mass communications media to continue and enhance their support for the Palestinian people;

"7. Urges the Security Council to consider the current situation in the occupied Palestinian territories, taking into account the recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General; 1/

"8. Also requests the Secretary-General to examine the present situation in the occupied Palestinian territories by all means available to him and to submit periodic reports thereon, the first such report no later than 17 November 1988."

2. Given the background of resolution 43/21, which was adopted under agenda item 77, entitled "Report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Population of the Occupied Territories", the Secretary-General considered it appropriate that the Centre for Human Rights assist in the preparation of the report requested of him in paragraph 8 and, to this end, that a mission be sent to the area.

3. On 10 November 1988, the Centre for Human Rights, on behalf of the Secretary-General, contacted the Permanent Mission of Israel to the United Nations Office at Geneva regarding the dispatch to the occupied territories of a senior official of the Secretariat to examine the situation on the spot. On 14 November 1988, the Israeli Mission replied that the Secretary-General's request was being considered by the Government. To this date no further response has been received.

4. In these circumstances, the Secretary-General instructed the Centre for Human Rights, which serves as the secretariat for the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Population of the Occupied Territories, to provide an update to the information contained in the Special Committee's last report (A/43/694). The update, which is annexed to the present report, consists of a summary of Israeli press reports regarding incidents that have occurred in the occupied territories in September and October 1988. In addition, the annex includes information provided by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).

5. It is evident from the information provided in the attached annex that the overall situation in the occupied Palestinian territories has worsened. Civilian deaths and injuries continue to be widespread and so do other serious violations of human rights. The Secretary-General has on numerous occasions during the current year expressed his grave concern at these developments. He is deeply distressed by the high number of casualties, and he has noted that Israeli measures, such as deportation, administrative detention and other collective punishments, such as the imposition of curfews and the blowing up of houses, can only aggravate the tension that already prevails in the area. He has received persistent appeals protesting these measures and other human rights violations, in particular, the closure of schools and the lack of access to detention centres.

6. As the Secretary-General emphasized in his report to the Security Council on 21 January 1988, 1/ submitted in accordance with resolution 605 (1987), the civilian population of the occupied territories is entitled to safety and protection under the Fourth Geneva Convention. This is clearly stated in the first paragraph of article 27, which reads:

"Protected persons are entitled, in all circumstances, to respect for their persons, their honour, their family rights, their religious convictions and practices, and their manners and customs. They shall at all times be humanely treated, and shall be protected especially against all acts of violence or threats thereof and against insults and public curiosity".

The responsibility of the occupying Power is underlined in article 29, which reads:

"The Party to the conflict in whose hands protected persons may be is responsible for the treatment accorded to them by its agents, irrespective of any individual responsibility which may be incurred."

7. The Security Council has repeatedly reaffirmed the applicability to the occupied Palestinian territories of the Fourth Geneva Convention. On 26 August 1988, the President of the Council issued a statement on behalf of the members of the Council which reads as follows: 2/

"The members of the Security Council are gravely concerned by the continued deterioration of the situation in the Palestinian territories occupied by Israel since 1967, including Jerusalem, and especially by the current grave and serious situation resulting from the closing-off of areas, the imposition of curfews and the consequent increase in the numbers of injuries and deaths that have occurred.

"The members of the Council are profoundly concerned by the persistence of Israel, the occupying Power, in continuing its policy of deporting Palestinian civilians in contravention of Security Council resolutions and the Fourth Geneva Convention, as demonstrated on 17 August 1988 by its expulsion

of four Palestinian civilians to Lebanon and its decision to expel 40 more. The members request Israel immediately to desist from deporting any Palestinian civilians and immediately to ensure the safe return of those already deported.

"The members of the Council consider that the current situation in the occupied territories, described in paragraph 1 above, has grave consequences for endeavours to achieve a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East.

"They reaffirm that the Geneva Convention Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, is applicable to the Palestinian and other Arab territories occupied by Israel since 1967, including Jerusalem, and request the high contracting parties to ensure respect for the Convention.

"Recalling Security Council resolutions, the members of the Security Council will keep the situation in the occupied Palestinian territories, including Jerusalem, under review."

8. The Secretary-General fully shares the views expressed by the members of the Security Council. He considers it essential that the occupying Power apply scrupulously the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention. In this connection, he would like to draw attention once again to the detailed recommendations he made on this subject in his report to the Security Council of 21 January 1988.

9. However, as the Secretary-General has repeatedly stated since the uprising began nearly a year ago, measures to enhance the safety and protection of the Palestinian people in the occupied territories, urgent as they are, will not resolve the underlying problem. A resolution of the problem can only be reached through a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), and taking into account the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, including self-determination. The Secretary-General remains fully committed to the search for such a settlement, and will do his utmost in this respect.

ANNEX

I. Summary of reports on events in the occupied territories published in the Israeli press* from 1 September through 1 November 1988

1. On 1 September 1988, it was reported that the number of Palestinians killed in the territories since the beginning of the uprising had reached 212. According to UNRWA reports, the number of victims reached 258, and included 13 cases of suffocation from tear gas, 12 cases of death as a result of beating and 14 cases of death following shooting by Israeli civilians. (Ha'aretz, 1 September 1988)
2. On 1 September 1988, it was reported that 67 residents of the territories had been arrested in various towns of the Galilee region, northern Israel, for illegally staying in Israel. All were reportedly employed in Israeli construction, agriculture, etc. A Galilee police spokesman said that such arrests would continue and that residents of the territories who wished to stay overnight in the area could apply for special permits. (Ha'aretz, 1 September 1988)
3. On 1 September 1988 it was reported that two settlers from Hebron who handed a wounded Arab youth to the police, claiming that they captured him after he had thrown stones at them, were later arrested by the police on suspicion of having attacked and injured the youth. They were identified as Noam Arnon and Yoav Paniri, a "Gush Emunim" activist. Arnon's pistol was confiscated on suspicion that the settler had used it to beat the Arab youth on his face. The two settlers were questioned and released on bail. (Ha'aretz, 1 September 1988)
4. On 4 September 1988, the Commander of the Military Police, Tat-Aluf (Brig.-Gen.) Emil Elimelech, gave details about the number of Arabs from the territories held in prison. There were 2,461 administrative detainees, 519 convicted prisoners, 987 detainees (by order of a police officer) and 1,643 detained until the end of the legal proceedings (by order of a judge). The total number was 5,640 persons. Since December 1987, the Investigating Military Police had opened 430 inquiry files regarding "irregular accidents" in the territories. In 350 cases the inquiries were completed and in the remaining, 80 inquiries were still under way. Some 154 inquiries concerned death circumstances of young Arab demonstrators, 71 concerned cases of injuries, and 200 concerned other irregular acts by soldiers, including beatings, destruction of property, etc. (Ha'aretz, 5 September 1988)
5. On 4 September 1988 Hatem Abd el-Kader, 33, a journalist in the East-Jerusalem daily Al Fajr, was arrested by the Jerusalem police and placed under administrative detention for six months. (Ha'aretz, 5 September 1988)

* This summary is based on two sources, the Hebrew-language daily Ha'aretz and the English-language daily, The Jerusalem Post. The terminology used in the summary is that which appeared in the original source.

6. On 4 September 1988, it was reported that several residents of Jericho had alleged being harassed and ill-treated by Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) reservists during the previous months. Such harassment involved the deliberate throwing of a tear-gas canister into a private house, and forcing people to travel on the hood of a jeep. (Ha'aretz, 4 September 1988)

7. On 5 September 1988, the High Court of Justice upheld an IDF ban on international telephone calls from the territories, based on an emergency regulation dating back to 1945. The High Court ruled that the ban, issued by Central Region Commander Amram Mitsna on 10 April 1988, fell within the latter's powers to "restrict, regulate or impose conditions" on telephone use in order to prevent exchange of information among hostile elements. The court dismissed the petitioners' claim that the ban constituted a form of collective punishment. (The Jerusalem Post, 6 September 1988)

8. On 5 September 1988, two journalists were arrested: Salah Zuheika, the acting editor of A-Sha'ab and Hassan el-Khatib, the sports editor of Al Fair. (Ha'aretz, 6 September 1988)

9. On 6 September 1988, the security forces embarked on an unprecedented operation of searches and arrests in the town of Kalkilya. A curfew was imposed, and was lifted eight days later, on 14 September 1988. The operation started before dawn. Troops surrounded the town of 25,000, blocked access roads and diverted traffic. Phone links were cut. Soldiers carried lists of names, and detainees were taken handcuffed and blindfolded to a school, where they were questioned by General Security Service agents. A military prosecutor signed detention orders and prisoners were taken to the Far'a detention camp near Nablus. Some 150 people were arrested during the first day of the operation. Military sources said the detainees were found in possession of knives and hatchets. On 8 September 1988, it was reported that some residents had complained to reporters during the searches. Palestinian sources said four houses had been demolished. On 14 September 1988 it was reported that residents had been complaining of a shortage of fresh food and milk for infants. Electricity and water supplies had been periodically interrupted, and fruit trees and other crops outside the town were being damaged because of lack of irrigation during the curfew. By 15 September 1988, 28 roads had been blocked in Kalkilya, to prevent stone-throwing at Israeli cars passing on the main road. (Ha'aretz, The Jerusalem Post, 7, 8, 11, 14 and 15 September 1988)

10. On 6 September 1988, it was reported that, following a report by a team of doctors and toxicology experts who warned that the use of tear gas in closed spaces could be fatal, the IDF General Staff issued a directive prohibiting soldiers from using gas in closed areas while breaking up demonstrations in the territories. (Ha'aretz, The Jerusalem Post, 6 September 1988)

11. On 6 September 1988, it was reported that the civil administration in the West Bank was acting against Palestinian attempts to hold classes in place of schools closed down by the military government. On 5 September 1988 the IDF closed down the Society of Friends of Al-Najah University in Nablus after classes were held on the premises. On 7 September 1988, security forces raided several

vocational training centres in Tulkarem, on suspicion that classes were being held there. On 20 September 1988, it was reported that 14 educational centres that provided supplementary courses to secondary school students had been shut down. A civil administration spokesman said that classes at the centres violated an order closing down all educational institutions in the West Bank until 1 October 1988. (Ha'aretz, The Jerusalem Post, 6, 8 and 20 September 1988)

12. On 8 September 1988, the civil administration in the Gaza Strip and the IDF southern command released 70 detainees, residents of Gaza, who were held in the Ketziot detention centre. (Ha'aretz, 9 September 1988)

13. On 8 September 1988, the military court in Gaza sentenced a 60-year-old woman, Raki'a Abu-Samadna, to five months' imprisonment, five months' suspended term, and a fine of NIS 1000 (\$650). She was found guilty of attacking warders and of trying to pass Fatah messages to her son, detained in the Gaza prison. (Ha'aretz, 9 September 1988)

14. On 10 September 1988, security forces uncovered in Gaza 37 Fatah "popular committees" and arrested 200 people, including leaders of the underground and heads of local committees in camps and neighbourhoods. (Ha'aretz, The Jerusalem Post, 11 September 1988)

15. On 14 September 1988, it was reported that the IDF had staged an operation similar to the one in Kalkilya, in the village of Kafr Malek, north-east of Ramallah. The village was sealed off and placed under curfew. Soldiers with prepared lists of suspects moved from house to house, backed by a helicopter used to spot fleeing youths. The village was reportedly targeted because of its proximity to a road leading to neighbouring Jewish settlements, and because it had been the site of attacks on settlers' vehicles. Similar operations were also reported in four villages in the Tulkarem area: Kafr Zibad, Kafr Abush, Kafr Sur and Kafr Jamal. Some 40 suspects were arrested. In Deir Balut, east of Rosh-Ha'avin, 20 persons were arrested. It was also reported that villagers in Tell and Iraq' Burin, near Nablus, which had been sealed off for over a month, complained that they could not market their fig produce, their principal source of livelihood. (Ha'aretz, The Jerusalem Post, 14 September 1988)

16. On 18 September 1988, it was reported that the civil administration in the West Bank had banned the distribution in the territories of the East-Jerusalem daily Al Fajr for 45 days, following the publication of an "antisemitic cartoon". In response, the editorial board of the newspaper decided to hold a one-week strike. (Ha'aretz, 18 September 1988)

17. On 19 September 1988, IDF sources were reported as saying that, since new plastic bullets started to be used in the territories, troops had been authorized to use such bullets against stone-throwers and demonstrators, even when there was no danger to the soldiers' safety. The authorization was reportedly given in order to step up the struggle against "violators of the order", without resorting to shooting of live bullets. IDF sources estimated that the large number of persons with bullet injuries following recent clashes with soldiers resulted from the authorization to shoot at stone-throwers. According to a report appearing on

20 September 1988 Defence Minister Rabin had changed orders regarding the firing of plastic bullets, cancelling an earlier restriction which had limited the use of such bullets to especially trained officers. Now, most soldiers in the territories might carry plastic bullets, after being instructed about their range and effectiveness. (Ha'arets, 19 September 1988; The Jerusalem Post, 20 September 1988)

18. On 19 September 1988, it was reported that an IDF reservist, Hillel Bardin of Jerusalem, had been sentenced to two weeks in prison for attempting to mediate an agreement between his unit and Ramallah residents during his period of service in the town. Bardin reportedly held contacts with local community leaders with the intention of reaching an agreement whereby residents would demonstrate peacefully and the unit would not intervene in the non-violent protest. Military sources said that Bardin had violated orders by initiating the contacts, and had acted on his own, without the permission of his superiors. (The Jerusalem Post, 19 September 1988)

19. On 19 September 1988, the military court in Nablus sentenced Khaled Naif Hirallah, 20, to 10 years' imprisonment and 10 years' suspended term. He was convicted of trying to stab a female soldier. (Ha'arets, 20 September 1988)

20. On 23 September 1988 it was reported that the Judge Advocate-General had decided to put on trial four soldiers - a staff-sergeant and three privates - of the "Givati" brigade, who were allegedly involved in beating a Gaza resident, Aani Shami, to death. The incident occurred in August 1988, when some 20 soldiers forced their way into Shami's home, searching for stone-throwing children. When Shami tried to protect his children, the soldiers caught him and started beating him violently on all parts of his body. Aani Shami died of his wounds several hours later. On 26 September 1988 the President of the Southern Command military court ordered the remand of the four suspects until the end of the legal proceedings. According to a report published on 27 September 1988, the four suspects were staff-sergeant Yitzhak Adler and privates Ron Hakhel, Arieh Luzzato and Yitzhak Kibudi. They were being charged with manslaughter, and it was the first time since the beginning of the uprising in the territories that soldiers were being charged with beating an Arab to death. According to the charge sheet, the soldiers beat Shami with their rifles, a stick, by kicking him and by jumping on his body. The soldiers told their military police interrogators that they had received explicit orders to beat Arabs even when they were not offering resistance to arrest. "Such orders were displayed on notice-boards in the dining hall and in the military base", they said. On 4 October 1988, the Military Appeals Court heard the appeal by the four "Givati" soldiers. Lawyers for the four soldiers claimed that the use of beating "as punishment" was ordered by "most senior authorities" in the IDF. One of the lawyers quoted an affidavit by the soldiers' immediate commander, stating that their "action was in accordance with the customary procedures in the area". On 5 October 1988, the Military Appeals Court decided that the four soldiers should remain in jail pending their trial. (Ha'arets, 23 and 27 September 1988, The Jerusalem Post, 5 and 6 October 1988)

21. On 27 September 1988, Defence Minister Rabin declared in a press conference that the IDF was using plastic bullets in the territories to increase injuries among Palestinian rioters. Other equipment, such as tear-gas and rubber bullets,

had proved inadequate against stone-throwing from 30 to 50 metres, he said. He added that, in addition to the use of plastic bullets, the IDF had increased its pre-emptive raids on villages in order to block the organisation of violent protests. (The Jerusalem Post, 28 September 1988)

22. On 27 September 1988, it was reported that the El-Bireh based "Family Welfare Association" that was ordered closed by the West Bank military commander had applied to the High Court of Justice against the order. (Ha'aretz, 27 September 1988)

23. On 29 September 1988, a journalist from Gaza, held at the Ketsiot detention centre in administrative detention, was sentenced by an IDF officer to two weeks' solitary confinement. He was charged with causing riots among hundreds of detainees. (Ha'aretz, 30 September 1988)

24. On 2 October 1988, it was reported that all schools and educational institutions in the West Bank would be closed, by order of the civil administration, until 15 November 1988. (Ha'aretz, 2 October 1988)

25. On 2 October 1988, it was reported that the administrative order closing the Palestinian Office for Press services in East Jerusalem, headed by Raymonda Tawil and Ibrahim Karain had been extended by one year. (Ha'aretz, 2 October 1988)

26. On 5 October 1988, the IDF issued an administrative detention order against Naila A'ish, 26, from El-Bireh, whose husband, Jamal Zakut, had been expelled from the country two months earlier on suspicion of being a member of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine organisation. She was the seventh female administrative detainee since the beginning of the uprising in the territories and, more generally, since the beginning of the occupation in 1967. (Ha'aretz, 6 October 1988)

27. On 6 October 1988, it was reported that the IDF had been threatening villagers in the Tulkarem district that unless calm was restored in their villages they would be prevented from harvesting their olive trees. It was further reported that civil administration's income tax officers had threatened over 100 oil-press owners that unless they paid their debts to the income tax authorities they would not be allowed to use their oil presses. (Ha'aretz, 6 October 1988)

28. On 7 October 1988, Defence Minister Rabin said that since the beginning of the uprising in the territories, 250 persons had died and 18,000 arrests had been carried out. He said that plastic bullets were fired by officers and especially-trained soldiers in order to injure anyone involved in stone-throwing, organization of riots, or incitement. "In any confrontation with rioters, we are interested not only to arrest rioters but, if the violence continues, that they should suffer injuries", Mr. Rabin said. (Ha'aretz, 9 October 1988)

29. On 8 October 1988, security forces uprooted a plantation and demolished a house in Deir el-Balah, the Gaza Strip, after a hand-grenade had been thrown at a road in the area. It was further reported that the village of Bidia remained under curfew, after villagers had killed the local mukhtar who was suspected of

collaboration with Israel. Electricity was cut off and the villagers were prohibited from harvesting their olive trees and from going abroad. (Ha'aretz, 9 October 1988)

30. On 9 October 1988, Attorney-General Yosef Harish defended the use of plastic bullets in the territories and said that their aim was not deterrence through injury, but dispersal of violent riots. Harish said he had approved guidelines for use of the bullets before they were issued to troops. (Ha'aretz, The Jerusalem Post, 10 October 1988)

31. On 10 October 1988, it was reported that a spokeswoman of the Women's Organization for Political Prisoners said that 43 female "political prisoners" were at present in detention. She estimated that over 1,000 women had been arrested since the start of the uprising. She claimed that almost all the women were tortured, most often by various forms of sexual degradation and by having their hands and feet tied together and their head covered with a bag, often for several days. (The Jerusalem Post, 10 October 1988)

32. On 12 October 1988, the IDF demolished four houses in Nablus and sealed five others. The houses belonged to families of men suspected of killing three other Palestinians whom they alleged were collaborating with the security authorities. The houses demolished were in the Ras el-Ein neighbourhood and in the Casbah area. (Ha'aretz, The Jerusalem Post, 13 October 1988)

33. On 12 October 1988, Dr. Ibrahim al-Yazuri, head of the "Mujam'a al-Islami" organization in the Gaza Strip, was arrested by security forces, reportedly for questioning. The organization was described as an "umbrella body" of all the Islamic associations in the region. According to security sources, several other Palestinians linked with Islamic organizations had also been arrested recently. (Ha'aretz, 13 October 1988)

34. On 16 October 1988, it was reported that the deputy Mufti of Jerusalem, Sheikh Jamal a-Rifai, had been charged by the Jerusalem police with encouraging an illegal assembly. It was reportedly the first time that such a serious Wakf official (Rifai also heads the Moslem religious courts in East Jerusalem and the West Bank) was being charged with a criminal offence. The incident giving rise to the charge had occurred several months earlier, when workers for the Religious Affairs Ministry started excavations in Via Dolorosa, in the Old City of Jerusalem. At the time, Sheikh a-Rifai had used a loudspeaker to call upon Moslem worshippers to defend the Temple Mount from a Jewish attempt to gain control of it, and his call reportedly prompted widespread rioting in the Old City. (The Jerusalem Post, 16 October 1988)

35. On 17 October 1988, it was reported that a group of reservists had complained to the Defence Minister about the behaviour of a reserve tank unit in Kalkilya and its area in September 1988. According to the complainants beatings of Palestinian detainees by the unit's officers and soldiers were routine, and the detainees were kept in "dehydration facilities", an improvised open-air lock up surrounded by a barbed-wire fence where it was extremely cold at night and very hot during the day. Detainees were kept there for several days and then released. The soldiers

thus avoided regular arrest procedures. Further charges in the complaint included the tying of a man to an electricity pylon, the transportation of offenders to an orchard for beating and the shooting at a mosque of the muezzin's loudspeaker. One of the complainants, a medical student, said he had been prevented from giving aid to a Palestinian who had been badly beaten by the soldiers. (Ha'aretz, The Jerusalem Post, 17 October 1988)

36. On 18 October 1988, it was reported that cases of temporary confiscation of cars belonging to Arab residents in the territories had recently increased. The cars were being confiscated for army use, for various purposes, for several hours and sometimes even for a whole day. Replying to a letter on the subject by members of the Knesset (MK) Dedi Zucker, Defence Minister Rabin said that that practice was in keeping with international law. (Ha'aretz, 18 October 1988)

37. On 18 October 1988, troops broke into the home of Said Kanaan, a well-known public figure in Nablus; they carried out a search and set up a temporary observation post on the roof, from where they watched over a funeral procession. (Ha'aretz, 19 October 1988)

38. On 20 October 1988, it was reported that, since the beginning of the uprising, the IDF had demolished about 100 houses in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. (Ha'aretz, 20 October 1988)

39. On 20 October 1988 the IDF demolished the house of Khaled Jassin Abu Jenida, suspected of throwing petrol bombs at troops. In addition, it was reported that the IDF had demolished eight houses and three villages. The houses had allegedly been built without a permit. (The Jerusalem Post, 21 October 1988)

40. On 20 October 1988, the Israeli press reported on two recent publications by the West Bank Data Bank Project, headed by Dr. Meron Benvenisti. One publication, entitled "The Price of Insurgency", was the first comprehensive report on human rights violations in the territories since the beginning of the uprising. The report, compiled by attorney Carmel Shalev, indicated an "alarming increase in the number of human and civil rights violations as a result of measures adopted by the Israeli authorities in their efforts to quell the uprising by the Palestinian population. That phenomenon was accompanied by government acts - legislative, administrative and judicial - which have been granting legitimacy to these violations, and have been causing a qualitative change in the human and civil rights situation of the population". According to the report, by September 1988, over 250 persons had been killed in the territories, compared with eight in 1986 and 22 in 1987. During the period under consideration, over 5,000 people were injured, some 2,500 administrative detention orders issued, compared with 37 in 1986 and 62 in 1987, and over 18,000 people arrested. The freedom of movement of hundreds of thousands of individuals was restricted by the imposition of curfews and by the sealing off of localities. Thus, the entire West Bank and Gaza Strip were totally sealed off for three days in March and four in April 1988. The report also alleged that there was a dual system of justice in civil and military courts, that discriminated against Arabs. The report further noted a discrepancy between official policy guidelines on the use of force by Israeli soldiers and their implementation. The second publication was "The West Bank and Gaza Atlas", which

included maps and statistics on Jewish and Arab population growth and distribution, infrastructure and transport, cultivation, town planning and various Israeli political plans for border demarcation. One of the major findings in the atlas concerned the increase in the Palestinian population of the territories. According to the atlas, the West Bank Palestinian population was greater by some 200,000 than figures released by the Central Bureau of Statistics, and reached 1,067,873. The Gaza Strip Palestinian population stood at 633,000. (Ha'aretz, The Jerusalem Post, 20 October 1988)

41. On 21 October 1988, the security forces demolished a house in the Jabaliya refugee camp, in the Gaza Strip, and sealed another house in the same camp. The owners of both houses, who had allegedly thrown petrol bombs at troops, applied to the High Court of Justice against the demolition and the sealing, but their petition was rejected. (Ha'aretz, 23 October 1988)

42. On 23 October 1988, Reuter News Agency reported - on the basis of Palestinian allegations - that an undercover army unit, code-named "Duvdevan" ("Cherry") was operating in the West Bank to capture Arabs throwing petrol bombs and rocks, and that the unit had verbal orders to shoot to kill fugitives "with blood on their hands". According to Reuter, foreign correspondents alleged that members of the force had impersonated journalists several times to arrest or photograph Arab suspects. According to the Reuter report, three West Bank residents killed in clashes on 8 and 9 October in the villages of Yatta and Yaabad were shot dead in cold blood by members of this unit. The news agency further alleged that a similar unit, code-named "Samson", was operating in the Gaza Strip. On 24 October 1988, the IDF flatly denied the existence of an undercover "death squad" operating in the West Bank and Gaza. The announcement by the IDF spokesman's office read as follows: "In reaction to media reports in Israel and abroad concerning alleged illegal activities of IDF units in Judea, Samaria and the Gaza Strip, the IDF spokesman emphasizes that IDF units carry out varied operational activities to preserve security and order, in accordance with the law. There is no unit in the IDF which is authorized to act, or which acts, against the well-known rules for opening fire which are grounded in law". The statement did not deny the existence of undercover units whose task was to arrest throwers of rocks and petrol bombs. (Ha'aretz, The Jerusalem Post, 24, 25 and 28 October 1988)

43. On 23 October 1988, the Vice-President of the Jerusalem District Court, Justice Elishu Noam, confirmed the six-month administrative detention order issued by the Defence Minister against Feisal Hussein, director of the Centre for Arab Studies in East Jerusalem. (Ha'aretz, 24 October 1988)

44. On 23 October 1988, it was reported that 60 administrative detainees and prisoners from the Gaza Strip held at the Ketziot prison in the Negev desert, known as Ansar 3, were being released from prison, as a gesture on the occasion of the holiday marking the birth of the Prophet Muhammad, on 22 October 1988. (Ha'aretz, 23 October 1988)

45. On 23 October 1988 it was reported that MK Dedi Zucker had asked Defence Minister Rabin to order that the practice of mock executions as a means of pressure on witnesses, or as a form of ill-treatment, be ceased. According to MK Zucker he

had received two complaints of such a practice over the past fortnight. (The Jerusalem Post, 23 October 1988)

46. On 26 October 1988, Defence Minister Rabin told a reporter that the Defence establishment had no intention of changing the orders and procedures given to IDF soldiers in the territories with regard to beating residents who threw stones or petrol bombs. (Ha'aratz, 27 October 1988)

47. On 27 October 1988, the IDF Judge Advocate-General, Brigadier-General Amnon Strashnow reported that the army was holding 1,600 Palestinians in administrative detention, compared with some 3,000 a few months earlier. Most of the detainees had filed appeals, and all but 200 of which had already been heard by military court judges. The remaining appeals were to be heard the following week. In addition, the judge reported that 32 IDF soldiers and officers had been tried since the beginning of the uprising for unbecoming conduct towards the residents of the occupied territories. (The Jerusalem Post, 28 October 1988)

48. On 29 October 1988, the security forces carried out many arrests, described as "preventive measures", in connection with the forthcoming elections in Israel and the United States of America, the Balfour Declaration Day, and the meeting of the Palestine National Council in Algiers. Many public figures were arrested, including eight journalists, eight trade unionists and the son of Abd el-Hamid A-Sayeh, chairman of the Palestine National Council. (Ha'aratz, 30 October 1988)

49. On 30 October 1988 an Israeli woman, Rahel Weiss, and her three children were burned to death when a civilian bus travelling from Tiberias to Jerusalem was attacked near Jericho with several petrol bombs. (Ha'aratz, 31 October 1988, The Jerusalem Post, 31 October 1988)

50. On 31 October 1988, the houses of three Palestinians of the A-Takruri family were demolished. The three had confessed to the petrol bomb attack the previous day in which an Israeli woman and her three children were burned to death. The houses were located in Jericho. According to one report, seven houses were demolished in the town following the attack. (Ha'aratz, The Jerusalem Post, 1 November 1988)

51. On 1 November 1988, it was reported that the IDF Judge Advocate-General, Amnon Strashnow, was seriously considering - at the request of Defence Minister Rabin - demanding the death penalty for the perpetrators of the petrol bomb attack on 30 October 1988 in Jericho, in which an Israeli woman and her three children were killed. Sources close to Mr. Rabin said that the Defence Minister was "determined to carry out that change in the policy" which consisted of refraining from demanding capital punishment in military trials. (The Jerusalem Post, 1 November 1988)

Palestinian casualties as reported in The Jerusalem Post
and Ha'arets

52. The following is a list of the Palestinians killed between 27 August and 31 October 1988 in the occupied territories.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Name (age)</u>	<u>Place of residence</u>
27.08.88	Aiman Yamin (14)	A-Til
28.08.88	Samikh Yusuf Muhammad Dababseh (22)	Yatta
31.08.88	Manawi Munir el-Arashi (17)	Rimel neighbourhood in Gaza
31.08.88	Iman Ahmed el-Najar (16)	Rafah
31.08.88	Fahri el-Bargouti (22)	Ramallah neighbourhood
07.09.88	Abd el-Karim Mahmud Abed (17)	Rafah
08.09.88	Muhammad Ahmed Abu-Salah (36)	Silat al-Hartiya
10.09.88	Ali Ahmed a-Dabsa (26)	Nuba, near Hebron
10.09.88	Rayek Farash (26)	Sinjil, near Ramallah
10.09.88	As'ad Abu Ghosh (28)	Nablus
10.09.88	Issa Yassin (30)	Anin, near Jenin
10.09.88	Unidentified	
14.09.88	Rami Khalil Abu-Samra (11)	Gaza
14.09.88	Adli a-Thalagi (30)	
17.09.88	Imad el Arkawi (18)	Jenin
17.09.88	Munjid Ismail Sirhan (26)	Luban ash-Sharkiya
19.09.88	Imad Abu-Thuria (18)	Gaza
21.09.88	Hani Abu-Meidan (18)	Bureij camp, Gaza
24.09.88	Nahil a-Tuhi (12)	Amari camp, near Ramallah
26.09.88	Jamal Shukeirat (23)	Jebel Mukabar neighbourhood, East Jerusalem

<u>Date</u>	<u>Name (age)</u>	<u>Place of residence</u>
26.09.88	Naim A. Satatiya (50)	Nablus
26.09.88	Jihad a-Zinu (22)	Gasa
26.09.88	Nabil al-Jamal (21)	Beit-Surik
26.09.88	Nasser el-Jundi (22)	
27.09.88	Hussam al-Gharbawi (20)	Gasa
27.09.88	Imad Abu-Sharar (17)	Nuseirat
27.09.88	Osama Baraikeh (17)	Khan Yunis camp
29.09.88	Naser Abu Sabit (19)	Balata camp
30.09.88	Kaid Salah (42)	Hebron
30.09.88	Muhammad el-Karaki (18)	Hebron
05.10.88	Nidham Abu-Hawila (24)	Balata
06.10.88	Mustafa Salim Abu Baker (45)	Bidin
06.10.88	Ahmed Za'rur	Anin village, near Jenin
06.10.88	Adnan Abu Hanfa (31)	Nablus
07.10.88	Samir al-Bahlul (26)	Nablus
07.10.88	Nidal Ali al-Najar (29)	Nablus
07.10.88	Ali Az e-Din a-Sayeh (20)	Nablus
07.10.88	Muhammad al-Masharawi (17)	Nablus
07.10.88	Ahmed Ziad al-Kilani (28)	Yaabed
07.10.88	Muhammad Aref Salah (36)	Burka
08.10.88	Muhammad Fawzi Abd el Kader (23)	Ein Beit Alma refugee camp
09.10.88	Osama Subhi Ahmed	Rafah
09.10.88	Kamal Muhammad Hassan al-Dari'a (23) Fadel Ibrahim Shehadeh Najjar (25)	Yatta

<u>Date</u>	<u>Name (age)</u>	<u>Place of residence</u>
10.10.88	Nisam Abu Judeh (17)	Dheisheh refugee camp
13.10.88	Mahmud Abu Khader (18)	Judeida, near Jenin
14.10.88	Omar al-Asi Ba'arat (23)	Kafr Malek
14.10.88	Ahmed al-Arja (19)	Kibya
16.10.88	Osama Walsfi a-Shalabi (18)	A-Til, near Tulkarem
18.10.88	Ziya Haj Muhammad (5) Khaled Tbeileh (14)	Nablus
24.10.88	Abdel Munim Shahin Shahmawi (17)	Far'a refugee camp
25.10.88	Manal Samour (14)	Shati refugee camp
26.10.88	Nisrin A-Nawajha (3)	Khan Yunis
27.10.88	Ziad Sabad (16)	Nuseirat refugee camp
29.10.88	Basal Mustafa Dweikat (17)	Rujeib
30.10.88	Iyad Bishara Abu-Saadeh (20)	Beit Sahur

II. Information provided by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East

53. On 4 October 1988, after returning from a visit to the occupied territories, UNRWA Commissioner-General Giorgio Giacomelli said that he had been able to witness and to verify personally that the number of casualties inflicted on the refugees by different means continued to be alarmingly high. UNRWA had noted in the previous two weeks, in particular, an alarming increase in the number of injuries from gunfire - whether by normal aluminium or plastic bullets. In his meetings with the Israeli authorities, the Commissioner-General had expressed once again his deep concern about this trend and his hope that the security forces could find more proportionate means of responding to protests and demonstrations.

54. On 11 October 1988, UNRWA expressed concern over the effects of the prolonged closure of schools for Palestinian children in the Israeli-occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip. The Commissioner-General noted that UNRWA was responsible for educating over 130,000 young people in the occupied territories, refugees who constituted a high proportion of the Palestinian population there. For over 10 months the Agency had faced many difficulties in running their biggest programme, education, which accounted for two-thirds of their resources. UNRWA's three training centres in the

West Bank, catering to some 1,500 students, and its training centre in Gaza, with 600 students, had been closed since late 1987. That loss of a year of instruction placed the future of these students, and those who would have been admitted during 1988, in serious doubt. It was of critical importance for UNRWA to be able to resume its education programme. The Agency had contingency plans in hand for when they could resume full operations. The Commissioner-General considered that the loss of class-room time was tragic and costly, for the refugees and for UNRWA. Security considerations had been invoked to justify the closure of educational institutions, but a major consequence was that a generation of Palestinian children - of whom the refugees were such a large share - were unable to exercise their basic right to education.

55. In his statement of 9 November 1988 in the Special Political Committee (see A/SPC/43/SR.22), the Commissioner-General commented on some of the developments that had taken place since 30 June 1988, the date marking the end of the period covered by the latest report to the General Assembly, in the area of UNRWA's operations. He recalled that the Agency's programmes had been seriously affected during the previous five months, especially with respect to education. The Agency remained gravely preoccupied with maintaining its activities in the Israeli occupied territories. The number of casualties among the refugees had increased and widespread suffering had resulted from beatings, destruction of shelters, curfews and other punitive measures. Interference with the performance of the Agency's activities and violations of its premises had undermined its efforts to work quickly and effectively.

III. Information provided by the International Committee of the Red Cross

56. The Secretary-General has been informed by ICRC that, since the beginning of the intifadah, the International Committee has pursued its tasks in favour of the civilian population in the territories occupied by Israel, in accordance with the Fourth Geneva Convention. The ICRC delegations in Tel Aviv, Jerusalem, Gaza and Nablus, the staff of which has been increased and which currently totals 36 expatriates, focused on the following main activities:

(a) Visits to persons detained in connection with the events

About 6,200 people are currently visited by ICRC delegates in eight military detention centres (Atlit, Meggido, Far'a, Tulkarem, Dahariye, Ketzich, Katiba and Ofer). During those visits, the ICRC delegates notably checked on the detention conditions of administrative detainees, who now number over 2,100.

(b) Supervision of the medical infrastructure

The ICRC doctor and the two nurses based in the occupied territories are monitoring the area's medical facilities. In addition, particular attention is given to the local branches of the Red Crescent: six ambulances have already been provided to the local branches, and eight others are planned before the end of the year.

(c) Assessment of the general situation in the camps and villages

The ICRC delegates are continuing regular visits to towns, villages and camps, and more particularly to those under curfew or which have been the scene of clashes with the Israeli armed forces, in order to solve a number of problems of humanitarian concern and to investigate violations of international humanitarian law. Material aid is also being provided to families whose houses had been ordered destroyed.
